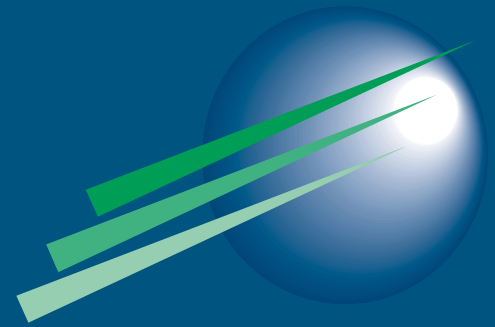


ACNIS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

April 2011



The Armenian Center for National and International Studies

ACNIS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

In the past year, the Armenian Center for National and International Studies (ACNIS) launched the publication of a regular series of monthly newsletters. This is the next issue of our new “ACNIS Monthly Newsletter,” a publication that provides a brief summary of our work, activities and projects for the month of April 2011.

ACNIS PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

ACNIS Announces New Director of Research

As of April 1, Armenian Center for National and International Studies (ACNIS) senior analyst Manvel Sargsian serves as the Center’s Director of Research. He replaced Richard Giragosian in this capacity.



MANVEL SARGSIAN

“There are many creative ideas, projects, and contemporary subject matters of both international and domestic character which call for fresh and comprehensive analysis,” Sargsian noted during his inaugural meeting with ACNIS staff.

“And together we will conduct this work by way of separate monographs, collective studies, and regu-

lar seminar-roundtable discussions. It is beyond doubt that the Center needs innovative concepts and vigorous, cutting-edge content. In this connection, we are pleased to welcome to our research staff political scientist Edgar Vardanian and historian Saro Saroyan.”

ACNIS extends its appreciation to Mr. Giragosian for his services.

ACNIS Director of Research Holds First Press Conference



On April 7, political scientist and ACNIS Director of Research Manvel Sargsian held his introductory news conference in this capacity.

Welcoming the audience with opening remarks, ACNIS Administrative Director Karapet Kalenchanian also introduced the Center’s new analysts: political scientists Edgar Vardanian and Saro Saroyan.

The range of questions asked by the journalists was extensive and it included recent developments in foreign and domestic politics, and contemporary issues with respect to the Center’s new challenges and its future projects and policies.

Responding to the numerous questions posed by the news reporters, Manvel Sargsian thoroughly →

← presented his vision for meeting a variety of immediate challenges, and expressed hope that productive collaboration with the media and wide publicity of ACNIS's reports and activities will greatly promote the transparency of the Center's endeavors and raise the efficiency of the conducted studies and envisioned organizational events.

ACNIS COMMEMORATES THE VICTIMS OF THE GREAT GENOCIDE



On April 24, 2011, the 96th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, the staff of the Armenian Center for National and International Studies (ACNIS) remained faithful to their annual tradition, joined the people, and visited the Genocide Memorial at Tsitsernakaberd to pay their respects to the 1.5 million innocent victims who were killed as a result of the genocide which Ottoman Turkey had carried out from 1915 to 1923.

Upon the request of the journalists, ACNIS founder Raffi K. Hovannisian briefly spoke about the significance of this day. "Today we demand not solely recognition, but also the elimination of the consequences of the Genocide. Even if normal relations are established between Armenia and Turkey at some point, they must not be based on some disputable and unlawful protocols, but rather on real history which, first and foremost, assumes reparation for the damages caused by the Genocide," Hovannisian stated.

ACNIS Director of Research Manvel Sargsian likewise expressed his views to the members of the press. According to him, today's world wishes to transfer the context of the Armenian Genocide's international recognition toward the domain of Armenia-Turkey relations. "And the objective is that recognition comes about not under pressure, but by way of discourse between the Armenians and the Turks," Sargsian maintained.

Will the Wave of Arab Revolutions Reach South Caucasus?



On 20 April, ACNIS convened a policy roundtable to analyze the likelihood of the Arab revolts' penetration into the countries of the South Caucasus, including Armenia. The discussants specifically looked at the preconditions of, and challenges facing, the sociopolitical processes that have caused widespread discontent in Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, Libya, Syria, and a number of other countries in the region, and also assessed the international response to these processes. The meeting brought together representatives from international organizations and the diplomatic community in Yerevan, leading analysts, policy specialists, and members of the press.

Welcoming the audience with opening remarks, ACNIS Director of Research Manvel Sargsian stated that the revolts in several countries of North Africa and the Arab world were a result of changes in the general situation, specifically in terms of the growing societal role.

Arab Studies expert and former Ambassador Davit Hovhannisyan and Iranian Studies expert Emma Begijanyan delivered the main presentations on this topic, and examined this subject matter from different viewpoints.

The presentations were followed by a series of questions and answers, and featured a lively exchange with the audience.



Meetings With High Level Diplomats



On April 19, the Armenian Center for National and International Studies (ACNIS) Director of Research Manvel Sargsian hosted and conferred with British Ambassador Charles Lonsdale.

On the next day, April 20, ACNIS's guest was the Dutch Ambassador Pieter Jan Langenberg.

On April 27, Manvel Sargsian and ACNIS Administrative Director Karapet Kalenchian were received by Ukrainian Ambassador Ivan Kukhta.

Cognitive discussions were held during these meetings between the high level dignitaries and ACNIS's senior officials.

ACNIS Convenes a Seminar Discussion for Students

On April 9, the Armenian Center for National and International Studies (ACNIS) held a roundtable for students from different universities entitled "Current State of Diplomatic Settlement of the Mountainous Karabagh Issue: Negotiations and Incidents Along the Line of Contact of the Armed Forces."

First, a documentary film by Vahram Balayan entitled "Artsakh: At the Crossroads of History" was shown on the Artsakh war of liberation and postwar developments, and subsequently ACNIS Director of Research Manvel Sargsian and political analyst Andreas Ghukasyan delivered presentations on the legal and political aspects of this matter.

The presentations were followed by a lively exchange with the audience, and the young discussants expressed a wish to continue such discussions which, in their view, are highly cognitive.

ACNIS Welcomes its New Staff Members

On April 1, ACNIS included among its workforce analysts Edgar Vardanian and Saro Saroyan and director's assistant Ruzan Pluzian.

Edgar Vardanian

He was born on April 20, 1975 in Yerevan. He is a graduate of the Lazaryan Institute of International Relations and the International Scientific and Educational Center of the Armenian National Academy of Sciences, and holds a Master's degree in political science. He has worked as project manager and analyst at the Institute for Democracy and Human Rights (IDHR) NGO and lectured at the Moscow Institute of Business and Law, Yerevan Branch.



Saro Saroyan



He was born on November 26, 1976 in Tsovagiugh village of the Gegharkunik marz. He is a graduate of the Armenian Police Academy and Yerevan State University, and holds a Master's degree in history. He has worked at the Armenian Police Department and the National Security Service. He has authored numerous analytical and journalistic papers.

Ruzan Pluzian

She was born on March 29, 1982 in Yerevan. She is a graduate of the Faculty of Oriental Studies at Yerevan State University (YSU) and the Department of Political Science at the American University of Armenia, and holds a Master's degree in Arab studies and international relations. She has worked at Yerevan State Academy of Fine Arts, the International Research and Exchanges Board in Armenia (IREX), the European Commission's National Tempus Office in Armenia, and has lectured at YSU.



MEDIA OUTREACH



Capital daily, April 5

In an interview with *Capital* daily, the Armenian Center for National and International Studies (ACNIS) Director of Research Manvel Sargsian analyzed the likelihood of achieving a real change in power by means of elections in Armenia. “As long as it is possible to rig the elections and to tolerate this fraud, they will be rigged,” Sargsian argued, noting that the body politic is already reaching a point and the civic order to be created after that point will no longer allow the regime to resort to election fraud.

Sargsian also stated that the recent activation in Armenia’s political field is a result of several positive and negative factors. In his view, the first factor is the coalition statement which the authorities have signed, the second factor is the revolutions in the Arab world, and the third factor is the changes in the Armenian society ever since 2008. And upon the request of *Capital* daily, ACNIS Director of Research thoroughly commented on these three main factors which have stimulated Armenian politics.

Capital daily, April 28

During his interview with *Capital* daily, ACNIS analyst Saro Saroyan looked at Armenia’s domestic developments, specifically the correlations between the authorities and the opposition. According to Saroyan, it is still too early to consider the recent relations between the authorities and the opposition Armenian National Congress (ANC) to be an arrangement among them.

“The authorities resorted to certain concessions because today the society and the opposition are putting huge pressure on them. In addition, when I say opposition I do not mean solely the ANC,” Saroyan noted.

Zhamanak daily and 1in.am news agency, April 14

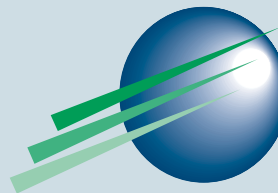


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In an interview with *Zhamanak* daily, ACNIS analyst Edgar Vardanian examined the imperative of achieving systemic changes in Armenia using the example of the Polish Solidarity Movement. As per Vardanian, the Armenian people expect that their opposition forces possess this kind of power and spirit for waging an unwavering struggle.

“When the society takes part in the main decision-making process, the positions of the opposition always become more resilient against the pressures and persecutions by the authorities. But if the general public does not partake in the making of important decisions, it will never assist and support the opposition,” the analyst maintained.

MORE ABOUT US



The Armenian Center for National and International Studies (ACNIS) is a leading independent strategic research center located in Yerevan, Armenia. As an independent, objective institution committed to conducting professional policy research and analysis, ACNIS strives to raise the level of public debate and seeks to broaden public engagement in the public policy process, as well as fostering greater and more inclusive public knowledge. Founded in 1994, ACNIS is the institutional initiative of Raffi K. Hovannisian, Armenia’s first Minister of Foreign Affairs. Over the past fifteen years, ACNIS has acquired a prominent reputation as a primary source of professional independent research and analysis covering a wide range of policy issues.

For more information on ACNIS, our work and activities, please contact us at: root@acnis.am or visit our website at: www.acnis.am.