

“Trump Route” will create fresh logistical opportunities for SCO Member States, Armenian PM says



The newly launched “Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity” will create fresh logistical opportunities not only for Armenia and Azerbaijan but also for all member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said in an address at CSO+ meeting in Shanghai.

Speaking about the signing of a landmark peace declaration with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Washington on August 8 — mediated by US President Donald Trump — Pashinyan emphasized that Armenia and Azerbaijan have effectively ended decades of hostilities and taken a historic step toward lasting regional peace.

“This is a historic turning point with far-reaching regional impact,” Pashinyan said, noting that international leaders who participate in the Washington summit congratulated both countries on their achievement.

The Armenian leader underlined that discussions now focus on reopening transport links on the basis of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and jurisdiction. This includes guaranteeing unimpeded communication between mainland Azerbaijan and its Nakhijevan Autonomous Republic through Armenian territory, with reciprocal advantages for Armenia’s international and domestic connectivity.

According to Pashinyan, the US-backed

“Trump Route” investment program is directly aligned with Armenia’s “Cross-roads of Peace” initiative. Yerevan and Washington have already signed a bilateral memorandum to jointly develop the project and attract investments.

“The implementation of these agreements will not only open communications between Armenia and Azerbaijan, but also create new logistical opportunities for all SCO members, as well as our immediate neighbors,” Pashinyan stressed.

The Prime Minister reaffirmed Armenia’s firm commitment to the agreements and expressed determination to bring them to life as swiftly as possible.

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Armenia-Azerbaijan peace framework may support positive credit trends – Fitch Ratings

The peace framework agreement between Armenia (BB-/Stable) and Azerbaijan (BBB-/Stable) is a positive step towards a comprehensive deal and reduces the risk of renewed hostilities, although obstacles remain, *Fitch Ratings* says.

According to the agency, achieving a peace agreement is unlikely to immediately affect either country's ratings, but could support positive medium-term credit trends, notably via expanded trade that may boost growth, although this is difficult to quantify.

"The declaration aligns with our expectation that a return to military conflict is unlikely, but this remains a preliminary framework with no agreed timelines for building the transit corridor or signing a binding treaty. Tangible benefits to economic growth, government revenues and trade will take a few years at least to materialize," Fitch says.

"A sustained reduction in geopolitical risks could boost Armenia's growth,

and reduce FX volatility and fiscal risks through lower defense spending in the medium term. For Azerbaijan, reduced tensions could foster greater focus on domestic reforms, such as economic diversification and strengthening governance, although momentum appears limited," it adds.

For Armenia, durable geopolitical risk reduction and normalisation of relations with Türkiye depend on the final peace terms and deal implementation. Armenia performs broadly in line with the 'BB' median on the World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators (WBI), although it ranks less than half the peer median in 'Political Stability and Absence of Violence'. A sustained improvement is likely to take time.

Most of landlocked Armenia's trade is through Georgia, so faster alternative routes to European markets – notably through Türkiye – would support Armenia's medium-term economic growth

prospects. Fitch does not include these factors in its current macroeconomic forecasts, given high uncertainty and obstacles to be negotiated as part of a peace process.

"A lasting peace to end the three-decade conflict could also reduce Armenia's exchange-rate and fiscal risks. In recent years, the dram has depreciated when tensions have risen (although, it strengthened by 17.4% in nominal terms against the US dollar in 2022-2024). Such depreciation, if prolonged, could have a negative impact on Armenia's key credit metrics, including government debt given the large share of foreign-currency debt," the agency notes.

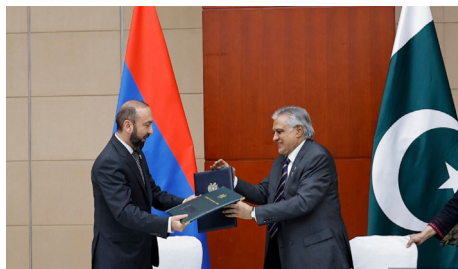
Given the large fiscal deficits projected (averaging 4.4% of GDP in 2026-2027), a peace deal could ease budget pressures from defense spending, which is set to increase by 0.7pp to 6.1% of GDP in 2025. However, this has been partly offset by robust revenue aided by fairly strong economic growth and higher inflation.

Armenia, Pakistan establish diplomatic relations

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Mohammad Ishaq Dar signed a Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic relations between Armenia and Pakistan.

The signing ceremony took place in Tianjin, China on the sidelines of the CSO summit.

By signing of the Communiqué, Armenia and Pakistan establish diplomatic



relations. The two Governments are desirous to enhance friendly relations in accordance with the UN Charter, including the principles of mutual respect

for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality, mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence.

The Governments of Armenia and Pakistan have agreed to exchange Representatives and to provide each other all the necessary assistance for the performance of diplomatic relations on reciprocal basis in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961 and international customary practices.

Centuries-old Armenia-India friendship reaches new level, Pashinyan tells Modi



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has congratulated Indian Prime Minister

Narendra Modi on the occasion of India's Independence Day, noting that the centuries-old friendship between the two nations has reached a qualitatively new level in recent years.

In his message, Pashinyan said this new stage in relations creates opportunities to deepen cooperation in areas of mutual interest, strengthen ties between the peoples and states, and work together to effectively address global and regional

challenges.

He expressed confidence that the intensification of political dialogue — including through high-level visits and contacts — will give fresh impetus to cooperation in both bilateral and multilateral formats for the benefit of Armenia and India.

Concluding his message, Pashinyan wished prosperity and lasting progress to Modi and the people of India.

Armenia has entered new stage of development following Washington agreements – PM



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan stated during government sitting on August 21 that Armenia has entered a new stage of development as a result of the agreements reached in Washington on August 8.

The Prime Minister first congratulated members of the Cabinet on the establishment of peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan. He noted that prior to the visit to Washington, consultations and in-depth discussions had been held with government officials, members of the Security Council, the President of Armenia,

parliamentary colleagues, and the “Civil Contract” faction, after which the decision was made to move forward.

Pashinyan expressed gratitude to members of the government for their contribution and support to the process, stressing that the signing of the documents is not the conclusion of their work, but rather the beginning.

“I am convinced that with this step we have moved to a new agenda of development, a new level of development. The content and energy of our work must now be greater. The efficiency of our work must be greater. There is enormous work ahead of us — constructive, peaceful, and creative work — and we must all remain maximally focused on this,” he said.

The Prime Minister also emphasized the importance of effective public communication, underscoring that citizens

must clearly understand what the government is doing and why. “Even the greatest achievements may become problematic if the public does not understand their origins,” Pashinyan noted, urging government members to pay increased attention to outreach in the coming period.

Concluding his remarks, Pashinyan wished success to his colleagues in what he described as a new, creative phase of institutionalizing peace.

On August 8, in Washington, Prime Minister Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev signed a joint declaration mediated by the United States. U.S. President Donald Trump signed the declaration as a witness. Armenia and Azerbaijan also initialed a peace agreement and jointly applied for the dissolution of the OSCE Minsk Group.

Armenia’s Security Council Secretary meets UK Minister Stephen Doughty

Secretary of the Security Council of Armenia Armen Grigoryan held a working breakfast in Dilijan with Stephen Doughty, UK Minister of State for Europe, North America and Overseas Territories, Grigoryan’s Office has said in readout.

Grigoryan presented the agreements reached in Washington within the process of normalizing relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as the unblocking of regional communications and the economic opportunities offered by the implementation of the “Crossroads of Peace” project.

Minister Doughty expressed support for the agreements reached in Washington and underlined the importance of achieving lasting peace in the South Caucasus.

The sides also discussed the agenda of Armenia–UK bilateral relations, outlining



ways to further deepen cooperation.

They praised the dynamic development

of ties, noting that relations are moving toward a strategic partnership.

Armenia, UK agree to upgrade ties to Strategic Partnership



On 26 August 2025, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, Mr. Vahan Kostanyan, and the Minister of State for Europe, North America and the Overseas Territories of the United Kingdom, the Rt Hon Stephen Doughty MP, held the second round of the Armenia-UK Strategic Dialogue in Yerevan.

Building on the inaugural meeting of the Strategic Dialogue held in London in 2023, the two parties reviewed the progress achieved and reaffirmed the importance of regular high-level exchanges to further strengthen and expand the bilateral partnership between Armenia and the United Kingdom, the parties said in a joint communiqué.

The parties reiterated their unwavering commitment to democracy, rule of law, and the protection of fundamental human rights both regionally and globally, based on shared values, respect for international law, democratic principles, and a rules-based international order.

The Armenian side briefed on the country's ongoing democratic transformation, including efforts in strengthening democracy, advancing the rule of law and

protection of human rights, enhancing anti-corruption measures. The United Kingdom commended Armenia's progress and reiterated its support for the continuation of these reforms.

The parties agreed to upgrade the relationship to a Strategic Partnership. Both parties discussed expanding cooperation in the areas of security and defense, including future high-level engagements, the exchange of defense attachés, and closer cooperation in the fields of cyber security and countering hybrid threats.

In the context of upgrading the relationship, the importance of continuing to deepen economic ties was underscored by both parties. The parties looked forward to furthering business relations and to drive growth through collaboration, including support for Armenia's inclusive economic development, reform and diversification in partnership with International Financial Institutions. The parties discussed the Armenia/UK Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Armenia recognised the potential of United Kingdom Export Finance (UKEF) to further boost trade and investment.

The parties also welcomed the growth of people-to-people contacts and emphasized the significance of further cooperation in education, culture, and professional exchange.

Turning to regional and international issues, the parties exchanged views on key developments, including the situation in the Middle East. Special attention was given to the South Caucasus. The United

Kingdom welcomed the recent agreements reached between Armenia and Azerbaijan in Washington D.C., emphasizing that these represent a decisive step towards full normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, based on mutual recognition of each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized borders in line with the 1991 Alma-Ata Declaration.

The parties reaffirmed the importance of the opening of communications between Armenia and Azerbaijan for the promotion of peace, stability, and prosperity in the region and in its neighborhood on the basis of reciprocity and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and jurisdiction of the States. The parties also discussed the "Crossroads of Peace" initiative as a platform for enhanced regional connectivity and economic cooperation.

Looking ahead, the parties discussed Armenia's hosting of two major international events in 2026: The European Political Community Summit and the 17th Conference of the parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP17). The United Kingdom expressed its readiness to support Armenia in the successful organization of COP17, ensuring that the conference delivers concrete and meaningful outcomes.

The Dialogue concluded with a mutual reaffirmation of the shared commitment to deepen bilateral relations and expand close collaboration by establishing a Strategic Partnership between the Republic of Armenia and the United Kingdom.

Deputy FM briefs Armenian ambassadors on developments

Day 2 at the Armenian ambassadorial gathering featured remarks by Deputy FM Vahan Kostanyan, who spoke about the developments and achievements in his area of coordination – the Americas, Europe, bordering countries, Middle East and the development of various partnerships.

Kostanyan briefed the diplomats about the work toward implementing the memorandums signed with the U.S. to develop bilateral strategic partnership.

He addressed the development of

Armenia-EU partnership, partnership with EU member states and other European nations, the foreign ministry said in a press release.

The upcoming European Political Community Summit in Armenia was also discussed.

The agenda of developing partnerships with Iran and Georgia was also discussed.

"In the context of developing cooperation with countries in the Middle East, an exchange of views took place around

opportunities to enhance the circle of partnerships in priority sectors for Armenia, strengthening of the economic component and promoting investments," the foreign ministry said. Other regional developments were also discussed.

Armenian ambassadors stationed across the world gathered in Kapan over the weekend for the annual meeting involving briefings by PM Pashinyan and FM Mirzoyan, among others.

Armenia's contributions to KFOR align with our shared goals - U.S. Embassy

The U.S. Embassy is proud to support Armenia's contributions to KFOR, which align with our shared goals of strengthening coalitions and fostering a strong security partnership with Armenia in the Caucasus region, the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan has said in a statement.

"Senior Defense Official and Defense Attaché, COL Crowe, bid farewell to another contingent of the Armenian Peacekeeping Brigade deploying to Kosovo in support of NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR) mission.

Since 2004, Armenia has been a steadfast troop-contributing nation to KFOR,



demonstrating its commitment to peace and stability in the region. Armenia remains one of the largest non-NATO contributors to KFOR, surpassing several

NATO and EU member states. This sustained dedication highlights Armenia's role as a reliable partner in regional security operations and its willingness to work alongside Allied forces.

The U.S. Embassy is proud to support Armenia's contributions to KFOR, which align with our shared goals of strengthening coalitions and fostering a strong security partnership with Armenia in the Caucasus region," reads the statement.

In Pristina, the Deputy Commander of the NATO KFOR mission handed over the Armenian flag to the commander of the troop.

Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu says he recognizes Armenian Genocide



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on August 26 for the first time that he recognizes the Armenian Genocide.

He made the remarks in an interview with Patrick Bet-David on his podcast.

Asked by Patrick Bet-David why Israel does not recognize the Armenian genocide and the genocide of Assyrians and Greeks in the early 20th century perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire, Netanyahu said, "I think we have. I think the Knesset passed a resolution to that effect," though no such legislation has been passed into law.

Pressed on why no Israeli prime minister has recognized the genocide, Netanyahu responds, "I just did. Here you go."

Armenian National Committee of America Executive Director Aram Hamparian [reacted](#) to Netanyahu's statement, saying "Netanyahu's tack toward

longwithheld Israeli recognition of the Armenian Genocide — in the wake of its arming of Azerbaijan's blockade and genocide of Artsakh's Armenian Christians and amid ongoing threats to Jerusalem's Armenian Christian Quarter and serious and sustained violations of international law in Gaza, akin to Azerbaijan's ethnic cleansing of Artsakh — must, if it is to represent more than an attempt at tactical cover for its transgressions, be followed by a sharp break with Israel's military alliance with Azerbaijan and public pressure on Turkey to abandon its denial and obstruction of justice for the Armenian Genocide."

Former HDP MP Garo Paylan urges Erdogan to open Turkey-Armenia border

Former Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) lawmaker Garo Paylan has called on Turkish President and ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan to take immediate steps to reinforce the newly signed Armenia-Azerbaijan peace agreement.

Following the joint declaration between Armenia and Azerbaijan establishing lasting peace, Paylan stressed the importance of swift action to ensure the agreement's permanence.

"It is our duty to take urgent steps

to make this peace permanent," Paylan said, addressing Erdogan directly: "Mr. Erdogan, open the Turkey-Armenia border immediately! Bring together the peoples of Armenia, Turkey, and Azerbaijan. Let us take this step without delay."

In a message posted on social media platform X, Paylan welcomed the "historic agreement" signed by Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders in the presence of US President Donald Trump, marking an end to decades of hostilities.

"Azerbaijan and Armenia's leaders



signed the 'historic agreement' that ends decades of enmity, with US President Trump as a witness. It is our duty to take urgent steps to make this peace permanent," Paylan wrote

Russia backs Armenia's plan for 'Trump Route' – Deputy PM

Russia supports Armenia's plans to establish a transport corridor with Azerbaijan, known as the "Trump Route," if Yerevan deems it necessary, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexey Overchuk told reporters.

"Armenia is our strategic ally, and if Armenia believes something is good for them, then of course we support Armenia in the matter," Overchuk said.



The deputy prime minister will visit Yerevan next week to discuss Armenia's

activities within the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

"The trip was planned in advance," he noted. "It is connected to the fact that a new regulatory act — a decision by the Armenian government — has been adopted, which, in our view, contradicts EAEU law."

According to Overchuk, this issue will be on the agenda during his upcoming visit.

Yerevan to fast-track Iran-Armenia 400 kV power transmission line project

The Armenian government has approved a decision enabling the rapid completion of the "Iran-Armenia 400 kV Overhead Power Transmission Line and Associated Substation Construction" project. The initiative aims to mitigate potential future electricity tariff increases for end consumers.

According to the 2025 State Budget, under the Electric Power System Development Program, funding was initially allocated for the "Extension of the Design Lifetime of the Armenian Nuclear Power Plant Unit 2" — specifically, over AMD 10 billion for the first nine months of 2025



and AMD 13,5 million for the entire year. However, due to delays in procurement processes related to that program, it is now possible to reallocate part of these funds.

As a result, AMD 828 million will be provided to the High Voltage Electric Networks company for the first nine months

of 2025, and over AMD 1 billion for the entire year, to be used for the Iran-Armenia transmission line project. The remaining amount will be redistributed for use during the 2026–2028 period.

Once completed, the project will increase electricity exchange capacity between Armenia and Iran from the current 350 MW to up to 1,200 MW, enhance the security, reliability, and stability of Armenia's energy system, and enable full utilization of the Iran-Armenia gas pipeline within the "Gas for Electricity" exchange program.

Kansas Army National Guard soldiers conduct medical training with Armenian troops

Kansas Army National Guard Soldiers conducted medical training with Soldiers from the Republic of Armenia during Exercise Eagle Partner 2025 in August. The exercise also included equipment comparison and capability demonstrations by the 12th Armenian Peacekeeping Brigade.

Eagle Partner 2025, which aims to enhance interoperability for international peacekeeping missions, exchange best practices in control and communication,

and improve the readiness of the Armenian Armed Forces' peacekeeping unit, is a U.S. Army Europe and Africa training event involving soldiers from USAREUR-AF, the Kansas National Guard, and the Ministry of Defense for the Republic of Armenia.

Upon completion of Eagle Partner, U.S. forces and their equipment are scheduled to return to their home stations.



Armenia, Iraq intend to boost economic ties



The 4th session of the Armenia-Iraq intergovernmental commission on economic cooperation took place in Yerevan on August 26.

Officials stated that the economic ties between the countries have intensified in the recent years, and trade turnover has doubled with results of the first half of the year, amounting to 171 million USD.

The countries intend to expand cooperation to utilize the untapped potential.

"In the recent years our bilateral economic ties have intensified," said Armenian Minister of Economy Gevorg Papoyan. "We've gathered here today to strengthen these ties and boost them with new quality."

In 2024, trade between Armenia and

Iraq amounted to 246 million USD, which was a 36% growth compared to the previous year.

Papoyan said the statistics shows a steady growth dynamic.

"But at the same time the figures show that we have a rather great untapped potential. And this joint session is very important to find new approaches and outline the steps that will allow us to make our economic and political partnership maximally effective," he said.

A business forum will also take place during the two-day event.

Papoyan said the Armenian side is interested in the prospect of participating in the Iraq reconstruction process. "Armenian enterprises are ready to invest their potential in construction, infrastructure development, food industry and healthcare."

He pointed out agriculture, digitization, cybersecurity, high technologies, science and culture as other areas of interest.

Iraqi Minister of Agriculture Abbas Jabr Al-Alyawi described Armenia as a true partner regionally and internationally.

"We hope that today's meeting will become an important factor for developing

and strengthening bilateral relations," he said, adding that Iraq expects Armenian companies to be involved in their projects.

The Iraqi side proposed to create a joint committee with Armenian businessmen to boost trade.

Armenian Ambassador to Iraq Ruben Soghoyan described Iraq as one of Armenia's important and reliable partners in the Middle East.

Mohammad Omer Salah Aldeen, Iraq's Charge d' Affairs in Armenia, said that his government seeks to deepen relations with Armenia and intensify political dialogue.

In his remarks he congratulated Armenia on the occasion of initialing the peace agreement with Azerbaijan. He said that the agreement will bring security and peace to the region and boost economic ties.

The parties signed four documents on the outcomes of the session – the joint session protocol, a MoU between the chambers of commerce, an MoU in construction and a document between the business associations.

Armenian Vine and Wine Foundation discusses Concours Mondial de Bruxelles 2026

Minister of Economy Gevorg Papoyan has chaired a session of the Board of Trustees of the Vine and Wine Foundation of Armenia, the organization which advances Armenia's wine industry globally.

Papoyan is the Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

Organizational matters of the [Concours Mondial de Bruxelles 2026](https://armenpress.am/en/article/1228191), which will be held in Armenia, were discussed, among other topics, the economy ministry said in a statement.

Papoyan underscored the importance of high-level organization to advance Armenian winemaking and wine tourism.

The minister highlighted the studies of the outcomes of participation in international wine exhibitions, as well as financial participation by private companies.

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Pax Americana Comes to the South Caucasus



Armenia's Transit Route, America's Backing, and Azerbaijan's Reticence

By [Nerses Kopalyan](#)

In early March, U.S. intelligence as well as numerous officials had substantial basis to warn the White House that Azerbaijan was planning on reinitiating hostilities against Armenia, with deep concerns that incursions into Syunik would likely materialize by mid-March. U.S. officials undertook a flurry of activities to curtail Baku's gameplan, and by mid April, a shuttle diplomacy of sorts was initiated by President Trump's Special Envoy Steve Witkoff's team between Yerevan and Baku. In early May, the American team produced a proposal to both sides which would become the foundational basis of normalization between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Washington Summit held on August 8 at the White House between Prime Minister Pashinyan, President Trump, and President Aliyev is the culmination of this normalization proposal and months of negotiations between the three sides.

At the heart of the normalization process, from its inception, was the American belief that unless connectivity is established and the transit route issue addressed, Baku will weaponize the so-called "Zangezur Corridor" precept to relaunch hostilities. Thus, for Washington, normalization began with finding a solution to the transit route conundrum. What followed was a three-month process of complex negotiations on a highly-creative and unique proposal put forth by the United States. For those of us involved in this process, three things were clear: U.S. pressure was fundamental in order to get Aliyev to agree; the secret state of negotiations limited us from sharing details with the public or civil society; and,

the complex and innovative nature of the proposal was ripe for pro-Russian proxies, both in Armenia and the Diaspora, to distort and seeks its obstruction through targeted disinformation campaigns.

On August 8, three documents were formalized at the Washington Summit. First, a joint declaration by Armenia and Azerbaijan, under the auspices of the United States, seeking full normalization of relations and permanent pathway to peace. Second, the foreign ministers of both countries placed their initials on a document based on the agreed contours of the draft peace agreement, signifying commitment by both sides to the terms of the deal, which, in essence, includes adherence to the 17 articles of the draft agreement. Third, both foreign ministers jointly signed a document formally withdrawing from the OSCE Minsk Group, noting the ineffective and obsolete nature of the format.

At the bilateral level, numerous sets of pre-summit meetings were held on August 7, as both sides addressed the growing depth and scope of U.S.-Armenia relations. On August 8, President Trump and Prime Minister Pashinyan signed numerous memorandums of understanding to elevate the U.S.-Armenia partnership, which, in essence, is designed to not only quickly implement the agenda of the U.S.-Armenia Strategic Partnership, but also include initiatives to collaborate on artificial intelligence, energy, mining, semi-conductors, security, and Armenia's Crossroads of Peace initiative. MOUs were also signed between Azerbaijan and the US, though not at the same scope or depth as that between Armenia and US, considering that the latter are formal strategic partners, while formal bilateral relationship does not yet have such an elevated status. Both sides, however, will be given access to America's arms market, and in this context, the Trump Administration is open to offering both parties weapons sales as commensurate with commitment to bilateral agreements.

There Will Be No "Zangezur Corridor," Only an Armenian-Controlled

Transit Route

With respect to the very cornerstone of this Summit lies the much-anticipated U.S.-proposed transit route. After months of intense negotiations, all sides have agreed to the Trump Route for Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP), a joint Armenia-U.S. venture designed as a master development plan to build a commercial route across Syunik. Conceding the fact that the term "corridor" has been politicized and weaponized by Baku and Russia's proxies in Armenia and the Diaspora, the project will interchangeably use the terms "road" and "route," thus addressing an important Armenian concern. TRIPP is envisioned as a vital and strategic trade artery that will be subjected to and administered by Armenian law, while operated under a joint Armenia-U.S. venture. Thus, TRIPP, as confirmed in discussions with numerous U.S. officials, ensures Armenia's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and jurisdictional authority. Contrary to the disinformation spread by the likes of former Kocharyan foreign minister Vartan Oskanian, Armenia's illiberal opposition, and pro-Russia organizations in the Diaspora such as the ANCA, Armenian sovereign territory will not be ceded, given, or delegated to any third party actor that constitutes extra-territoriality. Moreover, contrary to the disinformation proliferated by such circles, foreign troops will not be stationed in Armenia, no neighboring country will have a presence in sovereign Armenian territory, and Armenia's link south to Iran will not be obstructed nor have anything to do with this route.

In this context, Armenia and the United States will undertake a joint venture, with both Armenian and American companies being granted contracts to build the infrastructure and undertake the development of the route. Considering the immense role the United States will be playing in securing financing for the project, the U.S., in consultation with its Armenian partners, and commensurate with Armenian law, will have the right to delegate or subcontract different parts of the construction project

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page 8 ➡ to pertinent companies as deemed appropriate in completing TRIPP. Thus, the United States will partner up with Armenia, with strict adherence to the principle of the inviolability of Armenia's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and jurisdictional authority, to build and operate a commercial transit route through Southern Armenia, allowing for connectivity between Azerbaijan and Nakhijevan.

The route is being qualified as an economic and commercial endeavor, not simply a geopolitical or hard power move, and it is for this reason that there is not and will not be talks of its militarization to address the security of the route. Unlike the stipulations put forth in the 2020, November 9 trilateral statement that had sought, based on Russian and Azerbaijani interpretation, the presence of Russian FSB troops controlling an extraterritorial corridor, TRIPP will not have any military presence from any foreign country. Rather, the United States, in agreement with Armenia, will take on the responsibility of ensuring that the route operates and functions safely through the hiring of highly-experienced and qualified companies whose activities, under Armenian law, will ensure the set objectives.

While Aliyev had demanded complete unimpeded access of all cargo and goods passing through Armenia, without any inspection of the content included in the shipments, his maximalist demand was not achieved. Rather, only commercial access will be permitted, and in this context, military equipment or non-commercial products will not be permitted. Further, since the control of the route will be under Armenian law, and thus, under Armenian control, cargo entering and passing through the Republic of Armenia will be subjected to inspection prior to entering Armenian territory. The border inspection mechanism will utilize the front-office/back-office model: a third party operator, hired by the U.S.-Armenia joint venture, will work the front office when physically dealing with incoming Azerbaijani cargo, while Armenian officials and border control personnel will be in the back office overlooking all aspects of the process.

Through this model, all cargo entering and passing through Armenian territory will be ensured to be commercial, while Armenian law will dictate front-office/back-office operations.

The U.S.-Armenia Paradigm and a Growing Security Architecture

The Washington Summit is testimony to the highly constructive and methodical role played by the United States in making this initiative a reality. Two important factors stand out in how this came about. First, against much of his strategic self-interest, which is well-designed to maintain his power asymmetry with Armenia and thus obstruct any third-party initiative that allows Armenia agency and potential for development, Aliyev finally agreed to the U.S. proposal, after having sought every diplomatic mechanism of obstructing or prolonging the process. In my extensive engagements with the State Department, National Security Council, and the White House, it was evident that there was a clear understanding in Washington that bringing Aliyev to the table was incumbent upon the United States if Washington had any hopes of its proposed initiative having life. In essence, the Trump Administration's model of working through deadlines, and making certain that involved parties will face punitive action for failing to meet the set deadlines, produced the outcome that many of us, even having access to the process, were skeptical of: that Aliyev will agree to terms that are not commensurate to his maximalist posturing.

Second, the U.S. normalization proposal, while having had several iterations since its first draft, is primarily hinged on the following logic: the United States will step in as a constructive economic and geopolitical actor to support the establishment of a transit route through Syunik, giving Azerbaijan commercial connectivity to its exclave of Nakhichevan, with the route being subjected to Armenia's laws and in full compliance with Armenia's sovereignty. In conversations with the leadership in both the State Department and the NSC during the last three months, it was directly shared with me that America's thinking was predicated

on three underlying postulates.

One, the Washington Summit is not a one-off engagement, but rather a foundational framework for what the United States views as a three year process, from this normalization initiative to signing a final peace treaty. Two, the White House proceeded with a "peace first" approach, where the conflict is removed from the battlefield space and the use of force is precluded, after which the normalization process proceeds. And three, the U.S. envisions a new South Caucasus, one defined by trade, stability and interconnectivity, which also includes the opening of borders with Turkey in the very near future. In this context, the background leading up to the Summit has been defined by categorically denying Baku the option of using force, offering creative (economic, energy, infrastructure, etc.) incentives to both sides to make certain they adhere to the U.S. plan, and using these developments to formalize a normalization framework that, by 2028, will lead to the signing of a final peace agreement.

For Armenia, the U.S. proposal was not only a highly-preferable outcome of its Western pivot and policy of diversification, but more specifically, it has fundamentally altered its security architecture. The joint U.S.-Armenia venture in building TRIPP, for official Yerevan, is not, in and of itself, only an economic or commercial endeavor, but just as, if not more importantly, an important layer of robust deterrence against any future acts of Azerbaijani aggression. Within the domain of security, TRIPP offers Armenia an expansive and multilayered framework of soft deterrence, which exponentially diminishes the threat propensity within its security environment. In essence, whereas the threat of Azerbaijani incursions were a continuous and high-probability threat since 2020, that threat has been exceedingly marginalized by virtue of the U.S.-led normalization initiative and the development of the TRIPP project.

Furthermore, the outcome of the Washington Summit, and America's vision of undertaking a multi-year process of finalizing a peace treaty, extensively ➡ page 10

page 9 ➔ handicaps Aliyev's capacity to tap into his hybrid warfare toolkit. While Baku, for tactical and strategic reasons, will still seek to utilize certain methods of hybrid warfare, it will, nonetheless, be unable to utilize its wide-ranging toolkit the way it has for the last five years. Within the confluence of such developments, Aliyev's penchant for relying on kinetic and coercive diplomacy will also lose efficacy, since the theater of conflict has been transferred to a normalization format with immense U.S. investment.

In no uncertain terms, the normalization process brings Armenia a state of *de facto* peace, and while a peace treaty, if achieved in the future, will produce a *de jure* outcome, the more important

variable, in the immediate and near future, is that Aliyev's war machine, which had fed off of the power disparity with Armenia, would have to go into hibernation. What the U.S. normalization initiative has done for Armenia's security architecture is quite unique: it has given Armenia a transit route that it controls, not the Zangezur Corridor of Aliyev's dreams or the FSB-controlled corridor of Moscow's desires, while at the same time strengthening Armenia's position as a regional actor.

Finally, inherent in the normalization initiative is the implicit understanding that Azerbaijan will have to withdraw from the territories it has occupied within Armenia-proper as the TRIPP project comes

close to conclusion and reaches the opening stage. More simply put, Azerbaijan will either have to withdraw or act as an obstructionist force against the U.S. project, for the U.S. normalization initiative envisions the operationalization of TRIPP with the de-occupation of Armenian territories. Thus, Azerbaijan's occupation of Armenian sovereign territory will soon become a liability, and what Aliyev had initially deemed an important instrument of leverage against Armenia will now become a source of diplomatic weakness in its relations with the U.S. Quite similar to what will also happen soon with the POWs: as the process develops, the issue of Armenian prisoners of war, a topic of growing importance to the White House, will become a political liability for Baku.

The Time for a Paradigm Shift Is Now

Former Iranian foreign minister outlines path for diplomacy.



By **Mohammad Javad Zarif**, an associate professor of global studies at the University of Tehran and the founder and president of *Possibilities Architects: Inspiring Ascending Beyond*, a nongovernmental Iranian think tank.

West Asia stands at a perilous inflection point. The horrors unfolding in Gaza, the recent aggression directed at Iran but repelled by the Iranian people and its armed forces, and the continued destabilization of Syria illustrate in stark terms that for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his global enablers, the only so-called existential threat is actually peace and quiet. This pairing for Israel of internal apartheid and perpetual regional conflict threatens the very foundations of the regional and global orders. While

strong defense is necessary, an enduring solution demands a bold diplomatic initiative, a historic shift for Iran and the region from a deeply ingrained threat paradigm to an empowering possibilities paradigm, including: expansion of ties with neighbors and global south countries, a new regional partnership among Muslim West Asia, and a renewed dialogue with Europe and the United States.

For too long now, nations in the region have been trapped in cycles of conflict and missed opportunities. Forging a different future requires vision, courage, and a conscious decision to break free from historical determinism. For Iran, this shift begins domestically and radiates outward into its neighborhood. Having been able to demonstrate that it is not easy prey and can hold its own against two nuclear-armed aggressors, Iran has the capacity to make this critical transition from an approach centered on confronting perpetual threats to one focused on exploiting opportunities. It is not only feasible but profoundly in the interest of Iran, the region, and the global community. Achieving it necessitates unwavering domestic resolve and external noninterference; driven not necessarily by morality or international law, but simply by self-interest.

Iran's foremost possibility resides in its people. Millennia of history testify to their extraordinary resilience. Invaders have occupied Iranian land, but they were invariably absorbed into the enduring culture and were never able to impose their values on the Iranian people. This resilience is the decisive factor confounding ostensibly superior foes, from Iraq's invasion in 1980 (backed by global powers) to the recent gambits of Netanyahu and U.S. President Donald Trump. It is why four decades of so-called maximum pressure and crippling sanctions have failed to achieve their objectives.

Despite unprecedented global restrictions—from U.N. Security Council resolutions to export restrictions deliberately designed to stifle Iran's technological advancement—the Iranian people have indigenously propelled scientific and technological progress, particularly in defense and nuclear energy. Thus, Iranian people are not subjects to be constrained but the nation's paramount asset to be empowered, nurtured, and allowed to flourish.

Iran's second vital pillar of possibility is its neighborhood. With borders on 15 nations, Iran sits at a unique Eurasian crossroads. More significantly, the region shares deep, unbreakable historical and

cultural ties woven over centuries by Iranian poets, mystics, philosophers, and scientists. These connections have endured empires, invasions, and turmoil.

Yet real regional cooperation has remained elusive. In my decades as an Iranian diplomat, I've participated in developing initiatives that were consistently undermined by a paradigm of suspicion and threats. From proposals for Persian Gulf security during the Iran-Iraq War, to aborted cooperation declarations with tour neighbors in the southern coast of the Persian Gulf in the wake of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, and later initiatives like a regional dialogue forum, a non-aggression pact, the Hormuz Peace Endeavor, the Muslim West Asian Dialogue Association, and the most recent Middle East Network for Atomic Research and Advancement, all these initiatives faltered due to mutual mistrust.

But recent escalations by Israel have created a new awareness of shared vulnerability in the region. There is now a crucial window of opportunity. Iran, alongside Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen—potentially expanding to Pakistan, Central Asia, and the Caucasus—must seize this moment. Under a U.N. umbrella, we can forge a new compact based on a strategic pivot from fragmentation to one of synergy. Shared energy corridors, robust nonproliferation and nuclear cooperation frameworks, economic cooperation, and cultural unity can become the engines of shared prosperity.

Through the prism of this possibilities paradigm, Iran and even Russia and Turkey can view the recent agreement between Azerbaijan and Armenia in Washington not as a threat, but as an opportunity—a chance to revive the previously proposed transit cooperation in the Caucasus between Iran, Russia, and Turkey, together with Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. The new agreement provides a global context that makes our 2019 regional initiative more feasible and sustainable. And it will provide unique investment opportunities for the private sector in the United States and other countries.

The third pillar, involving global diplomacy, is perhaps the most challenging for Iran given its disillusionment over past experiences. Yet I firmly believe Iran and the international community share an existential interest in pushing past those experiences and forging a different future.

Iran has made significant contributions to global stability over the decades. As a U.N. founding member, it sponsored landmark initiatives: the 1974 proposal for a Middle East Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, the 1997 "Dialogue Among Civilizations," and the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Tragically, the world's major powers have consistently undermined these Iranian overtures.

The historical pattern is stark: The West's aggressive response to Iran's 1951 oil nationalization, culminating in the 1953 coup; its support for Saddam Hussein's aggression against Iran in 1980; its actions enabling Israel to possess hundreds of nuclear warheads; its labeling of Iran as part of an "axis of evil" in 2002, despite Iranian cooperation post-9/11; and the relentless disinformation campaign against Iran's peaceful nuclear program. Ironically, that assault has been led by Israel, which has refused to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and is known to have secretly developed a large nuclear arsenal.

The saga of the JCPOA epitomizes the unfulfilled promises of diplomacy. Around the world, it was hailed as a diplomatic triumph in 2015. But Trump's decision to withdraw from the agreement three years later deeply damaged faith in diplomacy within Iran. Beyond the crushing sanctions, the recent European move to invoke the JCPOA's Dispute Resolution Mechanism amid Israeli attacks on Iranian facilities is profoundly cynical. Europe systematically failed to honor its JCPOA and U.N. Security Council commitments for seven years. The core bargain—economic normalization for verified nuclear compliance—was shattered when the United States withdrew and Europe proved unable or unwilling to implement even rudimentary economic mechanisms like its own proposed INSTEX, a vehicle aimed at bypassing U.S. sanctions.

Iran, facing noncompliance by the United States and E3—Britain, Germany, and France—lawfully invoked the JCPOA's remedial measures from 2017 to 2021. Rather than uphold diplomacy, the E3 [supported](#) Israeli military attacks on Iran in June, with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz going so far as to say that Israel was doing the West's "[dirty work](#)." Europe's endorsement of war followed by a resort to the diplomatic dispute resolution of the nuclear deal—for the same objectives that war failed to achieve—have further shattered Iranian respect for diplomacy.

Given this heavy historical baggage, getting the Iranian people and their government to believe in the viability of diplomacy will be challenging. Yet the alternative—the path of the forever wars—leads inexorably to regional dismemberment, rampant extremism, and chaos engulfing West Asia and beyond. It risks plunging the United States and the West into a quagmire of historic proportions.

The United States and Europe—and not just Iran—have an existential interest to encourage the paradigm shift discussed above. By opting for war even as negotiations were underway, they have practically slammed the door on diplomacy. The onus is now on them to change course if they expect Iranian reciprocation. Iran, too, has much to gain—and immense hardship to avert—by engaging in a multidimensional, forward-looking, results-oriented dialogue. The path forward may include the formation of a [regional network](#) for nonproliferation and peaceful nuclear cooperation, coupled with a possible U.S.-Iran non-aggression pact.

We cannot ignore the past, nor should we cease learning from it. But we must refuse to be imprisoned by past failures. Otherwise, we doom ourselves to an endless loop of catastrophes.

Warmongers thrive on closing any window for diplomacy. We must deny them the chance to entrench the destructive threat paradigm and extinguish hope. The crossroad is here. The choice for Iran, the region, and global powers is clear: more of the catastrophic past, or the courage to build a future together. The time for a paradigm shift is now.

Tehran-Yerevan ties will never be subject of geopolitical bargain, Armenian Deputy FM says



Armenia's deputy foreign minister says the relations between Tehran and Yerevan are of strategic importance to his country and will never be the subject of any geopolitical bargain.

Vahan Kostanyan made the remarks in an exclusive interview with [IRNA](#), during which he said the government and people of Armenia have deep respect for the Leader, government, and people of Iran.

"We value these relations, which have a history of thousands of years, and we must pass them on even stronger and more resilient to future generations," he said.

Below is the full transcript of the interview:

Q: Good afternoon, Mr. Deputy Foreign Minister. Thank you very much for this opportunity and for the time you have given us during your very important visit to Tehran. To begin, I would like to ask you about bilateral relations and your assessment of the current state of relations between Iran and Armenia, as well as the potential for their development and expansion.

A: Since Armenia's independence, Iran and Armenia have interacted as two nations with very good, indeed exceptional, relations. Since 1991, our bilateral ties have been steadily growing. Today, the relations between our two countries, our leaders, and our governments are very special and of great importance to us. I believe these relations are strategic in nature, and I am confident that the upcoming visit of President Pezeshkian to Yerevan will elevate them to an even higher level.

These relations encompass a wide range of areas of cooperation, from politics

to the economy. In recent years, we have achieved significant results in trade and have set ambitious targets between our governments: first, to reach \$1 billion in trade turnover, and then to strive for \$3 billion. Armenia's relations with Iran are truly unique, and we view them as going beyond just energy or politics, because having relations with a good neighbor is a priority for us. This priority is recorded in our government's program for 2021–2026, and I can say that the policies and benchmarks set in the government's action plan are being successfully implemented.

Q: As you know, following the agreement between Yerevan and Baku signed in Washington, this issue topped the news and media coverage in Iran. In your view, what impact will this agreement have on regional security and stability?

A: Thank you for your question. I believe this historic development made headlines not only in Iran but also globally. It is important for us to hear the feedback and opinions of brotherly countries, especially Iran. We appreciate the balanced statement by the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as the subsequent remarks by Iran's foreign minister and president. I believe we are now entering a new era in Armenia–Azerbaijan relations, one in which the two countries and their leaders have openly affirmed their commitment to peace. This will have a positive impact not only on our bilateral relations but also on regional dynamics, from politics to economics.

One of our key agreements with Azerbaijan is the reopening of communication routes in the region, with full mutual respect for the sovereignty, jurisdiction, and territorial integrity of countries. In practice, this will open new doors for railway cooperation between Armenia and Iran, including through the Nakhchivan–Jolfa

railway line, which will mean Iran's access to Armenia and, ultimately, to the Black Sea.

Q: How do you see Iran's place in this equation? And what is Yerevan's view on the role of regional mechanisms such as the 3+3 format in moving forward?

A: Regarding Iran's role, especially within the framework of the "3+3" regional mechanism proposed by Iran, I must say that Armenia has participated since the first meeting of this platform—initially at the deputy minister level and later at the ministerial level. We believe this dialogue format can provide a suitable platform for discussing regional projects, especially connectivity projects. The recent developments between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the principled agreement to reopen regional communication routes, have opened a new chapter for dialogue, including within the "3+3" format. According to the latest ministerial statement, the next meeting should be held in either Yerevan or Baku, and we also have in mind bilateral consultations with the Azerbaijani side.

Q: Given Washington's role in this agreement, what is Yerevan's position on the presence of the United States or any third party in the region? And what guarantees are there that the United States will not play a negative role against regional countries?

A: Regarding Tehran's concerns about this agreement and the role of the United States, I must say this has been one of the main topics of our discussions yesterday and today. I have come here with the message that Armenia has taken Iran's considerations into account and that these sensitivities were factored into the preliminary negotiations about the connectivity project known as the "Trump" project. Some details of this project have already been determined and agreed upon, which I have shared with

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page 12 ➡ the Iranian side, and I am ready to announce them publicly as well. It is planned that a company will be registered in Armenia, with shares divided between Armenia and the United States, but this does not mean a US security presence in the region. We understand that this has been one of the key concerns of the Iranian side, and I believe this concern has been addressed.

For us, the uninterrupted and obstacle-free functioning of the Iran–Armenia border and its crossings for the movement of goods and passengers is of strategic importance, and we do not expect any obstacles in this regard. The opening of communication routes, including three new projects, will be carried out on the basis of the sovereignty and jurisdiction of countries, which in itself is another guarantee.

Q: Does Armenia not share the concern that the US presence in this region could lead to a power struggle between regional powers and Washington?

A: Our general position on the opening of communication routes has been outlined in the Armenian Prime Minister's "Crossroads of Peace" initiative. We believe this opening should not lead to new

geopolitical restrictions but should serve as a confidence-building measure among geopolitical powers. In practice, US shares in the company registered in Armenia will benefit the United States, Iran will benefit from access to the Black Sea, and we will be able to connect to Russia via Azerbaijan's railway line. We hope that this mutual economic interdependence will serve as a bridge for cooperation rather than an obstacle to it.

Q: I received part of the answer to my next question in your earlier responses, but given the importance of the matter, I would like to ask it separately: Is Tehran's concern, and the importance it attaches to its short but significant and historic border with Armenia, taken into account in Yerevan's negotiations?

A: One of Tehran's main concerns is the historic Iran–Armenia border. We cherish this border and have been grateful for Iran's political support on this matter in recent years. This position holds the same importance for us as it does for Iran, and it will not change under any circumstances. We have given the necessary assurances to the Iranian side.

At present, we are making extensive

preparations to host President Pezeshkian in Yerevan. I believe this historic and long-awaited visit will further strengthen the political alignment of our two countries and open new avenues for economic cooperation.

Q: Can you tell us how many cooperation documents will be signed during this visit?

A: We expect important documents to be signed between the two countries, although we are keeping some details confidential for now.

Q: Given that we are on the eve of President Pezeshkian's visit to Armenia, I would like to ask you to send a message to the people of Iran.

A: The government and people of Armenia have deep respect for the leader, government, and people of Iran. The relations between our two countries are of strategic importance to us and will never be the subject of any geopolitical bargain. We value these relations, which have a history of thousands of years, and we must pass them on even stronger and more resilient to future generations. This is the belief and message of my government. Thank you.

Infrastructure minister inspects Syunik road construction projects



Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructures Davit Khudatyan has visited the Syunik Province to inspect the ongoing road construction projects.

Local officials accompanied the minister on day 1 to Sisian, where he inspected the government-funded construction of the Ashotavan-Tasik-Arevis 10km road, the ministry said in a press release.

Khudatyan then visited the construction site of the Verishen-Khoznavar 18,3km road.

Day 2 coincided with the ambassadorial gathering in Kapan. The Armenian diplomats joined the minister on a visit to the construction site of the Kajaran-Agarak 32km section of the North-South Road Corridor.

TUMO to Open a New Center in Mumbai, India



This November, TUMO will open its first South Asian center in Mumbai. The new center, launched in partnership with the Shantilal Shanghvi Foundation, will be housed in Shikha Academy's brand-new building, one of the country's most forward-thinking educational institutions. TUMO Mumbai will provide free education in technology and design to up to 1,800 teenagers each week.

"I have no doubt that TUMO can be life-changing for teenagers in India. But this is also a huge learning opportunity for us. The population density, the socio-economic mix, the degree of mobile penetration, and a unique emphasis on national excellence in AI... These are all things we look forward to experiencing and learning from in India," said TUMO CEO Marie Lou Papazian.

TUMO's innovative education model combines self-learning with hands-on workshops and learning labs, allowing students to personalize their learning paths and collaborate with industry professionals. In addition to gaining technical knowledge, students also develop the soft skills they need for future success. These qualities are what make TUMO's model attractive to communities worldwide.

"At Shikha, we've always believed that world-class education shouldn't be limited

to the privileged. Partnering with TUMO allows us to broaden our scope with cut-



ting-edge learning in creative technologies, AI, and design for students who might not otherwise have access to such resources," said Karishma Shanghvi, founder and director of Shikha Academy.

Prior to the launch of TUMO Mumbai, Pegor Papazian, TUMO's Chief Development Officer, and Tom Auger, Senior Software Engineer, teamed up with Shikha Academy to pilot TUMO's new generative AI workshop for teens from some of Mumbai's informal settlements. Students explored the potential of multimodal AI through code generation, configuring AI agents, coding interactive websites, and creating visuals and songs.

"At TUMO, we believe education is about more than just learning how to use tools," said Pegor Papazian. "It's about giving young people the confidence to take ownership of their learning process, see

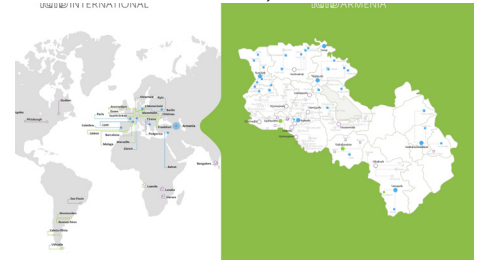
themselves as creators, and shape how technologies like AI will evolve and how they will fit into their lives."

Artificial intelligence also took center stage at the ai/teens worldwide conference organized by TUMO this March. During the conference, participants, including future staff and students of the Mumbai Center, joined live with TUMO Centers operating and opening in cities around the world to discuss the relationship between artificial intelligence and education.

Just a few months later, Mumbai is becoming part of the global TUMO network, strengthening ties between Armenia and India and bringing the two countries together around shared goals of innovation, digital literacy, and youth empowerment.

India joins a growing list of countries on TUMO's international map, including Argentina, France, Portugal, Germany, Albania, and Japan, with upcoming centers in Uruguay, the United States, the Netherlands, Georgia, and Kazakhstan.

International expansion makes it possible to position Armenia as a leading country in developing innovative educational products, to continuously improve the educational model, and to ensure the



financial sustainability of TUMO Centers and Boxes in Armenia.

About TUMO

The TUMO Center for Creative Technologies is an after-school educational program that gives teenagers free access to learning in technology and design. Founded in Armenia and now expanding internationally, TUMO combines self-learning with hands-on workshops and learning labs to prepare young people for the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

Rufus Wainwright and Aloe Blacc to perform Live at 2025 Aurora Prize Ceremony on Ellis Island

The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative announced today that Grammy-nominated artists Rufus Wainwright and Aloe Blacc will headline the 2025 Aurora Prize Ceremony, set to take place on November 6 on the historic Ellis Island. The Ceremony, marking the 10th anniversary of the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity, will honor extraordinary grassroots humanitarians and announce the 2025 Aurora Prize Laureate. Award-winning journalist Judy Woodruff and bestselling author and columnist David Ignatius will co-host the evening.

"The Aurora Prize Ceremony has become a tradition, a celebration of courageous individuals who dedicate their lives to protecting others, and a space where a global community of humanitarians and supporters comes together," said Armine Afeyan, CEO of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative. "This year on Ellis Island, as we honor the commitment and impact of humanitarian heroes, we also mark a decade of building a platform that amplifies their voices, strengthens their work, and grows a network rooted in generational gratitude. We're glad to welcome Rufus Wainwright and Aloe Blacc into this ongoing effort."

Held at Ellis Island, a symbol of refuge



and resilience, this Ceremony will spotlight the power of private philanthropy in support of human rights and global humanitarian efforts and reinforce the criticality of private giving at a moment of government funding cuts and increasing humanitarian needs.

Renowned for his interpretive brilliance and vocal artistry, Rufus Wainwright is one of the most acclaimed vocalists and songwriters of his generation. Born in New York and raised in Montreal, Wainwright has released 11 studio albums, including *Rufus Does Judy at Carnegie Hall*, his Grammy-nominated Judy Garland tribute. In addition to his success in pop, Wainwright has composed for opera and classical music, including his acclaimed debut opera *Prima Donna*, which premiered in 2009.

"It's a privilege to perform for a cause that uplifts those working tirelessly, often without recognition, to save lives and uphold dignity," said Wainwright. "I have been deeply moved by Aurora's support

for modern-day heroes and grateful for the opportunity to help celebrate their impact."

Aloe Blacc, a Southern California native known for hits "*I Need a Dollar*" and "*The Man*," rose to global fame with "*Wake Me Up*" (produced by Avicii), which topped charts in over 30 countries. A long-time advocate for social justice,

Blacc partnered with Aurora to release the single "*SHINE*," inspired by grassroots humanitarians supported by the Initiative. The song premiered at last year's Ceremony in honor of those who fight fearlessly to save human lives and alleviate suffering.

"In a world that can feel overwhelming, the stories Aurora brings to light remind us of the extraordinary strength and kindness that still exist," said Blacc. "It's an honor to stand with this community once again and celebrate those who choose courage and compassion, even in the darkest moments—a commitment that continues to inspire my work and my partnership with Aurora."

The event will also feature performances by Kento Suzuki, duduk player and alumnus of the United World College in Dilijan, Armenia, and Diana Adamyan, virtuoso violinist and winner of the 2018 Yehudi Menuhin International Competition. Adamyan's moving performance at last year's Ceremony was one of the evening's highlights.

Emir Kusturica's Kustendorf Classic 2025 to feature Armenian artists



Press release by Armenian State Symphony Orchestra

From September 4 to 6, in the famous ethno-village "Mečavnik" created by renowned film director Emir Kusturica, the next edition of the International Classical Music Festival Kustendorf Classic will take place. Each year, the festival brings

together young musicians and distinguished masters from across the globe.

Upon the recommendation and with the support of Emir Kusturica's longtime friend- violinist, producer, and founder of Almazian Productions, Khachatur Almazian- the festival program will feature guest artists representing Armenia.

The special guest of this year's festival will be conductor Sergey Smbatyan, Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra and Principal Conductor of the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra. He will deliver an open lecture for the festival participants.

The stage of "Mečavnik" will also welcome Eva Gevorgyan- a young but already acclaimed Russian-Armenian pianist, who

will perform Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto.

For many years, Emir Kusturica's festivals have been celebrated for their unique atmosphere and for attracting world-renowned names. In different editions, the guest list has included Monica Bellucci, Johnny Depp, Salma Hayek, Jim Jarmusch, Valery Gergiev, Yuri Bashmet, Denis Matsuev, and many others.

Among the anticipated guests this year is mezzo-soprano Vasilisa Berzhanskaya, one of the brightest stars of today's international opera stage.

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