



CENTER OF ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
BEYNƏLXALQ MÜNƏSİBƏTLƏRİN TƏHLİLİ MƏRKƏZİ

ANNUAL REPORT 2020





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ANNUAL REPORT 2020



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FOREWORD



DR. FARID SHAFIYEV

*Ambassador, Chairman of the
Center of Analysis of International
Relations (AIR Center)*

Operating for almost two years, the Center of Analysis of International Relations (AIR Center) has managed to become one of the leading think tanks in Azerbaijan. To achieve the goals set in late 2019, the AIR Center dynamically continued its activities in 2020, a year marked by a number of significant events, both for our country and the world. Every country, including Azerbaijan, has been forced to fight a new type of coronavirus—COVID-19. The virus has affected all areas of work life. Our Center has studied in detail the impact of the pandemic on Azerbaijan: the economy as well as regional and international relations. At a time when physical contact is minimized, our Center has held dozens of webinars on bilateral and multilateral relations under coronavirus conditions. It is now understood that COVID-19 will continue to be part of our lives in 2021, and we will continue to investigate its impact on the system of political and economic relations and carry on researching ways out of the crisis.

From a political point of view, the last months of 2020 proved to be especially significant for Azerbaijan. What started as an attack on the Tovuz region of Azerbaijan on the Armenian–Azerbaijani state border on July 12 ultimately escalated into a full-on war on September 27, when Azerbaijan launched a counteroffensive. The subsequent 44 days of active military operations between the two countries became known as the Second Karabakh War, leading to the liberation of Azerbaijani lands that had been under Armenian occupation for 27 years. On September 10, with Russia’s mediation, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan signed a joint statement on the cessation of hostilities. A number of the articles contained in the statement have already been implemented, with the rest of the process to follow. The AIR Center has been researching and analyzing the events of the war and the subsequent agreement, giving regional and international interviews on specific details as well as producing various articles. Taking into account the spectrum of this historic victory, the Center will continue its work in this direction in 2021.

In addition to closely monitoring and researching the processes taking place around the globe and in the country, the Center will also continue its traditional activities as established in 2020. We will analyze events in Azerbaijan, its neighborhood, and on a global scale; identify potential threats to Azerbaijan; prepare recommendations and comment on projects in which Azerbaijan participates; report to the government; and engage with various agencies and other organizations.

Expanding cooperation with existing think tanks abroad and organizing joint webinars and conferences will also remain on our agenda. We hope to draw more attention to the events in Azerbaijan and, primarily, to all aspects of the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict.

The AIR Center website is in full operation, and active work is being carried on social networks as well. Products, scholarships, and internship opportunities are continually developed and posted on both the website and social networks. More detailed information about our products, activities, internships, and scholarship opportunities can be accessed on our website: <https://aircenter.az/>.



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OVERVIEW

Since 2019, the Center of Analysis of International Relations (AIR Center) has worked to provide strategic insights and comprehensive analysis of global and regional processes, simultaneously aiming at raising the international community's awareness of Azerbaijan's foreign policy priorities, particularly the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict and regional security. In 2020, the AIR Center accelerated and expanded its work in all of its major areas of focus. The global COVID-19 pandemic and the historic victory of Azerbaijan in the 44-day Second Karabakh War, as well as Azerbaijan's chairing of the Non-Aligned Movement and involvement in transport and energy projects, have been just a few of major topics covered by the Center in 2020. In terms of international cooperation, the Center signed eight Memoranda of



Understanding (MoU) with various international research institutes and think tanks in 2020, including with the Middle East Institute (MEI) in the U.S.A.; the University of Toronto's Center for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies (CERES) in Canada; the Euro-Gulf Information Center (EGIC) in Italy; the Center for Contemporary Middle

Eastern Studies (CEMOC) in Argentina; and the National Institute for Strategic Studies in Ukraine. In 2020, nine publications were successfully issued in English, French, Russian, and Azerbaijani, either by the Center directly or with its support. The list includes a report by Professor Malcolm Shaw QC and Naomi Hart on the war crimes and the international legal responsibilities of Armenia as the belligerent occupier of Azerbaijani territories; a monograph titled "The City of Yerevan" by Nazim



EGIC
Euro-Gulf
Information
Centre

Mustafa; a report (in French) prepared by France-based COJEP International on the Armenian diaspora and lobby organizations in France and their assistance to Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh; a report prepared by the Center’s staff titled “The Forgotten Victim of the Armenian–Azerbaijani Conflict: Environmental Impact of the Conflict,” and a report on the use of mercenaries and foreign fighters by Armenia against Azerbaijan in the Second Karabakh War.



The year also saw the launch of the first issue of *Caucasus Strategic Perspectives* (CSP), the Center’s first in-house academic journal on foreign and security policy. The Center also started publishing monthly bulletins in English covering the main directions of Azerbaijan’s foreign policy. The Center hosted 14 events and webinars, including an international conference titled “IDP Women’s Call for Justice: Addressing Their Needs in Peace and Security Agenda”; a webinar titled “Regional Geopolitical Polarization and Turkey–Azerbaijan Relations”; a webinar on the “Fate of Multilateralism during COVID-19 Crisis”; an international video conference on the “Global Energy and International Political Risks,” jointly with Russia’s Valdai International Discussion Club; a webinar titled “The United States in the Caspian Region: A Think-Tank Discussion,” jointly with the Caspian Political Center; and a webinar titled “Development of Belarusian–Azerbaijani Relations in the Post-Pandemic Period,” together with the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies. Over the past year, the Center’s experts have delivered top-level analysis and outstanding research products in international media.

In the year ahead, the AIR Center will continue to engage in thought leadership by providing essential insights and analysis into key trends and topics in the region, as well as leveraging its expertise and resources to expand the international community’s awareness of Azerbaijan’s foreign policy priorities.

PROJECTS

The Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict: An overview of our activities and publications

The year 2020 will go into the history books as the most important turning point in the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia since the independence of these countries: the year that saw the end of Armenia’s occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan. The negotiations and peace talks mediated by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-chairs had not yielded a peaceful resolution of the conflict since the ceasefire agreement of 1994. The Armenian government led by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan continued to obstruct negotiations with the old dilatory and deflective tactics of the Kocharyan–Sargsyan period, tactics that “successfully” prolonged conflict resolution for more than twenty-six years following the 1994 ceasefire.



On September 27, 2020, the armed forces of Armenia illegally stationed in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan breached the ceasefire regime and launched an offensive against Azerbaijan. The armed forces of Armenia shelled not only the positions of the Azerbaijani armed forces along the Line of Contact, but also deliberately targeted villages, other populated areas, and civilian infrastructure beyond the front line, and thus grossly violated

international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

In compliance with international law and invoking the right of UN member states to self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter, Azerbaijani armed forces had to respond adequately and launched such self-defense, or counteroffensive, operations against Armenian forces. Lasting 44 days, these operations liberated the territories that had been under Armenian occupation since 1993.

After the resumption of full-scale war in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, the military operations continued until the November 10





ceasefire agreement that was signed by the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, the Prime Minister of Armenia, Nikol Pashinyan, and the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin. According to the trilateral statement, the occupation forces of the Republic of Armenia had to leave the occupied Kalbajar region by November 15 (this period was later extended until November 25), Aghdam region by November 20 and Lachin region by December 1.

Unfortunately, before and during the period when Azerbaijan was compelled to exercise its inherent right of self-defense under international law and respond with proportionate countermeasures against aggression and occupation, similarly to some of the Minsk Group Co-chair states, other international institutions, NGOs, mainstream media, and “experts” did not speak of the real facts and developments on the ground in a just and adequate way. As in the past, they made their best efforts to conceal misdeeds of the occupying power by intentionally distorting, twisting, and manipulating legal and historical facts on the ground and presenting inaccurate narratives that led to grossly wrong and self-contradictory conclusions. Throughout the Second Karabakh War (September 27 to November 9, 2020), a disconcerting pattern was established among certain institutions, media outlets, and individual journalists who expressed a one-sided view of the escalation of events within the Karabakh region, an internationally recognized part of Azerbaijan. Unfortunately, most commentators and Western experts on the conflict have, for different reasons, been far from accurate in their descriptions and definitions of basic elements of the conflict. Some did not have enough knowledge and information, or were influenced by long-term and sophisticated propaganda. Others just could not put aside their sympathies and biases while informing policymakers, which, in the end, did not help those policymakers to enact adequate policies. Unfortunately, most such commentators also remained indifferent to the plight of a million internally displaced persons and their right of return to their lands, from where they had been “cleansed” and forcibly expelled.



In the past, the aforementioned inaccurate presentations have distracted from the internationally mediated peace talks and obviously did not contribute to a peaceful conflict resolution. Now we can clearly state that there was launched, and unfortunately will continue to be waged, a full-scale information war and propaganda assault against Azerbaijan. As

they were before and during the 44-day Second Karabakh War, the experts of the Center of Analysis of International Relations (AIR Center) are always at the forefront of this information war against Azerbaijan, debunking and responding to the false allegations and narratives about the conflict and providing true history, real facts, and legal background on different international platforms: through their op-eds and articles; interviews on leading local and international media outlets; speeches; briefings; and comments on social media. From January 2020, the experts of the AIR Center appeared more than 150 times on different leading international foreign-language platforms with their op-eds and articles. During the 44-day war alone, 39 articles by the experts of the AIR Center were published, exposing the truth and real facts of the Armenian aggression. Last year, the AIR Center also addressed a number of letters of protest about inaccurate representations of the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia to international institutions including Columbia University and *Forbes* journal.

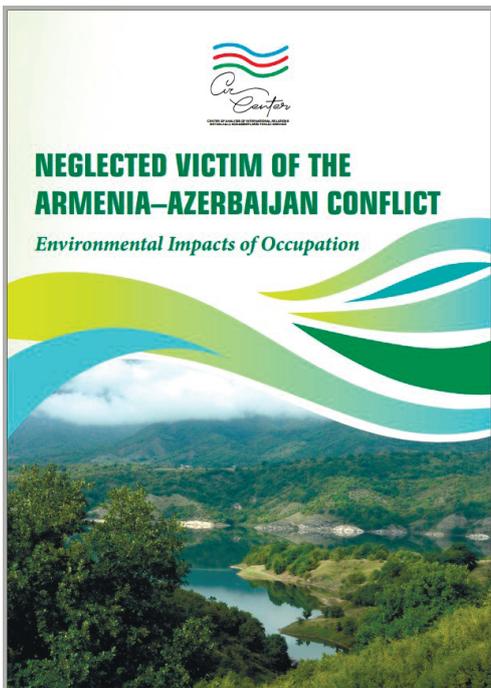


We should also underline that before and during the 44 days of war, and after the trilaterally signed declaration by Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Russia on November 10, platforms at certain academic institutions were not equally accessible to the conflict parties, thus not only leading to a continuing one-sided approach to the events, but also making the work of the AIR Center very difficult. Enormous intellectual work, time and energy have been put in by the staff of the AIR Center to overcome all barriers and disseminate the truth about the conflict and the Armenian aggression. It goes without saying that restricting an exchange of perspectives, especially in such a complex situation, brings into question the integrity and objectivity of an institution and also restricts the possibilities for conflict resolution.

Unfortunately, the approach and policies of the aforementioned institutions towards



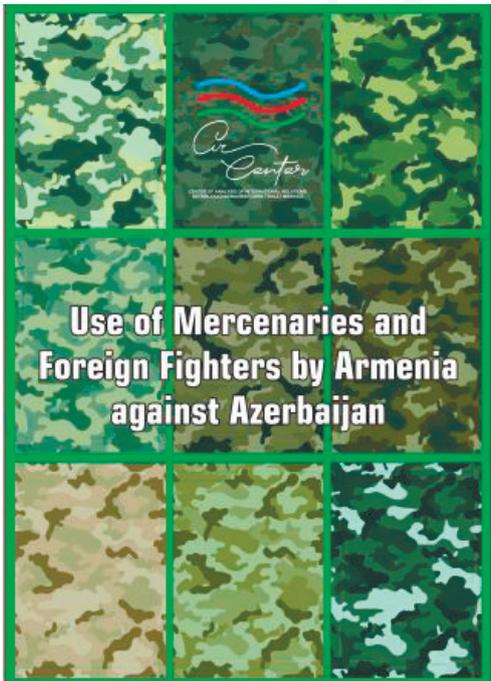
the conflict can, in fact, easily be interpreted as “appeasement of the aggressor” that committed war crimes and crimes against humanity, including the massacre in Khojaly in 1992. These institutions remained blind to the Armenian military build-up in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan; illegitimate demographic manipulation through an illegal settlement policy; alteration of centuries-old



toponyms; and the destruction of cultural heritage in the occupied lands. They did not attempt to do anything to make Armenia comply with UN Security Council resolutions 822, 853, 874, and 884, adopted in 1993, which demanded that Armenia immediately and unconditionally withdraw its armed forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

Last year, in order effectively to confront the mentioned challenges, the research agenda of AIR Center experts on the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict was formulated along three dimensions of Armenian studies: the Republic of Armenia; Armenians in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan; and the Armenian lobby abroad. The AIR Center regularly submitted reports, comprehensive analyses, and research on the aforementioned aspects of Armenian studies to the government of Azerbaijan, as well as to the general

public, to initiate wider discussions and raise awareness among different audiences. In order to equip the expert and research community of Azerbaijan with in-depth knowledge and understanding of dynamics of the three dimensions of the Armenian studies as well as the conflict, the AIR Center launched free, regular, and professional Armenian language courses.



Through its activity during the 44-day war, the AIR Center pursued its main mission of conducting in-depth research on the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict and the ongoing occupation of the internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan for the government of Azerbaijan as well as local and international audiences. The Center has aspired not only to inform and educate local and international audiences, but also to influence and facilitate policy-making processes on the conflict at different levels. Along with its activity on different international platforms, the AIR Center continued to provide the leadership of Azerbaijan with analysis and policy recommendations on the other strategic dimensions of the foreign policy of Azerbaijan.

By Fuad Chiragov and Ilaha Huseynova

The 44-day war and victory: Our activities

The Second Karabakh War (September 27 to November 10, 2020) resulted in Azerbaijan's victory over Armenia and ended its almost 30-year-long illegal occupation of Azerbaijan's internationally recognized territories. Azerbaijan succeeded in restoring its territorial integrity by liberating parts of its territory through military operations and other actions following the signing of the trilateral agreement of November 10



between the Russian Federation, Azerbaijan, and Armenia. The results of the military conflict have transformed the geopolitical situation of the South Caucasus, breaking the long-established status quo and forming a new reality in the region.



With the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict now in the past, the South Caucasus region is at the dawn of a new era. The Center of Analysis of International Relations has been continuously active in the field of information warfare, both during the 44-day war and following the trilaterally signed agreement between Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Russia on November 10. The Board members of the Center, as well as other field experts, carried

out their activities by publishing articles in foreign and local publications, giving regular interviews to international and local media, and organizing webinars for the public and the Center's partners.

During this period, more than 50 articles by our employees were published in various publications in the United States, Canada, Latin America, Europe, and Russia. The articles predominantly focused on the principles of international law; the four United Nations Security Council Resolutions adopted during the First Karabakh War but ignored by Armenia; the so-called Madrid Principles; and the Armenian provocation in Tovuz district in July 2020—all factors that fueled the conflict even further and reignited a full-scale war. The articles also viewed the conflict from various perspectives: economic, political,



military, and more. Additionally, following the trilateral agreement, various articles have been published focusing on the post-war period and the prospects for sustainable peace in the South Caucasus.

Apart from internationally published articles, the AIR Center's staff also gave more than 35 interviews to international media outlets such as the BBC, Deutsche Welle, TRT World, Al Arabia, Aljazeera, Rustavi, A Haber, CNN Türk, ATR TV, Anadolu Agency, and others, in Russian, English, and Turkish. The main aim of those interviews was to inform the international community about the events around the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict; give Azerbaijan's perspective; highlight the less discussed, but equally important, nuances; and adequately respond to the anti-Azerbaijani campaign led by the Armenian diaspora.



The changing situation on the ground required constant updates and further analysis, and the experts of our Center worked on delivering those to the public. Similarly, we have also published within Azerbaijan; our staff were involved in online

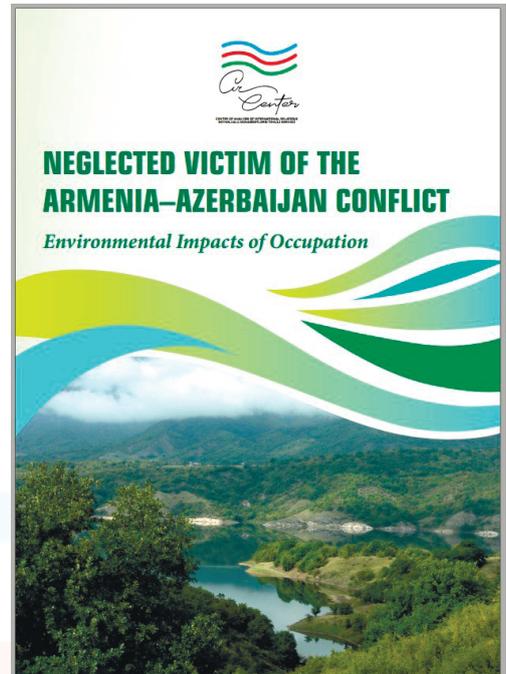
media and printed articles, and participated in television broadcasts, thereby aiming to keep the local community informed about the events and provide them with the AIR Center's analysis of events.

The monthly bulletins of the AIR Center, written in English and delivered to the diplomatic corps of Azerbaijan, also covered the events in detail. Additionally, reports such as "Neglected Victim of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict: Environmental Impacts



of Occupation,” “War Crimes Committed Against the Civilian Population of Azerbaijan and Attacks on Critical Infrastructure by the Armed Forces of Armenia,” “Child Soldiers Used by Armenia in Nagorno-Karabakh War” and “Use of Mercenaries and Foreign Fighters by Armenia Against Azerbaijan” were prepared by the AIR Center and shared with our foreign partners and the diplomatic mission of Azerbaijan. The AIR Center has also published responses to and comments regarding certain statements and reports by Western media outlets and organizations that were visibly pursuing a one-sided approach to the conflict.

Last but not least, during the period of the 44-day war and after victory, the AIR Center also organized a number of webinars and information sessions. There were webinars, both public and private, discussing the factors that led to the war, the course of the war, and, later, the outcome of the war and its impact on Azerbaijan’s foreign policy. The events occurring in the region were reported by the AIR Center’s staff in video conferences organized by the United States, Great Britain,



Pakistan, Turkey, Georgia, Poland, and several other countries. Some webinars were also organized by the AIR Center, including a webinar titled “Nagorno-Karabakh and the Future of Turkey-Azerbaijan Relations” with the Center for Strategic Research of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey; a “Briefing on the Situation around Armenia-



Azerbaijan: Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict”; “The Aftermath of the Karabakh War and the US Presidential Transition: The Future of American-Azerbaijani Relations” with the Caspian Policy Center of the U.S.A.; and more.



The Second Karabakh War created a new reality in the South Caucasus region. With Azerbaijan’s victory, the newly liberated territories will be restored and revived, thus allowing hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijani IDPs to return to their homes in the near future. The liberated territories



have also made it possible to reveal the previously concealed truth about the illegal operations being conducted in Azerbaijan's territories, as well as the mass destruction in many districts, including Aghdam and Fuzuli. Newly revealed information about the situation in the previously occupied territories of Azerbaijan will require further research, analysis, and publications. Taking into account the events of the Second Karabakh War and the processes taking place after the war, the AIR Center will continue its activities in this field in the coming years with the aim of delivering high-quality analysis and keeping the world informed about the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict.



*By Esmira Jafarova and
Ulviyya Bayramli*

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in the Activities of the AIR Center



The Center of Analysis of International Relations (AIR Center) also published articles and held events relating to the NAM and Azerbaijan's chairmanship of the group for the years 2019 to 2022.

On August 4, 2020, the AIR Center organized an international webinar on the topic “Non-Aligned Movement and the COVID-19 Pandemic.” This was moderated by Chairman of the AIR Center Farid Shafiyev.

Addressing the event, Dr. Shafiyev recalled the virtual NAM summit held in May 2020 on the initiative of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and noted that, also on Azerbaijan's initiative, the UN General Assembly had convened a special session on the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. The AIR Center chairman said this initiative is of special importance

for NAM's work and contributes to the strengthening of the movement's global role. It was also noted that the global humanitarian and economic crisis provoked by the outbreak of the coronavirus is also now posing a challenge to the role of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) as an important instrument for coordinating international cooperation and promoting multilateralism and solidarity in difficult times.



The webinar was also attended by representatives of the Belarusian Institute of Strategic Research and the Center for Global & Strategic Studies of Pakistan.



The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) represents a diverse group of states, the largest after the United Nations, the modus operandi of which is not to align with or against any major powers, but to stand for “the national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of non-aligned countries.” The NAM

was initiated at the Belgrade Conference of 1961 and has since expanded its membership from the original 25 states to 120 members. The establishment of the NAM, particularly in the wake of the demise of the colonial system and the independence fights of nations in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and other parts of the world, was also instrumental to the facilitation of the decolonization process. Ever since, the movement has played a role in the maintenance of international peace and security, while also remaining faithful to its strategic choice of neutrality and non-alignment.

There have been many subsequent debates about the role and relevance of the NAM in world politics, with some suggesting that the movement has mostly lost its appeal and importance to the most pressing international affairs. However, what we are today witnessing in the NAM under Azerbaijani chairmanship for the period 2019–2022 entitles us to assert that the movement is currently living through a period of rejuvenation.



When Azerbaijan assumed its chairmanship of the NAM for 2019–2022, it vowed to promote multilateralism, foster cooperation and solidarity within the NAM group, and work collectively towards rejuvenating the NAM's role in world affairs.

As events unfolded in the period following the formal assumption of chairmanship by Azerbaijan at the end of 2019, the NAM made a fresh start in world politics. Two NAM Summits have already been held under Azerbaijani Chairmanship: the first from October 25–26, 2019, in Baku and the second, virtual one



on May 4, 2020, which was related to dealing with COVID-19. What are more important are the outcomes that followed from these summit meetings, particularly the one held online on May 4 and titled “United against COVID-19.”

While the world was grappling with the challenges associated with COVID-19, the NAM, at the initiative of Azerbaijan, gathered for this online summit that involved over 40 NAM countries. The philosophy of this online summit was to unite NAM countries around fighting this global health challenge that had surpassed being a mere health crisis and had far-reaching socio-economic and political ramifications. This NAM Summit therefore showed the convergence of global interests and adherence to common principles highlighted in the fundamental documents of the Movement, including the one that specifies standing for “... security of the non-aligned countries” as among the highest priorities of the group.

Azerbaijan, as an emerging middle power, has assumed a leadership role to forge consensus among the NAM states in order to achieve coordinated actions to tackle this global calamity. One of the outcomes of the summit was therefore the establishment of a NAM Task Force to initiate a database that will contain information on the basic humanitarian and medical needs of NAM member states in order for them later to be submitted by the Chairmanship to all potential donors and elicit support for the needs of NAM countries. Azerbaijan has contributed 10 million US dollars to the World Health Organization (WHO) to support its efforts to fight the pandemic, and half of that amount was allocated to the needs of NAM countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Another momentous achievement of this online NAM Summit was the initiative of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev to convene an online special session of the United Nations General Assembly related to COVID-19. This initiative, which was supported by NAM countries, later also garnered the necessary support of 150 states of the United Nations and the negotiations on modalities of the session started on 10 July, with the session itself taking place on December 3–4, 2020. Thus, under Azerbaijani leadership, the NAM has managed to muster the support of the international community to embark on a collective quest for ways out of the current quagmire, and it is our belief that the special United Nations session dedicated to COVID-19 will provide a global platform for finding effective solutions to this scourge.

The Movement has demonstrated that, in times of acute crisis such as this one, it



can be mobilized to fight for the security of its members and, in doing so, also contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. The response provided by NAM to COVID-19 augurs well for the rejuvenation of the organization's role under Azerbaijan's chairmanship. In only the first years of Azerbaijani chairmanship of the Movement,

we are already witnessing a qualitatively new period in the modern history of the organization. Although we wish that COVID-19 had never happened, ironically, this health crisis has demonstrated that NAM could, in fact, be instrumentalized as a nimble, effective, and results-oriented mechanism for pursuing goals of global significance.

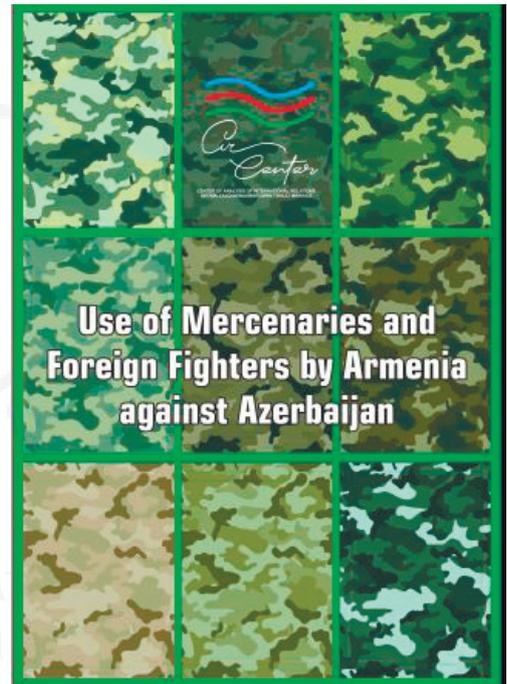
By Esmira Jafarova and Vasif Huseynov

Foreign Fighters and War Crimes

In 2020, the AIR Center prepared a report titled "Use of Mercenaries and Foreign Fighters by Armenia against Azerbaijan." It contains information about the involvement of foreign fighters, including mercenaries, on the side of Armenia during the military operations conducted within the internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan throughout the Second Karabakh War (September 27–November 9, 2020).

It is worth remembering, however, that the issue of the Armenian side deploying foreign fighters is not new. During the First Nagorno-Karabakh War (1988–94), soldiers of both Armenian and non-Armenian descent also actively fought and committed war crimes, including the 1992 Khojaly Genocide, in the Karabakh region. A prominent example is the California-born international terrorist Monte Melkonian, imprisoned in France for acts of terror in the 1980s, who was involved in military operations against Azerbaijani civilians in Karadagly, Khojaly, and other settlements of Azerbaijan.

The report consists of three parts. The first part is devoted to an assessment of the legal framework governing such actions, including the *International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries*, which the National Assembly of





FOREIGN MERCENARIES FIGHTING FOR ARMENIA
IN THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH REGION OF
AZERBAIJAN

NAME: Shagen
SURNAME: Danielyan
COUNTRY: Russia 🇷🇺



FOREIGN MERCENARIES FIGHTING FOR ARMENIA
IN THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH REGION OF
AZERBAIJAN

NAME: Bulishev Sergey
SURNAME: Qurgenovich
COUNTRY: Russia 🇷🇺



FOREIGN MERCENARIES FIGHTING FOR ARMENIA
IN THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH REGION OF
AZERBAIJAN

NAME: Akshen
SURNAME: Badalyan
COUNTRY: Russia 🇷🇺



FOREIGN MERCENARIES FIGHTING FOR ARMENIA
IN THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH REGION OF
AZERBAIJAN

NAME: Vartanyan Eduard
SURNAME: Danielovich
COUNTRY: Russia 🇷🇺



FOREIGN MERCENARIES FIGHTING FOR ARMENIA
IN THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH REGION OF
AZERBAIJAN

NAME: Vaagn
SURNAME: Chakhalyan
COUNTRY: Georgia 🇯🇵



FOREIGN MERCENARIES FIGHTING FOR ARMENIA
IN THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH REGION OF
AZERBAIJAN

NAME: Samuel
SURNAME: Badalyan
COUNTRY: Spain 🇪🇸



FOREIGN MERCENARIES FIGHTING FOR ARMENIA
IN THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH REGION OF
AZERBAIJAN

NAME: Safaryan Qalust
SURNAME: Akopovich
COUNTRY: Russia 🇷🇺



FOREIGN MERCENARIES FIGHTING FOR ARMENIA
IN THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH REGION OF
AZERBAIJAN

NAME: Gilbert Levon
SURNAME: Minassian
COUNTRY: France 🇫🇷



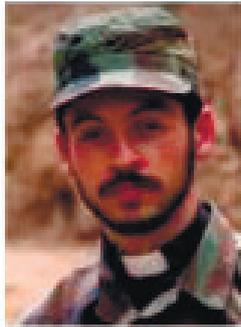
FOREIGN MERCENARIES FIGHTING FOR ARMENIA
IN THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH REGION OF
AZERBAIJAN

NAME: David
SURNAME: Hovsepyan
COUNTRY: France 🇫🇷



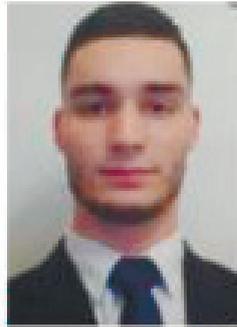
FOREIGN MERCENARIES FIGHTING FOR ARMENIA
IN THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH REGION OF
AZERBAIJAN

NAME: Hamlet
SURNAME: Hovsepyan
COUNTRY: France 🇫🇷



FOREIGN MERCENARIES FIGHTING FOR ARMENIA
IN THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH REGION OF
AZERBAIJAN

NAME: Kegart
SURNAME: Hovansian
COUNTRY: Syria 🇸🇾



FOREIGN MERCENARIES FIGHTING FOR ARMENIA
IN THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH REGION OF
AZERBAIJAN

NAME: Marc de Cacqueray
SURNAME: Valmenier-in
COUNTRY: France 🇫🇷



FOREIGN MERCENARIES FIGHTING FOR ARMENIA
IN THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH REGION OF
AZERBAIJAN

NAME: Kevork
SURNAME: Chawishian
COUNTRY: Syria 🇸🇾



FOREIGN MERCENARIES FIGHTING FOR ARMENIA
IN THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH REGION OF
AZERBAIJAN

NAME: Arutunyan
SURNAME: Edikovich
COUNTRY: Russia 🇷🇺



FOREIGN MERCENARIES FIGHTING FOR ARMENIA
IN THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH REGION OF
AZERBAIJAN

NAME: Vladimir
SURNAME: Vartanov
COUNTRY: Russia 🇷🇺



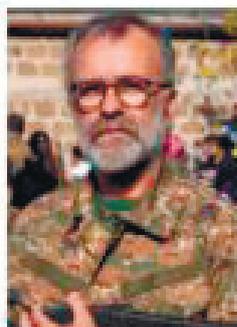
FOREIGN MERCENARIES FIGHTING FOR ARMENIA
IN THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH REGION OF
AZERBAIJAN

NAME: Sipan
SURNAME: Koroghlian
COUNTRY: France 🇫🇷



FOREIGN MERCENARIES FIGHTING FOR ARMENIA
IN THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH REGION OF
AZERBAIJAN

NAME: Sergey
SURNAME: Valeryevich
COUNTRY: Belarus 🇧🇪



FOREIGN MERCENARIES FIGHTING FOR ARMENIA
IN THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH REGION OF
AZERBAIJAN

NAME: Grayr
SURNAME: Koroghlian
COUNTRY: France 🇫🇷



FOREIGN MERCENARIES FIGHTING FOR ARMENIA
IN THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH REGION OF
AZERBAIJAN

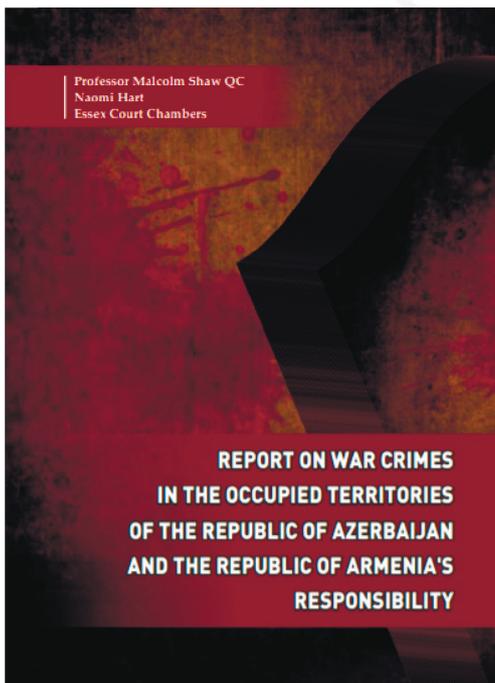
NAME: Aroushan
SURNAME: Badasyan
COUNTRY: USA 🇺🇸

Armenia recently ratified. The authors provide definitions of “mercenaries” and “foreign fighters” as well as paying special attention to the two UN Security Council resolutions, 2170 (2014) and 2178 (2014), addressing the foreign fighter phenomenon. Taking into account the above-mentioned legal framework, this study examines whether or not mercenaries and foreign fighters as external actors have been intervening on behalf of Armenia against Azerbaijan in Karabakh.

The second part of the report is devoted to the use of mercenaries by Armenia against Azerbaijan. Media reports have revealed that Armenia has been relocating from Syria and Iraq militants belonging to the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), classified by all Western countries, including the U.S.A. and the EU, as a terrorist organization, to the occupied territories of Azerbaijan to prepare for future hostilities and train Armenian militias. Radio communications of Kurdish terrorists fighting on behalf of Armenia against Azerbaijan in the conflict zone were intercepted by the State Security Service of Azerbaijan in early October 2020.

The third part of the report covers the role of foreign fighters. It is no secret that citizens of different countries, motivated by the call from the Armenian authorities, have travelled to Armenia to fight against Azerbaijan in Karabakh. One of their main reasons for joining the armed forces in Karabakh was to demonstrate their Christian solidarity with Armenians.

The report also emphasizes the mission of the special military-patriotic public organization VoMA, which stands for **Ողջ Մնալու Արվեստ** (the art of staying alive). Founded by Vova Vartanov and operating from Yerevan, this organization appealed to the Armenian diaspora, calling on them to participate in accelerated, well-known guerrilla-style military training courses to prepare them specifically for the mountainous and forest terrain of Karabakh. At the same time, the aim of these training programs was to establish a mountain rifle battalion under the command of the Ministry of Defense of Armenia. This organization also covered the travel expenses, all necessary equipment, and clothing for the recruits.



Thus, Armenia and its diaspora have been involved in the process of recruitment, use, financing, and training of mercenaries and foreign fighters, locally and abroad, for the purpose of participating in a concerted act of violence aimed at undermining the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. This is a gross violation of international law, international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and international refugee law.

The AIR Center, together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan: Azerbaijan International Development Agency, and the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations, supported another study titled

“Report on War Crimes in the Occupied Territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia’s Responsibility” written by professor Malcolm Shaw QC and Naomi Hart.

This report consists of the factual and historical background; a general overview of international humanitarian law; and an analysis of the responsibility of Armenia. It examines war crimes related to civilian deaths and injuries; civilian property; the mistreatment of detainees and prisoners of war; the taking of hostages; ethnic cleansing, forced displacement and changing the character of occupied territory; the destruction of cultural heritage; and damage to the natural environment.

As this report shows, Armenia is responsible for a variety of war crimes committed in the occupied territories. This survey demonstrates the range, variety, and consistency of Armenia’s violations of international humanitarian law and its commission of multiple war crimes for which it, as the State responsible, bears liability and with regard to which individual criminal responsibility may also lie.

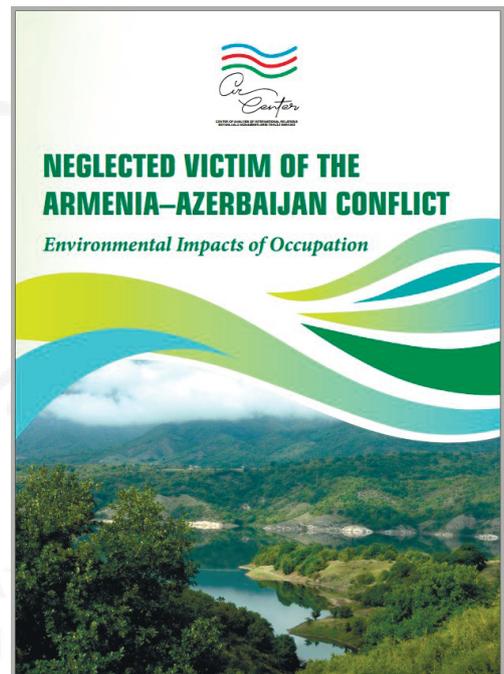
By Gulshan Pashayeva

Environmental Crimes in Azerbaijan’s Occupied Territories

The thirty-year-long Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict had severe consequences for the environment of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Not only did Armenia commit crimes against the civilian population of Azerbaijan by deliberately killing thousands of innocent people and displacing up to a million Azerbaijanis; it also dealt perilous blows to the environment of the region by ruthlessly exploiting natural resources, polluting water resources, disrupting water flows, felling trees en masse, and more.

The Second Karabakh War (September 27–November 10, 2020) between the two countries reaffirmed Armenia’s indifference to the environment as the country did not refrain from attacking Azerbaijan’s Aghgol and Goygol national parks with missiles, causing wildfires in specially protected natural areas. Nor did Armenia refrain from burning forests surrounding Azerbaijan’s Shusha City to gain a temporary tactical advantage on the battlefield, in flagrant violation of international conventions on the inviolability of the ecological environment and the normative acts of the relevant UN environmental organizations.

In 2020, the Center of Analysis of International Relations (AIR Center) raised the issue of the crimes that Armenia has committed against the environment and natural flora and



fauna of the Azerbaijani territories during the period they were under Armenia's control. In November, the AIR Center published a report titled "Neglected Victim of the Armenia–Azerbaijan Conflict: Environmental Impacts of Occupation" about the environmental consequences of the occupation of Azerbaijani territories and the international norms and principles regarding the protection of the environment in armed conflicts, principles that have been grossly violated by Armenia.

The report, with reference to studies conducted by researchers from non-partisan backgrounds (e.g., international institutions) and also to Azerbaijani and Armenian sources, demonstrates the horrendous extent of the environmental crimes committed by the Armenian government *vis-à-vis* the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The contributions by international law experts from Germany and Italy provide important insights into the provisions of international law concerning the obligations of an occupying state with regard to the territories under its control and examine the legal possibilities for holding Armenia accountable for the environmental crimes that it has committed in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.



Those crimes reached a new high during and after the Second Karabakh War. Despite the fact that the Armenians moved to the Azerbaijani districts around the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region only after their occupation in the war of the early 1990s, they found it unacceptable to hand those territories back to Azerbaijanis, as required by the trilateral agreement of November 10th. Media reports showed Armenians in Kalbajar burning houses, cutting down trees, and setting fire to forests before they left the region. They did not shy away from

burning down schools and hospitals and butchering the cattle. An article published by Naghi Ahmadov, a leading advisor at the AIR Center, on Euractiv drew attention to the environmental crimes committed by Armenians in Azerbaijani territories and called on the international community to condemn these unlawful acts and hold Armenia accountable.

By Vasif Huseynov

The Economic Situation in Armenia

During 2020, analysis of economic situation in Armenia was one of the main research directions of the AIR Center. Several articles, many reports and public research materials were prepared on this topic. The main goal of these research materials was to highlight the real economic situation in Armenia and the country's economic development perspectives. Therefore, great attention was paid to analysis of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemics and the Second Karabakh War on the economy of Armenia.



According to the research materials produced by the AIR Center, the difficulties in solving economic and social problems have proven the inability of the Armenian government to act effectively and independently. The economic problems related to the pandemic and the Second Karabakh War forced the Armenian government to make amendments to the state budget twice during 2020. The increasing need for budget resources in financing support programs and additional military expenses necessitated these changes. this seems to be an old data

The same here. There is a danger that the high budget deficit of Armenia relates not only to the high level of deficit, but also to the inability of the Armenian government to finance this deficit. Thus, Armenia has had to incur foreign debt. In April, it was calculated by Armenian government that it was necessary to attract US\$532 million. However, the financial problems created by Second Karabakh War have induced the Armenian government to attract an additional US\$825 million of foreign debt. If the Armenian government is able to attract the necessary lending, its foreign debt level will increase about 18.5% compared with the previous year.

The attraction of foreign debt will in turn result in a rise in the country's debt-to-GDP ratio, which is one of the main indicators measuring the financial security level of a country, to a dangerous level. After the attraction of all necessary foreign debt, this ratio will reach 67% and create substantial risks for Armenia fulfilling its financial obligations in the long term. These financial risks also negatively affect the international credit rating of Armenia, thus eliminating opportunities for attracting foreign debt on affordable terms.

As stated in the research materials, the shortage of financial resources, high-level dependence on foreign debt, and inability of the Armenian government to handle economic and social problems will create long-lasting and severe implications for Armenia. These implications include a high level of inflation, shortage of foreign exchange reserves, high



level of trade deficit, depreciation of the national currency, liquidity problems in the banking sector, shortages of necessary daily consumption products, inability to continue social support programs, and others. The economic problems that Armenia is facing are the result of its policy of occupation that continued for about thirty years. Because of the occupation, Armenia has lost economic development and cooperation opportunities with

its neighbors. The Second Karabakh War ended this occupation as Azerbaijan liberated its occupied territories, thereby providing Armenia with an opportunity to abandon its nationalistic approach and focus on economic cooperation with its neighbors. Without this cooperation, Armenia will be unable to solve its severe economic problems in the long term.

By Orkhan Baghirov

Economic Implications of the Pandemic on the World and Azerbaijan



During 2020, the AIR Center also analyzed the economic implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for the world and Azerbaijan. Economic support measures taken by Azerbaijani government were also covered. Several articles, reports, public research materials, and monthly bulletins were written on the subject. The effects of the pandemic on the big economies such as those of the U.S.A., China, and the European Union, and on the global energy sector, were also analyzed in these materials.

According to the research materials of the AIR Center, it was noted that, because of globalization and the increased economic interdependence of countries, the negative effects of the pandemic spread rapidly all across the world. The pandemic had its initial economic effects on China, which has the second biggest economy in the world, and soon began to affect the global economy. However, the greatest effect of the pandemic on the world economy happened when the virus began to quickly spread in European countries and the U.S.A. The

preventive measures that were taken by countries around the world in the first half of the year significantly decreased global economic activity and the volume of global trade.

In the third quarter of 2020 in many leading economies, a weak recovery process slowly happened as the spread of the virus started to slow. However, after September, 2020, the spread of the pandemic's second wave stopped this process and economic development forecasts worsened. The pandemic also affected the global energy sector by creating a surplus in oil supply that resulted in lower oil prices. Therefore, unless global economic activity is restored, oil exporters will continue to suffer from low oil prices.

According to the analyses of the AIR Center, the economic problems associated with COVID-19 have revealed the shortcomings of the international economic relations system. The stagnation caused by the pandemic showed that dependence on the export, service, and tourism sectors and high reliance on international supply chains are economically dangerous. Therefore, the economic problems created by the current crisis will further accelerate anti-globalization tendencies and expand the use of protectionist economic policies.



Regarding the effect of the pandemic on the economy of Azerbaijan, it was indicated that this mainly happened through volatility in the oil market. As exports of crude oil and gas, which have a substantial share in the country's economy, fell and the oil price on international markets decreased, revenues coming from the energy sector were reduced.

Azerbaijan implemented preventive measures aimed at curbing the spread of the pandemic. Despite the fact that these measures were effective in preventing the spread of the virus, they also had significant economic implications because of weakened business activity, slowed economic development, and unemployment problems. In order to effectively manage these implications, the government took various economic and social measures. For the implementation of economic measures, 1 billion manats were allocated from the state budget and a compensation program was implemented. The program covered 300,000 employees, 42,000 employers, and about 300,000 private and micro-entrepreneurs. Within the program 215 million manats were allocated to preserve the salaries of employees and 80 million manats were allocated to support individual entrepreneurs. The government also allocated 400 million manats to the social protection of citizens. Within the framework of the





social package, a 190-manat lump sum has been paid to 600,000 unemployed citizens and 50,000 paid public-sector jobs were created.

The government of Azerbaijan also allocated 1.5 billion manats for the implementation of a credit and guarantee support program that enabled businesses to obtain loans on preferential terms. The government's economic support program also envisaged tax benefits, privileges, and holidays for business entities.

With the implementation of all these economic and social programs, Azerbaijan became the country that, among all the post-Soviet countries, allocated the biggest share of its GDP to eliminate pandemic-related economic problems. All the budgetary funds that were allocated to support economic development, businesses, and the social protection of citizens reached 3 billion manats.

By Orkhan Baghirov

Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic: Eurasian Connectivity and Global Energy

COVID-19, which emerged in China and spread all over the world, has literally become a global threat that negatively affects every sphere of life. It has considerably weakened the global value chain by disrupting the balance between supply and demand, as production and consumption are on a downward trend across the world. Global trade is therefore still dealing with the negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the world economy is at the brink of a crisis unprecedented in history due to the pandemic, the process also has significant consequences in terms of connectivity and energy.



Although the COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected most sectors of the global economy, including the transportation sector, it has also created new opportunities for some emerging trade routes. The developments regarding the COVID-19 crisis have highlighted the need for alternative routes. Amidst the pandemic, as contactless foreign trade and multimodal transport systems have been developed, the Trans-Caspian Corridor



through Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Central Asia is quickly becoming the safest trade route between East and West. Therefore, the positive dynamics of cargo transportation via the Baku–Tbilisi–Kars (BTK) route, as a component of the Middle Corridor, has been

maintained during the pandemic.

The increase in freight traffic indicates the growing interest of the countries of the region in this railway line. So, while many countries face a wide spectrum of difficulties because of the coronavirus pandemic, railway transportation appears to have gained new momentum in the region. As a result, the role of the Middle Corridor in Eurasian connectivity has recently drawn enormous scrutiny and gained greater recognition from the international community. The AIR Center accordingly organized a webinar titled “Eurasian Connectivity and Rising Role of the Middle Corridor Amidst COVID-19” on September 22, 2020. The webinar was intended to bring together high-level international experts dealing with transportation issues, as well as government representatives from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Afghanistan involved in dealing with transportation and logistics issues and obtaining critical knowledge in the field.



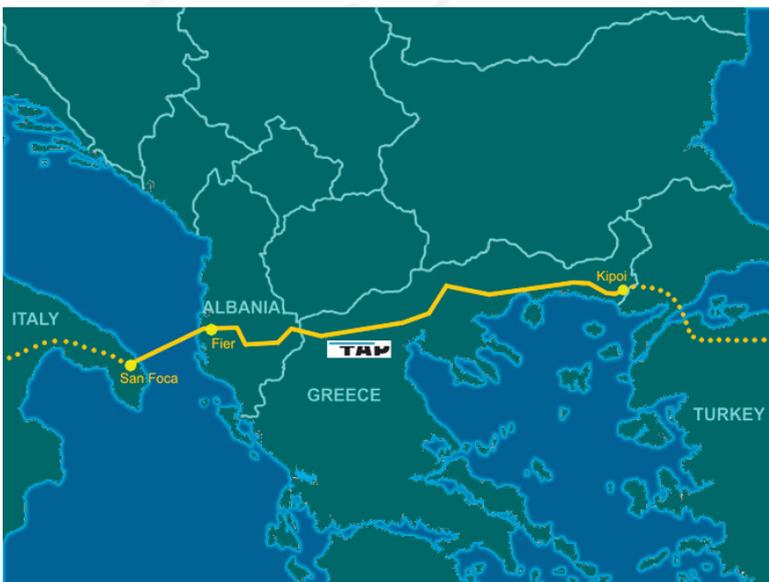
In addition to the marked effect on international transportation, the outbreak has also greatly impacted the global energy sector. A wide array of energy-sector businesses, such as renewables, natural gas, and petrochemicals, have been affected by the pandemic, with the latter having suffered the hardest blow.

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on global energy demand and prices were catastrophic; hence, many energy producing countries are aiming to help the energy sector recover from “pandemic shock.” Azerbaijan continues to cooperate successfully with partners in this direction and, today, all sections of the Southern Gas Corridor have been completed successfully. These are all significant energy infrastructure projects that open new opportunities, not only for Azerbaijan, but also for the Caspian region to export natural gas to European energy markets.

It is commendable that, on November 15, 2020, the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP), the final section of the SGC, was completed and began commercial operation. On December 31, 2020, the SGC was commissioned, and the first Azerbaijani gas reached Europe. The TAP pipeline, at an estimated cost of €4.5 billion, is a new inter-regional export gas pipeline for bringing gas to European consumers from the Shah Deniz 2 (SD2) offshore gas field in the Caspian Sea. The pipeline starts at the Turkey–Greece border and connects Greece, Albania, and ends at a final destination in the southern part of Italy. The initial capacity of the pipeline is 10 bcm/year of gas, and a future expansion will increase the pipeline's throughput capacity to 20 bcm/year.

The SGC as a whole was completed on time and under budget (US\$33 billion against US\$44 billion) and is set to contribute to the energy security and decarbonization efforts of the continent. For Europe, the SGC provides a diversification of gas sources and supply routes. Azerbaijani gas supplies will reach south-eastern, central, and western Europe, and those regions have high gas dependence on a few suppliers.

All large energy projects clearly illustrate that energy cooperation involves many players such as consumers, producers, transit countries, governments, and energy companies, but also, more importantly, inter-state relations between the involved parties. Azerbaijan managed to establish an effective consumer–producer dialogue and cohesive strategy that are important to realizing such energy megaprojects.



An analysis of European gas markets shows that EU gas consumption will increase, therefore an additional 10 bcm/year of gas volume is important for European consumers. Additionally, the European Green Deal aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and this also identifies natural gas as one of the main energy sources for the future.

In brief, Azerbaijan managed to focus on strategic objectives by implementing an efficient energy policy and thus started exporting natural gas to European consumers in 2020. Neither the COVID-19 pandemic nor the Nagorno-Karabakh war could stop Azerbaijan from finalizing the TAP project and ultimately the SGC, and the first Azerbaijani gas had already been supplied to European consumers. It is Azerbaijan's great achievement to complete all sections of the Southern Gas Corridor project, which will support economic integration and energy security.

By Shahmar Hajiyev and Naghi Akhmadov

EVENTS

The International Conference “IDP Women’s Call for Justice: Addressing Their Needs in Peace and Security Agenda”

On February 24, the AIR Center organized the international conference “IDP Women’s Call for Justice: Addressing Their Needs in Peace and Security Agenda” in the run-up to the commemoration of the 28th anniversary of the Khojaly massacre of February 26, 1992, and the 20th anniversary of the UN Security Council’s Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security.



Hikmet Hajiyev, Assistant to the President of Azerbaijan and Head of the Foreign Policy Department of the Presidential Administration, said that, historically, Azerbaijani women have always been very active in peace and security issues. He added that, during armed conflicts, civilian groups, particularly women and children, are the most vulnerable. Speaking on UN Security Council Resolution 1325, Hikmet Hajiye noted that this document grants women an equal role in peacebuilding and conflict prevention. A National Action Plan has been developed to implement the resolution and is currently in progress, with the support of government agencies to bring it to the final stage.



Farid Shafiyev, Chairman of the Board of AIR Center, emphasized the importance of such events in Azerbaijan. According to him, in the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict, Azerbaijan acted from a position of defense: “But the victim of this conflict is Azerbaijan. We need to redefine our position by discussing such issues and bringing our position to the international community.”



Later, the UN Resident Coordinator in Azerbaijan, **Ghulam Isaczai**, said that



“UN Security Council Resolution 1325 reflected the role of women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.” According to her, “women’s activities in this area will be a guarantee of lasting peace. We also call on Azerbaijan to adopt the Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325.”

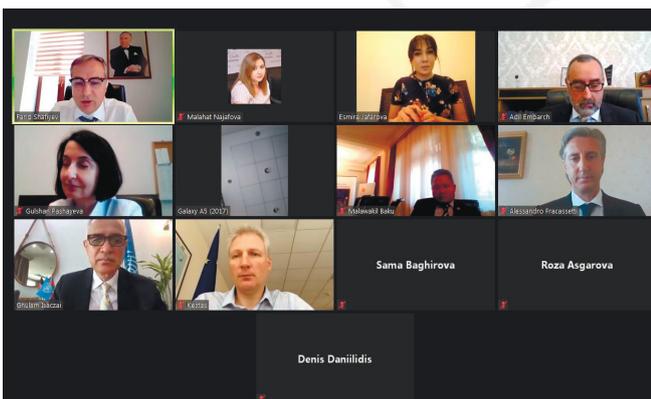
Tural Ganjaliyev, Head of the Azerbaijani community of the Nagorno-Karabakh region, said “violence against women in the conflict is unacceptable. We witness the peaceful calls of Azerbaijani women from Nagorno-Karabakh. We expect our women to actively participate in the reconstruction work after the occupation is over. I am sure that Azerbaijani women will also contribute to the liberation of our lands.”

Panel discussions on “Promoting Women’s Rights and Participation in Conflict-Affected Settings” and “Human Faces of Conflict” followed. During the second panel discussion, women who had suffered directly from the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict shared their life stories.

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A Webinar Titled “Fate of Multilateralism during COVID-19 Crisis”



On June 3, a webinar titled “The Fate of Multilateralism during the COVID-19 Crisis” was organized by the Center of Analysis of International Relations. The Chairman of the AIR center, **Farid Shafiyev**, said that the purpose of the webinar was to discuss the main problems faced by multilateralism during the COVID-19 crisis and the measures needed to prevent these problems. He said he was more optimistic about the future, saying the world was in

a better place than during the Spanish flu or World War II. According to Farid Shafiyev, multilateral institutions have played a great role in making the world a better place.

Gulam Isaczai, the UN Resident Coordinator in Azerbaijan, said that, although multilateralism has a long history, it has had even more relevance in the post-World War II period. According to him, the UN is one of the important organizations that emerged after the world war on the basis of multilateralism: “Currently, with the emergence of the

COVID-19 virus, there is a greater need for multilateralism. COVID-19 poses the greatest challenge to the world since World War II. The pandemic is stark reminder of the need for global cooperation.” Speaking about Azerbaijan’s contribution during the pandemic, Gulam Isaczai spoke about the summits of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Turkic



Council chaired by Azerbaijan and its support for other countries, noting that Azerbaijan has allocated US\$10 million to support the WHO.

The next speaker, **Alessandro Fracasetti**, UNDP Resident Coordinator in Azerbaijan, said that, despite all the forecasts across the world, he is also optimistic. According to him, in the 75-year history of the UN, the necessity of joint action for a better and stronger

future has never been clearer than during the current pandemic. According to him, no matter how much some countries want to act alone and close their borders, they have now realized that they also depend on information and equipment from other countries. “Other global challenges in the world also require a unified approach. It also creates common opportunities.”

Kestutis Jankauskas, Head of the EU Delegation to Azerbaijan, spoke next. In his speech, he said that cooperation in the fight against such crises was the key direction: “At the beginning of the year, when the virus spread, we would not have identified the virus and its symptoms if we didn’t cooperate and listen to our partners and other countries. We then were looking for best practice, doctors, and equipment.”



“High-Level Webinar on Energy Issues in a Post-COVID-19 World”



This high-level webinar was organized by the Center of Analysis of International Relations on June 11 with the participation of **OPEC Secretary General Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo**. During his speech, the Secretary General mentioned that Azerbaijan has historically made a great contribution to the oil industry and that



the development of the oil industry began in Baku. He noted the meeting of the Joint Monitoring Group of OPEC and non-OPEC ministers in Azerbaijan in March last year, adding that this meeting was a very important one for the Declaration of Cooperation.

The OPEC Secretary General also expressed satisfaction with Azerbaijan’s participation in the Declaration of Cooperation: “I thank Azerbaijan for its high-level support and commitment to this declaration. I am also proud to see Azerbaijan as a member of the OPEC family.” Dr. Barkindo thanked the Center for Analysis of International Relations for organizing the event and expressed hope that such discussions with the Center will continue in the future.



The moderator of the event, Chairman of AIR Center **Farid Shafiyev**, said that, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there had been a significant decline in economic activity in the world, which has affected energy demand. According to Farid Shafiyev, international cooperation is extremely important during this crisis, and Azerbaijan is one of the most important partners for OPEC+.



In his speech, Minister of Energy **Parviz Shahbazov** stated that the pandemic has created great difficulties in the energy sector, adding that the world community is interested in the future of energy. According to him, the oil market has also faced a number of problems during the pandemic, which shows the importance of the future role of the OPEC+ initiative. According to the Minister, the energy forecasts for

2020 are not encouraging: “The investment deficit in the energy sector is expected to fall by \$ 400 billion and costs by 30 percent. All this has put us in a difficult situation. OPEC+ will only be effective by strengthening and expanding. As Azerbaijan, we support expansion.”

The next speaker, **Bakhtiyar Aslanbeyli**, BP’s Vice President for External Relations and Strategy in Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey, said that the oil and gas sector is currently

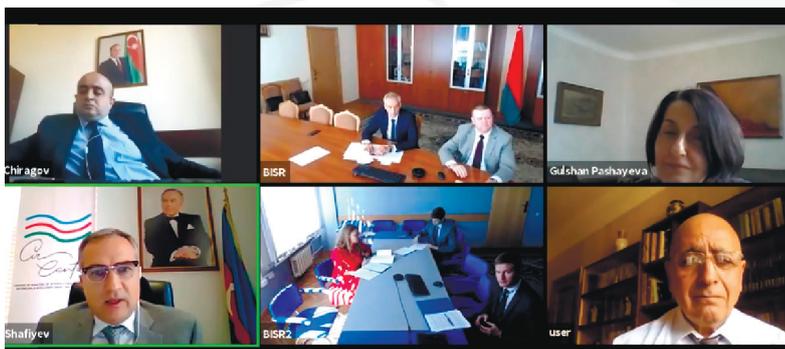
operating in survival mode. According to him, despite the crisis, BP will continue to implement its projects in Azerbaijan at a high level: **“Our goal is to sustain our business [in Azerbaijan] for at least the next 30 years.”**

Brenda Shaffer, a professor at Georgetown University in the United States, said that, unlike oil, natural gas has managed to overcome the COVID-19 crisis. According to her, during this period, the demand for gas has increased and natural gas has become a friend of renewable energy sources. Brenda Shaffer added that the prospects for imports are still high.

Robert Cutler, Director of NATO’s Energy Security Program in Canada, said that the Trans-Caspian pipeline in the South Caucasus region will once again find its place on the international economic agenda and will become the most important project for the region.

Opportunities for the “Development of Belarusian–Azerbaijani relations in the Post-pandemic Period” Were Discussed

On June 25, the Center for Analysis of International Relations, together with the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies, held a webinar titled “Development of Belarusian–Azerbaijani Relations in the Post-pandemic Period.”



In his opening speech, **Farid Shafiyev**, Chairman of the AIR Center, said that Belarus is among the countries that have demonstrated a different approach to the COVID-19 crisis. He also stressed the need for think

tanks to conduct active discussions by to solve this problem. Farid Shafiyev further added that his predictions about the pandemic were not pessimistic. According to him, once a vaccine is found, the world would soon be able to go back to normal. Speaking about the integration process, the chairman stated that this can be possible only on the basis of the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence of countries.

Speaking next, Director of the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies **Oleg Makarov** said that, despite the distance separating them, Belarus and Azerbaijan remain very close nations and states. According to him, close relations among the parties, in particular good relations between the leaders of the countries, have made a positive impact on the development of fraternal relations between their people. Oleg Makarov talked





about a number of alarming predictions that were made about the post-pandemic period: “We believe that the security of Belarus depends on regional ties and relations. Regardless of external factors, we can maintain these relations on our own. I think that ideas should be put forward to solve these problems. Qualitative analysis and analytics play an important role. We call on our partners for a reliable exchange

of views.”

In his speech, MP **Rasim Musabayov** said that no one knows when the virus will end. The MP noted that the pandemic had a serious impact on tourism and aviation, and the production chain was disrupted: “We must get out of this situation, and cooperation is the main way to do this. As a result of the pandemic, the abandonment of office space will increase, flexible work will be implemented, and video conferencing tools will be widely used. Online sales and commerce have also been hit hard by the pandemic. The provision of public services through information technology will also increase. Strengthening of sanitary and hygienic control at the borders will be carried out more widely.”

Sergei Martinenko, head of the International Security Department of the State Secretariat of the Security Council of Belarus, said that coronavirus is not only negative; positive aspects can also be revealed. As a result of the pandemic, new opportunities are opening up, and online work is already gaining momentum: “There is no doubt that our cooperation with Azerbaijan will continue at a high level during and after the pandemic. The heads of state pay special attention to bilateral relations. Our countries can better protect their interests together by cooperating.”

AIR Center’s chief of department **Fuad Chiragov** said that the two countries have faced a number of challenges and crises that have threatened stability and security in these difficult days. According to him, regional powers and world power centers have special interests in the two countries but, as a result of mutually beneficial cooperation with strategic partners, the countries can act as a subject, not an object, of regional and world policy. According to him, along with the fight against global threats, the restoration of territorial integrity is the main challenge for Azerbaijan.

Asya Pentegova, an analyst at the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies, and **Ivan Kharkov**, head of the EU and US division, spoke about key trends in the post-pandemic period, the economic impact of COVID-19, future prospects for Belarusian–Azerbaijani relations, information attacks, and brainstorming.

AIR Center and Valdai Discussion Club jointly Organized an International Video Conference

An international video conference titled “Global Energy and International Political Risks” was organized by the Center of International Relations Analysis and Russia’s Valdai International Discussion Club on July 2–3. Speaking at the opening of the event, **Andrei Bystritsky**, Chairman of the Board of the Valdai International Discussion Club, spoke about the current pandemic crisis in the world, saying that it will take a substantial amount of time to return to normal life. According to him, during this period, the world has more clearly understood the importance of energy: “Energy is part of many conflicts of different natures. Energy goes hand in hand with political processes. It is impossible to continue life without energy. Discussions in this direction will be held at the conference organized today.”



Farid Shafiyev, Chairman of the Center of Analysis of International Relations, said that energy issues have great importance for Russia and Azerbaijan. According to him, cooperation with Russia is very important, especially in the field of energy: “Competition should be put aside on a number of issues and cooperation should be key.”

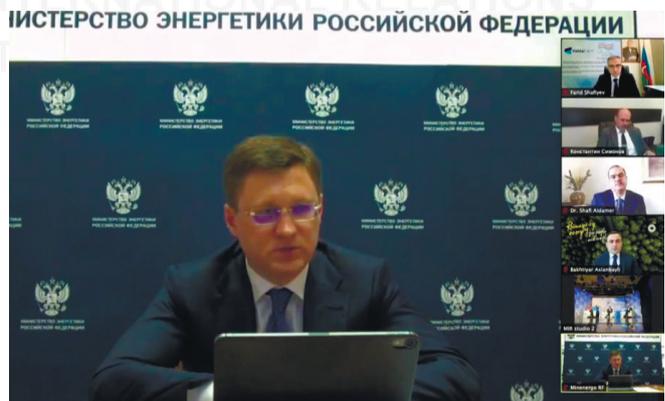


Minister of Energy **Parviz Shahbazov** mentioned during his speech that “Azerbaijan was one of the first countries to join the regulatory mechanisms within OPEC+.” He said that, in the current situation, the world should be more open to cooperation and innovation: “We must achieve stable implementation of decisions made as a result of OPEC+. I consider it necessary to expand this format.

Azerbaijan abides by its commitments and will continue to contribute to the stability of the oil market.”

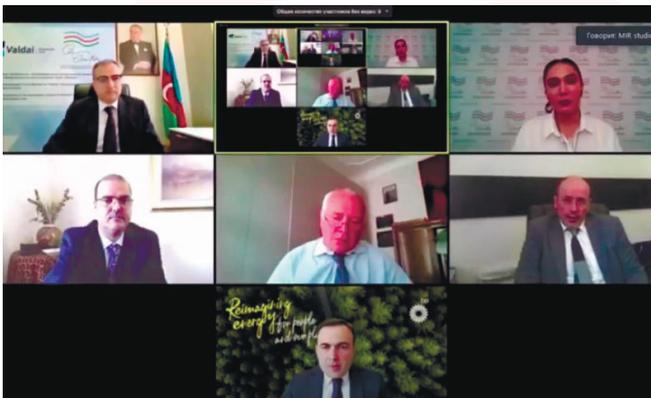
Speaking about Azerbaijan–Russia relations, the Minister said that Russian companies have been actively involved in energy projects in Azerbaijan for the past 26 years. According to him, the investment of Russian companies in the oil and gas sector of Azerbaijan is US\$4 billion.

Russia’s energy minister **Alexander Novak**, in his speech, said that the world



economy is facing an unexpected turn of events this year. According to him, in 2020 global GDP is expected to decrease by 5 to 6 percent, which will have a serious impact on world energy. The Russian minister said that energy can withstand the most serious scenarios: “Despite a sharp decline in demand, we must prevent the crisis due to oversupply. If we had not achieved a significant reduction in production, we would have seen a long-term serious decline in prices and an overall negative trend.”

An experts’ session was held at the event, moderated by **Fyodor Lukyanov**, Scientific Director of the Valdai Discussion Club. **Konstantin Simonov**, Director General of the Russian National Energy Security Foundation, said that the impact of energy on political processes dates back to the 1950s and 1960s. According to him, this became more apparent after the first and second oil crises.



Bakhtiyar Aslanbeyli, BP’s Vice President for Communications and External Relations in the Middle East and the Caspian region, spoke about the impact of the pandemic on the global energy market. According to him, despite the difficult economic situation, BP is committed to implementing projects in Azerbaijan: “Our goal is to continue doing business in Azerbaijan for at least the next 30 years. This is done in accordance

with the Production Sharing Agreement with the country. However, we must increase the competitiveness of the Caspian Basin so that projects are competitive even at low prices. We are also committed to continuing the Azeri–Chirag–Guneshli ‘Contract of the Century’ project.”

Shafi Aldamer, head of department at the King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, said that oil was not used in political processes, but rather regulated political processes. According to him, OPEC is a stabilizing factor and there is no monopoly in this organization: “Azerbaijan is trying to stabilize the world economy within OPEC+. I think this format will continue.”

Esmira Jafarova, a Board Member of the AIR Center, said that it was at the Davos Forum in 2016 that Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev initiated the establishment of a forum of OPEC and non-OPEC countries. She spoke of the rapid decline in demand for oil, also stating that gas was less exposed. According to her, renewable energy has also more seriously resisted the crisis. Esmira Jafarova said that, without interstate cooperation, it will not be possible to handle these challenges.

Alexander Rar, scientific director of the German–Russian Forum, said that changes in world markets have also led to geopolitical conflicts in the world. He touched on recent discussions over the North Stream 2 project and the threat of U.S. sanctions. According to him, against the background of all this, Germany has privatized energy companies and

left them to market laws.

Ivan Timofeyev, program director of the Valdai Discussion Club, said that the United States is currently a leader in the international financial system. According to him, the dollar is the most widely used currency in the world, and Americans use it as a political tool. He said that, no matter how willing the EU is, companies that move freely in the market will be subject to U.S. law and will move away from Nord Stream.

On the second day of the conference, Azerbaijani Deputy Foreign Minister **Khalaf Khalafov**, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister **Andrei Rudenko**, Russian Deputy Energy Minister **Pavel Sorokin**, and Azerbaijani Deputy Energy Minister **Samir Valiyev** spoke on Russian–Azerbaijani relations, achievements, challenges, and prospects for mutually beneficial relations. The conference was attended by researchers from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) **Nikolai Silayev** and **Sergei Markedonov**, researcher at the Russian Academy of Sciences **Stanislav Pritchkin**, MP **Nizami Safarov**, political scientist **Tofiq Abbasov**, and Deputy Chairman of the Russian Community of Azerbaijan **Anastasia Lavrina**.

The United States in the Caspian Region: A Think-Tank Discussion

On July 30, the Caspian Political Center, a partner of the Center of Analysis of International Relations in the United States, hosted a webinar titled “The United States in the Caspian Region: A Think-Tank Discussion.” Speaking at the webinar, moderated by a member of the Caspian Political Center, Ambassador **Richard Hoagland**, Chairman of the AIR Center **Farid Shafiyev** said that the South Caucasus has long been of interest to many countries, especially Russia. According to him, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, along with Russia, Iran, Turkey, and other countries, the interest of the United States and the European Union in this region has increased. Farid Shafiyev noted that the United States has pursued several major goals in the region since 1991–92. According to him, these goals were related to strengthening the independence of the newly independent countries, supporting the implementation of energy projects, and the global war on terror.



Ambassador Farid Shafiyev also noted that the United States must make a choice of priority countries in the region. He noted that, in this regard, Azerbaijan pursues a balanced policy and has the role of a bridge: “The Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict is a serious threat to the region. Given the recent clashes on the border of north-west Azerbaijan, this conflict does not only jeopardize peace and security, but also vital energy projects.”

Board member of the AIR Center Dr. **Esmira Jafarova** spoke about energy projects in the region and the role of the United States. According to her, since the first days of independence, Azerbaijan has shown itself a reliable partner of the United States and other countries. She also added that Azerbaijan has established a successful energy partnership and the United States has supported these processes. In this regard, Esmira Jafarova highlighted the Southern Gas Corridor project.

Speaking at the event, Ambassador **Giorgi Badridze**, an expert at the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies (Rondeli Foundation), said that the main purpose of U.S. cooperation with the newly independent countries of the region is to support their independence and involve them in international projects.

Iskander Akylbayev, executive director of the Kazakhstan Council on International Relations (KCIR), said that the role of the United States is declining not only in the region, but also in other countries. He stressed that, in this regard, the rise of China has already become more visible.

Eldor Tulyakov, executive director of the Uzbek Development Strategy Center, said that the geostrategic interests of many countries in the Central Asian region, where his country is located, collide. He added, however, that Russia's position in the region remains dominant, and China's interest in the region has grown in recent years.

Brianne Todd, an assistant professor of Central Asian Studies at the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies at the National Defense University, said the U.S. position in various countries would change during the COVID-19 pandemic owing to limited resources. According to her, the United States must make serious decisions on whom to cooperate with in the future. She said that, looking at Central Asia and the Caucasus, the United States will cooperate with countries that want to cooperate with it.

Speaking about projects within the region, the chairman of the Geocase Center, **Victor Kipiani**, highlighted that a high level of interaction can be observed here. He said that the interests of some countries in the region should not be conducted in the form of dictating their interests at the expense of other countries of the region.

An International Webinar Titled “The Non-Aligned Movement and the COVID-19 Pandemic”

An international webinar on “The Non-Aligned Movement and the COVID-19 Pandemic” was organized by the AIR Center on August 4. The moderator of the webinar, Chairman of the AIR Center **Farid Shafiyev**, recalled the virtual summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, organized in May 2020 on the initiative of President Ilham Aliyev. He said that this event was an important one in the history of the organization, creating conditions for its strengthening and demonstrating an adequate response to the coronavirus crisis. Drawing attention also to the convening of a special session of the UN General Assembly at the initiative of Azerbaijan, Ambassador Shafiyev stated that this initiative is of special importance for the activities of the Non-Aligned Movement and contributes

to strengthening the global role of the movement.

Khalid Taimur Akram, Director of the Centre for Global & Strategic Studies of Pakistan, said that the Non-Aligned Movement plays an important role in building international cooperation and solidarity in the face of various crises facing the world. Taimur Akram voiced various proposals to strengthen the movement and expressed confidence that the Non-Aligned Movement’s media forum and meeting of Economy Ministers would be useful for member states.



Vasif Huseynov, Senior Adviser at the AIR Center, said that the members of the Non-Aligned Movement appreciate the initiatives of the President of Azerbaijan, who is the chairman of the organization for 2019–2022, to combat the pandemic. According to him, among these initiatives, the proposal to hold a special session of the UN General Assembly should be noted: “This initiative, which was opposed by Armenia alone, was supported by more

than 130 countries.”

Speaking about the impact of the pandemic on conflicts between states, Dr. Huseynov drew attention to the July events on the Armenian–Azerbaijani border, noting that one of the reasons for the Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan was the internal crisis within the country.

Speaking next, **Jauhen Zadrucki**, a spokesman for the Belarusian Center for Strategic Studies, said the coronavirus pandemic should not be allowed to cause harm to international trade, investment, or other areas. According to him, his country appreciates the activities of the Non-Aligned Movement in this regard and the initiatives of Azerbaijan as chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement.



“Regional Geopolitical Polarization and Turkey–Azerbaijan Relations”

A webinar on “Regional Geopolitical Polarization and Turkey–Azerbaijan Relations” was jointly organized by the AIR Center and the Center for Strategic Research of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey (SAM) on September 16, 2020.

SAM Chairman Dr. **Ufuk Ulutas** noted that there are deep cultural connections between the two states, and these relationships are developing at the strategic, academic, and intellectual levels. According to him, such meetings contribute to the further development of these relations.



Ambassador **Farid Shafiyev**, Chairman of AIR Center, touched upon important events that have recently taken place in the region and around Turkey. He noted that relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey have historical roots, and on September 15, 2020, we marked the 102nd anniversary of Baku’s liberation by the Caucasus Islamic Army under the command of Nuru Pasha.

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, **Yavuz Selim Kiran**, emphasized that, in addition to a strategic partnership, Turkey and Azerbaijan also share friendly and brotherly relations. The Deputy Foreign Minister noted that bilateral relations between the countries had developed under the strong leadership of the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Turkey. Yavuz Selim Kiran noted that the South Caucasus has a strategic importance and location. According to him, the conflicts prevent full-fledged cooperation in the region. He added that the aggressive policy of Armenia is an obstacle to the development of the region: “Armenia has been creating problems in the region.



Armenia resorts to provocation to divert attention from its domestic problems. Turkey continues to strongly support the settlement of the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict in accordance with Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity and international law.”



In turn, Azerbaijani Deputy Foreign Minister **Khalaf Khalafov** stressed that Azerbaijan and Turkey continue to

cooperate successfully in all spheres. Mr. Khalafov stressed that cooperation between the two fraternal countries also contributes to the stability and security of the region. According to him, Turkish support to Azerbaijan in the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict over the occupation of historically Azerbaijani territories by Armenia is very important: “It is worth noting that high-ranking Turkish officials and the public supported Azerbaijan during the Armenian artillery shelling of the Tovuz region on the Armenian–Azerbaijani border on July 12, 2020. The development of relations with Turkey is an important part of Azerbaijan’s foreign policy, and fraternal relations and mutual support between the two countries are not directed against third countries.”

Chief of the Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, Ambassador **Yonet Can Tezel**, noted that stable Turkish–Azerbaijani relations are highly important in an uncertain world. He emphasized that those people who thought that during the Tovuz events Turkey would be very busy in Syria and the Mediterranean were wrong, because Turkey will always support Azerbaijan. He added that Turkey supports Azerbaijan not only owing to historical, cultural, and fraternal ties, but also because of the fair position of Azerbaijan.

Head of Department at the AIR Center, Dr. **Javid Valiyev**, made specific proposals for the development of bilateral relations. According to him, a format of coordination and dialogue between the two countries should be formed at the level of Foreign Ministers. In addition, special attention should be given to those people who write about the foreign and security issues of the countries in the Turkish and Azerbaijani media.

“Open Day” on the Occasion of Uzeyir Hajibeyov’s Birthday

On September 18, an Open Day on the occasion of the famous Azerbaijani composer Uzeyir Hajibeyov’s birthday and a National Music Day were held in the administrative building of the AIR Center, where Uzeyir Hajibeyov’s office was once located. The aim of the Open Day event was to draw attention to the fact of the occupation of Shusha, which is the temple of Azerbaijani music; the continuation of Armenia’s aggression against Azerbaijan; as well as to inform the Azerbaijani public about the great composer’s office room.



The opening ceremony was held in accordance with the requirements of the special quarantine regime in the country because of COVID-19. Ambassador **Farid Shafiyev**, Chairman of the AIR Center, noted that, although the Baku Music Academy has operated in the AIR Center building, the majority of Baku residents do not have information about Uzeyir Hajibeyov’s activity in this room: “Baku city has many secrets. The architecture is beautiful, the central streets are rich with historic buildings. However, many people,



historians and researchers are unaware of the existence of this room. We thought that we should promote it. This event also has political meaning as many famous Azerbaijani cultural figures, including the great composer Uzeyir Hajibeyov, were born in Shusha city. Unfortunately, Shusha and other districts of Azerbaijan are under occupation. The AIR Center deals with various issues of international relations,

and our main work is related to the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict. We want to use this significant day and symbolically choose this room to draw the attention of both Azerbaijan and the world community to the fact of occupation as well as underline that we will never reconcile with the occupation of our territories. Our scientific activity is aimed at the liberation of the occupied territories and returning refugees back to their homes.”

Chairman of the Azerbaijani Community of the Nagorno Karabakh region and MP **Tural Ganjaliyev** thanked the AIR Center for organizing this event. He noted that Uzeyir Hajibeyov had introduced Azerbaijan to the world with his works. He added that “as a Karabakh and Shusha resident, he always lived in Azerbaijan, and his works again proved to the world how many talented personalities were born in Azerbaijan.” He also spoke about his family ties with Shusha city, underlining that Uzeyir Hajibeyov left deep traces in his life. A representative of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan also attended the event.



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“Eurasian Connectivity and Rising Role of the Middle Corridor amidst COVID-19”

On September 22, an international webinar on “Eurasian Connectivity and Rising Role of the Middle Corridor amidst COVID-19” was organized by the AIR Center. Ambassador **Farid Shafiyev**, Chairman of AIR Center, who moderated the webinar emphasized that Azerbaijan, similarly to other countries, has been affected by the consequences of COVID-19, and the crisis has had a negative impact on the global supply chain. He added that COVID-19 is a threat to existing projects; however, during this period and from a transportation standpoint, one could observe an increase in cargo transportation via the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Speaking about the sanitary-epidemiological measures taken at Alat port during the pandemic, Deputy Director General of the Baku International Sea Trade Port CJSC **Akbar Karimov** noted that the epidemiological situation in Alat port is under control and all truck

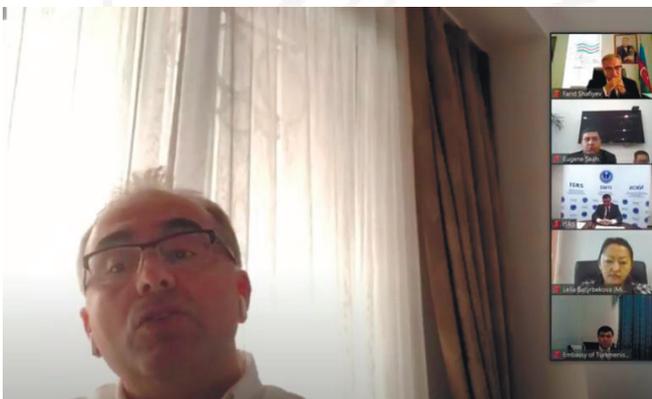


Middle Corridor is considered to be the shortest and safest route between Europe and Asia.”

Leila Batyrbekova, Deputy Secretary General of the international association Trans-Caspian International Association of Kazakhstan, noted that there are active connections between the ports of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, and such activity was also observed during the COVID-19 crisis. She mentioned that about half a million tons of cargo were transported between the ports Alat and Aktau within six months, and it is planned to increase this indicator up to 1 million tons by the end of the year.



Vice-rector of Kadir Has University in Turkey **Dr. Mitat Chelikpala** emphasized that Turkey gives particular importance to Azerbaijan and the South Caucasus region as well as viewing transport projects in this region as a priority. According to him, such projects present good opportunities not only for landlocked countries, but also for Turkey: “The Middle Corridor project is very promising as a global infrastructure project.”



Deputy Director of the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan **Sanjar Valiyev** noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the nature of international relations. According to him, on the one hand, such a situation complicates the cooperation process, but on the other hand, it can also open new opportunities for international



cooperation. The Deputy Director added that Uzbekistan is always ready to cooperate with the Caspian Basin and the regional countries in the above-mentioned projects.



First Secretary for Economic Affairs of the Embassy of Turkmenistan to the Republic of Azerbaijan **Ovazgeldi Jumanazarov** noted that his country was a participant in a number of international initiatives. According to him, Turkmenistan is at the core of global development processes in Central Asia. He specifically emphasized the role of the Baku–Tbilisi–Kars (BTK) railway in the development of the Middle Corridor.

Professor at Afghanistan’s Badakhshan University **Zabehullah Bashardost** touched upon the political and economic opportunities of the Lapis Lazuli Project, which connects Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Afghanistan. According to him, this strategic project provides access to the South Caucasus, the Balkans, and Europe for Afghanistan, which will give serious impetus to the macroeconomic indicators of the country.

Head of Port Operations Department of the Baku International Sea Trade Port CJSC **Yujin Sih** noted that the crisis could be used as an opportunity to facilitate cargo transportation. He also added that digitalization in cargo transportation is very important.



“The Future of Nagorno-Karabakh and Turkish–Azerbaijani Relations”



On October 2, a webinar on “The Future of Nagorno-Karabakh and Turkish–Azerbaijani Relations” was organized by the Center for Strategic Research of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey and the AIR Center. Turkish Deputy Foreign Minister **Yavuz Selim Kiran** noted that Turkey was proud of Azerbaijan’s strong defense against the unilateral attack launched by Armenia on September 27 and its successful

counteroffensive operations. He said that he fully supports the position of the Azerbaijani side regarding the failure of the OSCE Minsk Group in the negotiation process and believes that equalizing the occupying state with the victim of the occupation is unacceptable. At the end of his speech, the Deputy Minister said that no one should doubt that Turkey's unconditional support to Azerbaijan will continue.



Director of the Center for Strategic Research of the Turkish Foreign Ministry **Ufuk Ulutas** expressed confidence about international law being on Azerbaijan's side and that cooperation between Turkey and Azerbaijan will lead to the liberation of the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Ambassador **Farid Shafiyev**, Chairman of the AIR Center, said that Armenia was recognized as an aggressor state under international law, referring to the four UNSC resolutions,

the case of "Chiragov and Others v. Armenia" in the European Court of Human Rights, and documents adopted by other international organizations. Commenting on the calls of some major powers and organizations to suspend ongoing military operations and resume peace talks, Shafiyev said that Armenia's refusal of the Madrid Principles adopted under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group and its attempt to change the format of the negotiation process by involving a third party, as well as setting seven conditions for the resumption of talks in July, had made this impossible. He noted that Azerbaijan was currently implementing self-defense measures in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter.

Speaking about the military aspects of the conflict, Director of the EDAM Security and Defense Research Program **Can Kasapoglu** said that the flouting by Armenia of the four UN Security Council resolutions supporting the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan left the latter with no choice but to liberate its territories through military means.



Chairman of the Caucasian Center for International Relations and Strategic Studies **Araz Aslanli** discussed the chronology of events that led to the deadlock of the negotiation process, as well as the impact of Azerbaijani-Turkish relations on the settlement of the conflict.

Analyzing why the ongoing military operations began on September 27, Director of Security Studies (SETA) **Murat Yesiltash** said that this was organically connected with the July 12 Armenian attack on Tovuz, as well as geopolitical events in Libya, Syria, and the Mediterranean. Referring to Azerbaijan’s growing military power, he said: “The Azerbaijani army has already become an armed force that meets NATO standards.”

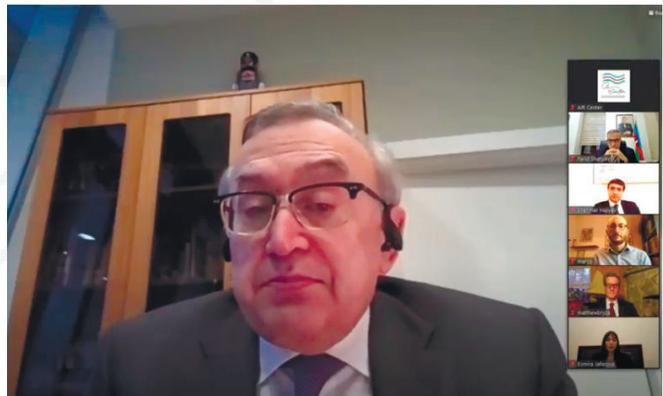
International Webinar held by the AIR Center on the Launch of the TAP Project



On December 15, the Center of Analysis of International Relations organized an international webinar titled “Azerbaijani Natural Gas in Europe and the Role of the Trans Adriatic Pipeline.” Opening the event, Chairman of the AIR Center **Farid Shafiyev** said that the events on the frontline, that is, the Second Karabakh War and the liberation of Azerbaijani lands, have been dominating the news. However, amid these events, the

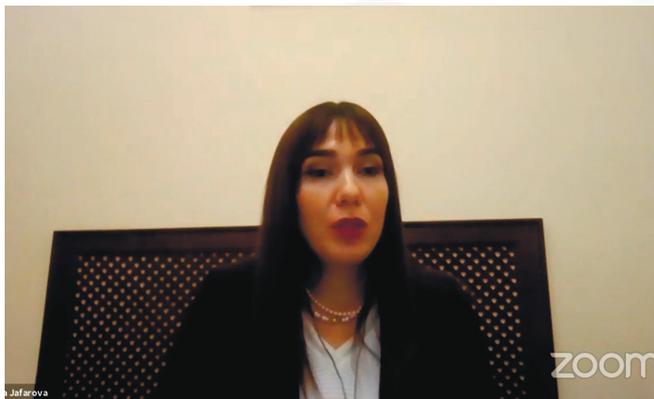
Trans Adriatic Pipeline was completed and became operational. Farid Shafiyev added that although skeptical views on the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan project were voiced in the 1990s, as they also were during the TAP and TANAP projects, today, Azerbaijan has successfully completed the project.

During his talk, SOCAR’s Deputy Vice-President for Investments and Marketing, **Vitaliy Baylarbayov**, said that the Southern Gas Corridor project has a great role to play for the oil and gas industry of Azerbaijan. According to him, this project is one of the most far-reaching projects implemented by Azerbaijan in terms of investment, effort, and the involvement of different countries: “We can say that the first stage of the energy strategy adopted by Azerbaijan years ago is nearing completion. We are days away from the startup of commercial operation of the whole Southern Gas Corridor. Before the end of this year, people in Bulgaria, Greece, and Italy will witness the gas coming into their fireplaces in their houses and into power stations.”



Vitaliy Baylarbeyov also spoke about the July escalation and the Armenian attack launched against energy and transport projects that connect Azerbaijan to Georgia and provide Azerbaijan with access to the West. According to him, in doing so, Armenia tried to demonstrate its power and control over the security of the energy corridor.

The next speaker, former U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan **Matthew Bryza**, a leading expert of the Atlantic Council, referred to the history of energy cooperation and relations between the United States and Azerbaijan, saying that, initially, his country did not have high hopes for projects in Azerbaijan, which had just emerged from war in the early 1990s and was facing an economic crisis. However, later the United States became one of the biggest political supporters of these projects: “Despite all the ideas put forward at that time, Azerbaijan decided to develop the national oil and gas industry. Azerbaijan is currently implementing these projects with its economic opportunities and partners. The physical or economic link between Azerbaijan and the EU is one of the factors ensuring not only the long-term development of Azerbaijan, but also its physical security and independence.”



Speaking next, board member of the AIR Center **Esmira Jafarova** noted that Azerbaijan’s path of becoming an energy-producing and exporting country was never linear or easy. According to her, Azerbaijan has worked closely with international partners and organizations to make these projects a reality, and now Azerbaijan is an exporter of energy security. She spoke about the “3D policy” of diversification, decarbonization, and

demand satisfaction, and touched on the project’s contribution to Europe’s energy security and sustainable development, as well as the idea of diversification of energy sources and meeting the needs of the region.

The final speaker, **Marco Guili**, an associate policy analyst at European Policy Center, stressed the importance of the project in terms of the material, normative, and national interests of Europe. He said that the TAP project has a broad target audience in Europe and will make part of the continent more competitive in the energy sector.



Webinar on U.S.–Azerbaijan relations and the Second Karabakh War

On December 17, the Center of Analysis of International Relations and the Caspian Policy Center (CPC) jointly organized an international webinar titled “Azerbaijan–U.S. Relations: Post-election Developments in the Aftermath of the Second Karabakh War.”



During the event, moderated by CPC’s Security and Politics Program Chair, **Richard Hoagland**, the opening speech was made by **Efgan Nifti**, CPC’s Chief Executive Officer, who stated that the webinar comes at a very significant time for both the U.S.A. and Azerbaijan. Efgan Nifti stated that their organization attaches great importance to the study of U.S.–Azerbaijan relations and, more widely, relations with the Greater Caspian region. In this regard, there is a need to discuss the recent changes in the U.S. Administration and U.S.–Azerbaijani relations in the context of the Second Karabakh War.

AIR Center Chairman **Farid Shafiyev** stated that, with the Second Karabakh War and the restoration of Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity, a new geopolitical reality has emerged in the region. He also mentioned another significant recent event in Azerbaijan, the operational startup of the Trans Adriatic Pipeline. Referring to the Second Karabakh War, Farid Shafiyev said that the 27-year-long negotiations had yielded no results and that the abandonment of the Madrid Principles under Pashinyan’s leadership, as well as the July provocations, had led to full-scale war. He spoke about the activities of the OSCE Minsk Group, and especially France, saying that the country should blame itself for its one-sided approach. According to him, this behavior is not in the spirit of the role of neutral mediator.

Speaking next, the CPC Economy and Energy Program Chair and former U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan, **Robert F. Cekuta**, stated that the U.S.A. traditionally views its relationship with Azerbaijan from a triangular view of security, energy/economic issues, and the rule of law/human rights issues. Despite the Trump administration’s “hands-off approach” to the region, Robert Cekuta stated that Azerbaijan should be of greater interest



for the U.S.A. He stated that recent developments with the Second Karabakh War have dramatically changed the situation in the region, but the United States did not play a role in the process. For the future, Robert Cekuta believes that the new administration can move on to a new stage of relations with Azerbaijan, reconsider some policies, and “in terms of making peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the U.S. can make valuable contributions.”

Richard Morningstar, the founding Director and Chairman of the Global Energy Center at the Atlantic Council and a former U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan, also expressed hope that the Biden Administration would be more involved in Azerbaijan and regional processes in general. According to him, Azerbaijan achieved great success during the Second Karabakh War and, after many years, had managed to liberate a large part of its territory. He said that he wanted the conflict to be resolved completely and that all countries in the region, including Armenia, were interested in that.

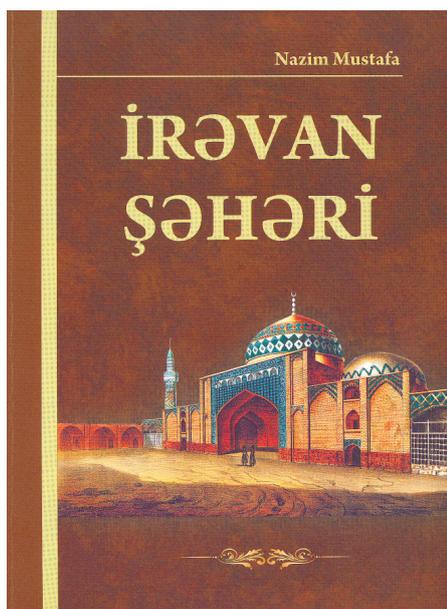


During his talk, **Svante Cornell**, Director of the Central Asia–Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program Joint Center, said that although, on paper, the United States and Azerbaijan are very close partners, this is not the case in reality, and he was not certain it would change any time soon. Touching upon the recent events on the front line, Svante Cornell said that the war had proved that Azerbaijan is no longer a small state, but a mid-sized country: “Azerbaijan is achieving results based on priorities that it sets. You can see it with the conflict, and you can see it also with the domestic policies. This is something that the United States has to realize.”

Speaking next, **Luke Coffey**, director of the Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies at the Heritage Foundation, made a number of proposals for the future of U.S.–Azerbaijan relations. According to him, under the new Administration, more officials should visit Azerbaijan. He also stressed the importance of opening a U.S. consulate in Ganja, Azerbaijan’s second-largest city, located close to the conflict zone and Georgia.



PUBLICATIONS



Nazim Mustafa's monograph *Yerevan City* (in Azerbaijani)

Department Head of the Presidential Library and Doctor of Philosophy in History, Nazim Mustafa's book, published with the financial support of the AIR Center, is intended for historians, researchers, analysts, and students, as well as the general public. The book consists of 10 chapters, 22 sections and 292 pages. The book recounts the history of Yerevan, an ancient political and cultural center; the process of settlement of Armenians in and around Yerevan; and the ethnic composition of the population, while also giving detailed information about the city's architectural monuments and their fate, and examples of Yerevan's art, theater, literary environment, press, science, culture, and statesmen. The book also discusses the past

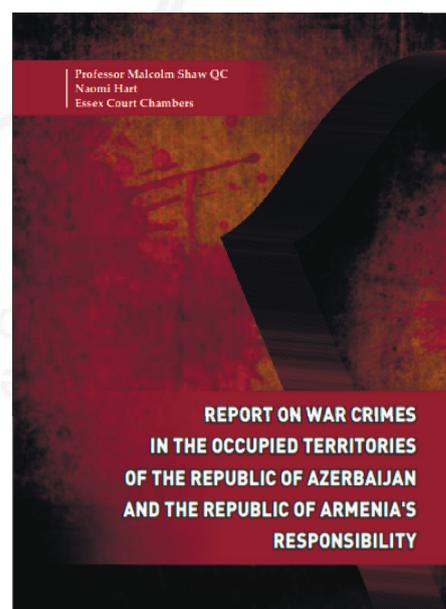
events leading to the present monoethnic structure of the Armenian capital, including massacres and deportations of Azerbaijanis since the beginning of the 20th century.

The first edition of the book, titled *Yerevan City: How Was Turkic-Islamic Existence Destroyed?* was published in 2015 by Berkan Yayinevi Publishing House in Ankara. Over the past few years, the author has reworked the book and enriched it with new facts and resources. The author's knowledge of the Armenian language enabled him to use Armenian sources. There are plans for the book to be republished in Russian and English.

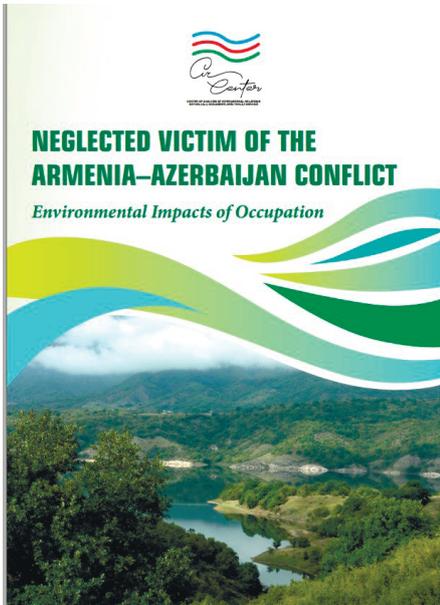
Malcolm Shaw and Naomi Hart: "Report on War Crimes in the Occupied Territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia's Responsibility"

This 124-page report on war crimes in the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia's responsibility was prepared by Malcolm Shaw and Naomi Hart, well-known international lawyers, with the support of the Center of Analysis of International Relations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Azerbaijan International Development Agency, and the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations.

The report consists of two parts. The first, titled "The Essential Framework," provides an overview of international humanitarian law and analyzes Armenia's responsibilities. The second section provides a detailed analysis of war



crimes against civilian property, cruelty to prisoners, hostage taking, ethnic cleansing, forced relocation, destruction of cultural heritage, and environmental crimes that resulted in deaths and injuries among civilians. The report also refers to UN Security Council Resolutions 822, 853, 874, and 884 of 1993, which unequivocally support the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and inviolability of the borders of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the fact that the Nagorno-Karabakh region is part of the Republic of Azerbaijan.



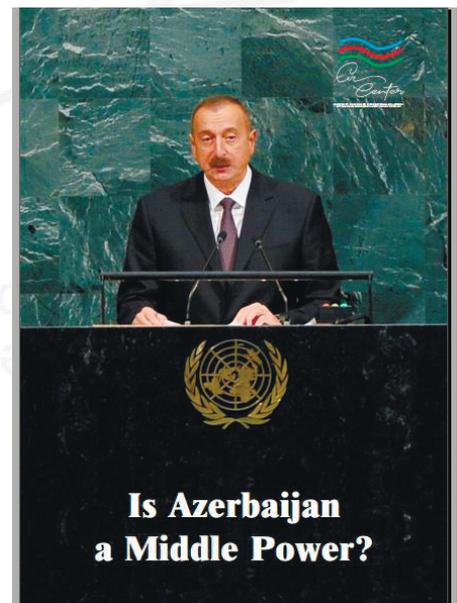
Farid Shafiyev, Vasif Huseynov, Hans-Joachim Heintze, and Natalino Ronzitti: “Neglected Victim of Armenia–Azerbaijan Conflict: Environmental Impacts of Occupation”

This publication, prepared on the basis of the report of the same name, provides information on the environmental consequences of the occupation of Azerbaijani territories and international law related to the protection of the environment in armed conflicts.

The report exposes the environmental crimes committed by the Armenian government in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and examines the legal possibility of bringing Armenia to justice for those crimes. It is noted that Armenia not only committed crimes against the civilian population of Azerbaijan, killing thousands of innocent people and expelling up to a million Azerbaijanis, but also severely exploited the natural resources of the occupied territories, polluted water resources, and cut down trees.

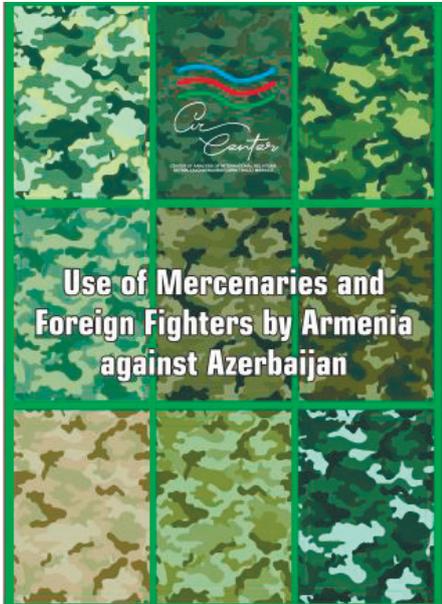
Is Azerbaijan a Middle Power?

This article by Esmira Jafarova, a board member of the AIR Center, looks at Azerbaijan’s successful foreign, economic and energy policy since independence. It is noted that Azerbaijan has had a balanced foreign policy and has worked successfully at the international and regional levels based on mutually beneficial cooperation, multilateral diplomacy, sustainable development, multinationalism, inter-religious dialogue, and so on. Although geographically it is a small state, in terms of promoting such values and assuming the role of a “norm entrepreneur,” it has already gained a reputation as a medium-sized power for its work, passion, and high sense of responsibility at the international level.



In the same publication, Canadian author Robert Cutler’s article on “Multilateral

Diplomacy and Azerbaijani Diplomacy” provides a comparative analysis of Azerbaijan’s foreign policy and that of Canada, which has been presented as a medium-sized power since the mid-1950s. At the same time, attention is drawn to the important role of multilateral diplomacy in Azerbaijan’s foreign policy. The priorities of Canada and Azerbaijan as medium-sized powers are analyzed.



“Use of Mercenaries and Foreign Fighters by Armenia against Azerbaijan” (published in English and Russian)

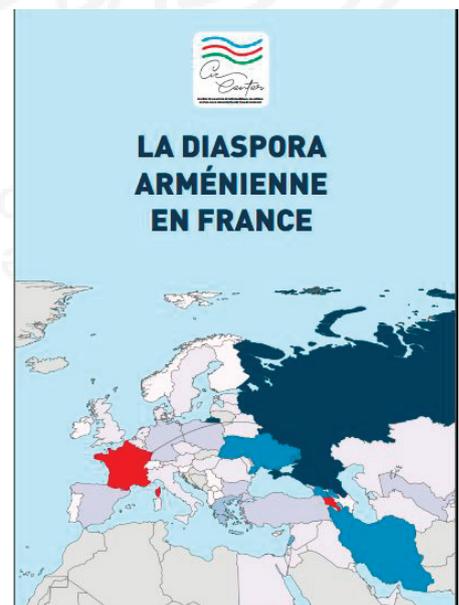
This publication is based on a report prepared jointly by a group of AIR Center staff (G.Pashayeva, I.Huseynova, R.Asgarova, and S.Bagirova). The report is informative on the use of mercenaries and foreign fighters by Armenia against Azerbaijan during the Second Karabakh War (September 27–November 9, 2020).

The report first provides an assessment of the legal framework governing such actions, including the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries, which the National Assembly of Armenia has recently ratified. The two sections of this report then focus on the recruitment of mercenaries and foreign fighters, respectively. The authors examined the numerous sources of information available via various Internet resources and social networks, as well as sources provided by law enforcement agencies, and collected relevant information about the participation of citizens of other countries in military operations against Azerbaijan on behalf of the Armenian armed forces. Armenian diaspora organizations are closely involved in this process. This is a gross violation of international law, international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and international refugee law.

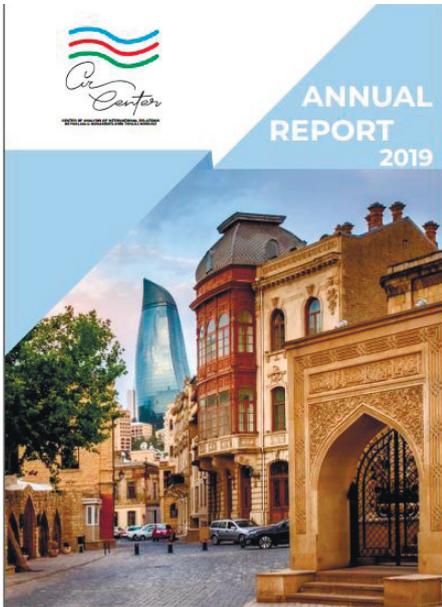
“La Diaspora Arménienne en France” (published in French)

This publication was prepared on the basis of a report of the same name by GOJEP, an organization founded by Turks operating in France at the suggestion of the AIR Center. The report consists of two parts.

The first part deals with the settlement of Armenians in France, their political activities, and their organizations. This section also analyzes the relations of Armenian organizations in France with French political circles and parliamentarians. The second part of the report examines the activities of Armenian organizations in France in support



of the self-proclaimed regime in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The events organized by these organizations, including financial assistance and visits of French senators and politicians to the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, are discussed. It is planned to publish the report in France in 2021.



AIR Center's Annual Report (2019)

The brochure comprising the AIR Center's report for 2019 outlines the main mission and activities of the Center, the activities carried out over six months, visits abroad, meetings, cooperation with foreign partners, and so on. At the same time, the publication provides detailed information on the Center's cooperation with both local and foreign media, as well as articles published by AIR Center's staff abroad.

Hatem Jabbarli: Armenian Language textbook (published in Azeri)

Hatem Jabbarli's textbook on the Armenian language was first published in 2015. The second edition of the Armenian Language textbook is revised and enriched, with the use of additional sources. This publication consists of 5 parts and 32 lessons. The textbook contains 182 works, 54 reading texts, and a dictionary. The answers to the exercises marked with an asterisk (*) are given at the end of the textbook.



PROGRAMS

Internship

The mission of the AIR Center is to set a track record of building trust and fostering collaborative teams that generate practical solutions for decision-makers. Therefore, the Internship Program at the AIR Center provides talented students and recent graduates with 3 to 6 months of unpaid training opportunity designed to encourage professional and personal development. The internship offers a stimulating, supportive work environment and an ideal opportunity to acquire substantive professional experience for those interested in a career in Foreign Policy or International Affairs.

Qualifications and requirements:

- Excellent analytical and writing skills, and previous research experience
- Fluency in English is required; an additional language is a plus
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office programs
- Should be an undergraduate or graduate student pursuing a degree in International Relations, International Law, Political Science, Regional Studies, Economics, Security Studies, or similar fields
- Previous experience in a think tank, foundation, NGO, government body, or similar organization is desirable
- Specific interest in the Caspian Region and the Caucasus is also desired.

Specific tasks:

- Search for source materials for analytical papers, collect and summarize relevant literature and sources, and prepare literature reviews
- Help with proofreading, fact-checking, and editing
- Contribute to the writing and preparation of analyses, reports, updates, etc.
- Research, monitor, and document developments related to specific issues
- Help in data management and presentation
- Contribute to creating news briefs and bulletins
- Assist in the planning and implementation of AIR Center events; attend and report on external events, conferences, and roundtables.

You will obtain:

- Research methods, data gathering, and analysis techniques
- Skills in writing and editing written work
- Skills in preparing and writing policy analysis papers and reports
- Understanding of the nature and scope of work of a think tank
- Experience in the development of effective mechanisms for the implementation of foreign and domestic policy.

Application procedure:

- A cover letter explaining your motivation for applying, interest in the position, and documents proving the relevant skills
- Resume/Curriculum Vitae
- A writing sample on a relevant topic
- Two recommendation letters (from a professor, present employer, or supervisor)

To apply, please email info@aircenter.az

Scholarships

The AIR Center Scholarship Awards Program (ASAP) is being launched to offer international scholarship to foreign students, experts, scholars, academics, and non-profit organization experts. The ASAP intends to provide scholarships for postgraduate study and professional development every year. The scholarships are provided by the ASAP Selection Committee for individuals with demonstrable leadership potential who also have strong academic backgrounds and a strong vision for the future.

*The main purpose of the scholarship is to enhance studies about Azerbaijan and the whole region. Researchers with fresh and *creative perspectives and ideas in strengthening international peace and security, identifying, and preventing possible foreign threats to Azerbaijan's sovereignty, and especially on the Armenia–Azerbaijan post-conflict period are welcomed.**

The AIR Center is an open platform giving access to a wide range of exclusive academic, professional, and cultural experience by providing training for skilled students, professionals, and academics. Towards this end, the ASAP is a unique opportunity to build an international network of researchers. The ASAP will also enable foreign researchers to experience Azerbaijan's heritage, history, and culture.

Applicants should submit:

CV, two letters of recommendation, a project description, as well as a sample of previous research, articles, etc., by email to: info@aircenter.az

If your application is successful, the ASAP will notify you via email that you have been provisionally selected. You are expected to adhere to high standards of behavior and to show respect to local traditions and guidelines set by the AIR Center. Foreign applicants are expected to reside in Azerbaijan during the scholarship period and return to their home countries after the end of that period.

Today, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, scholarships can be given for remote research for a period of 3–6 months. For more information and inquiries please contact info@aircenter.az

Volunteer

The AIR Center also offers some programs in youth development that extend invaluable opportunities to learn and build new skills. In addition to becoming a part of a great team, volunteers can add relevant experience to their resumes.

Through volunteering experiences, the AIR Center strives to offer highly motivated students and young professionals the opportunity to get involved in the creative and professional community of the Center through beneficial projects, conferences, high-level event organization, and administrative work. Selected volunteers have to work closely with the Center's staff in the run-up to events and assist in a wide array of logistical and administrative tasks during the respective conferences, including but not limited to guest relations, production, organization management, transportation assistance, and media. Through the AIR Center, the volunteers have a chance to strengthen their leadership capacity and enhance their integration into the labor market.

Requirements:

- Students or young professionals of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- Fluent in Azerbaijani and English: Other languages are desirable.
- Have excellent communication skills, strong interest in our programs, motivation to work flexible hours, and capacity to handle logistical and administrative work.
- Tolerant and willing to perform job duties assigned by a supervisor
- Able to work in a team and foster teamwork in a positive way.

The AIR Center is an open platform for talented youth to identify and develop their skills. For their valued involvement and unfailing commitment, the volunteers will be certified and recommended to concerned entities and potential employers. If you are a good communicator who shares our values, the AIR Center invites you to get in touch.

CAUCASUS STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVES

In 2020, Caucasus Strategic Perspectives (CSP), the AIR Center's semi-academic journal on foreign and security policy, was launched and the first issue was published.

The main purpose of CSP is to provide a platform for debates between researchers and scholars from the South Caucasus and abroad (Russia, Turkey, and other regions), and to contribute to academic discussion on broad economic, political, and social



issues in the Caucasus as a whole and in individual countries with the aim of promoting the exchange of views in the region and beyond. The magazine publishes articles on other countries and regions, including Turkey, Iran, Central Asia, Russia, Europe, and the United States, as well as on all aspects of international relations. Each issue will focus on a global or regional theme and will include perspectives from policymakers, area specialists, and diplomatic professionals along with academics from different countries and backgrounds.



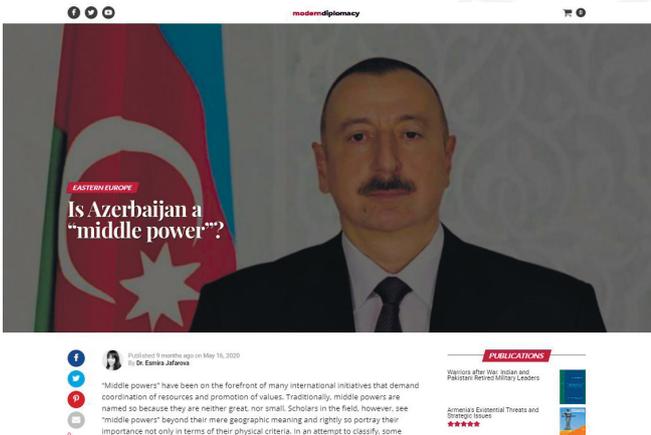
The first issue of the CSP journal, “The Non-Aligned Movement and its Prospects in International Affairs” (Volume 1, Issue 1, Summer 2020), focused on the current dynamics of this organization, highlighting Azerbaijan’s chairmanship within the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

The authors of the CSP magazine have analyzed the prospects for cooperation within the NAM, the relevance of the Movement, and the concept of non-alignment in the foreign policy of member states. While analyzing these topics, the authors also presented their views on the challenges of these factors for the foreign policies of the NAM member states.

The journal welcomes lucid, well-documented papers on other countries and regions including, in particular, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia, Russia, Europe, and the United States, as well as on all aspects of international affairs, from all political viewpoints. The journal will focus largely on the Caucasus neighborhood but will do so within a global context. CSP’s focus on the region and its neighborhood is informed and guided by a strong awareness of the global and regional context. Each issue focuses on a global or regional theme and includes perspectives from policymakers, area specialists, and diplomatic professionals along with academics of different countries and backgrounds. It seeks to present a global and regional perspective on issues affecting the Caucasus neighborhood and focuses broadly on the role of the region in international contexts and policymaking.

ARTICLES

In 2020, the AIR Center's staff published over 150 articles across more than 30 media portals and academic websites in Turkey, the United States, Canada, Latin America, Europe, and Russia. The articles primarily focused on the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict, including the July 12 provocation and the 44-day war starting on September 27; Azerbaijan's victory; and post-war processes. Additionally, some articles also covered Azerbaijan's chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement as well as energy and transport projects. Moreover, these from some of the articles in English were translated and sent to the Azerbaijani media and published in leading local electronic and print media outlets.



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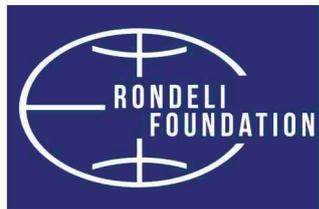
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