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Hafiz Pashayev and His Vision of ADA University

S. Frederick Starr

S. Frederick Starr is Chairman of the Central Asia Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, a research and policy center affiliated with the American Foreign Policy Council in Washington, DC and the Institute for Security and Development Policy in Stockholm. He is also Distinguished Fellow for Eurasia at the American Foreign Policy Institute. He co-founded the Kennan Institute of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, served for 11 years as President of Oberlin College, and served in the early 2000s as pro-tem Rector of the University of Central Asia. He is a trustee of ADA University, the recipient of an honorary doctorate in the humanities from ADA University, and a member of the Baku Dialogues Editorial Advisory Council.

Hafiz Pashayev—scientist, diplomat, educator, and citizen of modern Azerbaijan—has many admirers and friends, including the author of this

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portrait, which is written in celebration of his distinguished subject's 80th birthday. All know Hafiz Pashayev as someone who has used his talents in the fields of science, diplomacy, and education to champion his country's interests in a post-Soviet world. His mild and accessible temperament encourages those around him to focus on whatever issue is at hand, without pausing to enquire into his ruling values and the aspirations that arise from them. This is unfortunate, for in both areas he has much to say.

One's values and goals in life can arise from many sources, among them being childhood influences, religious or philosophical affirmations, study of the past or personal crises, efforts to peer into the future, or sheer chance. In the case of Hafiz Pashayev, they flowed organically from highly diverse yet intermeshed influences that began in his parents' home and extended through his adult life.

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Hafiz Pashayev's father, Mir Jalal Pashayev, was a self-made scholar, professor, and writer who as a child was brought by his parents into northern Azerbaijan from across the Araz river in the final decades of the Russian empire. He completed his initial studies in Ganja where he became a teacher before going

on to earn a doctorate for his studies of the great Azerbaijani 16th-century thinker and poet, Fuzuli. He subsequently went on to write immensely popular stories of daily life in his homeland, most of them gently poking fun at Soviet bureaucracy. He had studied his subject at first hand and had no illusions about the system under which he lived and toiled, but channeled his views into wry tales, not protests. Though a member of the cultural establishment, Mir Jalal was a loner amidst a wide circle of friends, a man who preferred drinking tea with family and colleagues to becoming "Dried Up in Meetings," to cite the title of one of his droll tales. Understanding the drift of Soviet life, he encouraged two of his sons (Hafiz as well as Arif, his older brother), to study physics, not literature, whilst the third, Agil, studied philology.

It was no mean achievement to rise to the upper levels of physics in the Soviet Union, as young Hafiz quickly did. He did doctoral research at

the Kurchatov Institute of Atomic Energy in Moscow, which at the time was the world's premier institution for the study of thermonuclear fusion and plasma physics. In the mid-1970s he was allowed to go abroad to conduct postdoctoral research at the University of California at Irvine. Hafiz's impressions of America were heady and extended far beyond the realm of physics to include universities, education in general, and social life in all its dimensions. His father prudently counselled him to keep his observations on America to himself. He did, spending three decades at the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS) where, in the course of time, he came to serve as Director of the Metal Physics Laboratory at the ANAS Institute of Physics whilst continuing his research and publishing scores of scientific papers in leading international journals.

To this point, Hafiz was a rising Soviet scientist in a prestigious field, a member of the elite by any measure. Though from an academic family, he was also the son of a noted and quietly independent writer who, rather than flaunting any skepticism about Soviet rule he may have harbored, translated it into wry and even absurd tales rooted in the reality known to all readers of the Azerbaijani language. And, it should be noted, though Mir Jalal Pashayev followed his own stars, he was part of an impressive Azerbaijani intelligentsia with a strong cultural memory that stretched back to the post-World War I era Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, which had ended only with the Red Army's invasion in 1920.

The cultural memory to which Hafiz Pashayev was heir extended back still further, to the oil boom of the late 19th century, when Baku became a sophisticated outpost of Europe, and even beyond that, to great writers and poets who wrote in Azerbaijani, not Russian. Though a member in good standing of the Soviet intelligentsia and fully integrated into the world of Russian language and culture, Hafiz stood proudly as a son of Azerbaijan and part of a generation of well-educated Azerbaijanis who felt that it was high time to reclaim their intellectual and cultural heritage. He could see that earlier generations of Azerbaijanis had produced bright and

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independent personalities who were committed to their communities and to civic betterment. Though neither they nor Hafiz commonly used the word, they were free citizens, not subjects.

Meanwhile, the underpinnings of Soviet rule in Azerbaijan were shaking. This reached a climax when the neighboring Republic of Armenia seized Azerbaijani territory in and around Karabakh, and when bloody ethnic confrontations broke out across both countries and in Baku itself. National feeling in Baku ran high and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, fearing complete chaos and outright secession, declared a state of emergency there. On January 19th, 1990, Gorbachev declared the city to be in a state of emergency and sent in more than 25,000 interior forces of the Red Army to quell the large crowd that had assembled in the Azerbaijani capital. Three days of fighting left hundreds of Azerbaijanis dead or injured. Hafiz Pashayev witnessed it all and concluded that Soviet rule was collapsing, and that Azerbaijan henceforth would be on its own.

Even then, Hafiz returned for several years to his scientific work and to the professorial life in which his father had preceded him. More published papers flowed from his research. However, the collapse of the Soviet Union left Azerbaijan and the other non-Russian republics adrift, and without the means to support such basic institutions as schools, hospitals, universities, and research institutes. Besides, physics in Azerbaijan had been intimately linked with Moscow, a relationship that had clearly been suspended and possibly would be terminated. Meanwhile, a new and independent government had formed and was sending out ambassadors to represent independent Azerbaijan to the world. Hafiz, with his American experience, was the obvious candidate to serve as Azerbaijan's first ambassador to the United States. The appointment was made in late 1992 and he was 51 years old.

Hafiz Pashayev was not the only Soviet-era physicist who retooled as a diplomat or statesman. Another to do so was Stanislav Shushkevich, a physicist and engineer who in 1991 became the first head of state of independent Belarus after it seceded from the Soviet Union. Still another was Meret Orazov, a younger physicist from Turkmenistan who went on to become his country's ambassador to Washington. These and other former Soviet physicists all followed in the footsteps of Russian physicist Andrei Sakharov, who did more than anyone else to broaden the calling of scientist to include civic and

patriotic activity independent of the state. Many of the Soviet Union's rising physicists, Hafiz among them, chose not to engage in politics directly. Yet scores of them exhibited a commitment to civic betterment, public service, and to full participation in the cultural and intellectual currents of the day in Europe and America.

Hafiz Pashayev took up his ambassadorial duties in Washington in February 1993. He and his beloved wife, Rana, were outsiders in a city where many long-resident foreign diplomats were accepted as insiders. Further complicating his life were the two major issues that confronted him even before his arrival. The first was British Petroleum's contract with the government of Azerbaijan to vastly increase the country's production of oil and the concomitant project—equally vast in scope—to build a pipeline for the export of Azerbaijan's oil from Baku to the West. Even though American oil firms were not directly involved in either of these projects, they had profound implications for American diplomacy of, and especially for, Washington's increasingly fragile relations with the post-Soviet government in Moscow. Precisely because both governments saw both of these projects as breaking Russia's monopoly control over the South Caucasus, Washington welcomed and supported the initiatives whilst Moscow opposed them.

The second issue that further complicated his life, as it were, was to redress the losses that Azerbaijan had suffered during what is now called the First Karabakh War that Armenia had waged against Azerbaijan from 1992 to 1994. The war had ended with Armenia in control not only of the enclave of Karabakh and one fifth of Azerbaijan's territory, but with tens of thousands of deaths on both sides and 740,000 Azerbaijanis having been expelled from their homes. Never mind that the UN Security Council passed four resolutions “reaffirming the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Azerbaijani republic” and “demand[ing] [...] the immediate, complete, and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces” from Karabakh and the surrounding regions. The Armenian government was staunchly committed to holding onto its wartime gains at all costs and to using diplomacy to thwart Azerbaijan in every way possible.

Either of these issues would have challenged even the most seasoned diplomat. But Hafiz was, he freely admitted, both a neophyte in diplomacy and a newcomer to the political and social labyrinth of Washington. Worse yet,

the political valence of each of these issues differed radically, with the oil and pipelines eliciting warm support from those responsible for America's national security and economic interests but skepticism and even opposition from what was then called the “human rights lobby.” Meanwhile, the Karabakh question caused Armenia, its diplomats, and members of the large Armenian emigration in the United States to mount a vehement and well-organized opposition to everyone and everything associated with Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan's supporters and opponents on the two issues differed radically. For obvious reasons, the main supporters of the development and transport of Azerbaijan's oil to the West were British and American businessmen and the few specialists in geopolitics in the U.S. Congress and academia, while the most vociferous forces aligned against Azerbaijan on the Karabakh issue were the large and well-organized communities of Armenian emigres and their descendants in California, New England, and elsewhere in America. The former tended to work quietly and behind the scenes; while the latter mounted one of the largest, most expensive, and most visible domestic American lobbying efforts on any foreign policy issue.

It is a gross understatement to say that these two projects demanded diametrically different skillsets and techniques from the embassy of Azerbaijan. No one, including Hafiz Pashayev, could have been expected to possess them all. In his engaging memoir, *Racing Up Hill* (2006), Pashayev provided a compendium of documents and impressions that shed light on what he admits was an uphill struggle. Suffice it to say that his method was to gather on his staff a talented group of young Azerbaijanis who focused on the more public dimensions of the agenda, while he himself addressed those matters that could best be advanced through face-to-face contacts on the basis of cordial personal relations. This method succeeded brilliantly. He selected the most promising young diplomats and trained them mainly by personal example, just as Mir Jalal Pashayev had done with young Hafiz. Members of his Washington staff went on to serve in Baku at the highest level of government, the diplomatic service, and academia. Meanwhile, the personal links Hafiz Pashayev formed with many key American politicians and statesmen proved immensely productive at the time and were to endure through the years.

In the end, the battle to counter the work of the Armenian government and their co-nationals among the American citizenry proved the most vexing.

In a brilliant and deeply injurious move, the two groups collaborated to put forward a seemingly minor revision to the U.S. Freedom Support Act (1992) that would prevent the United States government from extending any form of direct aid to the government of Azerbaijan. But would anyone in the U.S. Congress actually introduce this legislation, which was so clearly at odds with America's own interests?

The person who championed this damaging initiative in Congress was Senator John Kerry, who had been successfully lobbied by organized Armenian groups in his home state of Massachusetts. Never mind that President Bill Clinton, a fellow Democrat, opposed Kerry's move, and that neither Kerry nor his staff bothered to gain a more thorough and accurate picture of the situation in Karabakh or of developments in Azerbaijan itself. However casual its genesis, this ban made Azerbaijan the only post-Soviet state to be prevented from receiving direct aid from the United States government to facilitate economic development, political reform, and social advancement and stability.

I recently came across an interview Hafiz gave to an Azerbaijani publication in the fall of 2006 that I believe encapsulates an important thread of his thinking on this critical question:

The U.S. government's decision to deprive us of assistance during the desperation of our fundamental needs, was a devastating blow to us morally. One must view Section 907 in its historical and political context. Throughout those long years of the Soviet occupation of our country, we had looked to America as a beacon of hope, democracy, and justice. For us, America could be counted upon to be a strong defender of human rights. We had aspired to those life-affirming qualities; we dreamed of the day when government would look after our own people in the same way. [...] So [...] as we were trying to shake off Soviet oppression—an effort which the United States itself had actively endorsed and encouraged—we discovered that they, too, had shunned us, ignored our needs and abandoned us when we needed help the most. Psychologically, it was a demoralizing blow.

The battle over Section 907, as it came to be called, was less a partisan than a personal issue. Democrats in the White House and the State Department supported repeal but Democrats in Congress, led by Kerry, dug in their heels. In spite of endless letters and face-to-face meetings, Hafiz was never able to have Section 907 repealed, although he came very close on at

least one occasion. Instead, those who supported repeal had to settle for an annual waiver, which continues to this day.

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There is nothing more bizarre than the fact that the struggle over Section 907 took place simultaneously with the development of an important strategic relationship between Azerbaijan and the United States, and that that relationship was to prove as enduring as the shell of Section 907. Fortunately, over the years the Kerry initiative has faded and the strategic links have only strengthened. Many people deserve credit for this legerdemain, including senior Washington figures Richard Armitage,

Sam Brownback, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Dick Cheney, Bob Livingston, Strobe Talbott and, of course, Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Heydar Aliyev, and Ilham Aliyev. But were it not for persistent but low-keyed efforts of Hafiz Pashayev, and for the many personal contacts he had developed with officials in the departments of State and Defense, as well as in Congress, it is doubtful that this happy state would ever have been reached.

The combination of oil and pipeline politics, security issues, and Section 907 not only took up the lion's share of Hafiz Pashayev's time in Washington, but these matters also dominated his memoir, in both the English and Azerbaijani editions. However, all these topics together do not comprise the sum of his activities while serving as Azerbaijan's ambassador to the United States. His life in Washington had confirmed his earlier impression that Americans were woefully ignorant not only of Azerbaijan but of the Caucasus as a whole and of Central Asia as well. Soviet rule had isolated his country and the region from the world and the world had reciprocated by ignoring those lands. At worst, many in the West assumed they were all somehow part of Russia. In order for independent Azerbaijan fully to take its place in the world, this ignorance had to be overcome, not only among elected officials and bureaucrats but among the populace of the West as a whole.

It was in such a mood that Hafiz Pashayev in 1996 learned from his friend Zbigniew Brzezinski that plans were underway to set up a "Central Asia

Institute” in Washington that the author of this sketch would head up. Hafiz immediately contacted me and suggested that the new institute should include in its purview the Caucasus as well, and I readily agreed. In subsequent discussions, I made it clear that this new institute would base its research purely on the evidence at hand and avoid advocacy on behalf of any of the countries under study. So enthusiastically did Pashayev agree to this principle that the newly-established Central Asia-Caucasus Institute invited him to deliver its first public address. Ever the scientist, Hafiz used his speech to champion the principle of scholarly independence, while at the same time urging his audience to pay closer attention to the Caucasus as a region.

Hafiz Pashayev served as Azerbaijan’s ambassador to the United States for nearly 14 years. His experience had taught him several important lessons. First, it convinced him that lasting progress in international relations, as in all other spheres, arises not from adroit diplomatic maneuvers or clever theories but from the level of knowledge and general culture of the key actors and of the societies from which they are drawn. His experience in Baku and Washington left him in no doubt as to the positive role that leaders can play. Hafiz held Azerbaijan’s president, Heydar Aliyev, in the deepest respect, and also admired the even temperament and tenacity of his son and successor, Ilham Aliyev. Of course, as an Azerbaijani he knew full well that the possession of natural resources could be a plus—in the short term at least. But Hafiz believed that even the wisest top-down changes and resource-driven boosts to the economy would be unsustainable without a breadth of knowledge and understanding among the society at large.

This perspective placed education not merely as an adornment of the good society but as the necessary precondition for its existence. Far from being a mere theory, Hafiz based this conclusion on his on-the-spot contacts with the curricula of schools and universities in the United States, Canada, and western Europe. He had found there no place for rote learning, or for dogmas to be accepted *a priori*. As his tenure in Washington drew to an end, his commitment to these truths was stronger than ever.

Long before returning to Baku, Hafiz Pashayev had concluded that the type and level of education that Azerbaijan had inherited from Soviet times would retard and distort all future progress. There were others in Azerbaijan and the other newly independent states who grasped this

truth, but few saw it so clearly as he did—both in terms of the need for an informed citizens and for the kind of study in the humanities and social sciences necessary to prepare them. He had had opportunity to discuss this matter with the country’s new president, Ilham Aliyev, whose diverse career in academia and business—and also his extensive contacts with the

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West—had led him to the same conclusion. In March 2005—the second year of the new presidency and a year before Pashayev’s return to Baku—a conversation between him and President Aliyev took a very practical turn. Since the author of this sketch was present at and participated in that discussion in the presidential office, it can be reported in some detail.

Hafiz began by expressing his view that Azerbaijan’s universities and preparatory schools were in need of fundamental reform. They needed to be free of all the impedimenta of Soviet higher education, he noted, before making the case that the country’s future progress would largely depend on such changes being enacted. Only an educated public, Ambassador Pashayev said, could adapt to change and grasp the needs and possibilities of responsible citizenship. President Aliyev strongly agreed but noted in a somber tone that the bundle of laws on education that independent Azerbaijan had inherited from Soviet times could stifle any such initiatives. Rather than simply giving up, President Aliyev suggested what amounted to a laboratory test of the new thinking in education, one that could be launched immediately. Azerbaijan’s government at the time was greatly expanding its representation abroad, opening several dozen new embassies all at once. Scores of future diplomats had to be recruited and trained. Why not apply to this task the new thinking in education, in order to test its validity and learn how best to apply it?

And so the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy was born. In order to cement the link between the new institution and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, President Aliyev named Hafiz Pashayev Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. The minister, Elmar Mammadyarov, had served under Pashayev at the Washington embassy. Launched in a building near the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “ADA,” as it became known, quickly gained a reputation for

high competence and seriousness of purpose. Its courses addressed all the main issues facing Azerbaijan: the geopolitics of energy; the future of the Caspian region; great power competition; the evolution of global finance; and so forth. At the same time, it ventured into issues of history and culture that were commonly seen as the domain of the humanities. The original purpose of ADA was not merely to *train* diplomats in the craft of their field but to *educate* them to function effectively in a modern and sophisticated post-Soviet world. And the key to that education was an understanding of civic life and of citizenship, each integral to the achievement of what Hafiz has identified as ADA's strategic goal: the offering of a world-class education in Azerbaijan.

With English as the language of instruction, ADA was able to attract an international faculty from the outset. To further enrich the educational environment, Rector Pashayev invited several accomplished international figures to be in residence. Among these were the respected Georgian diplomat Tedo Japaridze, the Tatar-Russian plasma physicist and former director of the Space Research Institute of the USSR Roald Sagdeev, and former advisor to U.S. Secretary of State James Baker on Soviet nationality issues Paul Goble, whom Rector Pashayev named ADA's director of research and publications.

Very early in its young life ADA began to accept other students besides rising Azerbaijani diplomats. Word spread quickly that an innovative new institution had opened on the shores of the Caspian and letters of enquiry began pouring in. To handle this rising tide of interest Rector Pashayev named a director of admissions and regularized the application process. Within a couple of years the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy was attracting advanced students from dozens of countries, including some immediate neighbors and various states whose geography encompasses the Silk Road region, but also from faraway nations like

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Argentina, The Bahamas, Fiji, Mexico, and the United States, as well as from Azerbaijan itself

The rising tide of applications from secondary school graduates within Azerbaijan posed a special challenge. In Soviet times, the culture of higher education included ample space for influential parents to weigh in on behalf of their children's applications. So pervasive was this corrupt practice that it was considered a normal benefit of rank and status. It was therefore only a matter of time before some minister or senior official would telephone ADA's rector on behalf of his son or daughter. This test came in the second year of ADA's existence and Hafiz passed with flying colors. Thanks to his tactful manner the rector was able to send a clear signal to the local elite, and without eliciting a backlash.

By its second or third year it was clear to all that ADA was evolving beyond its initial formal mission as a diplomatic academy and becoming a fully-fledged academic institution. The challenge was to plan and build a diversified undergraduate institution while at the same time continuing to develop the Diplomatic Academy. This had been the shared vision of President Aliyev and Rector Pashayev from the outset. Indeed, while still serving as Azerbaijan's ambassador in Washington, Hafiz had advanced this project along four important lines.

First, he actively studied European and American institutions in search of the most appropriate models for new institution in Azerbaijan. He felt that Azerbaijan lacked the range of talents needed to sustain a new mega-university of the American type, nor were the resources at hand to do so. Further, he realized that graduates of Azerbaijan's secondary schools were not adequately prepared to plunge directly into professional training, as is common in Europe. This left the American liberal arts college, with its emphasis on basic education in the humanities, social sciences, and physical sciences, as the most appropriate model.

In order to gain a more concrete understanding of such institutions, Hafiz (while still in Washington) had visited a range of liberal arts colleges, among them Swarthmore in Pennsylvania and Middlebury in Vermont. He also consulted with the author of this essay on his experience as president of Oberlin College, the world's first institution of higher

education to grant degrees to women and the training ground for several Nobel Prize winners.

The future rector drew a number of conclusions from this enquiry. Azerbaijan's new institution must embrace the arts, sciences, and humanities—not as pre-professional programs but in order to enable graduates to then go on to master *any* field. This meant rejecting all rote learning, an emphasis on rigorous interaction between students and faculty and among students, and the development of high competence in both writing and speaking. Such a program would be possible only in a residential institution, where living and learning would be combined. And it would require not only a broad and compulsory first year program but a preparatory year as well.

As he had done in both his scientific work and as ambassador, in building ADA Hafiz Pashayev began by assembling a team of gifted and energetic young people. He made sure they grasped his broad aims but otherwise allowed them great freedom of action. He also engaged an American architectural firm to begin planning a residential campus that would foster the educational program he envisioned. Finally, in order to create the basis for longer-term independence, Rector Pashayev established a permanent endowment and set up a foundation in Washington to raise and manage such funds.

Scarcely less noteworthy than the strategic plan for ADA University is the measured pace at which it has been developed. Instead of a Soviet-type crash program that initially dazzles but eventually reveals deep flaws in concept and execution, the establishment of ADA University has proceeded in a careful “step-by-step” manner. This more organic approach allows for rethinking along the way and for adjustments that respond to perceived realities. Such an approach is properly built not only with the skills of an engineer but also with the sensibility of a gardener. Sustainable growth, even if at times dizzyingly rapid, must remain holistic and organic. It must not succumb to an indolent, mechanical process but instead be cultivated prudentially and allowed to evolve naturally; it must set a pace for growth that is deliberate; it must make the most of every opportunity for renewal; and it must stay true to the purpose that animated its founding whilst taking care to allow for constant adjustment and adaptability. At bottom, this is the

story of ADA and Hafiz Pashayev's leadership. The result? An institution that will long remain a work in progress, in the best possible meaning of the term.

Such a measured approach does not exclude acting on targets of opportunity. Typically, while the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy was transformed into ADA University in 2014, it was only in 2020 that Hafiz became convinced the time had come to recruit the necessary personnel to establish on a permanent basis a scholarly rigorous policy journal focusing on international and regional affairs, namely *Baku Dialogues*.

Similarly, Pashayev took a regional approach from the outset and believed that the University should build strong ties with the nearby countries of Central Asia. Turkmenistan was an obvious starting point, but a long-standing dispute between Baku and Ashgabat over rights to exploit an oil deposit beneath the Caspian Sea prevented progress. So Hafiz Pashayev, in his dual capacity as ADA rector and Azerbaijani deputy foreign minister, made a low-keyed visit to the Turkmen capital in 2014. The president of Turkmenistan eventually paid a return visit to Baku and, in due course, the dispute concerning the extraction of undersea hydrocarbons was resolved. Students from Turkmenistan and other Central Asian countries now study at ADA University.

A third example has been the evolution of the idea—first raised in 2013 in the form of a proposal to host a technopark to encourage homegrown entrepreneurship—of establishing a Science and Technology Village adjacent to the main ADA campus. Originally conceived as a way to further the work of the university's School of Information Technologies and Engineering, the idea gathered momentum in early 2020 during President Aliyev's state visit to Italy. In conversation with Italy's prime minister, Giuseppe Conte, he suggested working together to set up an Italy-Azerbaijan University. Hafiz had been a member of the Azerbaijani delegation (he signed a Memorandum of Understanding on academic exchange programs), and by the time it had returned home, the two men had come to an agreement that ADA University would spearhead this project, which if all goes well is expected to launch in a few years' time. At present, the plan is to draw on the strengths of various top-notch Italian universities and offer dual degrees with a consortium of Italian universities in electrical engineering, design and architecture, IT

and computer sciences, business and management, agrobusiness and food science, and other related areas, while at the same time establish new collaborative models with private-sector industry and high-tech entrepreneurs headquartered in both countries. The idea is still in its planning stage and is likely to evolve further in perhaps unexpected ways before seeing the light of day. Whatever its final form, Hafiz Pashayev and ADA University should be credited for standing at the forefront of what may turn out to be yet another seminal development in the history of preparing Azerbaijan.

The mode and pace by which Pashayev has developed ADA University flowed naturally from his deep aversion to top-down social engineering. He had seen how this worked in Soviet times and knew well its flaws. He knew that effective modern societies require free citizens, and that Soviet pedagogy, based on authority, standardization, and conformity, could not produce them. Absent such a citizenry, the best efforts of political leaders and diplomats reinforce the very habits that long hampered social and personal development and that suppressed invention, innovation, initiative, and freedom.

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The goal of Hafiz Pashayev's educational strategy is thus to develop free, independent, and modern *citizens*, not standardized *subjects*. This was the same philosophy that undergirded his father's life as a writer and teacher as well as his own role as the head of a major scientific institution in Azerbaijan. It informed his own work as a diplomat in Washington, where he was widely seen as an exemplar of such a worldview, and also pervaded in his role as Azerbaijan's deputy foreign minister and, of course, in his stewardship of ADA University.

Viewed from a great distance, it is easy to underestimate the impediments that can stymie anyone who champions such a philosophy in a developing country, even a sophisticated one like Azerbaijan. The central role of families in such traditional societies can create loyalties that are sometimes at odds with the free and equal exercise of individual citizenship. The rise of new wealth can also dim the voice of those who do not share it. Hafiz Pashayev has lived his life in such an environment. But his mild

temperament has distanced him from polemics and traditional politics. Instead, he has focused on what he is *for*, not what he is *against*. And the core of his philosophy as a scientist, diplomat, and educator has remained consistent throughout his life: to affirm the constructive role of free, educated, and independent men and women. During half his life he had observed how the Soviet system thwarted the development of such people, questioning their loyalty and undermining the meritocratic imperative, and he knew well the cost this had imposed on individuals and society. But instead of engaging in frontal combat with holdovers of the past, he has devoted his talents to creating better alternatives. In this mission he has been extraordinarily productive. We should rejoice in the fact that he continues to be so today. **BD**

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