

# THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

Volume LXXXVI, NO. 49, Issue 4443

\$2.00

The First English Language Armenian Weekly in the United States Since 1932

## Progress Reported in NKR Mediation Talks

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia (Combed Sources) — Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian has described as "quite useful" the latest meeting of Armenia's and Azerbaijan's presidents, saying that it might help to break the deadlock in the Nagorno-Karabagh peace process.



Russian President Vladimir Putin (front) walks with Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev (R) and Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan (L) during their meeting in St. Petersburg, Russia

"With certain caution, I can say that it took place in a constructive atmosphere," Nalbandian told Armenian reporters shortly after the summit hosted by Russian President Vladimir Putin in Saint Petersburg on Monday, June 20.

"On some issues, the presidents reached an understanding that if there is agreement on them it will be possible to move the negotiation process towards the [Nagorno-Karabagh] conflict's resolution," he said without going into details.

Nalbandian added only that Presidents

Serzh Sargsyan and Ilham Aliyev as well as their foreign ministers will continue to meet on a regular basis in the months ahead.

Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov similarly described the talks as "constructive" and "positive."

Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group observers periodically deployed in the conflict zone with the aim of preventing ceasefire violations there.

The expansion of the OSCE's small observer mission for Karabagh is one of the confidence-building measures advocated by Russia, the United States and France. The three mediating powers also want the

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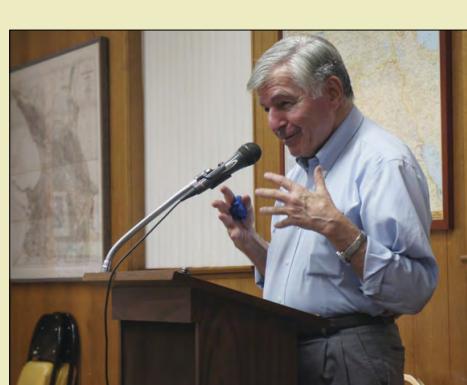
## Turekian Mixes Science, Diplomacy for State

**By Florence Avakian**  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

NEW YORK — Dr. Vaughan Turekian, science and technology advisor to US Secretary of State John Kerry, attended an all-day forum at the United Nations on Monday June 6, on "Science, Technology and Development for Sustainable Development Goals." The focus of the event was to discuss the ways these goals can be made available to the millions around the world who are in desperate need of these resources.

In an interview following a UN press conference, Turekian, 44, explained that his father, Dr. Karl Turekian, an eminent and well-known professor of geochemistry for 57 years at Yale University, and a member

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Governor Michael Dukakis speaking on May 26. (Aram Arkun photo)

## Governor Dukakis Speaks at CYSCA Event on Armenia Trip

BELMONT, Mass. — Former Massachusetts governor Michael S. Dukakis made a guest appearance at a Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA) panel discussion called Disabilities and Social Inclusion in Armenia held with the co-sponsorship of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research at the latter's headquarters on May 26 (see accompanying article on page

12 of this issue). His remarks focused largely on a trip to Armenia that he and his wife Kitty made in April of this year upon the invitation of the American University of Armenia (AUA).

The longest serving governor of Massachusetts, and the second Greek-American governor in US history, Dukakis was the 1988 Democratic

see CYSCA, page 13

## Noubar Afeyan Elected to MIT Board of Trustees

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — On June 2, Noubar Afeyan was elected to the Board of Trustees of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Afeyan, along with the nine other term members elected this year, will serve for five years, effective July 1. He will add his expertise to the 76 distinguished leaders in education, science, engineering and industry already serving the MIT Board of Trustees.

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Dr. Noubar Afeyan

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Mirror-Spectator Annual Summer Break

The Armenian Mirror-Spectator will close for two weeks in July for its annual summer vacation break. The last issue before vacation will be that of July 2, while the first issue after the break will be that of July 23.

The office will close on Friday, July 1, and reopen on Monday, July 18. All press releases or calendar items can be sent to editor@mirrorspectator.com.

### Turkish Justice Ministry Rejects Sis Return Discussions

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) — The Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia says the Ministry of Justice of Turkey has rejected discussing the demand for the return of the Catholicosate of Sis.

In 2015, the Great House of Cilicia issued a claim at the Constitutional Court of Turkey, demanding the return of the historical Catholicosate of Sis. Taking into consideration the importance of the lawsuit, the Constitutional Court of Turkey announced it would seek further advice from the Justice Ministry. The ministry rejected discussing the claim, and the Constitutional Court told the Catholicosate to respond to the rejection within 15 days.

On May 26 the Great House of Cilicia rejected the Justice Ministry's contradictory reasons and reiterated its demand. The Constitutional Court's verdict is expected.

### Armenia Condemns Attacks on Aleppo Christian Areas

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Armenia is concerned about al-Nusra Front's latest attacks on Aleppo that have claimed many lives among the civilian population, Ambassador of Armenia to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Arman Kirakossian said on June 16.

Addressing the OSCE Permanent Council, Kirakossian said Armenia condemns the targeted attacks on the Christian neighborhoods of Aleppo, with dozens of people having been wounded and killed in Armenian-inhabited districts alone.

The Holy Trinity (Zvartnots) Church, the Armenian maternity hospital, as well as historical and cultural buildings have been damaged during the offensives.

He added that minorities, including the Armenian community, are a key target for militants.

"The survivors of the Armenian Genocide established the Armenian community of Aleppo. And 100 years later, their descendants struggle for their existence."

## INSIDE

### Berlin Art Explosion

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# Dr. Turekian Advises Secretary of State on Science

**TUREKIAN**, from page 1  
of the US Academy of Sciences, instilled in him as a youngster that science was "part of the global enterprise. My father studied things like the processes that led to the transport of air from one place to another. Science was his laboratory. And that was part of my academic background."

Growing up, Vaughan Turekian saw prominent names that came from all over the world.

International Officer for the American Association for Advancement of Science, and the director of its Center for Scientific Diplomacy from 2006 to 2015, publishing several articles on international scientific policy.

Following his studies, he worked as the program director for the Committee on Global Change Research at the National Academy of Sciences from 2000 to 2002, and at the State Department as the special assistant and advisor

Turekian, in 2015, became the fifth Advisor in this prestigious position. He was chosen through a vetting process in which the U.S. Academy of Sciences and other scientific organizations identify a roster of people who are good candidates. It then goes through another process until a final candidate is chosen.

The reason for his interest in this position, he said, is that the job was a combination of "science and foreign policy," he said. "My own academic background was interested in things like how aerosols and dust get transported around the world. Another part was being around academic backgrounds, and seeing the important mixtures of cultures and knowledge that came from those environments. And another part was interest in climate change. Science can help inform policy. You not only need excellent scientists, but you need those people who are able to translate the science into the policy they can communicate." He gives credit to the "great teachers who inspired me and kept me on the straight and narrow."

Turekian could have made big money in the science business world, but he emphasized that he was interested in applying science to things outside of the laboratory. He had many opportunities in the academic community but he wanted to be a scientist "in a different community."

He still has one month and four months left in his current post, he said. And what will he do after his position ends? "I think if I could answer that, my mother would be happy," he responded with a round of chuckles.

Turekian visited Armenia for the second time a month ago. In 2000, he was a guest professor at the American University of Armenia working in the Environmental Chemistry Department. What was striking to him on this visit was that in the 16 years since his first trip, "there has been so much growth in certain areas, especially in the IT (information, technology and computer) fields." Despite other things, he saw optimism in those important areas, especially among the young people using their vitality to connect to the world, in things like programming, computing, design and a whole range of issues."

The most important goal he hopes to achieve

during his tenure in this position is "to do my little part to insure that I'm doing what I can do to demonstrate the value of having someone of my background, working with an amazing team of eight to ten incredibly talented scientists and engineers (out of 300 working in the State Department) and apply them to the issues the State Department has to deal with, and all foreign ministries have to deal with."

#### Great-Grandson of Genocide Survivors

Turekian, an engaging, affable individual with a warm quick smile, was born in New Haven, Conn. to Armenian parents born in the US. His father passed away three years ago, and his mother, originally a schoolteacher, continues to work as an assistant headmaster in a small day school in New Haven.

His grandfather was the only child of Armenian parents who were survivors of the Armenian Genocides of 1896, and 1915. (When I asked his thoughts on the continued non-acceptance of the Armenian Genocide by the American government, understandably, because of his position, he chose not to answer.)

Growing up, Vaughan and his sister used to hear their parents speaking Armenian "to make sure my sister and I couldn't understand them. By their tone we knew certain words were not so good." Though Turekian didn't speak Armenian growing up, he is now interested in learning the language. When he was in Armenia in 2000, he picked up some words to make sure he got the food he ordered, "especially *kutfe*"

He added, in a serious vein, "I think growing up in a place like New Haven with an academic background, you saw people of all these different traditions, and thought about how much their experiences were shaped at home and how they could interact with each other. From both his parents, he received the "value of education, and engaging with people of all ages."

Turekian and his wife have two children. He adds that it is important for them in this country to recognize that on one side their grandparents are from one part of the world, and their other grandparents came from another, a special enrichment."



Dr. Vaughan Turekian

"I thought Turekian was a normal name. I would go to my father's laboratory and see that science was something that brought people together. The laboratory was a microcosm of a global community and that was very important to me as I grew up. When you understand what's going on in the world, you have a better understanding of who you are in the world."

Before achieving this coveted position, Turekian, who graduated from Yale University (1993) with a BS in geology and earth science, and from the University of Virginia (2000) with a PhD in philosophy, was the Chief

to the under-secretary for global affairs from 2002-2006.

The position of the science and technology advisor to the US Secretary of State has existed for 16 years, he explained. It was created when the US National Academy of Sciences provided a report to the State Department to then-Secretary of State Madeline Albright. At the time, he said Albright had asked a "very simple question. How did the State Department prepare itself for the challenges of the 21st century given the central role that science, technology and innovation will play?"

## Governor Dukakis Speaks at CYSCA Event on Armenia Trip

**CYSCA**, from page 1  
presidential nominee. He is now a professor in the Department of Political Science at Northeastern University (Boston) and a visiting professor at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

The governor, an engaging and relaxed speaker, began by pointing out that "the Greek and Armenian communities are close in many ways. They are part of the same clan." He explained that he and his wife happened to visit Armenia because of a very close friend, Lorraine Alexander. He first met Alexander when she worked at the Massachusetts State House. She was recruited to UCLA to become the first Director of Development for the School of Public Policy there, where they became fast friends. She went on to Stanford University and other jobs, but now is the new Vice President of Development of AUA.

She introduced the governor to the president of AUA, Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian, while he was in the US, and the latter invited Dukakis to visit the university in Yerevan. The governor said, "I find the students to be very impressive—they are quite political in the best sense of the word. They are aware of things."

As his wife Kitty already had been friends with Caroline Mugar, this led the couple to visit a tree farm of the Armenian Tree Project. They were able to be present during the awarding of the first Aurora Prizes,

which Dukakis found quite interesting. His wife Kitty has been quite active on genocide-related issues over the years. Among other this, as a member of the President's Commission on the Holocaust and the Holocaust Memorial Council, she pushed to have the Armenian Genocide included in the US Holocaust Museum in Washington DC despite some resistance.

He encountered some 15 Syrian Armenian youth at the university whose families were driven out of Aleppo. They were supportive of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad as a protector of the Christian community and described their pre-war life in Syria as almost idyllic. Dukakis said, "This makes you pause a little bit." He wondered whether the attempts to create change in Syria were worth the humanitarian catastrophe that displaced and killed so many. He answered himself, saying he did not think so. He concluded, "We [the US] have to be a lot more careful about what we do, and how we do it."

The governor said that "we had a great time" in Armenia and hoped that he could go there again. He was surprised to see a number of Armenians from the Watertown area, both on the AUA faculty and at various events. One was Fr. Dajad Davidian, about whom he related a charming anecdote. Dukakis said that he and his wife would try to support a young student they met from Yerevan who wants to go to Northeastern.

## Armenian EyeCare Project Gears Up For 52nd Medical Mission to Armenia

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. — From June 25 through July 5, the Armenian EyeCare Project (AECP) is embarking on its 52nd Medical Mission to Armenia. The Project is urging everyone who is interested to join them on their journey — friends and supporters of the EyeCare Project; writers, photographers and videographers; and, of course, ophthalmologists, optometrists and others in the medical field.

This year's Medical Mission includes trips to the organization's Mobile Eye Hospital, which will be stationed in the Vayots Dzor province on June 25 and outside of a nursing home in Yerevan on June 28; the unveiling and grand opening of the Project's second Regional Eye Clinic, the John and Hasmik Mgrdichian Eye Clinic, in Spitak, Lori on June 27; and a visit to the Project's first Regional Eye Clinic, the Haig Bodajyan Eye Clinic, in Ijevan, Tavush, which had its grand opening last year, on July 5.

Those who have supported the EyeCare Project, or who wish to learn more about the organization and its various medical programs in Armenia, are invited to join AECP Founder Dr. Roger Ohanesian and the rest of the team on one or all of the Project's activities — either by booking a trip to the country or joining the activities if already in Armenia at this time.

"This is an opportunity for people to really see where their donations to the AECP have gone and how the Project has changed the landscape of ophthalmology in Armenia with a powerful and life-changing program," Ohanesian said.

Tours will be led by Rostom Sarkissian, the AECP's new Director of Development, and the local AECP team.

During the Project's 52nd Medical Mission, Ohanesian, along with his American colleagues, will train Armenian ophthalmologists, examine their special cases at several of the organization's facilities and participate in an Ophthalmology Conference and a Neonatal Conference. The Laguna Hills ophthalmologist will be joined by US doctors Thomas Lee, Richard Hill and Khodam Rostomian, who have long been involved with the EyeCare Project, and medical students Armen Ghazaryan, Ana Ter-Zakarian, Nairi Rostomian and Lilit Shahinian.

Armenia's chief ophthalmologist, Dr. Alexander Malayan, expressed enthusiasm about the EyeCare Project's upcoming trip to the country.

"We appreciate the support that the Armenian EyeCare Project has rendered to Armenia for nearly 24 years," Dr. Malayan said. "The activities of the AECP, in cooperation with the efforts of many players, have improved eye care in our country and have enabled thousands of Armenians to regain their eyesight and obtain quality medical care."

Of course, a trip to Armenia would not be complete without experiencing the sights, sounds and the wonderful cuisine of the country, which is why there are several social events planned for the trip, including a welcome party for the group, as well as dinners and cocktail hours.

To learn more about the trip and how to be a part of this experience in Armenia, or to RSVP, visit <http://www.itsmyseat.com/AECP/>.

## COMMUNITY NEWS

# CYSCA Presents Panel on Disabilities with Professionals from Armenia with Special Guest Governor Michael Dukakis

**By Aram Arkun**

Mirror-Spectator Staff

BELMONT, Mass. — The Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA) organized a panel discussion called Disabilities and Social Inclusion in Armenia: Challenges and Opportunities, which was held with the cosponsorship of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research at the latter's headquarters last month, on May 26. Five female specialists in disabilities visiting from Armenia spoke. Former Massachusetts governor Michael S. Dukakis was a special guest at the program. (See story on Page 1)

CYSCA Program Director Alisa Stepanian, who served as moderator that evening, provided the background to the visit of Armenian panelists. They were invited to the US as part of the Congressionally-sponsored Open World program, which is the only Federal exchange program working with former Soviet countries. It chooses timely themes and identifies candidates likely to benefit from a working visit to the US, who then are approved by the US embassy in Yerevan. Meanwhile, local organizations in the US bid to host groups. This was the third time that CYSCA has bid and won.

The Armenian group came for one week, May 22 to 29, and CYSCA found five local Armenian families to host the specialists. CYSCA helped organize visits with US government officials at various levels as well as organizations and universities involved in disabilities work, including the Perkins School for the Blind, the MA Disability Law Center, Boston Center for Independent Living, Arc of MA, and Cambridge City Disabilities Commission. The theme for the



Armenian educators and administrators specializing in the disabled, from left, Sofi Nersisyan, Satenik Papan, and Lusine Saghamyan, with trip facilitator Rinet Isajyan of the US embassy in Yerevan (photo Aram Arkun)

could not achieve any progress, since a long time was needed to implement the program."

She said that there were students who had never gone to school because of their disabilities, while parents resisted and were difficult to work with. To deal with these obstacles, the school began training courses for children, teachers and parents. It attempted to explain to them that all people were equal. Now there are 10 students included in the program in this school with 167 students.

Hakobyan said that seeing how Americans have overcome many problems over the years,

world for them here, and said that she returns to Armenia with great impressions, as well as useful information and experiences.

Sofi Nersisyan, project developer for the Children's Assistance Fund, a nongovernmental organization working in Hrazdan, related that she has been working for this organization for nearly ten years. This fund was able to establish a daycare center for children with disabilities almost two years ago with support from three different international organizations. The US embassy in Yerevan gave a grant to expand programming; USAID provided money to furnish the center, and the Polish embassy provided funding to renovate the second floor of the center and to expand the program. There are 80 clients who use the center. Most have psychological or intellectual disabilities. Psychologists, therapists, social workers and a special education teacher work at the center. Special classes in art, chess, theater and other fields are offered. Some of the children developed to the point that they do not need to come there any longer.

Nersisyan declared that "When I came here [to the US], I did not imagine that I could take so many things back to Armenia, but whatever I saw was incredible, just amazing. I have seen so many innovative things that we can use in Armenia without having large sums of money."

Satenik Papan works at World Vision in Stepanavan, a small town in Lori Province 35 minutes by car from Vanadzor. Her office serves the entire province, and she works as the child protection and education coordinator. World Vision International is an Evangelical Christian humanitarian aid, development and advocacy organization with its headquarters in California. Its goal is to support the most vulnerable children so that they can be raised in a non-abusive inclusive environment and have a better life.

Papan also is involved in the Full Life NGO, a smaller organization in Stepanavan which works to assure the full integration of people with disabilities in society. It runs a daycare center for children with the inclusive approach, so that there are children with and without disabilities together. Children from economically vulnerable families are accepted so they get to have access to some afterschool programs. Full Life also runs an inclusive summer camp program for 200 children every summer who learn life skills and the independence to spend time with their families.

Full Life runs in partnership with Save the Children and other organizations an employment improvement program called Life Project for adults. It helps them prepare for job interviews, provides coaching, and helps adults find jobs. It did some social entrepreneurship with its partner organizations so that people with disabilities can be hired. It also does some advocacy to ensure quality services for people with disabilities as much as possible considering the limitations in Armenia.

Lusine Saghamyan, project coordinator of the Child Development Foundation in Yerevan (www.cdf.am), said that she works both in the

capital and in the provinces. Her organization, she said, provides specialized services to children with developmental disabilities such as psychological help, speech therapy, social worker support, art therapy and a communication club for adults with disabilities, as well as preschool projects. Parents and teachers are given training by specialists in the field, and the organization tries to defend the human rights of people with disabilities.

It offers an inclusive theater group to encourage self-awareness and self-expression. Their performances are given in the provinces. It designs and produces developmental toys and games for children, while the parents of children with disabilities do craft work that the foundation sells. The profit is used to support families with disabilities.

The panelists listed a number of things they learned from the trip. They were amazed at how in some places, like the Perkins School for the Blind, ordinary cardboard or cartons that would be thrown away are used to build useful items. Programming in schools like that of the Understanding Our Differences NGO based in Newton, Mass. giving presentations to children with speakers and showing examples of different disabilities would be a good educational tool for Armenian society. They saw for the first time outside of television shows a sign language interpreter for the deaf at Stonehill College, which would be another great service to emulate in Armenia. At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, they saw that students all engage in practical or applied work. This is more useful than just learning primarily theoretical knowledge, as is the case now in Armenia, especially when this knowledge also is often an outdated remnant of Soviet times.

Perhaps, wondered one panelist, it would be possible to create an industry in Armenia to produce the special aids needed by the handicapped, such as wheelchairs. This would hopefully make these items more accessible financially, and also create more jobs for Armenians.

Several of the panelists declared that one of the great benefits of the US trip was that they got to know one another, and they might try to pursue some collaborative projects upon their return. One noted that fully accessible group homes for the disabled providing multiple services do not exist at present in Armenia, but collaborative efforts at creating them could provide examples for the country as to what the infrastructure for people with disabilities should look like.

The visitors did have some worries. For example, when comparing Armenia to the US, aside from the disparity in resources in general, even if the Armenian state were to place more priority on education, many who become educated emigrate. This is a great blow to Armenia, as human resources are the main advantages that this country enjoys at present.

On a more specific topic, Saghamyan noted that during the trip the Armenians met many parents and specialists who supported maintain specialized schools to provide a better education for the disabled, while continuing the inclusive approach. In Armenia, reforms aim at converting the specialized schools by 2022 into resource centers. Saghamyan returns to Armenia wondering, she said, "whether we need to eliminate all the specialized schools [in Armenia]."

When one speaker expressed concern that strategic planning for the disabled is lacking in Armenia, and in general the Armenian state and society do not have resources available to accomplish what Americans have done, Governor Dukakis hastened to encourage the visitors. He said, "Forty years ago things in this state [Massachusetts] were terrible, so believe me, it was not always this way. It is so much better now. Don't be discouraged." The governor also offered to put Armenians in touch with the New England Center for Children, on whose board he serves, as it is a model for working with autistic children.

For more information on the Open World program and CYSCA contact Alisa Stepanian at [asteonian@aol.com](mailto:asteonian@aol.com) or Jack Medzorian at [jmedzorian@aol.com](mailto:jmedzorian@aol.com) or see [www.cysca.org](http://www.cysca.org).



Program Director Alisa Stepanian of CYSCA speaking, with, seated from left, Meri Hakobyan, Anahit Flanagan (interpreter) and Mariana Matosyan (photo Aram Arkun)

visit was expanding social inclusion in Armenia for the disabled, in education, work and other spheres of life.

Prior to the panel discussion, Stepanian introduced Governor Dukakis to the audience and gave him the opportunity to say a few words (see accompanying article). He also participated in the discussion at the end of the program.

After the governor's brief presentation, the five visiting Armenians each introduced themselves and spoke about their work. Three were able to speak in fluent English, while the two who could not benefit from the use of an interpreter, Anahit Flanagan, Rinet Isajyan, who works in the US embassy in Yerevan, accompanied the group to the US to facilitate its trip. She told the audience that one of the priorities of the US embassy is social inclusion, which is why it supported the trip and the activities of the organizations for which the Armenian visitors worked.

Meri Hakobyan, principal of one of the two middle schools in the city of Meghri, in the southernmost part of Armenia, bordering Iran, said that her school was the first in the region to begin an inclusion program in 2005. She said, "Everyone feared when we first began that we

"gave me great hope that we will also overcome a lot of obstacles, and succeed in educating the public so that they all view each other as equals." She said that she hoped that one day the strong state support for programs for the handicapped in the US would be replicated in Armenia.

Mariana Matosyan, a teacher of disabled children in High School No. 1 in Gumi, said that her school also implements the inclusive educational approach, so that out of 200 children, 35 have psychological, physical and mental disabilities. The children without disabilities must be psychologically prepared to study together with the disabled, so preparatory work took place in stages for the teachers, students and the parents. There are afterschool programs till 5 p.m., and a day camp during vacations. Both are run by volunteers.

Matosyan exclaimed, "During the visits we made [in the US], nearly all organizations were dissatisfied with at least something that was lacking in their work, but when I compare this with the work in our field in Armenia, it is actually incomparable since even elementary means are lacking with us." She thanked the Open World program for truly providing an open