



Artsakh Newsletter

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ON SEPTEMBER 2, NAGORNO KARABAKH CELEBRATES ITS INDEPENDENCE DAY. TWELVE YEARS AGO WE, THE PEOPLE OF ARTSAKH, EXPRESSED OUR DETERMINATION TO LIVE IN FREEDOM. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS FORCED US TO DEFEND OUR RIGHTS ALSO ON THE BATTLEFIELD. WE WERE VICTORIOUS AND NOW THE NAGORNO KARABAKH REPUBLIC IS DEVELOPING A STABLE AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY, BOLSTERED BY A GROWING FREE-MARKET ECONOMY. CONGRATULATIONS TO THE PEOPLE OF ARTSAKH AND TO OUR FRIENDS AROUND THE WORLD!

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NKR CELEBRATES 10th ANNIVERSARY OF SUCCESSFUL DIPLOMACY

Stepanakert, July 29. July 23, 2003 marked the 10th anniversary of establishment of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic's Foreign Ministry. The decision to that end was made during hot stages of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, when regional powers and international organizations stepped up their mediation efforts to bring about a peaceful settlement. It was established to better represent and defend the young republic's interests on the international arena.

Today, the Foreign Ministry is a well-functioning government agency, whose responsibilities include military-political issues, peace negotiations, work with international organizations, contribution to economic development and strengthening of democracy. Nagorno Karabakh has established representations in Armenia, United States, France, Russia, the Middle East and Australia. They serve as de-facto embassies, acting as liaisons between Nagorno Karabakh and their host countries.



Armenian Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian addresses participants of the conference of the NKR Foreign Minister senior staff and Permanent Representatives abroad

The Foreign Ministry's 10th anniversary celebrations took place in Stepanakert July 29-31, 2003. As part of the celebration, a first-ever conference of the NKR Foreign Ministry senior staff and NKR Permanent Representatives abroad took place. A delegation of the Armenian Foreign Ministry headed by Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian also took part in the conference.

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Congressional Staff Delegation Visits Nagorno Karabakh, Meets Senior Officials

Stepanakert, August 19. Sponsored by the Armenian Assembly of America, a nine-member congressional staff delegation visited Nagorno Karabakh meeting with Prime Minister Anoushavan Danielian and Foreign Minister Ashot Ghoulian. Prime Minister Danielian thanked the United States Congress for its humanitarian assistance to the people of Nagorno Karabakh provided since 1998. Noting that the assistance has been critical in overcoming the consequences of the devastating war with Azerbaijan and continues to be important, he stressed that the country now needs assistance with the development of its economic infrastructure. Foreign Minister Ghoulian told members of the delegation that Nagorno



Congressional Staff Delegation with Prime Minister Danielian (center) and Foreign Minister Ghoulian (third from right)

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NKR CELEBRATES 10th ANNIVERSARY OF SUCCESSFUL DIPLOMACY*(Continued from page 1)*

President Arkady Ghoukasian congratulated participants, noting that the creation of the Foreign Ministry signaled Nagorno Karabakh's determination to achieve formal international recognition of its de-facto independence, since the conduct of independent foreign policy is one of the basic attributes of statehood. "The foreign policy of Nagorno Karabakh Republic is aimed at defending the national interests of the people of Artsakh. We have never deviated from this goal in the past nor will we do so in the future. Thanks to the efforts of our diplomats, the international community increasingly realizes the incontestable fact that peace and stability in the South Caucasus can only be achieved by taking into consideration vital interests of the Nagorno Karabakh people," said Ghoukasian.

In his speech NKR Foreign Minister Ashot Ghouljian said that the international recognition of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic would help further stability in the South Caucasus. He advocated direct negotiations with Azerbaijan and blamed Azerbaijan's rigidity for lack of progress in the peace talks. Ghouljian excluded the possibility of vertical subordination of Nagorno Karabakh to Azerbaijan in any peace deal and advocated for a permanent land link with Armenia.

Armenian Foreign Minister Oskanian underscored in his speech that "Nagorno Karabakh is a successful de-facto independent state and the state-building processes here have al-

ready become irreversible. As it is impossible to turn back history, it is time to make the shift from de-facto independence to international recognition of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic".

During the conference, Armenian and Nagorno Karabakh diplomats discussed the current stage of the peace talks, information policy and cooperation between the two Foreign Ministries and their diplomatic representations abroad. On the conference's final day, Oskanian and Ghouljian signed a renewed Protocol of Cooperation between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh. At the press conference that followed, the Foreign Ministers said that the conference was an opportunity for Armenian and Nagorno Karabakh diplomats to analyze the work of the past 10 years together, exchange ideas and set priorities for the future.



Ghouljian and Oskanian sign the Renewed Protocol of Cooperation between the Foreign Ministries of Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh

REMEMBERING ARTSAKH LIBERATION WAR HERO MONTE MELKONIAN

Ten years ago on June 12 the Armenian nation lost one of its finest sons, the legendary hero of the Artsakh Liberation War and the commander of the Martouni defense district Monte Melkonian (Avo). In his writings, the California-born Melkonian justified his decision to join the war by saying that "this homeland [Armenia] belongs to me just as it belongs to any other Armenian and I am responsible for the defense of this part of my homeland just as any other Armenian." Monte's military talent shone on the battlefield as he instilled strict discipline in the Martouni self-defense units leading them to one victory after another. A brilliant commander, he demanded that his subordinates respect Azerbaijani civilians and prisoners of war. He died as a true patriot on the battlefield, defending the liberty of the people of Nagorno Karabakh and the entire Armenian nation. The memory of National Hero Monte Melkonian remains in our hearts and minds.

Congressional Staff Delegation Visits Nagorno Karabakh, Meets Senior Officials*(Continued from page 1)*

Karabakh greatly appreciates the role that the United States plays as a Co-Chair of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) Minsk Group in trying to find a solution to the Nagorno

Karabakh conflict and maintaining stability and peace in the South Caucasus. He presented NKR's position on the conflict's settlement, stressing that no solution can be found and implemented without participation of the Nagorno Karabakh authorities

in the peace talks. Ghouljian also described the republic's internal political situation, the process of independent state building and implementing democratic reforms.

SITUATION TENSE ON THE LINE OF CONTACT AGAIN

Conditions on the Line of Contact heated up this summer as detachments of the Azerbaijani armed forces tried to re-deploy closer to positions of the NKR Defense Army units along parts of the frontline. Beginning in late June several Azerbaijani reconnaissance groups attempted to cross into the territory held by the Nagorno Karabakh armed forces on the southeastern portion of the frontline, re-

sulting in an exchange of fire. On June 26, one NKR Defense Army serviceman was wounded. In a similar development on July 14, one Azerbaijani serviceman was shot dead, while several others were wounded. The Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWRP) said that several dozen Azeri soldiers were killed or missing. Azerbaijani news sources also reported that the local Azeri brigade com-

mander was dismissed following these incidents.

The Nagorno Karabakh Defense Ministry issued three separate statements on July 1, 7 and 14 condemning the cease-fire violations and warning the Azerbaijani side that any attempts to cross the Line of Contact would be met with decisive retaliatory actions by the NKR Defense Army. Representatives of the Stepanakert

Martakert Liberated 10 Years Ago

Martakert, June 30. Nagorno Karabakh celebrated the tenth anniversary of Martakert's liberation from an Azerbaijani year-long military occupation. President Arkady Ghoukasian, who took part in the celebrations, said in his address that the liberation of Martakert reaffirmed Nagorno Karabakh's might and strength of

spirit. "Despite the fact that only a couple of kilometers separate Martakert from the frontline, I am convinced that we can defend our borders and our homeland should the enemy attack. I hope that the Azerbaijani side realizes this too," he said. Ghoukasian further expressed his belief that the people of Azerbaijan do

not want war and it is the political leaders in Baku who call for the resumption of hostilities. Stressing that today the NKR armed forces are much better equipped and disciplined, Ghoukasian called their statements "meaningless."

NORTH-SOUTH HIGHWAY MOVES FORWARD: NEW NINE-MILE STRETCH COMPLETED

Shekher, Varanda province, July 16. The All-Armenian "Hayastan" Fund announced that a nine-mile Drakhtik-Shekher portion of the strategic North-South highway, which includes Shekher Bridge, has been completed, while the construction of another seven-mile Shekher-Sarushen stretch is planned to begin soon. Another seventeen miles will be completed this year, mainly in the southern direction: Stepanakert-Aygestan, Sarushen-Karmir Shuka and Tsakuri-Hadrut. The highway is 105 miles long, about half of which is already constructed. The Fund also announced that before year's end, several fundraising events would take place around the world in order to collect funds for the completion of the highway. For more information please visit "Hayastan" Fund's website at <http://www.himnadram.org>.



A recently completed portion of the North-South Highway.

FIFTY STEPANAKERT FAMILIES GET NEW APARTMENTS

Stepanakert, July 12. A new multi-story residential building was completed in Stepanakert. Fifty families, the majority of whom are families of soldiers killed in the Artsakh Liberation War, received apartments in the building at no cost. A committed friend of Artsakh, Armenian-American philanthropist Mrs. Louise Simone

Manoogian, who has contributed significant funds for the post-war reconstruction of Stepanakert, sponsored the construction of the apartment complex. A playground and a tennis court are planned as part of the complex.

Situation Tense on the Line of Contact Again

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office of the Organizations of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) were notified of the cease-fire violations. Truce violations were also

reported along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, prompting Armenian and Azerbaijani Defense Ministers to meet and discuss the incidents.

An OSCE monitoring session took place July 10 on the Line of Contact

where the latest cease-fire violations were registered. A second monitoring took place August 12 in the northern portion of the Line of Contact near the Omar Mountain pass. Both sessions reported no incidents during their monitoring.

Government Announces Highest GDP Growth to Date

Stepanakert, August 20. The National Statistical Service reported on August 20 that in the first six month of the current year, Nagorno Karabakh's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew

12.7%. The unprecedented GDP growth rate was attributed to increased industrial output and capital construction.

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