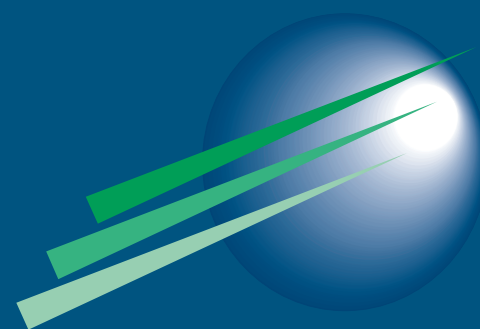


ACNIS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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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 June 2011.

ACNIS PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

Center Considers Armenia's Economic Situation



On June 10, ACNIS held a roundtable discussion to analyze the contemporary trends of, challenges facing, and prospects for the development of Armenia's economy. The meeting brought together representatives from international organizations and the diplomatic community in Yerevan, leading analysts, policy specialists, and members of the press.

Center Administrative Director Karapet Kalenchian welcomed the audience with opening remarks.

In his thorough presentation, the day's speaker, leading economist Dr. Tatoul Manassarian, described Armenia's current sad economic state and also offered his vision for the avenues toward improving this situation, underscoring that to date Armenia has not developed a strategy for economic growth. “Suffice it to say that Armenia's state budget has allocated a mere

one billion drams, or less than one percent of the country's entire GDP, to the domain of science. And under such circumstances there cannot be a knowledge-based economy,” Manassarian argued.



This notwithstanding, Tatoul Manassarian stressed that the way out of this predicament lies specifically in improving the Armenian legislation which regulates this domain, conducting flexible tax and customs policies, and carrying out several other measures toward an effective economic management.

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

Foreign Diplomats' Collaboration With ACNIS

The Center's work schedule for the first month of Summer 2011 was fairly eventful in terms of meetings, and exchanging views on a variety of issues, with high level representatives from the diplomatic community in Yerevan.

On the invitation of British Ambassador Charles Lonsdale, ACNIS Director of Research Manvel Sargsian attended, on June 8, a festivity to mark the official birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. On the evening of the same day, Ambassador Lonsdale received at his residence and conferred with numerous leading political →



← scientists and analysts, including Sargsian.

Two days later, on June 10, the British ambassador hosted the Center's Director of

Research yet again and conversed with him during a banquet in honor of Laurie Bristow, Director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia at the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Separately, on June 15, German Ambassador Hans-Jochen Schmidt paid a visit to ACNIS and met with Center Director of Research Manvel Sargsian. During this meeting they discussed a wide range of regional issues.



Cognitive Visits to ACNIS



On June 22, Center staff hosted Professor Gregory Aftandilian of the Northeastern University in Boston and a group of students from this institution of higher education. The guests had paid a visit

to ACNIS for cognitive purposes, and during the meeting Center Director of Research Manvel Sargsian briefly introduced the think tank's mission and underscored its important role in forming public opinion. ACNIS analysts Edgar Vardanian and Saro Saroyan also addressed the visiting university students.

Following this meeting, the guests were received by Center founder Raffi K. Hovannisian who likewise conferred with them and answered their inquiries.

On the next day, Manvel Sargsian hosted and conversed with Professor Graeme Robertson of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The interlocutors examined Professor Robertson's new research paper on key global changes in the post-Cold War period.

And upon the Professor's request, ACNIS Director of Research spoke about the domestic political state of affairs in Armenia, specifically since the presidential elections in 2008.



Interview For PhD Research Paper



On June 21, Center Director of Research and political scientist Manvel Sargsian gave an in depth interview to Arianne Caoili, the Philippine-born leading Australian chess player who achieved the FIDE Woman International Master title. Miss Caoili, however, did not

visit ACNIS because of chess-related matters, but to enrich—with yet another renowned expert viewpoint—her PhD dissertation on Armenian-Russian economic and political ties.

Aside from playing chess, Arianne Caoili also studies at the Australian National University and the European Business School and has a background in Economics, Finance, and International Relations. Her main fields of interest lie in Russian geopolitics, Armenian economic development and diaspora relations, and political economy of the Middle East.

All through her visit to Armenia for the next one month, Miss Caoili will have meetings and conduct interviews with the country's several officials and policy specialists.

To note, Arianne Caoili is also the intimate of Armenian chess Grandmaster Levon Aronian, with whom Caoili had met during a chess olympiad.

ACNIS Examines the Post-Kazan Situation Concerning Karabagh



On June 30, the Center convened a policy roundtable to look at the current state of affairs with respect to Mountainous Karabagh (Artsakh) following the recent meeting held in Kazan, Russian Federation, among the presidents of Russia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. The seminar discussion brought together representatives from international organizations and the diplomatic community in Yerevan, leading analysts, policy specialists, and members of the press.

ACNIS analyst Saro Saroyan welcomed the audience with opening remarks.

In his intervention, Center Director of Research Manvel Sargsian reflected on the post-Kazan reactions by the OSCE Minsk Group's co-chairing countries and, accordingly, he did not rule out the possibility of change either in the format of the Minsk Group, or in the concept for resolving the Artsakh issue. "I will not be surprised if the Minsk Group is dissolved and the peace process is transferred to the domain of European integration. I believe time will soon show that the circumstances are changing, a new phase is starting, and this could mean Artsakh's participation as a separate party to the conflict," Sargsian remarked.

In his turn, Regional Studies Center (RSC) Director Richard Giragosian explored the question of whether a war is imminent with regard to Karabagh and against the background of the developments before, during, and after the trilateral meeting in Kazan. "By constantly threatening with war and demanding everything at once, Azerbaijan has put itself in the corner and now looks for a suitable excuse to come out from that trap which it has created and to give up Karabagh 'with dignity,'" the analyst maintained.

The presentations were followed by a series of questions and answers, and featured a lively exchange with the audience. The roundtable participants also included British Ambassador Charles Lonsdale; German Ambassador Hans-Jochen Schmidt; political scientist Levon Urumyan; Naira Sultanyan from the British Embassy; and several others.

● MEDIA OUTREACH



Armenia Today

On June 3, ACNIS Director of Research Manvel Sargsian gave an interview to *Armenia Today* news agency and spoke about the likely developments in connection with the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents' meeting in Kazan, Russia, on June 24 upon the initiative of the president of the Russian Federation. He stated that Azerbaijan's "policy of blackmail, which it has conducted for numerous years, now has begun to work against Azerbaijan itself." Consequently, Sargsian did not rule out the possibility of applying pressure on that country and this, in the analyst's view, can play a part in Kazan and compel the Azerbaijani leadership to sign an agreement on excluding the use or threat of force.

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On June 21, Center Director of Research Manvel Sargsian had an interview with *Capital* daily and analyzed the enlargement of the European Union's role in the Karabagh peace talks format, its assistance toward achieving an agreement, and the trilateral meeting in Kazan. Sargsian noted that the current document on the resolution of the Artsakh issue receives a conflicting reaction from Armenia and Azerbaijan, therefore "under such conditions it is incomprehensible as to what important changes we can expect from Kazan." According to the political scientist, if the sides do not reach an accord, the actual concept could change, that is to say, wholly new ideas and precepts could be set as bases for settling the conflict.



On June 16, ACNIS analyst Saro Saroyan was hosted by the “Azdarar” news program on AR television during which he examined Armenia’s energy security matter, and in particular looked at the long-term Iran-Armenia oil pipeline project and the prospect for its operation. Saroyan stated that the uncertainty of this undertaking is conditioned on the political and economic competition among the countries which pursue interests in the region. Above all, the analyst reflected on the function of the Russian factor in bringing this pipeline venture to fruition.

Center analyst Saro Saroyan’s article series entitled “Handing Over of Liberated Lands and Treason,” which was published by several electronic media, widely resonated among the body politic all through the month of June. In his analysis, Saroyan explored the question of whether the assumed surrendering of liberated territories collides with state and national interests and such action can be regarded as treason. To note, this issue was highly debated in Armenia prior to the Armenian, Azerbaijani, and Russian presidents’ meeting in Kazan. In his analytical study, Saroyan underscored the need to remove this matter from the emotional domain and to examine it rationally, also looking at the security considerations of Armenia and Karabagh. The analyst concluded that complete or partial return of liberated lands is not only treason, but such move could threaten national security.



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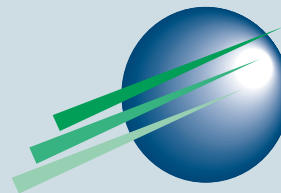
On June 10, ACNIS analyst Edgar Vardanian was the guest of “Realpolitik” program of *1in.am* news agency, and he comprehensively appraised the discourse between the

Armenian National Congress (ANC) opposition force and the country’s authorities. Vardanian examined in theory and in reality, with the Armenian example, the opposition-government correlations in non-democratic countries.



As per Center analyst, in such countries the halls of power consent to holding talks with the opposition solely after accepting their own defeat. But in the case of Armenia, as maintained by Vardanian, the ANC has not created that condition which would force the authorities to sit at the negotiations table, and as a result the powers that be refuse to hold discussions on conducting pre-term elections. “There is little value in the frequently expressed views which suggest that the opposition can remove the authorities from power by introducing facts. No piece of evidence can convince the undemocratic establishment to resign from power,” 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 seventeen 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.