

**REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS,
REPORTS AND EVENTS
SEPTEMBER 2009-NOVEMBER 2009**



By Richard Giragosian

1. “CHRONOLOGICAL REVIEW”

22 November 2009: Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian met in Munich for the latest in a series of recent negotiations brokered by the OSCE Minsk Group as part of the effort to mediate the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Although the talks seem far from any imminent agreement, the intensity and timing of the meetings have increased in recent months, reflecting an attempt by the OSCE to leverage the momentum and progress in Turkish-Armenian diplomacy. The Azerbaijani and Armenian presidents last met on 9 October in Chisinau, Moldova, representing the seventh such meeting in 2009 alone. The next summit between the two leaders is set for 1-2 December, timed with the OSCE Ministerial Council summit in Athens.

19 November 2009: Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian formally submitted the set of two Armenian-Turkish diplomatic protocols signed on 10 October to the Armenian Constitutional Court. Under Armenian law, all international agreements have to be submitted to the Constitutional Court for its consideration and review prior to their later submission to parliament for ratification. The protocols were formally signed by the Armenian and Turkish foreign ministers after both sides publicly committed to “make their best efforts” to ratify the protocols in a “timely” manner in a statement released on 31 August. The Armenian Constitutional Court now has a period of 90 days to complete its review of the protocols. According to the Constitutional Court’s mandate, its decision will not necessarily be based on whether the protocols are in compliance with the Armenian constitution, but on whether the obligations deriving from such an international agreement are in conformity with the constitution.

6-7 November 2009: Turkish President Abdullah Gül dismissed international criticism of the planned visit to Turkey of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, despite an outstanding arrest warrant issued in March 2009 by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for the Sudanese leader for “crimes against humanity” and acts of genocide in Sudan’s Darfur province. The Sudanese leader was expected to attend an OIC economic summit in Istanbul from 8-9 November.

However –reportedly as a result of behind the scenes requests from Ankara– al Bashir postponed this visit. Officials from the European Union (EU) filed a formal note of protest with Turkey, criticizing Turkey’s announcement that it “does not intend to arrest” the Sudanese president. Commenting on that EU note of protest, Turkish President Gül noted that it was not a bilateral visit and argued that al-Bashir was coming to Turkey merely to participate in a summit meeting of the Islamic Conference Organization (ICO). Although the Sudanese president’s visit to Turkey will be his third in the past 18 months, it will be his first since the ICC arrest warrant was issued in March 2009. A coalition of Turkish human rights groups also protested the visit, and accused the AKP government of “double standards” for condemning Israel over its actions in Gaza while hosting a president who is blamed for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of civilians in Darfur. The visit by the Sudanese president also adds a new problem for Turkey’s image as it follows the Turkish prime minister’s state visit to Iran when he declared that Iran’s nuclear program was “entirely peaceful.”

6 November 2009: Turkish Premier Recep Tayyip Erdoğan met with Archbishop Aram Atesyan, the representative of the Constantinople diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church. The meeting, held at the Dolmabahçe Palace in Istanbul, focused on the “rights of national minorities in Turkey.”

4 November 2009: Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan dispatched a formal diplomatic letter to Greek Prime Minister and Foreign Minister George Papandreou pledging that the Turkish government was ready to discuss all issues to improve relations with Greece in every area and conveying a number of proposals to create new cooperation opportunities between the two countries. The Turkish prime minister added that bilateral relations between Turkey and Greece was based on a framework of mutual respect and understanding, which would only have a positive impact on regional peace and stability. The letter went on to say that Turkey attached importance to boosting its relations with neighbor Greece, and stressed that “zero problems with neighboring countries” was among the priorities of the Turkish foreign policy. The diplomatic message concluded by expressing hope that the Turkish government and the newly formed Greek government would “speed up the ongoing good relations and dialogue.” The letter follows the 9 October visit to Istanbul by the Greek leader during an informal meeting of foreign ministers of the South-East European Countries Process.

2-4 November 2009: The Turkish Army's Land Forces Commander, General Işık Koşaner, met with senior officials from the Azerbaijani Defense Ministry, including Azerbaijani Defense Minister Safar Abiyev, during a visit to Baku. The Turkish and Azerbaijani military officials discussed plans to reestablish and expand military cooperation. General Koşaner is expected to become the next chief of the Turkish General Staff upon the retirement of Army General İlker Başbuğ.

28 October 2009: During a meeting in Tehran with visiting Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani stated that bilateral cooperation between Iran-Turkey was the best way to “strengthen security in the region.” Speaking to reporters, Larijani added that in light of regional developments in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine, the roles of both Iran and Turkey in those countries only “complete each other.” For his part, Prime Minister Erdoğan responded by saying that “we need to establish peace in the region and its solution is in the hands of regional countries and no cross-regional solution should not be imposed to the issue.” The Turkish premier then expressed concern over developments in Palestine, stressing that Turkey’s “stance in Davos meeting and the cancellation of Turkey-Israel joint military exercise” were driven by those concerns and called for “further cooperation among Islamic countries to help” the Palestinians in Gaza.

28 October 2009: Ending a diplomatic crisis between Turkey and Azerbaijan just one day prior to Turkey’s Republic Day holiday, officials in Baku restored Turkish flags flying near a memorial to Turkish soldiers located at the “Alley of Martyrs” in the Azerbaijani capital. Azerbaijani officials had ordered on 15 October that the Turkish flags be removed from the memorial in response to a decision to ban the Azerbaijani flag during a recent football match in the Turkish city of Bursa attended by the Armenian and Turkish presidents. Even more controversially, Azerbaijani also lowered the flags of Azerbaijan and Turkey in front of a Turkish diplomatic building, sparking a more serious diplomatic incident that prompted Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to warn Azerbaijan “against provocations in bilateral relations.”

28 October 2009: Speaking to reporters after arriving in Baku, the leader of an official Turkish governmental delegation, Turkish Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Murat Mercan, argued that the bilateral relationship

between Azerbaijan and Turkey was still defined by the concept of “one nation, two states.” He further reassured the Azerbaijanis that “we have always said that Turkish parliament will not take a step that will trouble Azerbaijani people,” referring to the submission of the Turkish-Armenian diplomatic protocols to the Turkish parliament. Justice and Development Party (AK Party) parliamentarian Murat Mercan also vowed that “what we are witnessing here is that our relations are back on track on the basis of the principle of one nation two states.”

27 October 2009: Turkish Minister of Energy and Natural Resources of Turkey Taner Yıldız announced that Turkey was ready to discuss payment for the difference in the cost of Azerbaijani natural gas which widened since April 2008. The minister explained that both sides are engaged in active negotiations over the pricing for the gas but added that Turkey “would not take steps that could harm the interests of Azerbaijan.” The current price for Azerbaijani gas supplies to Turkey stand at 120 dollars per 1,000 cubic meters, while the average cost of gas for domestic consumers in Turkey is around 380 dollars per 1,000 cubic meters.

20-21 October 2009: After a meeting of the National Security Council in Ankara that formally approved the two diplomatic protocols on normalizing Turkish-Armenian relations, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu formally introduced the protocols to the Turkish parliament. Although the protocols must be approved by both the Turkish and Armenian parliaments prior to their implementation, the schedule for parliamentary consideration and a final vote remain unclear for both countries.

16 October 2009: Turkish police arrested more than 30 suspects allegedly linked to the al-Qaida terror network and accused of planning to stage terrorist attacks on NATO facilities as well as U.S. and Israeli missions in Turkey. Special counter-terrorism police units detained the suspects in a series of simultaneous raids in the cities of Van, Erzurum, Konya, Batman and Istanbul. Turkish police increased security around all U.S., Israeli, NATO and other diplomatic missions throughout the country following al-Qaida linked suicide bombings in 2003 that targeted the British consulate, a British bank and two Jewish synagogues in Istanbul, resulting in the deaths of 58 people. Despite the increased security, a subsequent attack last year that was blamed on al-Qaida-affiliated militants targeted the U.S. Consulate in Istanbul left three assailants and three policemen dead. According to Turkish security officials, several dozen Islamic militants from Turkey have undergone

military and terrorist training in al-Qaida camps in Afghanistan over the past several years, although such extremist Islamist activism is generally rare in Turkey.

14 October 2009: In a reciprocal visit to Turkey by Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian, Turkish President Abdullah Gül hosted his Armenian counterpart in Bursa to watch a soccer match between the Turkish and Armenian national teams. The match, a follow-up to an earlier such game in September 2008 in which the Turkish team also won, was followed by a meeting between the two leaders in which they praised each other for the “significant progress” in their efforts to normalize bilateral relations. Speaking to reporters following the match, the Turkish president explained that “we are not writing history, we are making history,” adding that the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations is a difficult process that cannot be completed “in one day” but noting that “we have witnessed together that we can solve difficult problems during this process” and “the next step will be to make progress on this platform.”

11 October 2009: According to a new report released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Turkey is ranked 101 out of 109 countries according to the UN gender empowerment measure (GEM), an index that shows the level of female participation in the economic and political life of a country. The measure is a specific benchmark that incorporates relevant data such as the percentage of female legislators, senior officials and managers, female professional and technical workers as well as gender disparity in earned income, as a measure of economic independence.

10 October 2009: In a signing ceremony in Zurich hosted by the Swiss foreign minister and attended by the foreign ministers of France, Russia and the U.S., along with several European officials, the foreign ministers of Armenian and Turkey signed two protocols, formally entitled a “protocol on the establishment of diplomatic relations” and a separate “protocol on the development of bilateral relations,” serving as the guiding framework documents for the normalization of relations between the two countries. After a three-hour delay, the signing ceremony proceeded.

9 October 2009: During a visit to Istanbul, Greek Prime Minister and Foreign Minister George Papandreou met Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu during the informal meeting of foreign

ministers of the South-East European Countries Process. Papandreou also visited the grave of his former colleague İsmail Cem, where he was welcomed by Cem's wife and son, at the Zincirlikuyu Cemetery. Papandreou placed an olive branch on the grave, cut from the olive tree planted in Greece a decade earlier by Cem and Papandreou in a symbolic act devoted to securing peace.

8-9 October 2009: Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian and Azerbaijani President İlham Aliyev met in Chisinau, Moldova as part of the mediation talks over the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The meeting, which lasted close to three hours, took place in the residence of U.S. Ambassador to Moldova. Yuri Merzlyakov, Russian Co-Chairman of the OSCE Minsk Group, the body mediating the conflict and managing the peace process, hailed the summit meeting as “serious and constructive,” and stated that “there are not many issues left lacking mutual understanding” between Armenia and Azerbaijan. For his part, the U.S. co-chairman, Ambassador Robert Bradtke, added that the two presidents “in a serious way discussed the problem” and stressed that one of the key achievements of the Chisinau summit meeting was the Presidents' readiness to have next meetings shortly. According to U.S. Chairman, İlham Aliyev and Serzh Sarkisian revealed “a positive dynamics in the talks.” The Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents discussed the terms of the so-called Madrid Principles, a framework document that serves as a general guide to the negotiations and agreed to prepare new modifications and amendments to the document. The next day, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev hosted a special trilateral meeting with his Armenian and Azerbaijani counterparts, reflecting Russia's attempt to mediate the Karabakh conflict to supplement the OSCE Minsk Group.

8 October 2009: The Yerevan-based office of the Open Society Institute (OSI) released the findings of a public opinion poll it conducted in Armenia from 14 to 30 September 2009 on Turkish-Armenian diplomacy. According to the poll's findings, some 58.7 percent of the 1306 sample polled supported the initiative to normalize relations between the two countries. In response to the question what Armenia will gain from normalization of relations with Turkey 14.5 percent of respondents replied they expect the process to boost economic development, with 11.3 percent believing that Armenia will gain nothing and another 8.7 percent who said that this will negatively affect settlement of the Karabakh conflict. Some 48.5 percent of those polled said that the initialed protocols contain no preconditions, whereas 37.2 percent held the opposite point of view. A further

22.4 percent of the respondents believed that Armenia needs an opening of the border with Turkey whereas 16.3 percent indicated that Turkey needs it more, and 22 percent saying that both the states need the border to be opened. Another 17.3 percent said that the opening of the border is in favor of unnamed “third states.”

4 October 2009: During a tour of key community centers in the global Armenian diaspora, Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian briefed over 60 Armenian community leaders in Los Angeles on the Armenian government’s efforts to conclude a diplomatic deal to normalize relations with Turkey by adopting two “protocols” detailing the opening of borders and establishment of diplomatic relations. Most significantly, Sarkisian added that he would consider a measure that would add a formal reservation to the protocols, providing Armenia with the right to consider the agreement null and void, should Turkey, after ratification, not open the border with Armenia within the stipulated 60-day timeframe or if it closed the border after its formal opening.

1-3 October 2009: Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu arrived in Belgium for the start of an official visit that included meetings with European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso and EU Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn. The Turkish foreign minister then traveled on to Azerbaijan’s Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic to accompany Turkish President Abdullah Gül at a summit of “Turkic Language Speaking Countries” from 2-3 October.

30 September 2009: In a meeting with a state-created body known as the “Public Council,” Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian argued that by signing the Armenian-Turkish Protocols Armenia is not forming “ties of relationship” with Turkey, but is rather “only trying to create a tolerable atmosphere for further cooperation.” The Armenian president admitted that “the [Armenian] public has doubts about the Armenian-Turkish protocols, which is quite natural,” adding that even he “had doubts when I was inviting Turkish President Abdullah Gül to Yerevan,” but stating that “I have talked to many experts and economists” and “they believe that an open order will open up ample opportunities for Armenian producers than for Turkish producers – the Armenian market serves three million people, the Turkish market 70 million, which is almost 23 times large.” The Armenian leader also addressed fears about preconditions allegedly contained in the Armenian-Turkish protocols by noting that the documents do not contain

any preconditions but merely “have some points that are the result of compromise.” Following the president’s remarks, the body voted in favor of signing the Armenian-Turkish Protocols on establishing diplomatic relations and developing bilateral relations with Turkey.

28 September 2009: During the 64th session of the UN General Assembly, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu met with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Speaking to reporters prior to their meeting, Clinton pointed out the importance of relations between Turkey and the United States, adding that “the foreign minister and I speak on a range of issues that are important, including energy and Turkey’s EU accession process and the normalization efforts with Armenia and the situation in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, the Middle East.” She went on to add that “I very much appreciate the strong commitment that the Turkish government has made to the Armenia normalization process, and I also am very grateful for the strong relationship that the United States and Turkey have had, which continues today.” In a separate meeting, Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian conferred with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and discussed the current stage of Armenian-Turkish diplomacy. For her part, the U.S. secretary of state reaffirmed that the U.S. was Armenia’s partner in both democratic reforms and economic development and praised Armenia’s efforts to establish relations with Turkey and reconfirmed U.S.’s position that establishment of Armenian-Turkish relations must be without preconditions and within reasonable timeframes. Clinton explained that she wanted to “reiterate our very strong support for the normalization process that is going on between Armenia and Turkey, which we have long said should take place without preconditions and within a reasonable timeframe.” The meeting was the second meeting between the Armenian foreign minister and the U.S. state secretary this year.

25 September 2009: Arriving in the Azerbaijani capital Baku, Turkish Parliament Speaker Mehmet Ali Şahin participated in a summit meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-speaking countries (PATC). In comments to the press during his visit, Şahin said that Turkey was offering to help find solutions to problems in the South Caucasus and the establishment of peace in the region, but noted that “the Azerbaijani authorities have been informed on the process between Turkey and Armenia” and stressed that “Turkey will not be in a position to cause difficulty for our Azerbaijani brothers and sisters.” Şahin met with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, Parliament Speaker Oktay Asadov and Prime Minister Artur Rasizade as part of his visit.

16 September 2009: In a special ceremony in Istanbul, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu and his Syrian counterpart, Foreign Minister Walid Moualem, signed a new agreement ending visa restrictions for Turkish citizens traveling to Syria. The lifting of the restrictions, which applies equally to Syrians traveling to Turkey, follows a series of negotiations in recent months on expanding bilateral relations. That effort has also been matched by Turkish-mediated mediation efforts aimed at easing tension between Baghdad and Damascus and seeking to foster peace between Syria and Israel. Hailing the agreement, Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoğlu noted that it was a result of Turkey's plan for closer "economic and political ties with the region" and added that "we want this understanding to spread into our region and the region to turn into a very wide zone of welfare and strong stability," noting that "we may establish similar mechanisms with Iran" so that "our relationship with our neighbors to turn into maximum cooperation via the principle of zero problems."

2. REPORTS OF INTEREST & NEWS FROM THE "THINK THANK" WORLD

New Report: "Turkey in Europe. Breaking the Vicious Circle," Second Report of the Independent Commission on Turkey, British Council and Open Society Institute (OSI), September 2009. The Independent Commission on Turkey was established in March 2004 by a group of concerned Europeans, deeply committed to the integration process and having held high public office, for the purpose of contributing to a more objective and rational debate on Turkey's accession to the European Union.

Abstract of the report

In its first report, *Turkey in Europe: More than a Promise?*, published in September 2004, the Independent Commission examined the long history of Turkey's convergence with Europe as well as the major opportunities and challenges connected with Turkey's possible EU membership. It concluded that accession negotiations should be opened without delay upon fulfillment by Turkey of the Copenhagen Criteria. Turkey's European vocation and its eligibility for membership in the EU having been reconfirmed by European

governments many times during past decades, any further delay would have been seen as a blatant breach of commitments made and would have seriously damaged the Union's credibility. Moreover, while the accession of a country with the size and specific characteristics of Turkey would doubtlessly present the EU with substantive challenges, it argued that these were by no means insurmountable. On the other hand, the accession of a transformed, democratic and modern Turkey, a country in a unique geo-strategic position with great economic potential and a young and dynamic workforce, would bring considerable benefits to the European Union.

The Independent Commission welcomed the European Council decision in December 2004 to open accession negotiations with Turkey and the start of talks in October 2005. Regrettably, negative reactions since then from European political leaders and growing hesitation by the European public about further enlargement, have given Turkey the impression that it is not welcome, even if it were to fulfill all membership conditions. Moreover, the process itself has been hindered by the effective blockage of more than half of the negotiating chapters.

Support in Turkey has faded for both the EU accession process and the implementation of difficult and sometimes expensive reforms. This was aggravated by internal political difficulties, in which the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) found itself under serious pressure from emboldened Turkish Euro-skeptics who, partly under the guise of defending secular principles against a supposed advance of Islamism, attempted to delay the implementation of political and social reforms needed for EU membership.

Lack of Turkish reforms triggered more European opposition to Turkey's accession. The sense of being excluded further demoralized Turkish reformers, thus creating a vicious circle. This vicious circle is now undermining the many achievements over the past decade inspired by Turkey's convergence with the EU. In particular, progress has stalled in strengthening democracy, broadening respect for human rights and building up a free and vibrant civil society. The new

dynamism experienced by the Turkish economy has slowed, aggravated by the global economic crisis, as has the dramatic increase of foreign direct investment experienced after the talks started. On the other hand, Turkey's new charisma and prosperity have made it increasingly attractive to nearby countries and its proactive regional policy has proved that an EU-anchored Turkey can project stability into volatile areas of its neighborhood in the Caucasus and Middle East. This is the backdrop of the present report, in which the Independent Commission analyses developments in the EU and Turkey since the opening of negotiations as well as issues important for Turkey's accession process. As with its first report in 2004, the present publication by the Independent Commission represents the personal views of its members, and does not intend to duplicate the European Commission's forthcoming annual progress report.

The report is available at: www.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/ICT-report.pdf

New Report: “*Turkey. Need for continued improvement in response to protracted displacement,*” published on 26 October 2009 by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the report notes that “around one million internally displaced people (IDPs) in Turkey continue to face protracted displacement, with many obstacles still standing in the way of durable solutions. Prevailing insecurity in south-eastern Turkey, the continuing presence of village guard militias and of mines, and under-development continue to bar their return. Integration in urban areas is still fraught with difficulties in the absence of targeted assistance, as IDPs, most of them Kurdish, face socio-economic marginalization and discrimination.

The report notes, however, that the Turkish government “has taken notable steps to address the internal displacement situation. In the last four years, it has commissioned a national survey on the number and conditions of IDPs; drafted a national IDP strategy; adopted a law on compensation; and put together a comprehensive pilot action plan in Van Province which addresses rural and urban situations of displacement.

The report is available at: [http://www.internal-displacementorg/8025708F004BE3B1/\(httpInfoFiles\)/7EDA8C99541018EAC125765B002E188D/\\$file/Turkey_Overview_Oct09.pdf](http://www.internal-displacementorg/8025708F004BE3B1/(httpInfoFiles)/7EDA8C99541018EAC125765B002E188D/$file/Turkey_Overview_Oct09.pdf)

New Articles of Note: “Starting Over? Turkey and Azerbaijan after the Protocols,” “Endgame on Karabakh?” and “The Sources of Russia’s Rapprochement with Turkey,” were recently published in the “Azerbaijan in the World” biweekly newsletter of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy (ADA) in Baku, Azerbaijan.

The following are the abstracts of each report:

Nigar Göksel, “Starting Over? Turkey and Azerbaijan after the Protocols,” *ADA Biweekly*, Vol. II, No. 23, 1 December 2009.

The two protocols signed by Turkey and Armenia on October 10th are now awaiting action by the Turkish parliament’s foreign affairs committee. Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev has frequently spoken against any rapprochement between Turkey and Armenia as long as the latter continues to occupy Azerbaijani territory. Baku’s strategy to elicit popular concern in Turkey proved effective, since the Turkish government has often tried to defend its foreign policy decisions in terms of public opinion. The AKP government is receptive to public opinion and has by now reiterated at every level that the protocols will not be ratified until the “occupation of Azerbaijan ends,” though it is not clear whether this refers to some –or all– occupied Azerbaijani regions around Karabakh, or also Karabakh itself. It is quite feasible in Turkey that protocols wait in the parliament for long stretches of time. In 2005, for example, Turkey signed an agreement extending its customs union with the EU to the new members of the Union, including Cyprus; this has still not been ratified. For now, from the Azerbaijani perspective, the immediate “risk” may thus be averted.

Paul Goble, “Endgame on Karabakh?,” *ADA Biweekly*, Vol. II, No. 23, 1 December 2009.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev's statement that Baku would use force to recover the occupied territories if an agreement on their return is not reached soon, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan's suggestion that Yerevan would recognize Karabakh as an independent state if any force were used against that enclave, repeated media suggestions that one or another parties in the dispute is going to turn away from Russia or from the West depending on what occurs next – all these and many other events over the last month have sparked speculation that the South Caucasus is on the verge of a new outbreak of violence.

Fariz Rzayev, "The Sources of Russia's Rapprochement with Turkey," *ADA Biweekly*, Vol. II, No. 23, 1 December 2009.

Since late 1980s the world has experienced a number of processes the significance of which is sometimes described as geopolitical earthquakes. These worldwide events in turn have triggered many regional changes, including Russia's rapprochement with Turkey, that have so far garnered fewer headlines but are increasingly the subject of discussion in diplomatic and academic circles.

Participants in these discussions generally fall into two camps. The first, which might be called "the sceptics", do not deny that there has been a strengthening of relations between Russia and Turkey observed since 1990s, but they argue that these ties lack a strategic foundation, are opportunistic in nature, and thus are subject to change in the future. The second, for which there is no obvious single term, argue that the Russia-Turkey rapprochement is in fact a strategic process based on a commonality of interests, with some stressing the positive nature of this development and others focusing on its negative implications for the broader region's integration with the Euro-Atlantic area. Indeed, some of the latter are expressing serious concern about a possible "reorientation" of Turkish foreign policy.

Each article is available at: <http://ada.edu.az/uploads/file/bw/pdf290.pdf>

Event of Note: “CSIS Hosts Roundtable Discussion on ‘Global Economic Problems and Private Sector Solutions’ The Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies’ (CSIS) Turkey Project and the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) hosted M. Rifat Hisarcıklıoğlu for a discussion on 14 September 2009 entitled “Global Economic Problems and Private Sector Solutions.”

For more information, go to: www.csis.org

Event of Note: “United Nations University Hosts Turkish Ambassador to the UN Apakan for a Presentation on Conflict Mediation.” The United Nations University (UNU) held a special event on 21 October 2009, as part of its “Mid-day Forum Series,” with the newly appointed Turkish Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Ertuğrul Apakan presenting an assessment on how the international community can best fulfill its role and responsibilities as a mediator in conflict situations.

For more information or to download the Ambassador’s report, go to: <http://www.ony.unu.edu/events-forums/new/MDForums/2009/conflict-and-international-med.php>