



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Friday, August 29, 2008

TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

POLITICS

1. IN OPINION OF ALEXANDER ISKANDARIAN, ARMENIA TOOK CORRECT POSITION DURING CONFLICT IN SOUTH OSSETIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/27/08]

The Armenian government took quite a correct position during the conflict between Georgia and South Ossetia. Political scientist Alexander Iskandarian expressed this opinion at the August 26 press conference. In his words, under such circumstances it was necessary not to interfere in the events and to wait for passions to calm down - just the way Armenia has behaved. In the opinion of A. Iskandarian, the South Ossetian developments have changed the South Caucasian region: Georgia has weakened, and Russia's role has changed in the region.

In his opinion, Turkey is also trying to change its role in the South Caucasus. In this respect, according to him, Armenia should be able to make use of the existing situation. "Armenia should maintain its relations with all states, including the West, and show the maximum caution," he said, adding that Russia-Georgia and U.S.-Iran relations affect Armenia but the country is trying to keep its relations with each of these states.

A. Iskandarian said that the issue of recognition of Nagorno Karabakh's independence by Armenia has no relation to the recognition of independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. In his words, this only forms a "background" for thinking so. "The recognition of the NKR by Armenia is of no importance in terms of international recognition. Azerbaijan should first of all do it, while in case of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Georgia should recognize, which in its turn will cause a wave of recognitions," he noted.

2. A BALANCE OF FORCES IN REGION IS TO ARMENIA'S ADVANTAGE, STEPAN GRIGORIAN SAYS [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/27/08]

Russia's steps (unexpected to the world) in Georgia are continuing and will result in Russia's signing bilateral agreements with Abkhazia and South Ossetia, including in the military sphere, the head of the Analytical Center of Globalization and Regional Cooperation Stepan Grigorian stated at the August 27 press conference.

He paid attention to the fact that today Russia is implementing the idea of restoring a mini-USSR. In particular, it is not ruled out that Belarus and the unrecognized by international community Abkhazia and South Ossetia may enter this format. In the political scientist's opinion, while realizing this idea, Russia may also tackle in real earnest the problems of the Crimea and Transnistria. "Thus Russia is taking concrete steps on the formation of a new pole of force in the world, and these steps are directed against the West's influence," S. Grigorian said.

According to him, since the moment when Russian aircraft started bombing Poti, the conflict moved to the plane of international relations as a number of Western programs were related to Poti. In the words of S. Grigorian, the discontinued operation of Baku-Supsa pipeline, the freezing of the project on construction of Kars-Akhalkalak-Baku railway, etc, are directed against the influence of the West in Georgia and the South Caucasian region. He expressed an opinion that the "cold war" between West and Russia will continue and intensify.

As regards Armenia, S. Grigorian underlined the necessity of a serious analysis of what happened in the neighboring country. He paid attention to the circumstance that the presence of both Russia and the West in the region is to Armenia's advantage, and he drew some historical parallels. "We do not benefit when only one power fully controls the region, we remember the 1921 lessons. A balance of forces in the region, that is, the presence of both the West and Russia is to Armenia's advantage," S. Grigorian said.



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3. ACCORDING TO ARMEN RUSTAMIAN, ARMENIA CANNOT DISCUSS RECOGNITION OF ABKHAZIA AND SOUTH OSSETIA OUT OF CONTEXT OF KARABAKH PROBLEM [Aravot, 08/28/08]

"The situation is complex for us. We respect the right of self-determination, we have always protected and will protect the Karabakh people's right to be the arbiter of its own destiny," representative of the ARF Armenia Supreme Body Armen Rustamian said when answering the Republic of Armenia daily's question about recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia by Russia.

Presenting the position of the ARF Dashnaksutyun, A. Rustamian said the matter concerns neighboring Georgia, normal relations with which proceed from the vital interests of Armenia. "Under such conditions, I think, Armenia should not hurry and act like in case of Kosovo. Armenia has not even recognized the independence of Karabakh as it does not consider the international community's ability to solve peacefully the problem as exhausted. In my opinion, the opportunities for peaceful resolution of the Russian-Georgian conflict have not been exhausted yet, and this way can and should be used. Armenia cannot discuss recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia out of context of the Karabakh problem," A. Rustamian said.

4. NAGORNO-KARABAKH REPUBLIC HAILS RECOGNITION OF ABKHAZIA AND SOUTH OSSETIA INDEPENDENCE [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 08/28/08]

The foreign ministry of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR) hailed today Russia's recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

In a statement the ministry said the recognition of both republics' independence is in full compliance with the basic principles of the peoples' right to self-determination, as it is fixed in the fundamental documents and legal standards of the OSCE, UN and other international organizations.

"We have warned many a time that threats of use of force, the excessive military build-up and the strive to resolve problems by force are fraught with humanitarian catastrophes,' the statement said adding that Nagorno-Karabakh hopes that all stakeholders will draw right conclusions from the latest developments in the South Caucasus and will make concrete steps to solve all existing conflict exclusively through peaceful means and restore the region's stability.

5. ARMENIAN DEFENSE MINISTER RECEIVES HEAD OF KANSAS NATIONAL GUARD [ARMENPRESS, 08/28/08]

Armenian defense minister Seyran Ohanian received August 27 Todd Banting, Adjutant General, Maj.-General and head of the National Guard of the U.S. State of Kansas, who is having a five-day visit to Armenia.

A spokesman for the ministry, Seyran Shahsuvarian, told Armenpress that Joseph Pennington, U.S. charge d'affaires in Armenia, was also present at the meeting.

The minister was quoted as saying that visits by high-ranking Kansas National Guard officers to Armenia have become regular evidencing the importance of cooperation between Armenia and Kansas, which embraces peacemaking mission, de-mining, military medicine and military education.

Todd Banting for his part conveyed the greetings of Kansas governor to the Armenian minister and commended Armenia for its participation in peacekeeping missions in Iraq and Kosovo.

The minister also spoke about Armenian cadets receiving education in the USA, saying this is bringing a positive impact on the Armenian-U.S. military cooperation.

6. NKR PRESIDENT CONGRATULATES LEADERS OF SOUTH OSSETIA AND ABKHAZIA OVER THEIR INDEPENDENCE RECOGNITION [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 08/29/08]

Nagorno-Karabakh president Bako Sahakian sent messages to leaders of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Eduard Kokoity and Sergey Bagapsh respectively, to convey his congratulations over both republics' recognition by Russia.

According to Sahakian's press service, in both statements Nagorno-Karabakh president congratulates South Ossetians and Abkhazians on behalf of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh and himself personally.

In the statement to Kokoity he says the path to independence was full of ordeals and trials, adding that Nagorno-Karabakh is truly and sincerely happy for it.

In the letter to Sergey Bagapsh Nagorno-Karabakh leader says Abkhazia has archived what it strove for years by surmounting a long string of difficulties.



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Bako Sahakian says he is confident that the international recognition of Abkhazia will give it a new development and prosperity impetus.

7. TURKISH PRESIDENT SAYS HIS COUNTRY ADVOCATES PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS TO ALL CONFLICTS [ARMENPRESS, 08/28/08]

In a televised interview Wednesday Turkish president Abdullah Gul said Turkey has always advocated that problems in the South Caucasus should be resolved through dialogue, saying also that after escalation of tension in the region on August 11 Turkey proposed a plan of creating a Caucasian Stability and Cooperation Platform.

The plan was first voiced by Turkish prime minister Recep Erdogan and was discussed in Moscow and Tbilisi and was backed by both countries' leaderships.

Asked to comment on Russia's decision to recognize South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independence states Abdullah Gul said his country will continue 'the balanced policy in the region.'

Commenting on Turkey's plan Russian ambassador in Ankara Vladimir Ivanovsky said Turkish and Russian foreign ministers would meet in Istanbul to discuss this issue in detail in early September.

Upon a question on how Turkey and Armenia as well as Russia and Georgia, which are countries that have certain problems with each other, will be able to sit on a table to discuss such issues, Ivanovsky said such a gathering could take place within the framework of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization meeting to be held in October.

"Both Russian and Turkish diplomats realize the complexity of the issue. And in this sense we do not cherish illusions. What is important is to have will and a long-term outlook," Ivanovsky said.

8. ARMENIA'S PRESIDENT SERZH SARGSYAN RECEIVES CHINA'S AMBASSADOR TO ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 08/28/08]

Armenia's president Serzh Sargsyan received today China's ambassador to Armenia Hun Zioun and thanked him for the warm welcome given to Armenian athletes at the Beijing Olympic Games.

President Sargsyan was quoted by his press service as saying that Chinese authorities and the people did everything possible to organize the Games at the highest possible level.

Serzh Sargsyan singled out the Chinese' hospitality, their attention and willingness to help the guests. He then spoke about Armenia's excellent participation in the Games.

The ambassador spoke for his part about his government's efforts to make the game an unforgettable sporting event to its participants.

The two men also spoke about prospects for boosting bilateral ties. The ambassador said his government gives great attention to cooperation with Armenia.

9. HUMAN RIGHTS ARE REGULARLY ABUSED AT CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES OF ARMENIA, PREVIOUSLY IMPRISONED OPPOSITIONISTS CLAIM [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/28/08]

Human rights are regularly abused at the correctional facilities of the RA ministry of justice, in particular, various kinds of provocation with respect to political prisoners have become common, former deputy head of the National Security Service Gurchen Yeghiazarian said at the August 28 round table on the state of 76 imprisoned oppositionists.

G. Yeghiazarian who himself was recently in custody gave concrete examples of the so-called "special attitude" to political prisoners at correctional facilities. In particular, according to him, two men with previous convictions were put in the prison cell where the leader of "New Times" party Aram Karapetian was kept, which was a gross violation of the law. The murderer of a godchild of National Assembly deputy Hakob Hakobian was put in H. Hakobian's cell.

The participants of the round table issued a statement calling on the justice minister Gevorg Danielian to strictly protect human rights at correctional facilities. "G. Danielian is the person responsible for violation of the legislation and human rights at correctional facilities," is said in the statement which bears the signatures of chairman of the Armenian National Movement Ararat Zurabian, chairwoman of the Social Democratic Party Lyudmila Sargsian, human rights defender Vardan Harutyunian, as well as Gurchen Yeghiazarian, former vice speaker of the parliament Karapet Rubinian, Yerdzhanik Abgarian, and Khachik Simonian.



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10. CHINA ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO COOPERATION WITH ARMENIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/28/08]

China and its people have done their best so that both sportsmen and hundreds of thousands of fans will be impressed by the high organizational level of the 29th Summer Olympic Games in Beijing. Receiving on August 28 the Chinese ambassador to Armenia Hong Jiuyin, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan also thanked him for the warm reception given to the Armenian delegation during the Beijing Olympic Games.

In the words of the Chinese ambassador, that large sport review was a great holiday for China, and the government made the maximum effort to organize it in the best way.

According to a press release of the RA president's press service, the interlocutors also discussed the development prospects of bilateral relations, underlining the importance of increasing the speed of cooperation. The Chinese ambassador said that the government of his country attaches great importance to cooperation with Armenia, and they are convinced that Armenian-Chinese relations have much potential and a great future.

11. AS OF AUGUST 28, 9 PEOPLE HELD UNDER PRELIMINARY ARREST BY CRIMINAL CASE ON MARCH 1-2 EVENTS [Haykakan Zhamanak, 08/28/08]

As of August 28, 9 accused persons are under preliminary arrest by the criminal case investigated by the RA Special Investigation Service in connection with the March 1-2 events in Yerevan. Precautionary measures other than arrest have been chosen with respect to another 8 accused persons.

According to the press service of the RA Prosecutor General's Office, 87 criminal cases on 101 people have been sent to court. Out of these cases, the court examination of 70 cases on 80 people has been completed, while other cases are still being examined. 5 out of the indicated 80 people have been acquitted, a case on a person was quashed due to reconciliation with the accused person - under Article 183 of the RA Criminal Procedure Code, fines have been imposed on 5 people, 35 people have been sentenced to imprisonment, and 34 persons have been given suspended sentences and put on probation.

12. IN OPINION OF ARTSVIK MINASIAN, ARMENIA NEEDS STABILITY TO FULFIL ALL REQUIREMENTS OF PACE [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/28/08]

The tension in the internal political life of Armenia continues and there will be a culmination of all these processes in the autumn, political secretary of "Heritage" party, deputy of the National Assembly Vardan Khachatryan said at the August 28 press conference.

In his words, the main elements ensuring stability: legitimate power and an efficiently working government are absent in Armenia. V. Khachatryan expressed an opinion that in the absence of these elements, the tension will not ease in the country. As for the upcoming PACE session in September and the discussion of the report of PACE Monitoring Group on Armenia, he expressed regret that Armenia will again be presented not in a positive way, taking into account the existence of political prisoners in the country and the fact that no progress has been made in the detection of the bloody March 1 events.

According to member of the NA faction "Prosperous Armenia" Aram Safarian, a short time has passed since March 1 so that Armenia could fulfill the requirements of PACE resolutions No 1609 and 1620. At the same time, he expressed regret that until now there has been no progress in the court examination of the cases of the imprisoned persons. According to him, if no considerable steps are taken in this issue until October 25, the final conclusions of the ad hoc parliamentary committee on inquiry into the March 1 events will prove senseless and useless.

Representative of the ARF Artsvik Minasian said that at the present moment, taking the situation in the South Caucasian region into consideration, most likely, PACE will be interested in reducing the tension in Armenia. He noted that some of the PACE requirements have already been fulfilled but there is much to be done and for this Armenia needs stability.



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13. INTERVIEW OF ARMENIAN PRESIDENT SERGE SARGSYAN TO TURKISH DAILY "RADIKAL" [ARMENPRESS, 08/29/08]

Below is the interview of president of Armenia, Serzh Sargsyan, to the Turkish daily Radikal.

Q: The 2010 World Cup qualifier between the national teams of Armenia and Turkey, scheduled for September 6 in Yerevan, is probably the most politicized sporting event in our region. In terms of politics what were your expectations when you invited Turkish president Abdullah Gul to Yerevan to watch the game together?

A: My number one goal was to normalize the relations between our countries. Mr. Gul's congratulation message upon my election said about the opportunities of normalizing the relations between Armenia and Turkey. Later on Prime Minister Erdogan stated that Turkey is open to a dialogue with Armenia. In return, I decided to use this opportunity. There is a good sports event ahead. It is the first time in the history our football teams will meet. It may become a good opportunity for us to develop our relations. The result of the game is not important, anyways I hope it will be a pleasure for the fans. There excitement will be great. This will be a big and exclusive event in our relations, and I hope it will become more special due to the presence of the Armenian and Turkish presidents. We are neighbors and will remain so. I am sure having normal relations will benefit both the countries. My invitation to Mr. Gul shall be considered in this context.

Q: There are some concerns in Ankara about this invitation. How, for example the problem of the borders is to be solved and how president Gul will be received in Armenia. Do you share these concerns?

A: There is nothing to worry about. If we have invited a president of a foreign state, we are able to provide everything on a due level.

Q: I have met with some representatives of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) Party, who are against your invitation. They said they will so everything to be heard in case president Gul arrives in Yerevan.

A: I am sure their means to express themselves will remain in terms appropriate for an official visit. Not being politically correct they will first harm themselves, Armenia and me, then Mr. Gul.

Q: What do you think about the regional power engineering and communication projects realized by Turkey, Georgia and Azerbaijan, which, in case of peace and stability in the region, might be very profitable? Would Armenia like to join those projects? Do you think that some day you will be received in Turkey in the same way as the leaders of Azerbaijan and Georgia are, and the leaders of Turkey will have doubts to accept invitations from Armenia?

A: By now I have learned two things about regional cooperation projects. First, in case not all the countries of the region are involved, or one of them is excluded, the projects do nothing but create new dividing lines. Second, when political aspects of the project outscore the economic ones, the projects usually turn out not as successful as it they meant to be. It is something similar to harnessing a horse from behind the cart.

Q: Which project do you mean?

A: The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad, for example. Doesn't such railroad already exist? It can be made operational again with minimum expenses. A lot is being spent to leave Armenia out. In the past the leaders of Armenia visited Turkey. I too, in different offices, have been to Turkey. Reciprocal visits between neighbors are quite a normal thing, and they should not be deemed as some kind of courtesy to the opposite party. Our efforts are aimed at that.

Q: When the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway was launched, president Gul in the presence of Aliyev and Saakashvili said that Armenia could join this project in case of respecting the international law. Do you think he hinted at the borders defined by the 1921 agreement of Kars?

A: I think Mr. Gul would give a better answer to that question. I can only assure that Armenia supports the regulations of the UN, as well as other international treaties, it respects its own international commitments.

Q: Well, I shall phrase my question more precisely. There are some parties in Armenia that refer to a part of Turkey as Western Armenia and, basing on the Sevres Treaty, have territorial claims from Turkey. Do you admit that it is difficult to have full-fledged diplomatic relations with a neighbor which argues your borders? What is your official opinion about the legitimacy and recognition of the agreement of Kars?

A: I can hardly remember any Armenian official to make territorial claims on Turkey. But I can always hear that from Turkey. I don't think it is right to base upon single statements. If so, there are many people in Turkey who assure that in fact there is no Armenia at all. We do not need any pre-conditions to establish relations with Turkey. I know about the anxiety of Turkish officials regarding the phrasings like Western and Eastern Armenia. It seems strange to me. Western and Eastern Armenia are geographical



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terms used in the 19th century. Trying to forget those expressions, coming from the past, is equal to trying to deny the existence of Sparta, the Russian Empire, the Ottoman Empire or other historical facts. If we had assumed that official policy, we would have called our country Republic of Eastern Armenia, not Republic of Armenia. None of the Armenian officials spoke such things. Russia, for example, has territorial issues with China and Japan, but it doesn't prevent those states from having normal diplomatic relations.

Q: After your invitation to Gul, very serious things as the Russia-Georgia conflict happened in Caucasus. What do you think about Russia's assistance to South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which separated from Georgia?

A: In fact tragic events happened. People were killed. It showed what can arms race result in such cases. We advocate settling such issues through peace negotiations. We also advocate respecting peoples' right to self-expression and self-determination. It is regretful that things take such a turn and of course we do not like it. We believe that the joint plan of the Presidents of Russia and France, Medvedev and Sarkozy, will bring peace and stability. Peace and stability are very important to us. Putting everything aside, 70% of Armenian trade is made through Georgia.

Q: Yerevan experienced problems with fuel because of the railway bridge in Georgia blown up by the Russians, is that so?

A: Yes, it is. We hope the problem will be solved in two days. The instability in the region is against Armenia. It displays very well how we need stability. Prolonging the instable situation for three more months or years would multiply our problems.

Q: Foreign Minister of Armenia Edward Nalbandian already approved Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan's initiative on Caucasian Stability and Partnership Platform. Can you give any details on Armenia's policy in this question?

A: Foreign Minister of Armenia Edward Nalbandian expressed positive attitude to Erdogan's initiative on regional stability, security and dialogue. I think the Foreign Minister took right actions. After we receive the proposal we will discuss it in details and announce our opinion.

Q: Do you think that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which is a very important issue in your relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey, may soon be settled? Do you think that making a peace agreement with Azerbaijan will raise political and economic cooperation in the region onto a new level?

A: We had a productive meeting with President Aliyev in Saint Petersburg on June 6. Both of us ordered our Foreign Ministers to proceed the work in accord with the principles adopted in Madrid. There have been three meetings since then. I hope we'll find a solution soon.

Q: Can you suggest an approximate date?

A: It would be wrong to predict anything before the presidential elections in Azerbaijan. We shall see what happens after the elections.

Q: Do you draw parallels between Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia and Abkhazia? I ask this because you said that people's right for self-determination should be always respected.

A: All the conflicts have something in common and something different. I prefer making ourselves lessons out of them instead of focusing on similarities and differences. I can clearly see that efforts to solve such issues with military force result in unpredictable and complicated consequences. I would like to know how many people knew the results of the conflict before starting it. We have to be very cautious.

Q: From outside it seems that the Turkish-Armenian relations are in stalemate because of the Genocide issue. Do you think it is right? Do you think Armenia-Turkey relations cannot progress until Turkey recognizes the tragic events of 1915 as genocide? Is it a pre-condition?

A: You can hardly find an Armenian in the world who does not believe the Genocide took place. But the recognition of the Genocide is not a pre-condition for establishing dialogue with Turkey. That is why we say that we are ready to establish diplomatic relations with Turkey without any pre-condition.

Q: What is your opinion about making a historians' commission to study the 1915 events? Do you think it is possible to have two commissions, one for normalizing the relations and another for studying the 1915 events? Do you think they can work at the same time?

A: I think we need to elaborate new approaches to this issue. For I cannot remember a non-governmental commission to be ever established to settle an intergovernmental issue. The best way is to start diplomatic relations. In that case numbers of substructures and groups may be established in the frameworks of the Armenian-Turkish intergovernmental commission. Earlier a similar commission was found in the USA. Did it work? Its necessary to create a proper environment for the functioning of the scientific commission you suggested. Therefore normal diplomatic relations are bare necessity.

Q: Do you believe that the ongoing confidential meetings of Armenian and Turkish diplomats will yield any outcome?



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A. I would never support them if I believed they would not. But on the other hand I believe that the course of relations shows that we, the leaders of the two countries, have reached the decision-making point. They are not going to be easy ones. Not all Armenians or Turks will like them. But I am sure that the overwhelming part of both societies will support those decisions. I do not mean the diplomats' efforts, by the overall atmosphere. Abdullah Gul's congratulatory message, Erdogan's words, my invitation to Gul, even the interview with you are parts of this atmosphere. In this sense I believe that we have reached the decision-making stage.

Q. Will Gul's decision to come or not to Yerevan effect that situation?

A. I think his visit will be important. Because it is not easy to make important decisions.

Addressing an audience and looking in the eyes of the one before you are different things. If I did not believe it was important I would not send the invitation. We had difficult times in our history, however Armenia is ready for development of relations and expects the same from Turkey.

14. ARF TO ORGANIZE RALLY AND CONCERT TO MARK NAGORNO-KARABAKH INDEPENDENCE [Aravot, 08/29/08]

On September 2 the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) party will organize a rally and a concert to mark an independence anniversary of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. The event will be held in an area adjacent to Matenadaran Institute of Old Manuscripts in Yerevan.

The ARF said its leaders will address during the rally the current situation in the region. The press division of the ARF Supreme Body told Armenpress that the Administrative Court had invalidated an earlier Yerevan municipality decision banning the gathering

The ARF said it notified the municipality about the event by attaching the Administrative Court's ruling.

15. OUT-OF-PARLIAMENT PARTIES WELCOME RUSSIA'S RECOGNITION OF SOUTH OSSETIA AND ABKHAZIA [ARMENPRESS, 08/29/08]

Several small Armenian, out-of-parliament parties, welcomed today in a joint statement Russia's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia saying it, as well as the West's recognition of Kosovo independence come to show that the principle of peoples' right to self-determination has become prevalent over the principle of territorial integrity.

The Self-Determination Union, the Democratic Party of Armenia, the United Communist Party, the Christian-Democratic Party and the Constitutional Right Union said Nagorno-Karabakh was the first in the post-Soviet space to implement the self-determination right.

The parties said they hope that the Russian Federation will recognize soon also Nagorno-Karabakh that regained its independence from Azerbaijan by a 1991 referendum.

They said that delaying this may lead to rekindling of a new war hotbed with all ensuing political, military and humanitarian consequences.

16. TURKISH PRESIDENT SAYS KARABAKH DISPUTE SHOULD BE SOLVED THROUGH DIALOGUE [ARMENPRESS, 08/29/08]

Turkish president Abdullah Gul has not yet made a final decision on whether to travel to Armenia or not to watch with his Armenian counterpart Serzh Sargsyan the first-ever game between Armenia's and Turkey's national football teams scheduled for September 6.

In televised remarks late Wednesday Gul said he was still considering Sargsyan's invitation.

"I am sincerely supporting all the latest attempts aimed at establishing peace in the region. I think it is very important to make use of the available opportunities. Our goal is to solve all problems with our neighbors," Abdullah Gul said.

In comments on Serzh Sargsyan's interview to Turkish Radikal daily in which Armenia's president speaks about the danger of trying to solve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by force Abdullah Gul said in an interview to the same newspaper that the conflict should be solved through a dialogue.



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17. PRESIDENT SERZH SARGSYAN TO MAKE WORKING VISIT TO RUSSIAN SOCHI ON SEPTEMBER 2 [ARMENPRESS, 08/29/08]

Armenian president Serzh Sargsyan will make a working visit to the southern Russian City of Sochi on September 2.

The presidential press office told Armenpress that in Sochi Sargsyan will have a meeting with Russian president Dmitry Medvedev.

It said they will discuss Armenian-Russian strategic partnership, issues pertaining to Armenia's rotating chairmanship in the CSTO and also regional and international issues.

18. PRESIDENT SARGSYAN APPOINTS NEW AMBASSADOR TO KAZAKHSTAN AND TURKMENISTAN [ARMENPRESS, 08/29/08]

Armenian president Serzh Sargsyan signed a decree August 29 to appoint Vasily Ghazarian ambassador to Kazakhstan (residence in Astana) and Vladimir Badalian ambassador to Turkmenistan with residence in Ashgabad.

The presidential press office told Armenpress that by another decree president Sargsyan appointed Vakhtang Abrahamian a Central Bank of Armenia Board member with a term of 5 years.

The decree comes into force on September 1.

BUSINESS

19. STATE BUDGETARY REVENUES INCREASE BY 26.8%, EXPENDITURES BY 30.3% IN JANUARY-JULY 2008 ON SAME PERIOD OF 2007 [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/27/08]

The revenues of the RA state budget made over 414 bln drams (over 1 bln 349.2 mln USD), the expenditures - 405.8 bln drams in January-July 2008, as a result of which the RA government-envisaged nine month program was fulfilled by 76.5% and 68.6% respectively. The annual programmed indices of the state budget were fulfilled by 55.1% (revenues) and 52.1% (expenditures).

According to data of the RA ministry of finance, the state budgetary revenues increased by 26.8% or over 87.4 bln drams, while expenditures grew by 30.3% or about 94.4 bln drams as compared with the same period of 2007. In the total amount of revenues, taxes and duties grew by 82.7 bln drams or 32.1%, compulsory social security payments by 6.6 bln drams or 13.6%, officials grants by 1.8 bln drams or 189.8%, whereas other revenues (previously called "nontax revenues") declined by 3.7 bln drams or 19.6%. As a result, there was a growth of taxes and duties (3.3%) and official grants (0.4%) in the total amount of revenues, while the share of compulsory social security payments and other revenues fell by 1.6% and 2.1% respectively.

20. THREE COMPANIES PASS PRE-QUALIFICATION STAGE OF TENDER FOR THIRD MOBILE COMMUNICATION OPERATOR IN ARMENIA [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 08/27/08]

Out of six companies that submitted bids for participation in the tender for receiving a licence of the third mobile phone communication operator in Armenia and permission to use radio frequencies, three companies have passed the pre-qualification stage: Orange (owned by France Telecom), CEO Blackrock Communications (a consortium) and M\$A Tele2 AB (Sweden), NT was informed by spokeswoman for the RA minister of transport and communication Susanna Tonoyan.

Although 17 companies had expressed an intention to participate in the tender, only 4 of them (in addition to the above mentioned ones) have presented the necessary documents: V-Tel (Jordan), AB (Sweden), Auroratel (Russia) and PJ Engineering (Finland).

The companies to have passed the prequalification stage must submit bids-proposals to the tender commission within 40 calendar days. After the discussion of their proposals, the winner will be announced.

21. 130 WAGONS OF GOODS, INCLUDING 10 WITH GASOLINE, TRANSPORTED INTO ARMENIA FROM GEORGIA IN PAST TWO DAYS [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/27/08]

130 wagons of goods, including 72 wagons of mixed goods, 48 wagons of wheat, and 10 wagons with gasoline have been transported into Armenia from Georgia in the past two days. 15 wagons of wheat and 7 wagons of mixed goods are now at the Sadakhlo customs point on the Armenian-Georgian border.



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191 wagons of goods to be imported into Armenia, including 92 with grain and 99 with mixed goods, are currently in the Georgian railway. Out of 2,800 tons of gasoline for Armenia, 10 wagons have already been loaded in the port of Poti; out of 3 thousand tons of wheat, 13 wagons have been loaded: these goods will soon be transported to Armenia.

DIASPORA

22. EXTREMELY IMPORTANT STAGE STARTS IN PROCESS OF RECOGNITION OF ARTSAKH'S INDEPENDENCE, CHAIRMAN OF FORUM OF ARMENIAN UNIONS OF EUROPE SAYS [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/27/08]

"We will do our best so that in a short time the Artsakh problem will cease being a merely Armenian problem and become a problem of the whole Christian world," the former prime minister of Slovakia Yan Carnogursky said during his visit to Armenia and Artsakh in August, which was organized on the initiative of the chairman of the Forum of Armenian Unions of Europe Ashot Grigorian. In his words, this visit will remain in his memory for ever. It is symbolic that the visit of a delegation of Slovak political figures and investors to Nagorno Karabakh coincided with the first day of bombing of South Ossetia. NT was informed by A. Grigorian that the prime minister of Slovakia was one of those few European leaders who condemned Georgia's aggression and sent a five million koruna aid to South Ossetia, which was an important step for South Ossetia's independence.

A. Grigorian said that a year ago he made a decision to start a process of recognition of Artsakh's independence, thinking that its implementation is like a fantasy. Six months later when A. Grigorian organized a meeting of the delegations of Slovakia and Artsakh during a visit of the Slovakian official delegation to Armenia, he, by his own admission, started to think that this fantastic plan did not seem so much unrealizable and its implementation became realistic within three-four years. "In the light of our visit to Artsakh this time and the fierce August 8 that made a turning-point in history, I already think we will succeed in presenting the issue of recognition of Artsakh's independence at Slovakia's National Council and achieving its positive solution," Ashot Grigorian said with confidence.

In his opinion, an extremely important stage in the process of Artsakh's independence started on August 8 and nothing can prevent foreign investors from assisting the Armenians of Artsakh with the creation of an independent and democratic country. "They both in Slovakia and many EU countries realize it today," A. Grigorian noted.

He said that the high rates of the program on Slovakian investments in Armenia and Artsakh and the amount of expected investments are quite inspiring. "The first millions of the 50+50 million dollar program we have announced are already in Armenia: the matter concerns construction of the Yerevan-Meghri radio-realy system with a credit insured by Eximbank (Slovakia), and the construction work has been started by our partner Slovakian company," A. Grigorian said. He attached special importance to investments to be made in energy and communication sectors of Artsakh by VUJE, Energy Consult, Telemont and other companies - members of EU EnergoTrans Group holding headed by him. He added that it is envisaged to implement an investment-credit program of more than 10 million USD for developing these sectors in Artsakh.

23. EDWARD SAHARIAN GETS KIDNEY PROBLEM AFTER BEING BEATEN BY GEORGIAN POLICEMEN [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/27/08]

Member of "United Javakhk" democratic alliance Edward Saharian of the village of Gumbordo was cruelly beaten by Georgian policemen and got a kidney problem.

Javakhk-Info reported citing reliable sources that E. Saharian was taken to police from the Armenian-Georgian border and arrested on a charge of "hooliganism". Then policemen detained his brother, member of "United Javakhk" Ararat Saharian. The detention term of Edward and Ararat Saharians was extended for 20 days.

E. Saharian was cruelly beaten by policemen, as a result of which he got a kidney problem and was taken to hospital. After receiving the first medical aid, he has been released. Ararat Saharian has also been released.

E. and A. Saharians were arrested several days after the explosion near the house of the head of Akhalkalak police Samvel Petrosian.



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24. ISABEL BAYRAKDARIAN GIVES A CONCERT IN OCTOBER IN SAN FRANCISCO [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/27/08]

The world-famous Armenian Canadian soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian will give a concert on October 4, in San Francisco Herbst Theatre. In a program with the conductor of the Armenian Orchestra Eduard Topchian the works of the Armenian composer Komitas Vardapet will be presented, as reports the San Francisco Chronicle.

25. 2008 DESIGNATED AS WILLIAM SAROYAN YEAR BY RESOLUTION OF U.S. SENATE [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/27/08]

State Senator Dave Cogdill introduced the Senate Resolution to honor Mr. Saroyan and the many cultural contributions Armenian Americans have made to California over the last 100 years. The resolution was passed unanimously by both chambers of the legislature and 2008 was designated as William Saroyan year.

"We thank Senator Cogdill for taking the initiative to honor Saroyan who put the Central Valley and specially Fresno on the literary map of the world", said Varoujan Der Simonian of the Armenian Technology Group. Saroyan once said that he didn't make Fresno famous, raisins did. The reality is that wherever you travel in the world, be that in Europe, Russia, Japan or the Far East, and when people find out that you are from Fresno, they will immediately say, Ah, Saroyan! Isn't that where William Saroyan was from?

A photo exhibition honoring Saroyan and the cultural contributions to California by Armenian Americans is now on display through September 24, at the State Capitol Museum in Sacramento.

On August 28th, there will be a special Centennial Celebration of William Saroyan's birthday at the Fresno Convention Center's William Saroyan Theatre. Sponsored by the Armenian Museum, the City of Fresno, The Fresno Bee and the Saroyan Centennial Committee, the event will feature the National Chamber Orchestra of Armenia, under the Artistic Director and Conductor, Maestro Aram Gharabekian, world renowned Matzo Soprano Edna Garabedian, and the Fresno Choral Artists. There will be pre-concert festivities, and after concert dessert.

26. BARSEGH TUGHLATSHIAN REPRESENTS TURKEY AT INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF SCIENCE, CULTURE AND ARTS [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/28/08]

At the International Congress of Science, Culture and Arts being held at London's Oxford University on August 26-31, this year too Turkey is represented by a famous linguist, historian Prof. Barsegh Tughlatshian. On August 27 he spoke before 250 delegates, touching upon such issues as the exercise of human rights and the establishment of friendly relations between nations.

During the congress, which was also attended by Turkey's ambassador Atelai Ersan, B. Tughlatshian was awarded the Order of International Honour.

As Marmara daily reports, within the framework of the congress Professor Tughlatshian visited the Armenian embassy and had an intimate talk with the ambassador.

27. ARMENIANS SUPPORTING OBAMA PLEASED WITH CANDIDATE'S DECISION TO NOMINATE BIDEN AS VICE-PRESIDENT IN CASE OF BEING ELECTED [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/28/08]

Armenians for Obama organization has positively echoed to Democratic Presidential hopeful Barack Obama's statement to put forward Joseph Biden's candidature as vice-president in case of being elected.

The organization issued a report which says: "Senator Biden is a politician having a past of pro-Armenian positions which will play an additional role in the direction of Presidential hopeful Obama's strong commitment to recognize the Armenian Genocide and to settle the Nagorno Karabakh conflict by the principle of the right of self-determination of nations. The two leaders will be able to guide the U.S. home and foreign policy realizing necessary reforms throughout the country."

Armenians for Obama organization's president Areen Ipranosian noted in his turn that they are greatly enthusiastic to see Senator Biden as a vice-president candidate beside Obama. "We give our strong appreciation to the united electoral campaign of the two candidates having a similar past of pro-Armenian positions and consider this reality a specific opportunity for our community," Ipranosian said.



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28. UNDER THE GUISE OF ANTI-WAR ACTIVISM, "YOUNG TURKS" TARGET CONG. KNOLLENBERG [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/28/08] By Appo Jabarian, Executive Publisher/Managing Editor USA ARMENIAN LIFE Magazine

Two Armenian American political action committees, a well-respected Armenian American weekly and a number of key individuals have rallied to assist Rep. Joe Knollenberg (R-MI) in his re-election campaign.

Armenian Americans and their friends should take note that under the guise of anti-war activism, a Turkish denialist group in the United States, shamelessly named after the same Young Turk regime that masterminded and executed the 1915-1923 Armenian Genocide, has targeted Knollenberg.

Cong. Knollenberg, Co-Chair of the Congressional Armenian Caucus and a staunch supporter of issues of importance to Armenian Americans, will be honored on August 28, at a Southern California reception co-hosted by the Armenian National Committee Political Action Committee (ANC-PAC), the U.S.-Armenia Public Affairs Committee (USAPAC) and The California Courier newspaper.

Upholding patriotism above partisanship, Armenian American Democrats as well as Republicans and Independents are expected to attend this timely event. Several members of the National Organization of Republican Armenians (NORA) are expected to join the fundraising efforts for the benefit of Knollenberg's campaign.

The joint press release issued on August 19 by the organizers of this timely fundraiser reminded Armenian Americans that Knollenberg "has been one of the Armenian-American community's staunchest allies in Congress, on occasion even publicly opposing both his party's President and leadership in defense of Armenian issues. He is in the political race of his life, one of the Top 5 most competitive congressional races in the country, and how our community responds will be watched closely. We encourage all to support this very worthy effort even if you are unable to attend."

Vis-à-vis Azeri war-mongering against Armenia and Artsakh/Karabagh, Cong. Knollenberg is "credited for having introduced an amendment to cut all military aid to Azerbaijan due to its escalating threats of war against Nagorno-Karabagh and Armenia. Although his measure was narrowly defeated in a committee vote of the U.S. House State-Foreign Operations Subcommittee, it was supported by each of his Republican colleagues on the panel as well as Cong. Adam Schiff (D-CA)."

The Armenian-American activists have demonstrated once more, pragmatic and consistent gratitude to a well-deserving incumbent candidate for U.S. Congress.

The fundraiser will take place on Thursday, August 28, 7-8 p.m. at US-Armenia TV Headquarters, 2727 West Alameda Blvd., Burbank, CA 91505. Suggested donations: Platinum Members: \$2,300; Gold Members: \$1,000; Silver Members: \$250.

I would like to urge readers of USA Armenian Life to RSVP and show their support for Cong. Knollenberg and e-mail the organizers at events@ancpac.org.

In case they cannot attend, they are kindly asked to send a check to: ANC-PAC, 104 N. Belmont, #200B, Glendale, CA 91206.

By converging to the support of Rep. Knollenberg, Armenian Americans once again stand to demonstrate that they are determined in their political drive for Justice.

By putting their "money where their mouth is," they will be sending a strong political signal to friends and foes in the U.S. Congress and in the highest echelons of the current and incoming presidential administrations.

ARTS

29. FOLK ART MUSEUM IN YEREVAN WILL HOST A JOINT ARMENIAN-BELGIAN EXPOSITION OF PAINTINGS [ARMENPRESS, 08/28/08]

The Folk Art Museum in Yerevan will host a joint Armenian-Belgian exposition of paintings next week. The event will be held on September 2-6 as part of Armenian-Belgian culture days under the motto 'Dialogue.'

Artists from Belgian-Armenian Arax cultural center and its chairman will also show their works. The event is a joint initiative of Armenian culture ministry and Arax center. A ministry press officer told Armenpress the event will kick off by screening a documentary about Belgian Liege city and Yerevan. Belgian ambassador to Armenia Charles Gislen said he will attend the event.



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SOCIAL

30. NOR KHARBERD ORPHANAGE REPAIRED WITH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OF LOS ANGELES-BASED "SURB TSNUND" CHARITY FUND [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/27/08]

The specialized orphanage in Nor Kharberd (Yerevan) was repaired with the financial assistance of Los Angeles-based "Surb Tsnund" charity fund for orphans and disabled children. NT was informed by the chairman of the Yerevan Philharmonic Center Layert Movsisian that the bedrooms, lavatories, balconies and corridors of the orphanage have undergone repair.

He said that a charity marathon is held in Los Angeles every year on the initiative of the Fund's chairman Hovhannes Balayan. This year it will be organized on November 2, and the raised money will be allocated to Armenian orphanages.

31. ROOFS OF 26 APARTMENT BUILDINGS TO BE REPAIRED IN KAPAN THIS YEAR [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 08/27/08]

The Armenian government allocated 150 million drams from its reserve fund for repairs of roofs of apartment buildings in Kapan. The head of the urban development unit of Kapan mayor's office Vilen Badalian told NT correspondent that 26 roofs will be repaired with these allocations. Priority was given to accident-prone buildings. It is envisaged to complete the repair work by late 2008. The work will be done by the construction firms that were announced the winners of a tender.

By another decision of the government, 185 million drams was allocated for major repairs of Aram Manukian Street and Grigor Arzumanian Street in the regional center of Syunik marz, and repairs of a 2.4 km road which is parallel with the Meghri-Yerevan interstate road passing through the city. This work will also finish by the end of 2008.

32. LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL CHARITY ORGANIZATIONS IMPLEMENTED THIS YEAR 63 PROGRAMS [ARMENPRESS, 08/28/08]

With the assistance of the Armenian labor and social affairs ministry, local and international charity organizations have implemented this year 63 social support programs.

Martin Mkhitarian, head of a ministry's department in charge of coordination of charity programs, told Armenpress that these projects are different- such as providing food and clothes and stationary for school children, wheel-chairs to disabled people, construction of houses for homeless, home repair and so on.

Thus, 35,000 insecure families in Yerevan, Shirak and Lori provinces have been receiving food parcels. According to Mkhitarian, about 120-130 charity programs are implemented annually.

33. FUND FOR ARMENIAN RELIEF TO PAY TUITION FEES FOR 10 BEST STUDENTS [ARMENPRESS, 08/28/08]

The Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) will continue to sponsor students of state-run universities from insecure families and pay their tuition fees as part of Matevosian program.

A press officer for FAR, Levon Latchikian, told Armenpress that students from insecure families, apart from presenting family social status passport, a document testifying that the family is poor, must have also good academic achievements.

The number of short-listed applicants will be known in 10 days. Ten best students will be selected after FAR jury members visit also their homes. FAR will pay their four year tuition fees.

Levon Latchikian said FAR has been assisting also students from the Armenian-populated region of Javakheti studying in Armenia, but on condition that after graduation they go back to Javakheti.

FAR has been active in Armenia since 1997 having sponsored 80 students. Now it sponsors 40 students.

34. RESIDENTS OF AYGUT IN GEGHARKUNIK PROVINCE THREATENED BY LANDSLIDES [ARMENPRESS, 08/28/08]

Residents of the village of Aygut in Gegharkunik province have been threatened by landslides throughout the summer. Henrik Gabrielian, village head, told Armenpress that out of 350 houses 150 are threatened by landslides.



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Thirty families have already lost their houses having found temporary shelter at relatives or neighbors or in wooden-made dwellings.

The landslides have caused holes two meters deep and one meter wide. They have been especially active in the last ten days. Provincial governor Nver Poghosian visited the village and presented the situation to the government.

Last year the government released 15 million Drams to the village to help it buy temporary homes for families whose houses were destroyed by landslides.

35. SOME 33,485 FIRST-GRADERS EXPECTED TO START ATTENDING SCHOOL THIS YEAR [Aravot, 08/28/08]

Some 33,485 first-graders are expected to start attending school from September 1, when the schooling year in Armenia begins. The overall number of school students is 435,200, of whom 47,742 are eleven-grade and 47,340 are nine grade students.

A deputy education and science minister Bagrat Yesayan told a news conference today that the total number of school children has dwindled due to lower birth rates.

This schooling year is remarkable in a sense that the so-called senior school program is to be started embracing 3 schools in Yerevan and 7 outside it. Experts say installment of senior school gives students a chance to decide what profession they would like to choose after graduating school.

The minister said his agency has developed also all requirements needed for shifting to a full 12 year secondary education from the previous 10 year.

The minister also spoke against a mandatory funds raising by school heads when children are forced to make monthly payments for the so-called school funds, used for different ends, but added that schools can work with benefactors.

36. ON OCTOBER 14-17 INSTITUTE OF PHYSICAL STUDIES OF NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES TO ORGANIZE LASER PHYSICS-2008 CONFERENCE [ARMENPRESS, 08/28/08]

On October 14-17 the Institute of Physical Studies of the National Academy of Sciences will organize an annual conference on Laser Physics-2008.

The National Academy of Sciences press division told Armenpress the conference participants will discuss the latest developments in laser radiation generation and transformation, laser machine building and other issues.

On September 19-26 the Academy's Mathematics Institute in cooperation with Yerevan State University will have an international conference on Harmonic Analysis, dedicated to academician Alexander Talalian. The conference will be held in Tsakhkadzor.

37. ARMENIAN NSS 'NEUTRALIZES' INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL RING OF 3 ROMANIAN AND 1 LATVIAN CITIZENS [ARMENPRESS, 08/28/08]

Armenian National Security Service (NSS) said today on August 27 it 'neutralized' an international criminal ring of 3 Romanian and 1 Latvian citizens, who had withdrawn million of drams in cash from ATMs in Yerevan and outside it by using fake plastic cards.

A statement by the NSS said the group operated in Armenia throughout August withdrawing over 80 million Drams.

It said a search in their hotel room revealed 160 fake plastic cards, as well as foreign and Armenian currency. It emerged that the fraud deals had been implemented by using account numbers of the British Barclays bank customers.

The NSS said a criminal case was launched to find out other circumstances of the fraud and joint moves are being carried out together with Interpol and other international law-enforcement bodies to fully expose the group's activity.

38. NEW MEDICAL CENTER TO BE BUILT IN GYUMRI [ARMENPRESS, 08/29/08]

Samvel Ghazarian, head of the provincial health department in the northwestern region of Shirak, told Armenpress that a new medical center will be built in the region's capital Gyumri.

The decision was made during an out government session in Gyumri earlier this year. The new medical center's construction will be funded by a World Bank credit.



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The center will be established on the basis of the Austrian Children Hospital and will have 500 berths.

The new three-storey building and the one-storey children hospital will make a multi-functional medical center to house the surgical, therapeutic, pediatric and gynecological departments.

The new center will be furnished with modern equipment and devices and is expected to be commissioned in two years.

39. MAJOR DRINKING WATER SUPPLY AND WASTE WATER REMOVAL PROJECT TO KICK OFF IN SHIRAK [ARMENPRESS, 08/29/08]

A major program designed to drastically improve the drinking water supply and waste water removal is expected to be kicked off in Shirak province in a month. The program will be backed up by a credit from the German KfW bank.

The contractor company to do the job will be known in a week after a tender commission chooses one from two bidding firms. The program will be accomplished in 18 months.

The first stage's cost is estimated at 10 million euros. It will embrace the entire water supply and water removing systems of Akhurian, Azatan and Maralik communities and part of Gyumri. During the second and third stages the entire network of Gyumri will be reconstructed.

SPORTS

40. CELEBRATION IN HONOR OF ARMENIAN OLYMPIANS HELD IN YEREVAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/27/08]

A celebration in honor of the Armenian Olympians took place in Yerevan's Republic Square on the evening of August 26. The event started with performance of the hymn of the National Olympic Committee of Armenia (NOCA). Then the members of Armenia's Olympic team, 6 bronze medalists, the coaches, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan, NOCA President Gagik Tsarukian and the RA Minister of Sport and Youth Issues Armen Grigorian mounted the platform.

In his speech Serzh Sargsyan congratulated the sportsmen, coaches and all those who made a contribution to the success of the Armenian team at the Beijing Olympic Games. NOCA President also made a speech, in which he thanked the chief coaches of the weightlifting, Greco-Roman wrestling and boxing teams Ashot Mkhitarian, Levon Julfalakian and Rafik Mehrabian, as well as the sportsmen who have won bronze medals. G. Tsarukian expressed a hope that at the next Summer Olympic Games to be held in London in 2012, our Olympic team will be composed of more sportsmen and they will win gold and silver medals as well.

Weightlifter Tigran V. Martirosian made a speech on behalf of the sportsmen. Then cultural workers gave a performance. The event was concluded with fireworks.

41. GRAND MASTER LILIT MKRTCHIAN TO COMPETE AT WORLD CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/27/08]

A World Women's Knockout Chess Championship will start in Nalchik on August 28. One of Armenia's leading grand masters Lilit Mkrтчian will compete at the championship with the participation of 64 chess players. She gained the right of participation by winning the bronze medal at the 2006 European Championship.

Games of the 1st round are scheduled for August 29. L. Mkrтчian will play against Eva Mozer (Austria).

Among the participants is Grand Master Katerina Rohunian (U.S).

42. COLLECTIONS OF PHILATELISTS KUPALIANS WIN GOLD AND SILVER MEDALS AT BEIJING 2008 [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/27/08]

An exhibition of postage stamps was held in Beijing on August 8-18 within the framework of the cultural program of the Summer Olympic Games. Stamps, envelopes, postcards, special seals, and coins on sport and Olympic themes were on display.

Among collections presented by 179 participants from 24 countries were two collections from Armenia. The collection of Marine Kupalian, a second-year student of Armenian State Institute of Physical



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Culture, was displayed at the youth contest of stamps, while the collection of her grandfather Juri Kupalian, a professor of a department of the same institute, was presented at the adult contest.

Marine's collection on the history of basketball won a gold medal. Yuri Kipalian's collection dedicated to the history of mountaineering received a silver medal.

43. ARMENIAN SPORTSMEN FROM OTHER COUNTRIES WIN 2 GOLD MEDALS IN BEIJING [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/27/08]

Two sportsmen of Armenian origin who represented other countries in Beijing: Artur Ayvazian (shooting), who was born in Yerevan and represented Ukraine at the Beijing Olympics, and Byurakn Hakhverdian, a female water polo player, whose family had moved from Iran to the Netherlands - have won gold medals. Greco-Roman wrestlers Armen Vardanian (Ukraine) and Ara Abrahamian (Sweden), both are former residents of the Armenian city of Gyumri, have won bronze medals. However, 33-year-old Ara Abrahamian refused to take his medal in protest to a judge's decision, due to which the IOC disqualified him. The Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne justified A. Abrahamian who appealed against the biased judging.

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Established in 1906, AGBU (www.agbu.org) is the world's largest non-profit Armenian organization. Headquartered in New York City with an annual budget of \$36 million, AGBU preserves and promotes the Armenian identity and heritage through educational, cultural and humanitarian programs, annually touching the lives of some 400,000 Armenians on six continents.