

Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst

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*Central Asia- Caucasus Institute
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THE CENTRAL ASIA-CAUCASUS ANALYST

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Analytical Articles require a three to four sentence Key Issue introduction to the article based on a news hook. Rather than a general, overarching analysis, the article must offer considered and careful judgment supported with concrete examples. The ideal length of analytical articles is between 1,100 and 1,500 words. The articles are structured as follows:

KEY ISSUE: A short 75-word statement of your conclusions about the issue or news event on which the article focuses.

BACKGROUND: 300-450 words of analysis about what has led up to the event or issue and why this issue is critical to the region. Include background information about the views and experiences of the local population.

IMPLICATIONS: 300-450 words of analysis of the ramifications of this event or issue, including where applicable, implications for the local people's future.

CONCLUSIONS: 100-200 words that strongly state your conclusions about the impact of the event or issue.

Field Reports focus on a particular news event and what local people think about the event. Field Reports address the implications the event or activity analyzed for peoples' lives and their communities. Field Reports do not have the rigid structure of Analytical Articles, and are shorter in length, averaging ca. 700-800 words.

Those interested in joining *The Analyst's* pool of authors to contribute articles, field reports, or contacts of potential writers, please send your CV to: <scornell@jhu.edu> and suggest some topics on which you would like to write.

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GEORGIA SUFFERS SET-BACK AT THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE, BUT WINS ACCEPTANCE OF RUSSIA AS A CONFLICT PARTY

Johanna Popjanevski

On April 1 the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that it lacked jurisdiction with regard to a claim filed by Georgia in August 2008, concerning acts of cleansing and discrimination of ethnic Georgians before and during the Georgia-Russia war. The Court's unusually strong emphasis on procedural requirements, along with divided views among its members, suggests that the Court had difficulties tackling the political dimensions of the case. The ICJ nonetheless dismissed Russia's argument that no dispute exists between Georgia and Russia – opening up to future deliberations on the merits of the case and confirming Tbilisi's arguments that Russia is a conflict party rather than a peace broker in the region.

BACKGROUND: Georgia filed its claim against Russia at the Hague-based International Court of Justice on August 12, 2008, immediately after an EU-brokered ceasefire agreement had been reached between Tbilisi and Moscow. Tbilisi claimed that Russia had violated the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) through interventions in Georgia's secessionist territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia during three separate phases starting from the early 1990s up until the end of hostilities in August 2008. It argued that Russia, through own state organs and through its control over the South Ossetian and Abkhazian militia, had pursued a two-decades-long campaign in the two regions which resulted in the death of thousands of Georgians and the displacement of more than 300,000 ethnic Georgians from their homes.

Russia filed several formal objections to the applicability of the CERD in relation to Georgia's claims – two of which were addressed by the Court in its April 1 ruling. The first

objection concerned the absence of a dispute between Georgia and Russia within the meaning of the CERD. Indeed, Russia has long denied being a conflict party in the region, arguing instead that Georgia's conflicts are issues to be resolved between Georgia and its secessionist capitals. Equally, throughout the hearing process in relation to the recently dismissed case, Russia maintained that it is a peacemaker in relation to Georgia's conflicts. The Court dismissed this argument, clearly stating that there was evidence of a dispute between the parties with regard to events during the August 2008 war. Surprisingly however, the Court refrained from acknowledging the existence of a dispute within the meaning of the CERD during the two phases *before* the August 2008 events.

Moscow's second objection was more successful. Russia argued that the Court lacked jurisdiction because Georgia had not initiated negotiations with Moscow prior to filing its claim in accordance with the procedural rules of the CERD. It claimed that Georgia had not



(Reuters)

complained about ethnic cleansing or discrimination before it filed its claim in the wake of the August 2008 war. The Court examined the different language versions of the Convention, and found that Georgia's claim did not fulfill the conditions laid down in its article 22, which defines a dispute as "not settled by negotiation". "Negotiation" was defined by the Court as a "genuine attempt by one of the disputing parties to engage in discussions with the other disputing party, with a view to resolving the dispute". Against this background, the ICJ ruled with 10 votes to 6 that it could not proceed to the merit stage of the case.

Importantly however, the Court was far from unanimous. In a separate opinion to the ruling, five of the Court's members, including ICJ President Hisashi Owada, expressed their strong disagreement with the decision on two key points. The judges jointly argued that the threshold set by the Court both with regard to the timing of when a dispute emerged, as well as the need for pre-trial bilateral negotiations, was unjustifiably high. They stated that "Georgia had long accused Russia of being responsible, by action or omission, for the ethnic cleansing it alleges was committed

against Georgian citizens in Abkhazia and South Ossetia", and thus, that the Court should have dismissed Russia's second objection as well.

The April 1 decision by the Court was met with varied reactions in Tbilisi. In commenting on the ruling, Georgian Foreign Minister Grigol Vashadze referred to the numerous negotiations taking place in relation to

Abkhazia and South Ossetia since 1991, arguing that the procedural requirements put forward by the ICJ was merely an excuse by the Court not to consider the case. Georgia's Deputy Justice Minister Tina Burjaliani was more optimistic, stating that the ruling opens up to future legal actions against Russia once the requirements have been met. Indeed, as the ICJ ruling makes no prejudice to the allegations put forward by Georgia, it does not prevent the Georgian side from filing a new claim in the future.

IMPLICATIONS: The decision by the ICJ to dismiss the Georgia-Russia case on technical basis is ill-timed. The case constituted the first opportunity for the Court to address some of the legal aspects of the lengthy conflict between Georgia and Russia, which so far has failed to be resolved at the international level. Especially in view of the continuous deadlock in the Geneva negotiations, the Court could have played an important role in bringing clarity to issues that continue to hamper progress in the negotiations.

Moreover, by arguing that Georgia has not raised these issues directly with Russia before taking the issue to the ICJ, the court

significantly raised the threshold for procedural requirements with regard to the Court's jurisdiction. Needless to say, at the time when the claim was filed there was little prospect of direct negotiations between Tbilisi and Moscow. Thus, pre-conditioning court proceedings with direct bilateral talks on specific issues is a sturdy requirement in this case. This was acknowledged by the dissenting Court members in their separate opinion to the April 1 ruling, who argued that the Court should have adopted a far more flexible approach with regard to article 22 of the CERD in its ruling. The five judges stated that "no one can seriously think it reasonable to have required Georgia to attempt to resolve its dispute with Russia through negotiations after 12 August 2008; it is unrealistic to believe that on that date there remained even the slightest chance of a negotiated settlement of the dispute, as defined before the Court". They went on to argue that "in our view, it is sufficient for the applicant clearly to make known the existence and tenor of its claims against the other party, thereby enabling the latter to express its position [...] that is exactly what happened in this case". Indeed, starting from the late 1990s, Georgia has repeatedly expressed its disapproval of Russia's actions against the ethnic Georgian population in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, both at the international level and in direct communications with Moscow.

The Court's emphasis on pre-procedural elements is also in stark contrast to previous case practice by the ICJ, where similar requirements have not limited the Court's jurisdiction. This suggests that the political sensitivity of the Georgia-Russia case may have factored into the Court's decision not to move forward to the merit stage of proceedings.

However, in its ruling the ICJ made some noteworthy statements, which provide ground for consideration of the merits of the case at a later stage. In particular, the Court made an important point when it rejected Russia's argument that no dispute exists between Georgia and Russia. This is an important accomplishment, not least in relation to the Geneva negotiations where Russia continues to deny its role as a conflict party. Thus, it proves that Russia's argument that it maintains a role as a peace guarantor in the region, and that the conflicts over Abkhazia and South Ossetia are to be resolved between Tbilisi and its secessionist capitals, does not hold water in international law.

CONCLUSIONS: While unfortunate, the decision by the ICJ not to move forward with the proceedings at this stage should not be seen as determinative with regard to the future outcome of the CERD dispute. Indeed, Georgia is likely to re-file its complaint once the procedural demands have been met. The April 1 ruling nevertheless indicates that the ICJ may prove reluctant to handle aspects of the Georgia-Russia dispute that took place prior to the events of August 2008. This is troublesome, as it unfairly portrays the 2008 war as an isolated event rather than a gradually escalating conflict tracing back more than two decades. Such an approach by the Court also fails to address Russia's role in the displacement of the more than 200,000 IDPs that remain stranded in Georgia proper as a result of the conflicts in the region in the early 1990s.

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KAZAKHSTAN TAKES UNIVERSITIES GLOBAL

Rafis Abazov

Since independence, Kazakhstan has actively experimented with education reforms in order to train its own specialists for the country's rapidly expanding economy. With the establishment of the Nazarbayev University and the introduction of several legislative measures giving it a special independent status, Kazakhstan's government intends to create a globally competitive higher education institution. Opinions on the project are divided. Some believe that the establishment of a new education institution where internationally and locally recruited faculty would teach most of the subjects in English and supervise world-class research projects is a leap forward for Kazakhstan's education system. Others are quite skeptical, claiming it would be better to spend more money and time reforming the existing university system.

BACKGROUND: The establishment of the western-style Nazarbayev University in 2010, a US\$ 2 billion project, reflects the rise of so-called 'Global Universities' in some developing countries, notably Abu Dhabi and Kuwait where such ambitious 'Global Universities' were established as host campuses of some of the most prestigious western universities. It is also a logical step in Kazakhstan's series of reforms in the field of education. Indeed, since independence in 1991 Kazakh policy makers have employed various approaches and strategies in modernizing the national education system, improving the quality of education and attempting to raise standards to international levels. Kazakhstan was among the first in the Central Asian region to allow the establishment of private universities and colleges across the country. It was also among the first countries in the region to abandon the Soviet-style system of higher education and to join the Bologna process, introducing a western-style three-cycle education structure (bachelor's–master's–doctorate). In order to quickly train a large number of international-quality professionals for its public sector, Kazakhstan sent about 15,000 students abroad between 1994 and 2010 under the Bolashak

(Future) program. The program provides full funding for education in foreign countries, including tuition fees and living and travel expenses. The condition for funding has been simple and clear: graduates have to return to their home country and work for the government or various government agencies for five years. Hundreds of Bolashak graduates returned to Kazakhstan bringing important know-how and expertise in crucial fields – from banking and energy to public management and engineering.

Among the innovations introduced during the last two decades was an attempt to establish western-style Research and Development (R&D) at certain national universities and to encourage international collaboration. Kazakhstan transformed its Academy of Sciences from a center of R&D into a public organization and attempted to channel all R&D funding to specialized agencies such as the National Innovation Fund, and to various universities across the country. However, these education and R&D reforms produced mixed results. On the one hand, academics undertook more research projects; especially projects funded by the state through competitive grants and initiatives, and expanded worldwide



collaboration. On the other hand, many of these research projects remained on paper, failing to produce the expected impact on the innovation industries, development of indigenous know-how or new internationally competitive products, patents and ideas.

IMPLICATIONS: Education reforms and the related changes have had a huge impact on Kazakhstan's education sector and the Kazakh economy. Experts and policy makers continue to debate the merits and outcomes of the reforms and have been polarized in their views. On the one hand, these changes helped to create a dynamic labor market, in which a new generation of western-trained young professionals plays a major role. Several sectors of the national economy have been built practically from scratch, notably banking, finance, legal and some other service sectors – with young graduates, especially from leading western universities, filling most of the positions, making these sectors the most

competitive in the CIS zone. For example, the KazKommertsBank, established in 1990, has been frequently cited as being among the top banks in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region.

The returning graduates also brought fresh and dynamic blood into the civil service sector. At the middle management level, and in some agencies all the way to the top, these services have been staffed by young and energetic former Bolashak students (*Bolashak tulekteri*, as they call themselves). This change in cadre has helped to reduce red tape and inefficiencies and to improve professionalism (especially if compared to neighboring countries in the region), achieving position number 72 out of 139 in the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) 2010–2011 and 65th place in the GCI's higher education and training section, at least 20 notches better than any of the neighboring Central Asian states.

Critics, however, highlight some negative impacts and shortcomings. First, there are significant distortions and mismatches in the labor market. Many observers and even the Bolashak students themselves complain that too many graduates have been returning back with advanced degrees in law, general management and international affairs and there are simply not enough jobs for them. A significant number of graduates have recently been assigned to do work far below their qualifications, or work at positions other than the ones they trained for.

On many occasions managers also complain that the Bolashak graduates have very strong theoretical knowledge and were trained to work in a western corporate environment, but they easily get lost in the local working environment and have difficulties adjusting to it. In addition, as the number of Bolashak students sent abroad shot from 300 to 3,000 per year, there was a significant negative impact on the prestige, quality and student demographics of the local universities. Though the Kazakh government pays full tuition fees for Kazakh students at the most prestigious and most expensive universities around the world, local Kazakh professors are still significantly underpaid and the brightest students go to foreign universities and do not bother applying locally. This erodes the prestige of the teaching profession and very few young people are currently heading to work at institutions of high learning, especially at tertiary technical colleges and lyceums.

CONCLUSIONS: In a *Newsweek* interview John Sexton, president of New York University, defined his vision of a “global university” as an institution linked by “global technologies” and taught by “global professors”. The establishment of the new university in an environment designed to make it globally competitive and to divert a portion of Bolashak

students to study at an international level but on national soil, is a step in the right direction. Yet, education officials should also undertake some solid planning in order to incorporate the local context, local case studies and links to local institutions in order to avoid isolation from the realities of Kazakhstan's economy and labor market. The Nazarbayev University should not be a foreigner on Kazakhstan's soil; it should position itself as a national educational center and a hub where educators from around the country and from around the region can learn about pedagogical approaches, incorporation of new media and IT into the teaching process, developing critical thinking among the students and gaining educational know-how to transfer to their home institutions. In addition, the NU should not only encourage links with the best global universities and R&D centers, it should also establish strong relations with the local private sector, especially with small and medium enterprises, which crave energetic, motivated and highly organized professionals, managers and venture capitalists.

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SECURITY CONCERNS AHEAD OF THE 2014 SOCHI OLYMPICS

Emil Souleimanov

Russian authorities have recently announced that around 70,000 persons of various professional backgrounds will serve during the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, a Northwest Caucasian seaport city with a population of 350,000 in the Krasnodar province. Within this number, an army of 25,000 volunteers, predominantly young men and women coming from all over Russia, will be established. This and other factors, coupled with the increased activities of the Western wing of the self-proclaimed Caucasus Emirate raise a range of security concerns ahead of the upcoming Olympics.

BACKGROUND: As Moscow seems to consider a smooth completion of the Olympics as a major opportunity to improve the country's image abroad and invests billions of dollars into the preparations, some groups within Russia are less happy with the upcoming games.

This first and foremost concerns the North Caucasian insurgents. Having declared a war of attrition on Russia, they do not hesitate to indiscriminately attack targets in Russia proper, regardless of civilian fatalities. Recent terrorist attacks in the Moscow subway (March 2010) and Moscow's Domodedovo airport (January 2011) testified to their ability to carry out full-scale operations even in a remote and hostile environment, with the Kabarda-Balkaria-Karachay jamaat becoming one of the leaders of the insurgency (see the 03/02/2011 issue of the CACI Analyst).

Second, Adyghe/Circassian nationalists regard the Sochi area, and especially the location called Krasnaya polyana where the core of the Olympic infrastructure is to be built, a mass grave containing the bodies of thousands of indigenous Adyghe, mostly women and children massacred during what they call the Circassian genocide of the nineteenth century. The event is believed to have claimed the lives of over a million Circassians and exterminated

some Adyghe tribes completely. Virtually all Circassians were ethnically cleansed from the area and hundreds of thousands of the survivors were expelled to the Ottoman Empire – symbolically through the seaport of Sochi. Representatives of Adyghe nationalist organizations point to the fact that the Olympics are to take place on the 150th anniversary of the end of the Great Caucasian War. Indeed, the Russian army celebrated its final victory over the rebelling Adyghe tribes of what is now the Krasnodar province in Krasnaya polyana on May 24, 1864.

Third, even though local inhabitants are generally eager to benefit financially from the wide range of opportunities during the upcoming event, some of them are deeply concerned with what they view as a serious ecological catastrophe as Olympic infrastructure is built on the territory of the unique North Caucasus biospherical national reservation. Archaeological sites dating back thousands of years are routinely being destroyed in the course of constructing highways. It is not uncommon that Olympic infrastructure is built with little respect for the private property rights of ordinary Sochians, whose houses and lands are appropriated with



STR/AFP/Getty Images

inadequate compensation, the most notable case being the ongoing conflict between the inhabitants of Sochi's Imeretian valley and authorities.

IMPLICATIONS: Russian authorities are obviously fully aware of the terrorist threat during the upcoming Olympics and will do their best to reduce any risk of terrorist attacks to a minimum. As construction works are proceeding, Russian security forces carry out strict control of people, transport and goods using advanced technologies. An unofficial ban has recently been placed on the participation of North Caucasian companies in public tenders for construction works in the Sochi area. Moreover, Olympic construction projects do not hire workers from the ethnic autonomous regions of the North Caucasus, a fact that has already stirred some inter-ethnic tension in the region. The precise requirements for selecting volunteers are as yet unknown as the official recruitment is to start in 2012, but it is likely that similarly discriminating criteria will be applied to ensure that potentially unreliable natives of the North Caucasus are kept away from the Olympic infrastructure.

It is likely that a special regime will be introduced during the Olympics in the entire

Krasnodar province, which will be upheld by members of the federal security forces transferred specifically for this purpose from Russia proper to minimize the risk of insurgents infiltrating the Olympic staff. Russian secret services are aware of the general unreliability of local security forces and prefer acting on their own, avoiding informing locals of forthcoming major anti-

terrorist raids, as was the case during a massive anti-terrorist assault in Ingushetia this March. The Russian security forces would obviously prefer to put an end to the Caucasus Emirate before the Olympics start, but given its generally ineffective methods and the very organization of the Islamist insurgency in the North Caucasus, this task is likely unachievable.

Whether the North Caucasus insurgents will be considering terrorist attacks against the Olympics will mainly depend on their actual agenda and technical capabilities in 2014. Considering the internal radicalization of the North Caucasus insurgency movement in recent years and the limited sympathy from the outside world for the movement, attacks can be expected to be rather high-profile and indiscriminate. The completion of an event of this magnitude in the immediate vicinity of insurgency centers is unique as it provides the insurgents with a welcome opportunity inform the entire world know about themselves and their political aspirations, moreover on territory they consider their own.

From a Russian perspective, the 2014 Olympics will test the contested ability of federal security

forces to effectively coordinate the work of dozens of thousands of people grouped in a wide range of agencies. This has traditionally been their weakest point, a fact frequently proven during massive anti-terrorist raids. Widespread corruption, especially in the ranks of police forces, remains a major problem and it is very unlikely that it will disappear overnight in Russia's probably most corrupt region.

As Sergey Markedonov points out in this regard, "as long as the major goal of [Russian] police is wearing down ordinary people and the secret forces deal with mythical 'Orange revolutions' and foreign NGOs, the Olympics will be extremely vulnerable". Since Islamist insurgents mostly rely on suicide bombers to carry out massive terrorist attacks, and thus have no concern for the terrorists' exit routes, it will be an extremely difficult task for the authorities to routinely control hundreds of thousands of guests on a relatively large territory to ensure that there is not a single bomb blast in crowded areas.

The authorities' desire to reduce the risk of terrorist attacks by preventing native North Caucasians from taking part in construction projects is also questionable. In the Krasnodar province in general and the Sochi area in particular, they are rather strong demographically. After all, the Krasnodar province contains the Adyghean autonomous republic within its borders. Numerous North Caucasian natives cannot simply be isolated from the area for the period of the Olympics. Besides, carrying out overtly discriminating measures against them is likely only to further stir already latent interethnic tension between on the one hand groups of North Caucasian natives, forging their internal solidarity, and on the other local Russians, strengthening the support among North Caucasians for Islamist

insurgents. Importantly, recent years have brought about reports of a stronger role of Salafism in Krasnodar's Adyghean autonomous region fueled by increasing Slavo-Adyghean antagonism. A general disaffection among local inhabitants with what they consider unfair activities by the authorities related to the construction of Olympic objects further fuels the conflict potential in the Sochi area.

CONCLUSIONS: The upcoming Sochi Olympics entail a number of serious security concerns that should not be underestimated. Particular segments of the North Caucasus Islamist insurgency are very likely to consider the 2014 Olympics a historically unique opportunity to gain global publicity. Since the Western wing of the Caucasus Emirate comprises members of Adyghe ethnicity, nationalist motives could also play a role in rallying militant Islamists and Adyghe nationalists as the implementation of the Olympics in the Sochi area is regarded by many Adyghe as a humiliating lack of respect for their massacred and ethnically cleansed forebears. Last but not least, through their heavy concentration on the Sochi area, Russian authorities risk providing the insurgents with easier opportunities to strike in Moscow, Saint Petersburg, or elsewhere in the North Caucasus or Russia proper. As the entire world will be watching the Olympics, any major attack on Russian soil would bring about massive media attention worldwide.

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HOW GLENCORE DOES WHAT IT DOES IN KAZAKHSTAN

J. Edward Conway

Over the last several months, the commodities trading giant Glencore has been hinting at a possible IPO – the most anticipated since Goldman Sachs went public in 1999. The company is one of the largest private firms in the world, with an estimated annual turnover of US\$ 48 billion. But beyond trading, Glencore also owns and operates significant mining assets in politically “risky” environments, including Kazakhstan. Glencore’s talent in political risk management relies on its ability to recognize national and regional government interests and to construct a company around those interests that ensures the firm can operate in the country with minimal friction.

BACKGROUND: Privately-held Glencore is known equally for its secrecy and financial success. The firm is also famous because it was originally run by Marc Rich, the billionaire trader accused of doing business with Iran during the hostage crisis (U.S. President Bill Clinton pardoned Rich on his last day in office). Rich no longer runs the company (the current president is Ivan Glasenberg) but Rich’s legacy there has helped build the company’s mysterious image. In 1997, Glencore purchased a 70 percent stake in the newly formed Kazzinc, headquartered in the eastern Kazakhstan city of Ust-Kamenogorsk.

Ust-Kamenogorsk lives and dies by lead and zinc mining and processing. Kazzinc was founded in 1997 when President Nursultan Nazarbayev consolidated all the lead and zinc operations in the eastern region of the country under a single name and put it up for sale. At the time, the lead and zinc industry in the area suffered from severe mismanagement and a general inability for Soviet-era “businessmen” to make the transition from the USSR’s command economy into a globalized world. Lead had been developed in the region since 1784; in 1912 the mining operations here were one of the largest in the Russian empire and in

the 1980s the region supplied 60 percent of the lead and 50 percent of the zinc for the entire USSR. But in the five years following independence in 1991, lead and zinc production fell by 50 percent and 34 percent, respectively.

When production falls, the city of Ust-Kamenogorsk falls too, and hard. In the mid-1990s life in the city was tough, but when Glencore acquired a majority share in the company in the late 1990s, production jumped back up to Soviet-era levels quickly. People were employed again – all 20,000 of them. Paychecks were coming in on time. That pleased the Kazakh government and over time Glencore’s ownership of Kazzinc would peak at 99 percent.

IMPLICATIONS: According to the business intelligence firm IHS Global Insight, Kazakhstan is a “significantly risky” business environment, ranked just behind Russia but well ahead of all the other Central Asian states. Looking specifically at the mining industry (outside of oil and gas), the mineral industry advisory firm Behre Dolbear Group ranks Kazakhstan 18 (between the Philippines and Zambia) on a list of 25 key mining states, where number 1 (Australia) is the least risky place to invest and number 25 (Bolivia) is the most risky



(the U.S. comes in at 5th place). How does Glencore do what it does in Kazakhstan? That is, how does it operate successfully in a seemingly dodgy country for mining investment? The primary outlet for the firm's political risk mitigation strategy is the country's added emphasis on social and labor issues.

Under Glencore, Kazzinc has absorbed many of the Soviet-era social expectations of a mining operation. According to the Kazzinc trade union, the company supplies 30 percent of the regional government's budget. The firm has built or refurbished schools, kindergartens, a tennis center, and the Sport Palast hockey rink. The multi-million dollar Balapan Preschool Education Center, for instance, includes athletic and music facilities for close to 300 kindergartners. President Nazarbayev toured the facility in his trip to Ust-Kamenogorsk in 2010, praising Kazzinc's social programs – in

fact, it seems that whenever the president visits the city he makes sure to stop in at a Kazzinc social project.

The key is finding the balance between the country's goals and Glencore's goals – what corporate social responsibility analysts often refer to as “enlightened self-interest”. Take, for instance, the social projects. The call for a sports center may come from the national or regional government, but Kazzinc agrees to finance those projects that will bring the company's profit line just below the excess profits tax threshold – Kazzinc avoids a tax penalty and the government gets its sports center.

Glencore's understanding of Kazakh priorities was also clear during the financial crisis – no leader wants unemployed people in the street, particularly an authoritarian leader whose legitimacy rests on his ability to maintain stability. Following a meeting with President

Nazarbayev in June 2009 at the heart of the crisis, Kazzinc's president Nikola Popovic announced that although Glencore "is trimming personnel at all its international units ... this is not the case for Kazzinc". Workers that had been laid off prior to the meeting with the Kazakh president were immediately rehired.

One risk on the horizon that the company will have to deal with is the environment. Kazzinc has significantly improved the water quality of the Ulba and Irtysh rivers but the air remains a problem, according to one specialist within the Administration of Natural Resources and Earth's Interior Regulations in Ust-Kamenogorsk. The Kazzinc trade union has been pushing back on emission standards, claiming they will cause the company to shut down. Right now the environmental taxes seem to be less about the environment and more about getting as much money as possible out of the big businesses in the country (the revenue from these taxes does not go into the Ministry of Environmental Protection's budget, for instance, but to the larger national budget). And if the crumbling building that houses the Administration of Natural Resources and Earth's Interior Regulations is any indicator on how serious the government is on environmental issues, Kazzinc has nothing to worry about in the short term. This was echoed by officials in the Ministry of Environmental Protection in Astana, the country's capital, who admitted their ministry was the lowest priority within the government – and that the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection was the highest priority. Anecdotally, however, when this author asked people in the city what they

thought about Kazzinc, the response was almost always the same – bad for the ecology, but necessary for the jobs.

CONCLUSIONS: Kazzinc gets high marks in terms of management from industry insiders. "In my life", one Kazakhstan-based mining consultant relayed, "I have seen so many companies in this part of the world, not only in Kazakhstan but in Russia and Kyrgyzstan. Kazzinc, from my point of view, is one of the best organized companies". According to the consultant, the company's mid-level and local management is just as competent as it is in the front office.

People in Ust-Kamenogorsk are under no illusions about Kazzinc – they know the company is foreign owned, though not everyone recognizes the name Glencore. But the people also realize that Kazzinc is an intractable component of the city, from the jobs it provides to the social projects it funds. Memories here are strong – people remember what life was like in the city in the years immediately after independence. "Risky" countries (and their governments) have goals with varying levels of priority just like any other country – the trick is in identifying the goals that matter and the goals that don't. Political risk is often about uncertainty – Glencore minimizes those uncertainties by getting as close to the government and the people as possible.

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FIELD REPORTS

NAZARBAYEV REELECTED PRESIDENT IN LANDSLIDE VICTORY

Georgiy Voloshin

On April 5, 2011, the Central Election Committee of Kazakhstan made public the official results of the latest presidential elections, in which the incumbent President Nursultan Nazarbayev won a landslide victory. Nazarbayev obtained 95.5 percent of the public vote, convincingly outbidding his three competitors. Senator Gani Kassymov, leader of the Kazakhstan Patriots' Party, is credited with 1.9 percent of the ballots, while Zhambyl Akhmetbekov of the Communist Party, and Mels Yeleusizov who represents the independent environmentalist organization "Tabigat", managed to secure only 1.4 percent and 1.2 percent of the total number of voting bulletins, respectively. Almost 90 percent of the Kazakhstani public are said to have presented themselves at polling stations on April 3.

The 2011 presidential contest was attended by over one thousand international observers and 200 journalists. Both the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which had seconded observer missions to monitor the electoral process, noted the high level of transparency and openness ensured at various polling stations, including those in remote rural areas. The truly critical comments were made by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which stated in its Interim Report of April 3 that "the absence of opposition candidates and of a vibrant political discourse resulted in a non-competitive environment". According to the OSCE, "the legal framework has key shortcomings inconsistent with OSCE commitments, including restrictions on freedom of assembly and freedom of

expression". A rather ambiguous reaction was soon emitted by the US Embassy in Astana in which it "urge[d] the Government of Kazakhstan to rapidly address the shortcomings the [OSCE] report highlighted". At the same time, it expressed confidence that US-Kazakh relations would follow the same positive trend as has been registered in recent years.

Long before the outcome of the presidential elections was made public, Nazarbayev had started to receive congratulations from colleagues all over the world. The first two were the leaders of Russia and China - Dmitry Medvedev and Hu Jintao, followed by Nicolas Sarkozy, Angela Merkel and many others. Speaking at a public gathering organized on Monday morning by his supporters from the NurOtan party, Nazarbayev averred that Western countries were sincerely surprised with the election results, as Kazakhstan has maintained internal stability and interethnic unity despite all the troubles in the surrounding world where bloodshed, internecine violence and economic difficulties are taking their toll.

At an ensuing press conference, Nazarbayev promised to continue with the necessary reforms and confirmed his commitment to equally friendly and productive relations with Russia, China, the US, the EU and Kazakhstan's other important partners. The Leader of the Nation specifically stressed the importance of strengthening judicial authorities, fighting corruption and further developing local accountability in the regions. He also lingered over the outstanding role of media, whose freedom will now be guarded with increased

vigilance. Answering a question about the clues to Kazakhstan's smooth and peaceful development, Nazarbayev said that only stability can guarantee peaceful coexistence of various peoples in a nation. In his view, recent revolutions in North Africa rolled the respective countries' economies back to 15-20 years ago, whilst Kazakhstan has succeeded in ensuring a 12-fold increase of its GDP since 1991 and will continue to grow and thrive.

A few days later, on April 8, Nazarbayev was inaugurated for the fourth time since Kazakhstan's independence. After reading a traditional sermon, kissing the flag and receiving the presidential identity card, he made a brief speech outlining the course of reforms awaiting his country in the next 10 years. According to the president, Kazakhstan should now focus on the four priorities of modernization, national well-being, innovation and integration. The reelected head of state said the Government will soon start selecting "100 absolute innovations" which will lay the basis for the country's industrial and technological leadership. By 2030, Nazarbayev expects Kazakhstan to be

admitted into the global camp of highly developed nations. Thus, the implementation of a historic policy paper – "Strategy for Kazakhstan until 2030", adopted in 1997, will largely be accomplished.

On the same day, the Government of Kazakhstan presented its resignation to the President, but a few hours later Nazarbayev, who held a traditional meeting with the deputies of the Parliament's lower chamber, resubmitted the candidacy of Prime Minister Karim Massimov for approval. He specifically commended Massimov's role in establishing a trusting relationship with the Parliament and his professionalism in carrying out post-crisis reforms. On April 11, President Nazarbayev proceeded to ministerial appointments, replacing the occupants of the Ministries of foreign affairs, economic development and trade, agriculture and a few others. Concurrently, Kazakhstan's number two – President of the Senate Kassymzhomart Tokayev – is already preparing to depart for Geneva, where he will head the UN Office as Director-General.

KYRGYZ PRESIDENT DISMISSES PROSECUTOR GENERAL

Joldosh Osmonov

As the Kyrgyz president dismissed the acting Prosecutor General, the latter decided to raise allegations of corruption against the country's leadership, which in turn led to broad public debate. Many consider his dismissal as part of a "removal of political undesirables" in light of a serious political struggle related to the upcoming presidential elections. However, political analysts claim that it is unclear who will benefit the most from the dismissal.

On March 31, Kyrgyzstan's President Roza Otunbaeva sacked the acting Prosecutor General Kubatbek Baibolov for "ethical reasons," the presidential press service stated. Allegedly, Nurjamal Baibolova, now the former Prosecutor

General's wife, profited from irregular real estate deals with the scandal-afflicted cell phone operator Megacom Company. The scandal around the mobile company has been a recent source of political turbulence involving high officials and leading to confrontation within the country's leadership. On the same day, Otunbaeva appointed Aida Salyanova, her Permanent Representative to Parliament, as the new acting Prosecutor General.

The presidential decree came as the Kyrgyz National Security Service (KNSS), as a result of an investigation initiated by Otunbaeva, revealed that Baibolov's wife was involved in fraudulent operations with the company's assets. Nurjamal Baibolova had reportedly sold real estate belonging

to the Megacom Company worth US\$ 400,000. The Kyrgyz government holds 49 percent of the mobile operator, while the owner of the rest has not yet been identified. Kyrgyz authorities have frozen the operator's assets while the company is under investigation

Baibolov, in turn, claims he is a victim of the political struggle ahead of the upcoming presidential elections. "My dismissal is politically motivated and I was removed because of my independent stance in the run-up to the elections," he stated. Baibolov's resignation caused public debate, especially after he voiced serious accusations of corruption against President Otunbaeva and her associates. Speaking at the parliament, he denied all charges, claiming that the alleged fraudulent deal was just an ordinary purchase contract. Moreover, he assured that he and his wife stand ready to prove their innocence in court.

He also accused the President of abuse of office by "assisting" her sister to win a previously lost property dispute case in court, thus promoting her personal interests over public interest. Similar accusations were voiced against the first vice Prime Minister Omurbek Babanov, whom Baibolov charged with the illegal seizure of large businesses in the country. Babanov was also accused of avoiding the equivalent of almost US\$15 million in taxes several years ago.

Baibolov severely criticized Keneshbek Duyshebaev, the head of the KNSS, for allegedly conducting illegal mass wiretapping, including of MPs and high officials. "Under the leadership of Roza Otunbaeva, the security committee turned into a monstrous organization", he said.

Moreover, Baibolov confessed that one of the main reasons why he was removed was his initiative to investigate the fate of US\$ 21 million disposed from five local banks affiliated with Bakiev's family.

According to him, the funds were misused, since they were partially directed to financing the campaigning activities of one of the political parties during the last parliamentary elections. He also referred to US\$ 2 million illegally removed from the Kyrgyz-Russian jointly owned "Dastan" munitions factory, and reportedly used to support the election campaign of the Social Democratic Party. In conclusion, Baibolov called upon parliamentarians to form a parliamentary commission to investigate his statements and promised to hand over all the evidence he has to the commission. A group of MPs, led by Akylbek Japarov from the opposition "Ar Namys" faction, has already initiated the creation of such a commission.

Baibolov, a former KGB officer, was elected to parliament three times in 1995, 2000 and 2005. During Kurmanbek Bakiev's rule, he was known as an ardent critic of the regime. In 2009, he left for the U.S., allegedly after continuous persecution by the authorities. Following the April 2010 events, he returned to Kyrgyzstan and was appointed deputy head of the KNSS, serving as the commandant of the Jalalabad region during last June's interethnic violence in the country's south. Prior becoming the acting Prosecutor General in September, he served briefly as Interior Minister. He is affiliated with the "Ata Meken" parliamentary minority party.

Most political experts contend that Baibolov's dismissal is related to the presidential elections scheduled in October this year. According to Kubanychbek Omuraliev, a local political expert, the official reason for the dismissal has no legal ground since there is as yet no court decision proving his guilt in the case with mobile operator. Omuraliev believes the dismissal was a mistake, since the resignation of such an influential political figure might weaken the positions of those in power and benefit opposition forces planning to contest the upcoming presidential elections.

TAJIK GOVERNMENT PLANS TO INITIATE CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

Alexander Sodiqov

The Tajik government prepares to introduce a constitutional reform process which, according to analysts, will alter the country's political system, possibly paving the way for President Rahmon's son to succeed him as the country's leader in 2020.

On February 13, the head of the government-run Strategic Research Centre (SRC) Suhrob Sharipov told Radio Ozodi that the SRC had developed a series of amendments to the country's constitution from 1994 and submitted them to the president's office for review. Sharipov suggested that the proposed amendments aimed at transforming Tajikistan's "governing structure" to bring it in line with "modern trends and realities".

The announcement of the imminent reform was apparently not cleared with the country's leadership. On February 14, the day after the announcement, Sharipov's deputy, Sayfullo Safarov, denied that his boss had ever discussed possible constitutional amendments with the media. Safarov said the SRC was not aware of any government plans to amend the country's constitution. "Ideas about potential amendments to certain provisions of the constitution have been extensively discussed by media over the last several years", he said. These ideas included introducing constitutional safeguards against nepotism and regional favoritism, and amending education-related articles, following the country's shift to a 12-year education system. However, Safarov stressed, these were "just ideas".

Following Safarov's statement, Radio Ozodi removed its February 13 report from the web-site. According to a journalist working for the radio, the report was removed following a telephone call from the SRC, suggesting that it was "not the right time" to discuss constitutional reforms.

The prominent Tajik journalist Rajab Mirzo says the constitutional reform plan has indeed been discussed by the government. Mirzo believes that

the president's office will unveil the plan and initiate a referendum to amend the constitution after the country celebrates the 20th anniversary of its independence in September 2011. According to Mirzo, the existence of a government plan to initiate a constitutional reform might explain the president's recent effort to reshuffle the Central Commission for Elections and Referenda (CCER), the country's chief body responsible for organizing and holding elections and public referenda.

Although there is no information at the moment about the imminent constitutional reform apart from Sharipov's prediction of changes in the country's "governing structure," analysts describe several possible changes that the reform might bring about. First, the amendments might lower the minimum age required for a presidential candidate, allowing President Rahmon's oldest son, Rustam Emomali, to run for president in 2020. Rahmon has been Tajikistan's leader since 1993. Constitutional amendments introduced in June 2003 entitled Rahmon to seek reelection for two additional seven-year terms, starting from 2006. There is little doubt in Tajikistan that Rahmon will easily be reelected in 2013 and will stay in office until 2020.

Rahmon's continuous promotion of Rustam has led many observers and journalists to believe that the president is preparing for his son to succeed him in office. Rustam, who is now 23, has already worked as a department head in the State Committee of Investments and State Property, deputy chief of Tajikistan's youth union, and a member of the Dushanbe city council. In March, Rustam was appointed head of the Tajik Custom Service's department to combat illegal activities. At the same time, state media launched a massive campaign portraying Rustam as a major benefactor who builds houses for people displaced by natural disasters and sponsors circumcision ceremonies for children from poor families.

The current constitution sets the minimum age requirement for a presidential candidate to 35. Rustam will only be 33 in 2020, when president Rahmon completes the two terms permitted by the current constitution. Therefore, it is widely expected that the upcoming constitutional amendments will remove the minimum age requirement or lower it.

At the same time, it is hard to imagine at the moment that President Rahmon, who will be 68 years old in 2020, will retire at that age when many of his colleagues in the post-Soviet Central Asia continue to dominate their country's politics. Therefore, the second major change that the constitutional reform might bring about is a special

status for Tajikistan's first president. Such a status could for instance allow Rahmon to participate in major national decisions after retiring as president and guarantee legal immunity for himself and his family. This arrangement will help Rahmon to slowly loosen his grip on power, while his son matures as the country's next leader.

It remains to be seen whether the government will go ahead with the constitutional reform plan after the celebration of Tajikistan's 20th anniversary of independence. After all, events in neighboring Kyrgyzstan and the Arab world might have warned the president's family against engineering a hereditary succession type of power transition in the country in an overly blatant fashion.

SECURITY FORCES LAUNCH AIR ATTACK ON INSURGENT BASE IN INGUSHETIA

Olof Staaf and Alexandre Autrand

On March 28, The Russian Federal and Ingush enforcement units launched an air and ground attack on an insurgent camp in Ingushetia's Sunzha district, officially killing 17 people. It was part of a large scale counterinsurgency operation in the region and has been qualified by President Medvedev as a "heavy blow" to the insurgents.

If the first reaction of the commentators was surprise since air attacks is a very unusual way for the Security Forces to fight insurgents in the Caucasus region, the attention quickly shifted to the number of people killed and their identity. Indeed, official statements, reports and commentators have constantly differed on these two points.

Regarding the number of casualties, the first official report mentioned 17 casualties and the arrest of two people suspected of having taken part in the Domodedovo attack in January. Soon thereafter, unofficial reports and statements began to contradict the official Russian stance and spoke of 14, 16, 19 or even 21 casualties.

However, most attention has focused on the fate of Doku Umarov. Soon after the attack, the first official statement claimed that the leader of the Caucasus insurgency, as well as his wife and personal physician, were among the dead. Since then, the situation has remained unclear. Whereas some are still arguing that Umarov is dead, others, such as the Ingush president and some unofficial sources, have remained more skeptical about this information. Even though the presence of Umarov's wife and personal physician would seem to demonstrate the presence the insurgent leader himself in the insurgent camp, nobody has yet formally identified his body. Moreover, on April 7 a man claiming to be Umarov called Radio Liberty's North Caucasus office to refute this persistent rumor. Finally, on April 8 officials stated that the remains of the bodies will undergo DNA tests in order to determine the identities of the killed people. It should be added that Moscow has on several occasions prematurely announced Umarov's death. Umarov has been the leader of the Islamist

insurgency since he was established as the 5th President of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria in 2006 and later First Emir of the Caucasus Emirate, and is the most wanted man in Russia.

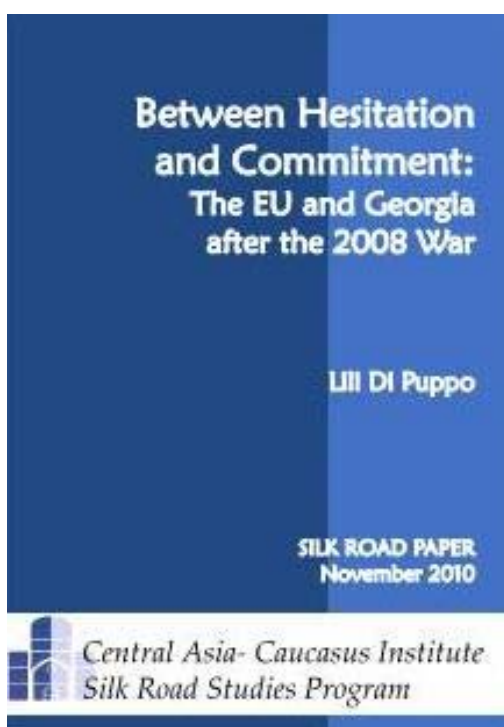
In the midst of this contradictory information, one thing remains certain; the death of Umarov's closest associate, Supyan Abdullaev. Although his death went largely unnoticed, some commentators argue that the consequences of his death are far more important than they seem to be. Indeed, Supyan Abdullaev has been the most influential religious ideologue of the Caucasus movement and was supposed to be Umarov's successor.

Russia's National Antiterrorist Committee (NAK) stated that the counterinsurgency operation in Ingushetia was part of the Kremlin's response to the January 24 suicide attack at the Domodedovo Airport in Moscow. The attack resulted in 37 dead and the suicide bomber was later identified as a 20-year old Ingush native. Since then, the number of reports about arrests and violent incidents in Ingushetia has increased. The Domodedovo bombing was the third major terrorist attack on major Russian transit infrastructure, within a period of 15 months. In November 2009, 27 people died

when the high speed Nevsky Express train was derailed after a bomb detonated on the track. In March 2010, 40 people died as result of the suicide bombings in the Moscow Metro. Umarov has claimed responsibility for all three attacks, although doubts have been raised on his actual involvement.

When Umarov declared himself Emir of the Caucasus Emirate in October 2007, the *jamaats* of all the North Caucasus Republics obtained a common entity to unite under. Nevertheless, Umarov's control over the local *jamaats* has always been limited and in October 2010, Umarov's authority weakened significantly as a number of veteran rebel leaders in Chechnya renounced their allegiance to him.

It has been suggested that Supyan Abdullaev was the main architect behind the creation of the Emirate, and he has been viewed as the one who maintained the connection between the Caucasus Emirate and the Chechen commanders after the split. The death of Abdullaev could therefore be presumed to further weaken the position of Umarov and the development towards a more divided insurgency movement with more independent local *jamaats* is likely to continue.



New Silk Road Paper:

Between Hesitation and Commitment: The EU and Georgia after the 2008 War

By Lili Di Puppò

This Silk Road Paper discusses the evolution of relations between Georgia and the EU after the 2008 war between Georgia and Russia.

The Silk Road Paper can be downloaded free at www.silkroadstudies.org. Hardcopy requests should be addressed to Paulette Fung at caciz@jhu.edu.

NEWS DIGEST

NATO'S SOUTH CAUCASUS ENVOY TO VISIT GEORGIA

1 April

The NATO secretary general's special representative for the South Caucasus and Central Asia will pay an official visit to Georgia next week, a Georgian government spokesman said on Friday. The visit is set for April 7-8. While in Georgia, James Appathurai will meet not only with representatives of the ruling power but with opposition activists as well. "Initially, [Appathurai's] visit was set for the end of March, but the events in Libya [where the western coalition forces are currently holding a military operation] postponed the visit. If nothing changes, the meeting with Georgia's minister [for European and Euro-Atlantic integration] will be held on April 7," the minister's spokesperson said. (RIA Novosti)

TERRORISTS LEADER, TWO GROUP MEMBERS KILLED IN DAGESTAN

2 April

The leader of a group of terrorists and two members of the group were killed in a special operation in Dagestan, National Anti-Terrorist Committee (NAC) Information Centre spokesman Nikolai Sintsov told Itar-Tass. "On Friday, at 21:30 Moscow time, law enforcement officers during a raid to neutralise members of the bandit underground at the 7th km of the Makhachkala-Buinaksk road in the Kumtorkala district of Dagestan attempted to stop a Lada Priora car, in which there were bandits. Fire was opened on the law enforcement officers. The gunmen were killed in the return fire," the NAC official said. The bodies of Yahya Aslanov, the leader of the "Karabudakhkent" subversive and terrorist group, and two members of the same group - Batrutdin Salimov and federal-search-wanted Rustam Batyroev were in the car. "According to intelligence information, they are involved in numerous terrorist crimes and also money extorting from businessmen of the villages of Karamakhi and Chabanmakhi," Nikolai Sintsov said. In particular, they participated in the terrorist act committed by Vitali Razdobudko and his common-law wife Maria Khorosheva in the village of Gubden, the Karabudakhkent district, on February 14. According

to law enforcement authorities' information, they participated in shooting attacks against policemen. Besides, according to the NAC, they were involved in robbery and banditry on roads under the guise of law enforcement officers, the murder of hunters near Gubden and the explosion in a grocery store in Buinaksk.

"Today as well Aslanov's brother is detained, who also provided complicity assistance. A laptop, in which, according to security officials, there is information important for operative work, is seized from him," the NAC spokesman said. The explosions near the village police station in Gubden in February this year killed three people and injured 26. The first explosion was committed by a young woman stopped by a serviceman of the Russian Interior Ministry's troops. Later, when investigators were working on the scene, a Lada Priora attempted to run through a police post, and when the car was stopped for identity checking, there was a second blast equivalent to up to 40 kg of TNT.

Immediately after that, the post was fired on from the forest. (Itar-Tass)

NAZARBAYEV WON KAZAKHSTAN'S ELECTION WITH 95.5 PERCENT OF VOTES

5 April

The Central Election Commission declared the results of the early presidential election of Kazakhstan. Nursultan Nazarbayev has won Kazakhstan's election, taken place on April 3, with 95.5 percent of votes, Kazakhstan Today reports. According to the Central Election Commission, Zhambyl Akhmetbekov, head of the Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan, received 1.36 percent of the vote, pro-government Senator Gani Kasymov of the Party of Patriots 1.94 percent and environmentalist Mels Yeleusizov picked up 1.15 percent. As informed earlier, the registered electorate is around 9.1 million in a nation with a population of 16.4 million. The candidate who wins over 50 percent of the votes will become the new president. The turnout in Sunday's vote is estimated at nearly 90 percent. Nazarbayev, 70, has been president of Kazakhstan since 1991 when the country gained independence after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. (Kazakhstan Today)

PENSIONER IN GEORGIA CUTS ARMENIA OFF FROM INTERNET

6 April

An elderly woman in Georgia is facing a prison sentence after reportedly causing internet services in neighbouring Armenia to crash. The country found itself offline for hours on 28 March after cables linking Georgia to Armenia were damaged. A Georgian interior ministry spokesman said a 75-year-old woman had admitted damaging fibre-optic cables while scavenging for copper. She has been charged and reportedly faces up to three years in prison.

"Taking into account her advancing years, she has been released pending the end of the investigation and subsequent trial," spokesman Zura Gvenetadze told AFP news agency. She had been searching for copper in the Georgian village of Ksani. The cables, owned by the Georgian Railway Telecom company, serve eastern Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. All three wholesale internet providers in Armenia - ArmenTel, FiberNet Communication and GNC-Alfa - were unable to provide their usual service on the evening of 28 March, Armenia's Arka news agency reported.

Services were eventually restored after midnight. (BBC)

DAGESTAN OFFICIAL SURVIVES ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT

6 April

Dagestan's Deputy Agriculture Minister Bilal Omarov, 36, wounded in the assassination attempt earlier on Wednesday, is in stable "medium severity" condition, doctors at the surgery department of the 2nd republican hospital told Itar-Tass. "The victim has a penetrating wound in the back of the head; he has been operated on and is now in a remand ward. He is in the condition of stable medium severity; nothing threatens his life," the doctors said.

Senior aide to the director of the regional department of the Investigation Committee (SK) Alkhas Amirkhanov told Itar-Tass "as the official was leaving his apartment house 14A, Irchi Kazak Street at 08:30, Moscow time, an unidentified man shot him in the back of the head with a pistol." Criminal proceedings were opened over attempted murder and illegal turnover of weapons and ammunition. Bilal Omarov has been working at Dagestan's Agriculture Ministry since 2006. He is in charge of fisheries and food industry. (Itar-Tass)

TAJIKISTAN EXTENDS POWER RATIONING SEASON

7 April

Tajikistan has extended severe seasonal electricity rationing across the country as the main hydropower reservoir hovers at dangerously low levels. Households across most of the mountainous ex-Soviet nation are being provided with only two hours of electricity per day. In the capital, Dushanbe, electricity is being cut off from 10:30 p.m. to 5 a.m. Extensive rolling blackouts are regularly imposed over the winter months, but are normally lifted as rivers begin to swell in the spring. Barki Tajik power company spokesman Nozirdzhon Yodgorov said Thursday that the Vakhsh River is flowing into the Nurek reservoir at levels significantly lower than last year. Tajikistan relies almost completely on hydropower for its electricity needs. (AP)

KYRGYZSTAN MARKS ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF BLOODY UPRISING WITH SOLEMN CEREMONIES FOR VICTIMS

7 April

Memorial ceremonies were held across Kyrgyzstan on Thursday to mark the first anniversary of a bloody uprising that led to the ouster of the Central Asian nation's authoritarian leader. President Roza Otunbayeva and other senior government representatives laid wreaths at the Ata-Beit cemetery in the capital of Bishkek, where many of the 87 people killed in last year's clashes are buried. While officials have played up the heroism of the dozens that died during the revolt, some remain uneasy at the lack of noticeable improvements and bemoan a growing ethnic nationalism. Protests erupted last year amid anger over stagnating living standards and perceived corruption under then-President Kurmanbek Bakiyev, who was blamed for the ex-Soviet nation's relentless descent into authoritarianism. After a memorial prayer at the cemetery, Otunbayeva spoke in praise "of compatriots who laid down their lives for freedom, for democracy, and the future of their country." Meanwhile, a crowd gathered in the capital's Ala-Too square, where government opponents were gunned down by troops during street protests, to observe a minute's silence. Several thousand people walked from the headquarters of Prime Minister Almaz Atambayev's Social Democratic Party to a government building in the center, retracing the route taken by demonstrators last year. "In the

future, April 7 should become a great holiday," Atambayev said in an address to the procession. "But we must recognize that the revolution has not achieved its goals." Those mixed feelings are widely reflected among mainly Muslim Kyrgyzstan's 5 million-strong population. The economy has continued to struggle and the ruling coalition government is riven by internal disputes. "Over this year, not much has changed. The main thing is that they have lowered tariffs for electricity and heating, and they have promised to increase pensions," said retiree Ryksybay Duyshenbiyev. Early attempts by a hastily assembled interim government to restore order were dashed by a wave of ethnic violence in June. More than 400 people were killed in clashes between ethnic Kyrgyz and minority Uzbeks in the southern Osh and Jalal-Abad regions. Businesswoman Olga Fedotova said the country's resurgent ethnic Kyrgyz nationalism over the past twelve months has alarmed many minorities, like her own ethnic Russian community. "Half of my friends have left the country. Nationalism is strong, and it has become difficult for us Russian-speakers to live here," Fedotova said. (AP)

KAZAKHSTAN EYEING TWO-PARTY SYSTEM?

8 April

Kazakh authorities are apparently no longer happy with their one-party system, and would like to see more political groups entering the parliament – at least according to the country's highest-ranking officials. "The next parliament will be multi-party," said Nursultan Nazarbaev, who was sworn for his fourth term in office in a ceremony in Astana today. "We need at least a two-party parliament," presidential adviser Ermukhamed Ertysbaev told RFE/RL's Kazakh service earlier this week. Prime Minister Karim Masimov has also mentioned what he called the "necessity" of having representatives of opposition parties in parliament. Currently, Nazarbaev's Nur Otan party occupies all parliamentary seats. Even before any election, Ertysbaev seems to have a pretty clear idea about which parties should enter the next parliament. "It could be possible to establish a new political party based on the Atameken business union," Ertysbaev told local media. Atameken is a nongovernmental union that brings together dozens of major business companies. "Nur Otan would be positioned as a party representing the government and the political elite, state officials, scientific and academic circle -- basically, a classic centrist party," Ertysbaev

suggested. Ertysbaev said it might take some five years to fully establish a two-party system in Kazakhstan, just "like Republicans and Democrats in the United States or Conservatives and Labour Party lawmakers in Britain." As for all other Kazakh political parties, Nazarbaev's adviser suggested that they should either join Nur Otan or enter a future Atameken party. Kazakhstan's opposition leaders, however, don't seem to have high hopes. The authorities need an opposition that "does everything they are told," says Vladimir Kozlov, the leader of an unregistered Alga party. "Obviously, they wouldn't let real opposition into parliament," Kozlov told RFE/RL's Kazakh Service. In the meantime, Kazakh officials aren't ruling out early parliamentary elections. Almost immediately after announcing the presidential election results, Nazarbaev's political adviser mentioned the possibility of dissolving parliament and having a snap poll later this year. The vote is currently scheduled for August 2012. (RFE/RL)

TURKISH MFA: BAGAPSH'S VISIT 'NOT OFFICIAL'

7 April

Ankara reaffirmed its support to Georgia's territorial integrity and said on April 7, that Abkhaz leader Sergey Bagapsh's visit to Turkey was not an official one. "The visit of Mr. Sergey Bagapsh to Turkey will take place purely on medical grounds upon the invitation by the civil society associations founded by Turkish citizens under their sole responsibility. The visit has by no means an official character," the Turkish Foreign Ministry said in a written statement. "Turkey attaches the utmost importance to her strategic partnership with Georgia based on traditional friendship and comprehensive cooperation in all fields," it said. "Turkey perfectly shares the sensitivity of Georgia concerning her territorial integrity. In that respect, Turkey respects and supports the territorial integrity of Georgia within her internationally recognized borders, a policy that remains a fundamental position." "Turkey reconfirms its commitment to deepening the strategic relations between Turkey and Georgia to the benefit of our peoples and the region at large," the Turkish Foreign Ministry said. Bagapsh arrived in Ankara on April 7 upon the invitation of the Ankara-based Federation of Caucasian Associations (KAFFED) and Federation of Abkhaz Association. During the visit, which also includes trips to Istanbul and Adapazarı, a city in northwestern Turkey, Bagapsh plans series

of meetings with the Abkhaz diaspora and business circles, his spokesman said on April 7. Bagapsh in his capacity of de facto president of Abkhazia was first intending to visit Turkey in 2007; but the trip was canceled after Ankara refused to issue entry visa. Bagapsh visited Turkey more than ten years ago to meet with the Abkhaz diaspora when he served as the breakaway region's Prime Minister in 1999-2000. Sergey Shamba, who is now the breakaway region's Prime Minister, was in Turkey in June, 2008 when he was a foreign minister for a private visit upon the invitation of the Caucasus-Abkhazia Solidarity Committee. (Civil Georgia)

THOUSANDS RALLY AGAINST ARMENIA GOVERNMENT

8 April

Up to 10,000 anti-government protesters rallied in the capital of ex-Soviet Armenia on Friday and occupied a central square after riot police withdrew to prevent clashes. Calling for the government's resignation and early elections, they held a short rally and then marched through the city to Freedom Square, which had been cordoned off by riot officers with batons and shields. But the police pulled back, allowing the demonstrators to continue their protest in the square, which was the scene of mass rallies after disputed presidential polls in 2008 that ended in clashes leaving 10 people dead. The leader of the opposition Armenian National Congress, former president Levon Ter-Petrosian, warned the government that more radical protests could follow if it does not to comply with his demands before the next rally later this month. "We are not speaking with the authorities in the language of ultimatums yet, but the people's patience has limits," Ter-Petrosian said. Another senior Armenian National Congress official, Levon Zurabian, called on activists to prepare for a campaign of civil disobedience. "We are entering a new stage in our struggle," Zurabian said. Opposition supporters are angry about poor social conditions and the continued imprisonment of activists allegedly involved in the violence in 2008. They claimed that the authorities had disrupted public transport heading to Yerevan from the provinces in an attempt to thwart the demonstration. After Ter-Petrosian's speech, some of the protesters were in a celebratory mood and danced to Armenian music in the square, where demonstrations had been prohibited until a large rally last month also forced riot police to abandon their cordon. The Armenian National Congress has predicted a bloodless "velvet

revolution", hoping to emulate mass uprisings in the Arab world. But the governing Republican Party led by President Serzh Sarkisian says that it has no intention of holding polls before a parliamentary election due next year and is working to improve social conditions in the impoverished country of three million people. "Stability and stable development is very important for the country," governing party lawmaker Eduard Sharmazanov told AFP, warning against political "shocks" which could damage Armenia. The country has gone through political and military turmoil since independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, with a series of disputed elections and a war with neighbouring Azerbaijan over the region of Nagorny Karabakh. Since the Karabakh war in the 1990s, Armenia has suffered economically because of closed borders with Azerbaijan and another neighbour Turkey, which strongly objects to Yerevan's campaign to have the World War I-era mass killings of Armenians by the Ottoman Empire recognised as genocide. (AFP)

KAZAKHSTAN PRESIDENT NAZARBAYEV SWORN IN FOR NEW TERM

8 April

Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev has been sworn in for a new five-year term after a landslide election win criticised by international observers. Thousands waved flags, greeting him at the inauguration ceremony in Astana. The 70-year-old, entering his third decade as ruler, said his victory was a vote for stability and prosperity, after gaining 95.5% of ballots cast. But the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe says Sunday's elections lacked transparency. News agency AP quoted President Nazarbayev as saying: "We have to find the optimal way of empowering parliament, increasing the government's responsibility and improving the electoral process." Kazakhstan's cabinet offered its resignation after Friday's inauguration, in line with the constitution. The president is expected to re-appoint or replace ministers over the next few days. Kazakhstan is yet to hold elections that are deemed to be fully free and fair by international observers. (BBC)

RUSSIAN INSURGENT LEADER HINTS AT MORE ATTACKS

8 April

The leader of Chechnya's Islamist insurgency said he is alive and well after Russian forces said they

may have killed him and he hinted he would prove it by organizing more attacks, Radio Free Europe said. A man purporting to be Doku Umarov phoned Radio Free Europe late on Thursday to deny reports citing officials as saying he might have been killed in a March 28 assault on an insurgent base in the North Caucasus province of Ingushetia. "They carried out a special operation. Several of our mujahedeen died. They are saying that I died, but this is not true," he said, according to a Reuters translation from Chechen. "They'll get an answer soon. They will hear news." Umarov styles himself the emir of the Caucasus and leads a persistent Islamist insurgency that followed two devastating wars Russia fought against separatists in Chechnya following the 1991 Soviet collapse. He has claimed responsibility for major attacks in the mostly Muslim provinces along Russia's southern rim and in Russia's heartland, including a suicide bombing that killed 37 people at Moscow's busiest airport in January. Umarov has been erroneously reported dead several times in the past. He told Radio Free Europe he was "perfectly healthy." Russian authorities said 17 militants were killed in the March 28 operation in Ingushetia and that Umarov might have been killed, but that it would not be clear without DNA test results. Islamist websites confirmed that a top lieutenant of Umarov, Supyan Abdullayev, was among the dead. The proximity of the North Caucasus to the Black Sea coastal resort city of Sochi, site of the 2014 Winter Olympics, is of particular concern for the Kremlin, which has vowed to beef up security for the event. (Reuters)

PROMINENT IMAM KILLED IN RUSSIA'S DAGESTAN

9 April

A prominent imam who discouraged youth from joining Islamic militants has been shot dead in his home in the strife-torn southern Russian republic of Dagestan, news reports said Saturday. Magomed Saiputdinov was slain by automatic gunfire in a nighttime attack near the Chechen-border town of Kizlyar, agencies quoted a spokesman for the local interior ministry as saying. "He was widely known for his uncompromising stand against any forms of violence, condemning the murder of innocent people and other atrocities of the Chechen underground," Interfax quoted a police statement as saying. Saiputdinov was the sixth Muslim religious leader to be killed in the republic in the past year, with the previous fatal attack occurring on November 1, 2010, RIA Novosti quoted the National

Anti-Terror Committee as saying. Dagestan has experienced some of the most deadly violence in Russia's mostly Muslim southern periphery since peace was largely restored in neighbouring Chechnya just under a decade ago. The Caspian Sea republic experiences almost daily shootings and bombings that officials blame on local criminals and Islamists with links to Chechnya. Fuelled by endemic poverty and corruption, the militants are seeking to establish an independent Islamic state across the North Caucasus. (AFP)

TURKMEN OFFICIALS LEARNING ENGLISH IN U.S. PROGRAM

10 April

A group of 46 Turkmen officials have begun English-language classes in a program sponsored by the U.S. State Department, RFE/RL's Turkmen Service reports. Bradley McGuire, information officer at the U.S. Embassy in Turkmenistan, told RFE/RL on April 8 that the seven-month-long program is one of many the State Department has organized to help law enforcement personnel around the world learn English. He said a knowledge of English helps law enforcers "to communicate more fluently and efficiently with one another" and improves their access to relevant resources in countries where English is the primary language. The participants in the program, most of whom have no previous knowledge of English, are from Turkmenistan's Customs Service, Border Service, Interior Ministry, Migration Service, Counternarcotics Agency, and Foreign Affairs Ministry. The course initially focuses on basic language skills. At a later stage, participants acquire technical vocabulary according to their professional specialization. More than 70 Turkmen law enforcement personnel have graduated from such English-language programs since their launch in Turkmenistan in 2007. Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimukhammedov said recently at a meeting in Ashgabat with leaders from the country's education, health care, tourism, and sports spheres that citizens should be able to speak three languages. (RFE/RL)

KYRGYZSTAN TO JOIN CUSTOMS UNION

11 April

The Kyrgyz government on Monday approved a plan to join a post-Soviet customs union and common economic space. An interagency commission was set up to open negotiations on the republic's admission to the Customs Union with

Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. Customs Union countries account for 44.9% of Kyrgyzstan's foreign trade. "Membership in this organization will strengthen the republic's borders and improve the living and working conditions of about half a million Kyrgyz nationals working in Russia and Kazakhstan," Prime Minister Almazbek Atambayev said. "God willing, we will be part of the Common Economic Space from January 1." He stressed, however, that Kyrgyzstan will remain a WTO member. The Customs Union materialized in early July 2010, when the countries ratified the Customs Code. Customs borders are to be scrapped on July 1, 2011. The creation of a common economic space with the free movement of goods, services and labor is billed as the next stage of their integration. (RIA Novosti)

MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITY TO OPEN BRANCH IN TASHKENT

11 April

The Malaysian Taylor University is a leading university in Southeast Asia. The institution trains specialists in tourism. It plans to open a branch in Tashkent, the Uzbektourism National Company told Trend.

Vice President Charles Cheu said Taylor is interested in opening a branch in Tashkent, as highly qualified specialists are needed in Uzbekistan to develop the country as a tourist destination. A Malaysian delegation visited the country and took part in talks with the Singapore Institute of Management Development's Tashkent branch, Tashkent State Economic University, Samarkand Institute of Economics and Service, and several other educational institutions.

Issues of technical support in training personnel for the tourism industry were also discussed. (Trend)

INDIA'S PM TO VISIT KAZAKHSTAN

12 April

The Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh will visit to Kazakhstan on April 15-16, Kazakhstan Today reports.

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh will pay an official visit to Kazakhstan on April 15-16 at the invitation of Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Monday, DailyIndia reported. "This would be the Prime Minister's first visit to Kazakhstan and his second to Central Asia after his visit to Uzbekistan in 2006. President Nazarbayev is a long standing friend of India. He last visited India as the

Chief Guest at our Republic Day celebrations in 2009. He had previously visited India three times in 1992, 1996 and 2002," MEA Secretary (East) Sanjay Singh said. "Apart from bilateral visits, the two leaders have met on several occasions on the margins of multilateral events. In recent times, they met on the sidelines of the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) Summit in Yekaterinburg in June 2009, and on the sidelines of the Nuclear Security Summit exactly one year ago on April 11, 2010, in Washington," he added. On April 16, Dr. Singh will attend an official welcome ceremony at the Presidential Palace, where he will have a restricted meeting with President Nazarbayev followed by delegation-level interaction. The two leaders will then interact with the media before attending an official luncheon. Dr. Singh will also meet Kazakhstan Prime Minister Karim K. Massimov. "Some agreements are expected to be signed. The Prime Minister will be accompanied by the National Security Advisor and other senior officials," Sanjay Singh said. The two countries are eager to advance their civil nuclear cooperation with the intergovernmental framework pact on peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency reported on Sunday, CentralAsiaNewswire reports. Kazakhstan has supplied India with uranium for the South Asian country's reactors under a deal signed in early 2009 between Kazakh nuclear holding corporation Kazatomprom and Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL). The new agreement will broaden the base of cooperation to include exploration and research of uranium. The two sides will sign at least six accords including the nuclear agreement, as part of initiatives to solidify strategic ties. One of those to be signed by Kazakh state-run energy company KazMunaiGas will give India's national oil company ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) exploration and production rights to the Satpayev block in the Caspian Sea. OVL will invest \$400 million into the project for a 25 percent stake in the block, which is estimated to hold around 1.75 billion barrels of crude. (Kazakhstan Today)

AFGHANISTAN URGES TAJIK OFFICIALS TO RETHINK TRANSIT FEE INCREASE

12 April

The Afghan Foreign Ministry and the country's Chamber of Commerce and Industry have asked Tajikistan to reconsider its increase in transit tariffs for cargo bound for Afghanistan, RFE/RL's Tajik Service reports. Umar Sahroy, an official

representative at the Afghan Embassy in Tajikistan, told RFE/RL on April 11 that a unilateral and unexpected rise in the fee by Tajikistan's state railroad company has created problems for the transit of goods from Russia, Ukraine, and other former Soviet states to Afghanistan. Sahroy said Afghanistan has been paying \$12.45 for every ton of cargo transited through the 132 kilometers of Tajik railroad lines but that Tajikistan is now asking for \$20 per ton. He said that according to an interstate agreement between the two countries, Tajikistan had agreed to transit 2 million tons of cargo to Afghanistan at the lower price. Tajik railroad officials have refused to comment on the issue. Tajik economist Hojimuhammad Umarov told RFE/RL that only Afghanistan uses Tajik railroads for transit and if Tajikistan continues to raise its transport fees it will lose its business with Afghanistan. He added that Afghanistan could use alternative railroad lines in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. (RFE/RL)

U.S. SOLDIERS REPORTEDLY KILLED IN FIRST-EVER FRIENDLY FIRE DRONE INCIDENT

12 April

U.S. military officials say a missile fired by a drone appears to have killed two U.S. soldiers during fighting in the southern Afghan province of Helmand last week. The military has launched a probe into the incident, which -- if confirmed -- would be the first instance U.S. soldiers have been killed in a "friendly fire" incident involving an unmanned aircraft. The incident first reported by U.S. media appears to have been caused by confusion on the battlefield near the town of Sangin where U.S. forces were fighting insurgents. The U.S. Defense Department has not officially commented on the reports saying only they are being investigated. (RFE/RL)

ARMENIA RATIFIES RUSSIA BASE

12 April

Armenia's parliament has approved an agreement to host a Russian military base on Armenian soil through 2046. Parliament voted 80-1 on Tuesday to approve the deal signed during President Dmitry Medvedev's visit to Armenia last August. As part of the deal, Moscow also pledged to protect Armenia's security and provide modern weapons for its military. Last year's agreement extended

the original Russian 25-year lease on the base under a 1995 deal. (AP)

SOKHUMI HAILS EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

13 April

Being part of Europe, Abkhazia considers close cooperation with the EU as one of its foreign policy priorities, the breakaway region's foreign ministry said in a statement on April 13, the Abkhaz news agency, Apsnipress, reported. The statement was made in response to a resolution "on the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy - Eastern Dimension" passed by the European Parliament on April 7. The resolution, among other things, calls on EU's diplomatic service, the European External Action Service (EEAS), "to develop more confidence-building measures and programmes, including the launching of new missions and public communication strategies and the consideration of pragmatic initiatives and innovative approaches such as informal contacts and consultations with the societies of the breakaway territories, while conserving the EU's non-recognition policy, in order to support civic culture and community dialogue." The breakaway region's foreign ministry welcomed the resolution and said it would contribute to "de-isolation" of Abkhazia and establishment of direct contacts with the EU. It said that the resolution "has a significant importance for planning of future cooperation of the Republic of Abkhazia with various EU institutions." It said that the Abkhaz side viewed positively messages in the resolution, which were "based on a measured pragmatic policy of good neighborhood in favor of establishing a dialogue and closer cooperation." The breakaway region's foreign ministry said that diversification of external relations and boosting direct contacts "is the only rational" approach, which would help "removing long-standing political and economic isolation of Abkhazia." "Establishment of direct contacts in the fields of culture, education and business will strengthen the authority of European institutions in the Abkhaz society, which has been considerably undermined during last years," the statement reads. "Moreover, de-isolation of Abkhazia and direct cooperation with the European Union will contribute to the development of democratic civil society in Abkhazia, and will create favorable conditions for peaceful settlement of the conflict," it said. (Civil Georgia)

FM: TURKEY WILL CONTINUE EFFORTS TO LIBERATE AZERBAIJAN'S OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

13 April

Turkey has always made an effort to maintain active diplomatic relations over the question of Azerbaijan's occupied territories and will continue to do so, said Ahmet Davutoglu, Chairman of the CoE Committee of Ministers and Turkish Foreign Minister, on the second day of the PACE spring session in response to questions by member of the Azerbaijani delegation Ganira Pashayeva. Pashayeva touched upon the murder of a nine-year old Azerbaijani child by Armenian armed forces and Armenia's construction of an airport in Nagorno-Karabakh. "A 9-year-old Fariz Badalov was killed on March 8 as a result of a ceasefire violation by the troops. He was shot in the head while playing in his yard. In addition, Armenia builds an airport in Nagorno-Karabakh - in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, which contradicts the resolutions of the CoE and PACE. We would like to know your opinion as the Chairman of the CoE Committee of Ministers. What does the Committee plan to do to suppress Armenia's steps that cause a blow to talks on the conflict resolution and are aimed at creating tension in the region?" she asked. Davutoglu expressed regret that the international community does not pay enough attention to the realities of the occupation, the issue of refugees and IDPs, as well as the situation in the region. "Regarding the activity of the CoE Committee of Ministers, I can say that the Council of Europe has a definite position over the Nagorno-Karabakh and other occupied territories. Here I would like to respond as the Turkish Foreign Minister. Turkey has always been against the occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh and other Azerbaijani territories. We tried to inform the world about the human tragedies that occurred as a result of the occupation. Unfortunately, the international community did not pay enough attention to the occupation, the issue of refugees and IDPs, as well as the situation in the region. Turkey has always persisted in its active diplomatic efforts of establishing lasting peace in the South Caucasus, and will continue to do so, including on the issue of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan," he stressed. The conflict between the two South Caucasus countries began in 1988 when Armenia made territorial claims against Azerbaijan. Armenian armed forces have occupied 20 percent of Azerbaijan since 1992, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region and seven surrounding districts.

Azerbaijan and Armenia signed a ceasefire agreement in 1994. The co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group - Russia, France, and the U.S. - are currently holding the peace negotiations. Armenia has not yet implemented the U.N. Security Council's four resolutions on the liberation of the Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding regions. (Trend)

SCO AND CIS'S INTELLIGENCE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES REPRESENTATIVES TO MEET IN TASHKENT

13 April

Representatives of the intelligence and law enforcement agencies of member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) will discuss security issues in counter-terrorism and anti-subversive protection of facilities of major importance -- security facilities, as well as military infrastructure facilities in Tashkent. The meeting will be held on Wednesday, a source in the Uzbek government said. The professional discussions were initiated by the SCO Regional anti-terrorist structure (RATS). As was previously reported, at the sixteenth meeting of the SCO RATS held in Tashkent on April 2010, a decision was made to hold regular meetings for representatives of competent bodies of the SCO member states to exchange operational information on combating terrorism, separatism and extremism in order to deepen cooperation in the fight against these dangers. At the March meeting joint measures were developed to ensure the security for a Council of SCO heads of states meeting scheduled for June 15 in Astana, the holding of the 26th Summer Universiad in the Shenzhen city and the first fair "China-Eurasia" in the Urumchi city (China), to be held in 2011. The SCO includes Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The headquarters of the RATS Executive Committee is located in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. (Trend)