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Military Escalation: From Afghanistan To the Caspian Sea and Central Asia

Largest ground combat operation since the Vietnam War

by Rick Rozoff
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The Pentagon and its NATO allies have launched the largest combat offensive to date in their nearly eight-year war in South Asia - Operation Khanjar (Strike of the Sword) with 4,000 US Marines, attack helicopters and tanks and Operation Panchai Palang (Panther's Claw) with several hundred British engaged in airborne assaults - in the Afghan province of Helmand.

The American effort is the largest ground combat operation conducted by Washington in Asia since the Vietnam War.

Other NATO and allied nations have also boosted or intend to increase their troop strength in Afghanistan, with German forces to exceed 4,000 for the first time, Romanian troops to top 1,000 and contingents to be augmented from dozens of other NATO member and partner states, including formerly neutral Finland and Sweden.

The US, NATO, NATO's Partnership for Peace and Contact Countries and other allied nations - states as diverse as Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, the United Arab Emirates and Macedonia - have some 90,000 troops in Afghanistan, all under the command of America's General Stanley A. McChrystal, former head of the Joint Special Operations Command in Iraq and a counterinsurgency master hand. The Afghan-Pakistani war theater resembles the Vietnam War in more than one manner.

The US troop contingent has nearly doubled since last year, more than quintupled in five years, and will be in the neighborhood of 70,000 soldiers by year's end.

Concurrent with the ongoing offensive the US has fired missiles from aerial drones into Pakistan in the two deadliest strikes of the type ever in that country, killing 65 and 50 people in two recent attacks.

Large-scale government military operations on the Pakistani side of the border, coordinated with the Pentagon through its new Pakistan Afghanistan Coordination Cell and with NATO through the Trilateral Afghanistan-Pakistan-NATO Military Commission, have uprooted and displaced well in excess of two million civilians, the largest population dislocation in Pakistan since the 1947 partition of British India.

Pentagon And NATO Fan Out From Afghanistan To Central Asia

Complementing and extending the escalating war in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Pentagon and NATO have also intensified initiatives to expand their military networks not only in South but also Central Asia and in the littoral states of the Caspian Sea.

On June 24-25 NATO held the first Security Forum of its Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) in Central Asia, the first outside of Europe in fact, in the capital of Kazakhstan, which borders both Russia and China and possesses the largest proven reserves of oil and natural gas in Central Asia and among Caspian Sea states aside from Russia and Iran.

The meeting gathered together the defense chiefs of 50 nations, 28 full NATO members and 22 partners; that is, from over a quarter of the world's 192 nations.

One report of the summit succinctly summarized its main focus as "reviewing the security situation, with special emphasis on Afghanistan, Central Asia and the Caucasus region, and of energy stability." [1]

With the arrival of the Barack Obama administration in Washington this January 20th and its emphasis on shifting US focus and forces from Iraq to Afghanistan, top Pentagon officials have paid a number of visits to the South Caucasus and Central Asia to arrange logistics for the war in South Asia and to solicit not only transit and basing rights but also troop commitments from former Soviet republics like Azerbaijan, Georgia and Kazakhstan.

The Pentagon has recently regained use of the Manas Airbase in Kyrgyzstan where an estimated 200,000 US and NATO troops have passed through since the beginning of the Afghan war. An unnamed Russian official recently said of that development: "The real character of the US military presence in Central Asia has not changed, which goes against Russian interests and our agreement with the Kyrgyz leadership." [2]

A Kazakh account of last month's NATO meeting in the capital of Astana noted that "NATO is seeking to deepen cooperation with its partner countries in Central Asia - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan." [3]

As a reminder of the significance of the meeting and its location the report added: "The EAPC Security Forum for the first time will be held on the post-Soviet territory and Asian continent in general...."

NATO's outgoing secretary general, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, speaking in the dual capacity characteristic of his post, that of Alliance leader and that of a Pentagon mouthpiece, confirmed this: "As you know, the new American leadership and President Barack Obama are launching several initiatives in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Middle East region." [4]

He also didn't fail to highlight the role of the host country and the Caspian region in general regarding several unprecedented oil and natural gas projects beginning in Kazakhstan and running over and under the Caspian Sea to the South Caucasus, Asia Minor, the Balkans, Ukraine, Central Europe and the Baltic Sea, in some instances linking up with Iraq, Egypt and Israel.

During the EAPC summit Scheffer told reporters: "My presence here today means that cooperation between NATO and Kazakhstan is deepening." [5]

The official NATO website quoted Scheffer as saying "Today, Kazakhstan is NATO's most active Partner in the Central Asian region. We have also achieved solid progress in defence and military co-operation, particularly in enhancing the ability of our military forces to work together." [6]

With fifty defense chiefs attending the two day meeting, the scope of discussions dwelt primarily but not exclusively with Central and South Asia.

Eastern Caspian, South Caucasus And Arc Of Past Decade's Wars

The network of military 'lily pad' bases, transit routes (land, air, sea), multinational and integrated war games and training that NATO has consolidated and conducted from the Balkans to nations bordering China like Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and Kazakhstan over the past ten years has been documented in an earlier article, Mr. Simmons' Mission: NATO Bases From Balkans To Chinese Border. [7]

The role of Azerbaijan on the eastern shore of the Caspian has been discussed in Azerbaijan And The Caspian: NATO's War For The World's Heartland [8], though much has occurred there recently.

The Western expeditionary military New Silk Road parallels trans-Eurasian energy transit projects also running from the Balkans to Central Asia, with troops and arms moving eastward and oil and natural gas going in the opposite direction.

The trajectory is more significantly and ominously the same as that of the major wars of the past decade in the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Pakistan, Iraq and the South Caucasus. An 'arc of instability' indeed, though not so much cause as effect of Western military aggression.

At the NATO summit in Kazakhstan the individual most substantively tasked to effect this triple passageway, through Republican and Democratic administrations in Washington alike, the NATO Secretary General's Special Representative to Central Asia and the South Caucasus Robert Simmons, an American - addressing among others representatives from all fifteen former Soviet republics - said about the results of last August's five-day war between Georgia and Russia that "We believe that the presence of Russian troops is inappropriate....Russia's military contingent should be withdrawn from Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as today it is greater than it was before the conflict erupted." [9]

Simmons has recruited an initial force of 500 Georgia troops, veterans of the Iraqi occupation and last year's war in South Ossetia, trained by US Green Berets and the Marine Corps, for NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan and has dragooned

additional Azerbaijani soldiers for the same purpose as well. Both the above South Caucasus nations will play an enhanced role in the transit of Western troops and materiel to the war zone, too.

Turkmenistan: Final Link In Caspian, Central Asian Energy And Military Plans

Earlier this week the George Soros Open Society Institute news site Eurasianet featured an article on Turkmenistan, which lies on the southeast corner of the Caspian Sea and which borders Afghanistan and Iran.

It includes the observation that "Turkmenistan is quietly developing into a major transport hub for the northern supply network, which is being used to relay non-lethal supplies to US and NATO forces in Afghanistan. The Pentagon has confirmed a small contingent of US military personnel now operates in Ashgabat [the capital city]...."

According to the Pentagon's Defense Energy Support Center, Turkmenistan is "invaluable to the success of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom."

A US Defense Department spokesman added that "the Government of Turkmenistan now allows the US overflights" and "the Turkmen government permits the presence of US troops on its territory."

The Eurasianet piece also says that the Turkmen government has offered the US the use of the "sprawling ex-Soviet air base at Mary," close to Afghanistan and even closer to Iran. [10]

Four days before the above article appeared the U.S Energy Department for Russia and Eurasia Deputy Director Meryl Burpoe was in Ashgabat, the capital of Turkmenistan, where she said, "The U.S. Energy Department completely supports the idea of diversifying gas export routes from Turkmenistan."

By diversification is meant cutting off Turkmen hydrocarbons to Russian pipelines and routing them to the Western-controlled Nabucco and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum { Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey) natural gas and the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipelines which deliberately bypass Russia, Armenia and Iran and are explicitly designed to drive Russia and Iran as producer nations out of the European energy market. A policy that, were it to be attempted against NATO member states, would be viewed not only as a hostile action but a veritable act of war.

On the same day as Burpoe made her statement the government of Turkmenistan announced an unprecedented move, that it had put up 32 Caspian oil and gas field units for international tenders. Bidders include Chevron, ConocoPhillips, Marathon, Midland Oil & Gas, the British Petroleum, the German RWE, Austrian OMV, Norwegian Statoil Hydro and French Total. [11]

According to estimates of the American WesternGeco Geophysical Company "the Turkmen sector of the Caspian Sea [contains] up 11 billion tons of oil and 5.5 trillion cubic meters of gas, in addition to the already contracted units." [12]

A few days earlier the Special Envoy of the US Secretary of State for Eurasian Energy, Richard Morningstar, made a trip to Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan.

Regarding the Turkmen leg of the journey, Morningstar "said the progress reached at the meetings exceeded his expectations. He said the stopping of gas transportation via the Turkmenistan-Russia pipeline was one of the possible reasons for the results achieved in Ashgabat." [13]

How broad the US-led energy transit campaign against Russia is will be seen in three days:

"An inter-governmental agreement on the Nabucco project envisaging natural gas supplies from the basin of the Caspian Sea to Europe avoiding Russia will be signed in Ankara on July 13....Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Iran and Iraq are considered as among potential energy resources for Nabucco. The US stands against Iran's participation in Nabucco's realization but supports gas transportation to Europe from Iraq." [14]

Recent moves by the US and NATO directly across the Caspian Sea in Azerbaijan replicate and complement those in Turkmenistan and the other four Central Asian nations.

This very day the US State Department's Under Secretary for Political Affairs William Burns and Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg are in the capital of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan: US, NATO Front Line Aimed At Karabakh, Armenia, Iran

In late June the Commander of U.S. Marine Forces Europe and Africa (dual commands), Major General Tracy Garrett, was in the capital of Azerbaijan to solidify "mutual support on regional security issues" and stated: "I am responsible for the United States' security in Europe and African countries, including in Azerbaijan. The U.S. wants to cooperate with Azerbaijan in the field of land forces." [15]

To indicate what US-Azerbaijani cooperation in developing the second's army entails, on the very day that the above quote was reported and presumably while the US Marine commander was still present in the country, the nation's president, Ilham Aliyev, said: "Today, our army is the mightiest army of this region. In case of necessity, we can use our military power to restore Azerbaijan's territorial integrity....The war has not ended yet. Only the first stage of the war ended." [16]

Aliyev referred to the lingering dispute with Armenia over Nagorno Karabakh. Armenia is an ally of Russia; both are members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization and Russia has a small contingent of troops in the country.

Armenia is also allied with Iran, which it borders. Otherwise it is encircled by the NATO Turkey-Georgia-Azerbaijan axis discussed shortly.

As the Deputy Head of the Working Group of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Federation Council of Russia Ramil Latypov mentioned four days ago, "Formed by three countries, a so-called strategic axis - Russia-Armenia-Iran - in fact has a major stabilizing influence in the Caucasus.

"Created to oppose the NATO axis of Turkey-Georgia-Azerbaijan, [which] on the contrary, in order to solve its own and the American-European geo-strategic tasks, NATO is trying to

drive a wedge between Russia and Armenia, as well as between Iran and Armenia, using every method, including military ones." [17]

Softening The Ground: 'Color Revolutions,' NATO's Fifth Column And Trojan Horse

Revealingly, Latypov also noted that "the Iranian nation has learned the correct lesson from the events in Ukraine and Georgia, as well as taking into account the lessons learnt by Armenia, in March 2008.

"Calling people to rallies the main Armenian 'fighter for freedom' [opposition leader] Levon Ter-Petrossian, and his Iranian counterpart, do not understand that they are only pawns in the struggle of Western countries for resources and the financial flows from the East and Asia....

"They rather showed that the three countries should develop a unified system of mutual support, triggered when external forces try to destabilize the internal political situation." [18]

He is not the first to remark the resemblance between the so-called Green Revolution in Iran and its predecessors in Georgia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Belarus, Iraq, Myanmar, Venezuela, Armenia and Moldova: The Rose, Chestnut/Orange, Tulip, Cedar, Denim, Purple, Saffron/Maroon, White, Daffodil and Twitter uprisings, respectively.

The Iranian Mehr News agency claimed: "Half a year before the Iranian presidential elections, the CIA was preparing an orange revolution scenario. CIA agents met Iranian oppositionists and gave them instructions in Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kuwait and the UAE [United Arab Emirates].

"The Woodrow Wilson Center and Soros Foundation are accused of setting up an Iranian revolution plan and providing \$32 million funding to fulfill the strategy." [19]

As the Russian senator mentioned above, attempts to destabilize Iran, Armenia and Russia are related and if one of the three is pulled into the Western orbit the others will suffer. Armenia and Iran are the only buffers Russia has to its south in the greater Caucasus region, otherwise being ringed in by NATO states and partners from the Baltic to the Caspian.

On June 25 Nikolae Ureku, the Romanian ambassador to Azerbaijan and NATO liaison to the country, said to the participants of a roundtable on NATO's role in the European security system that "Azerbaijan's future cooperation with NATO will be in the field of protection of energy resources and naval forces." [20]

Again, Western military forces move east as energy supplies move west.

New War Threat In Southern Caucasus As Pentagon Shores Up Azerbaijani Armed Forces

From June 15-25 Azerbaijan conducted large-scale war games with a title that could not be misconstrued in either Nagorno Karabakh or Armenia, Restoration of the Territorial Integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which consisted of "more than 4,000 military personnel, 99 tanks, 55 armoured fighting vehicles, 123 artillery systems, 12 fighters, 12 military helicopters and 4 battle helicopters...." [21]

Former president of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic President Arkadi Ghukasyan said on July 9 that "Aliyev keeps threatening war even if he speaks of peace." [22]

Immediately preceding this dress rehearsal for a new Caucasus war that would almost inevitably draw in Armenia, Russia, Iran, Turkey and through Turkey NATO and the United States, the US held a five-day workshop in the Azerbaijani capital on Strategic Defense Survey and Final Document Support conducted "in accordance with the bilateral cooperation plan." [23]

Azeri military personnel will also attend the "second half of the US Mobile Exercise Group's maritime operation course on July 26-31, Joint Combat Readiness training in Oklahoma on July 14-22 and US-Azerbaijan consultations in Washington DC, on July 29-30." [24]

On June 29 the NATO International School in Azerbaijan launched a conference on maritime security; that is, on the Caspian Sea.

Four days later US Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson conducted an interview with a new agency in Azerbaijan in which she stated: "Azerbaijan is one of the most important strategic allies in the Caucasus region for the United States....Azerbaijan is in a very serious and dangerous neighborhood with Russia and Iran." [25]

On July 8 the Azerbaijani ambassador to the United States, Yashar Aliyev, confirmed that his nation and the US are to hold defense consultations in Washington in late July and that "The current situation of military cooperation between the two countries and its prospects will be discussed during the consultations." [26]

The next day the Azerbaijani defense minister hosted Oklahoma National Guard Mayor General Myles Deering and their meeting "focused on U.S.-Azerbaijan relations, development of military cooperation and exchange of views on the military and political situation in the region." [27]

Earlier this week the nation's Defense Ministry announced that it was preparing a new Military Doctrine and that "NATO has given a positive review on the project of the Military Doctrine of Azerbaijan." [28]

NATO will hold a 28+1 (28 current Alliance members and Azerbaijan) meeting in Brussels on July 15.

Azerbaijan's defense minister said that "representatives of the Defense Ministry, State Border Service and other services will...participate at the event.

"Cooperation issues on different spheres between Azerbaijan and NATO will be in the focus of attention at the meeting." [29]

Israel Treads Road To Caspian Paved By NATO, Arms Azerbaijan And Georgia For War

On June 28 Israeli President Shimon Peres and a delegation including Defense Ministry Director-General Pinhas Buchris began a journey to the Caspian region with a visit to Azerbaijan. They left that country for Kazakhstan, four days after the NATO summit there

ended.

"The visit [was] the first official government visit of senior Israeli figures to Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan since diplomatic relations were normalized in the 90s." [30]

In Azerbaijan Peres discussed energy cooperation and said of it that "It has both economic and political aspects." [31]

An Armenian news site in a report called "Israel rearms Azerbaijani army" divulged these details of the visit:

"The Israeli defense company Elta Systems Ltd will cooperate with Azerbaijan in the field of satellite systems. Recently, the company announced the creation of the TecSAR satellite.

"According to Azerbaijani military experts, this is an indispensable system for military operations in a mountainous terrain. Given the landscape of Nagorno Karabakh, the system is simply indispensable."

The source also mentioned that Israel would provide its military partner with Namer {Leopard} Armored Infantry Fighting Vehicles and that "Israel and Azerbaijan plan to cooperate in other areas of the defense industry, in particular an agreement has been reached over the construction of a factory for intelligence and combat drones." [32]

Israel supplied neighboring Georgia with drones for its war with Russia last August.

At the time Georgian Reintegration Minister Temur Yakobashvili (trained in Britain and the US) told Israel Army Radio "Israel should be proud of its military, which trained Georgian soldiers.

"We killed 60 Russian soldiers just yesterday. The Russians have lost more than 50 tanks, and we have shot down 11 of their planes. They have sustained enormous damage in terms of manpower." [33]

Yakobashvili's figures may have been hyperbolic but his assessment of Israel's role in arming Georgia's burgeoning military was not.

Not only Armenia and Russia are threatened by increased Azerbaijani-Israeli military cooperation. The Jerusalem Post reported on July 1 in a story titled "Israel gains ground in Central Asia":

"President Shimon Peres's landmark visit to Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan this week represents a significant advance for Israeli ambitions in Central Asia. In the wake of the recent decision to permit Israel to open an embassy in the Turkmen capital of Ashgabad, the visit reflects the importance Jerusalem attaches to this strategically significant part of what is sometimes known as the 'greater Middle East.'" [34]

The piece went on to say that "With regard to containing Teheran, relations with Shi'ite Azerbaijan, which shares a border with Iran, are of particular significance. Azerbaijan has close ethnic links with Iran. Far more Azeris live in Iran than in Azerbaijan itself.

"Israeli defense industries have made very significant inroads. Israel played the central role in rebuilding and modernizing the Azeri military after its losses in Nagorno-Karabakh.

"Israel is reported to maintain listening and surveillance posts on the Azerbaijan-Iran border...." [35]

Iran recalled its ambassador to Azerbaijan after Peres' trip and shortly thereafter invited the Armenian defense minister to Tehran.

Russian analyst Andrei Areshev was quoted by an Armenian news source earlier in the week as saying "Israeli experts have been carrying out purposeful work to strengthen relations with Azerbaijan. Israel is fortifying positions in the Caucasus, it's obvious. Let's not forget that Israeli specialists trained the Georgian military before the attack on South Ossetia."

"It's unclear whether Israel plays its own game or acts as an agent of another power wishing the destabilization of Russia and Iran. At that, it would be naïve to think that the intensification of Baku-Tel Aviv relations is still a secret for Iran and Arab states." [36]

In an Azerbaijani news report called "Israeli air force to join overseas exercises with eye on Iran," it was revealed that the Israeli Air Force "will take part later this year in a joint aerial exercise with a NATO-member state, which is yet to be identified" and Israeli defense officials were quoted as saying that "the overseas exercises would be used to drill long-range maneuvers." [37]

Last week Israel for the first time brought one of its German-made Dolphin submarines through the Suez Canal "as a show of strategic reach in the face of Iran...."

"Each German-made Dolphin has 10 torpedo tubes, four of them widened at Israel's request - to accommodate, some independent analysts believe, nuclear-tipped cruise missiles." [38]

Last Sunday US Vice President Joseph Biden was asked on a television interview "whether the U.S. would stand in the way if the Israelis...decided to launch a military attack against Iranian nuclear facilities," to which he responded:

"Look, we cannot dictate to another sovereign nation what they can and cannot do." [39]

Thirty Year Afghan War, Twenty Year World Conflict With No End In Sight

The US has been engaged in hostilities against and armed conflict in Afghanistan and neighboring Pakistan for over thirty years, starting with the training and arming of a surrogate armed force no later than 1978, prior to the arrival of the first Soviet troops in the nation in December of 1979.

Four days ago Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari recalled the incontestable fact that "The terrorists of today were the heroes of yesteryear until 9/11 occurred...." [40] Heroes not only to the Pakistani political, military and intelligence elite but to their American sponsors as well.

In a genuine sense the US is now engaged in year thirty two of its South Asian war.

The current, direct war being waged in Afghanistan and across the border in Pakistan can also be seen as the twentieth year of a war that commenced as the Cold War ended. The amassing by the US, all its major NATO allies and assorted minor clients of as many as three-quarters of a million troops for Operation Desert Shield in 1990 was the opening salvo. After the following year's Operation Desert Storm and its devastating, overwhelming assault on Iraq military forces in Kuwait and on Iraq itself, then US President George G.W. Bush announced the creation of a New World Order and the war front moved, inexorably and unrelentingly, to new theaters.

Almost immediately after the carnage on the Highway of Death and in the Amiriyah shelter ended the US and its NATO allies shifted their application of military force to the Balkans (Croatia, Bosnia, Yugoslavia, Macedonia) and since then have waged, directed and assisted armed conflicts - individually, multilaterally, collectively and by proxy - in the Middle East (Yemen, Iraq, Lebanon, Gaza), the Horn of Africa (Somalia, Djibouti-Eritrea), Africa west of the Horn (Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Congo, Chad, the Central African Republic, Sudan, Mali), the Caucasus (Georgia-South Ossetia/Russia), South Asia (Afghanistan, Pakistan) and as far away as the Philippines in Southeast Asia and Colombia in South America.

The current main front in this global campaign is Afghanistan, NATO's first ground war and the US's longest war since Vietnam. A war that will be eight years old this October and that is escalating daily with no end in sight.

A war that has already pulled in troops from 45 nations in four continents and has extended itself through bases, troop transit and military operations to several other countries - Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan - with the logistical theater of operations slated to expand to the Baltic Sea, the South Caucasus and even over the skies of Russia.

The routes used for the transportation of troops, military hardware and supplies are those envisioned and commenced by the United States fifteen years ago in relation to anticipated hydrocarbon transit projects which are only now reaching fruition. Projects utterly dependent on oil and natural gas reserves in the Caspian Sea Basin. The Caspian is where the US and NATO drive for military expansion into Asia meets up with an equally ambitious campaign to monopolize control of energy supplies for all of Europe and much of South and Far East Asia.

In anticipation of this past Monday's meeting of American and Russian presidents Barack Obama and Dmitry Medvedev, a Russian commentator averred that "presidents come and go - while NATO's Drang nach Osten continues inexorably." [41]

- 1) Makfax, June 24, 2009
- 2) Press TV, June 24, 2009
- 3) New Europe/Kazinform, July 5, 2009
- 4) Ibid
- 5) Trend News Agency, June 25, 2009
- 6) NATO International, June 24, 2009
- 7) Stop NATO, March 4, 2009
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/stopnato/message/37672>

- Correction: For Pora read Otpor
- 8) Stop NATO, June 10, 2009
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/stopnato/message/39970>
 - 9) Trend News Agency, June 25, 2009
 - 10) EurasiaNet, July 8, 2009
 - 11) Trend News Agency, July 4, 2009
 - 12) Ibid
 - 13) Azeri Press Agency, June 24, 2009
 - 14) Trend News Agency, July 3, 2009
 - 15) Trend News Agency, June 24, 2009
 - 16) Azeri Press Agency, June 24, 2009
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 - 23) Azeri Press Agency, July 1, 2009
 - 24) Ibid
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 - 30) Ynetnews (Israel), June 28, 2009
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 - 32) PanArmenian.net, June 30, 2009
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 - 34) Jerusalem Post, July 1, 2009
 - 35) Ibid
 - 36) PanArmenian.net, July 6, 2009
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 - 39) Trend News Agency, July 5, 2009
 - 40) The Hindu, July 9, 2009
 - 41) Russian Information Agency Novosti, July 3, 2009