Report on our Trip to Amulsar Gold Project and Outstanding Project Risks

Introduction

Dr. André Sobolewski and Dr. Ann Maest visited Yerevan and the Amulsar Gold Project site during the week of June 18, 2018. Our meetings and events are listed in Appendix A. This trip report focuses on our observations and remaining concerns related to operation of the Amulsar Project and recommendations to the government of Armenia for improved environmental protection of water resources. We were part of a four-person team of scientists conducting an independent technical evaluation of the Amulsar Project over the past year. Our reports and memoranda are available online at https://goo.gl/fFpC5F. Our latest joint evaluation and the press release prepared while in Armenia are available here https://goo.gl/qUVTkh and https://goo.gl/bbxj1a.

We feel that Lydian's plans that have been released to the public, as well as plans discussed during our visit at Amulsar, still contain deficiencies, and we wish to present them in this report. We understand and acknowledge that the Armenian government will decide if mining should go forward at the Amulsar Project site. However, we believe that more work is needed to determine the effectiveness of proposed mitigation measures and the reliability of the proposed ARD prediction methods, in order to protect the quality of the surrounding environment and water bodies.

The only project risks described in 25.7 of Samuel Engineering (2017) are those related to economic risks to project success and do not include risks related to inadequate financial assurance, lack of company experience, or risks to the public and the environment from the project. **In our view, the greatest risks of this project are that acid drainage and contaminants leached from mined rock will enter surface waters and groundwater and contaminate sensitive and important water bodies in Armenia for centuries**. An additional uncalculated risk for the project is the lack of consideration of climate change on the water balance and the sizing and design of the mine facilities.

We first summarize our recommendations and then provide substantiation and more detail.

Summary of Recommendations

Our recommendations address four key issues of concern for the Amulsar Project and are summarized as follows. Important aspects of the project have changed without accompanying written documentation from Lydian. We recommend that the Armenian government require these plans, documents, and activities before it considers approving the revised project.

Acid drainage/contaminant leaching potential and waste management

- Provide a written plan for conducting the bucket tests and documenting how the results will be used to guide waste management during mine operation.
- Compare results from bucket tests and humidity cell tests using the same waste materials.
- Submit a report on the approach and effectiveness of mine waste amendments (lime, milk, biocides) in preventing or minimizing acid drainage and contaminant leaching, using the worst-case drainage expected from the BRSF and the pits, and provide information on where

these approaches have been used successfully for extended periods of time at other large, operating mines.

- Include details in the BRSF management plan to evaluate and address upwelling and inflowing groundwater to the BRSF during operation and closure. If such details are provided in an appendix to the Samuel Engineering, 2017 NI 43-101 report, provide the appendix on the Lydian website.

Water treatment during operation and closure

- Require a written report on the effectiveness of the proposed PWTS to treat Amulsar ARD and information on the exclusive use of a PWTS at operating large mines. In the absence of such information, we recommend that the Armenian government require a lime-based treatment plant to treat ARD at the site.
- Provide articles or other evidence on the long-term effectiveness of additives to suppress ARD from reactive rock. In the absence of such proof, the Armenian Government should assume that ARD will be generated by waste rock in the BRSF for 200 years or more, assume that it will require treatment for this time, and demand that Lydian provide financial securities to cover the cost of active treatment for this time.
- Provide evidence that Lydian Armenia is prepared to procure a temporary active treatment system for ARD as an adaptive management action before commencing mining operations.
- Demonstrate that the proposed treatment systems will remove every contaminant potentially present in discharges from the heap, the BRSF, and the pits.

Environmental Monitoring Plan and Adaptive Management Plan for operational conditions

- A detailed, finalized and approved environmental monitoring plan for operational conditions must be in place before revised project approval. The plan for ongoing monitoring during construction should also be made available on Lydian's website. The monitoring points should be adequate in number, location, and sampling frequency to provide an early warning of the release of mine-related contaminants to the environment.
- An Adaptive Management Plan should be elaborated and receive approval from the Armenian Government before the final project is approved. The AMP should address all aspects of mine operation that could affect the environment, and should include clearly defined action/trigger levels, required actions by Lydian and the MNP, and presentation of the results to the public.

Financial assurance

- Require an updated financial security from Lydian Armenia to cover costs for an active ARD treatment system during mine operations, treatment of heap rinsate and draindown for thiocyanate and ammonia, and other reclamation costs. The amount of this financial security can be adjusted as more reliable information is obtained during mining operation with regards to the quantity and quality of mine discharges, and labor and material costs.

Ongoing Concerns

In our press release,[1] we highlighted concerns that remained after meeting with members of the Armenian government, civil society, Lydian Armenia, and touring the site, which is in the last stages of mine construction. Following our impressions of the existing Amulsar site and comparing these against descriptions provided in project documents, we submit the following observations and comments on four key issues of concern for development of the Amulsar Project. Our recommendations for each issue are summarized above.

1. Acid drainage/contaminant leaching potential and waste management

Parbhakar-Fox and Lottermoser[2] noted that failure to accurately predict acid rock drainage (ARD) leads to long-term impacts on ecosystems and human health, in addition to substantial financial consequences and reputational damage to operators. Lydian acknowledged the acid drainage potential of the waste rock by changing their acid rock drainage (ARD) management approach for the Barren Rock Storage Facility (BRSF). This change from their previous plan – encapsulating potentially acid-generating wastes in non-acid generating wastes with no neutralizing ability – acknowledges that it would not have prevented or sufficiently minimized the generation of ARD from the facility. In our view, their new plan, which has been presented to us and the Armenian government verbally but not in writing, does not eliminate the risk of long-term acid generation.

We believe that the BRSF will be the most important potential source of acidic, metalliferous water to the environment during operation and closure. Our primary concern is that the unconventional characterization and management approaches promoted by Lydian's consultants are experimental and will fail to identify risks and prevent the discharge of mine-influenced water to downstream water bodies, including the Darb, Arpa, and Vorotan rivers; local springs; the Spandaryan-Kechut Tunnel; and the Kechut Reservoir.

- *ARD/Contaminant leaching assessment method:* Lydian's consultants are using an unorthodox approach to assess acid generation and metal leaching potential from loosely fragmented rock cores placed in 20-liter buckets. This testing approach is intended to supplant humidity cell testing (HCTs), which is the industry standard for long-term leach testing (incorrectly described as being maintained at 100% humidity for one week before flushing with water[3]). The field bucket tests will be used to "verify that waste from Amulsar is naturally-resistant to ferric iron oxidation ARD reactions."[4] Our understanding is that the wastes in the buckets will have different percent sulfur (%S) values,[5] and Lydian will measure the leachate produced to determine the pH and metal leaching produced by certain %S values. However, as far as we are aware, no written plans for the operation of the bucket tests or how the results will be used to guide waste management have been submitted to the government or the public by Lydian. We are deeply concerned that the bucket tests will

[1] https://goo.gl/bbxj1a

[2] Parbhakar-Fox and Lottermoser, 2015. A critical review of acid rock drainage prediction methods and practices. Available: https://goo.gl/nNpC9a

[3] Samuel Engineering, 2017. NI 43-101 Technical Report, p. 357.

[4] Samuel Engineering, 2017, NI 43-101 Technical Report, p. 397.

[5] In wastes with no neutralizing ability, such as those at Amulsar, the %S can be used to estimate acid generation potential; the higher the %S, the higher the acid generation potential.

underestimate the rate of ARD formation, potential pH values and released contaminant concentrations because they will include very few fines, which are known to control leachate quality and acid generation potential.[6] During our visit, Lydian told us they will use a pH of 3 to define "severe ARD."[7] Their definition of "severe ARD" is unusual, arbitrary and not widely shared, including in the industry-sponsored GARD Guide, which defines ARD as any mine drainage with a pH <6.[8] We were told by Lydian that Amulsar mine water with a pH of 3.5 or higher would be treated using their ARD passive treatment system, and wastes producing leachate with a pH <3.5 will require amendments, as described in the following bullet. How the results of the bucket tests will be used to drive waste management is unclear, but our understanding from the site tour is that even wastes with a total sulfur content of 3 to 5% and higher have not produced acid using the bucket tests. This result is surprising for wastes with no neutralizing potential, such as those at Amulsar. Given their unusual approach, the onus is on Lydian to demonstrate that their method produces results that are comparable to HCTs and will correctly predict acid-generation potential.

- *ARD mitigation in the BRSF*: Lydian proposes to amend reactive waste rock with lime, milk and biocide to suppress ARD generation in the BRSF. The failure of blending neutralizing materials with sulfidic waste rock to prevent ARD has been well documented.[9] In addition, Lydian is focusing on acid drainage but not the leaching of other mine contaminants known to be present in Amulsar wastes and mobile at neutral and higher pH values, such as arsenic, nitrate, and sulfate. The history of development of ARD suppressants is well known to us and we are not aware of any reproducible, long-term successful application of biocides or milk to suppress acid generation at any mine site anywhere in the world. Biocides have had inconsistent success in preventing ARD and typically offer only short-term relief at best.[10] Milk or returned milk from dairy waste alone has not been shown to be successful in preventing or ameliorating ARD. Some success has been shown when used in combination with wastewater effluent,[11] yet this would require adding a known toxic substance to Amulsar wastes. Finally, acid-generating rock stored in the BRSF will eventually weather, crack and expose new surfaces that have not been treated by ARD suppressants. These new surfaces will become unchecked sources of ARD and metal contamination in seepage from the BSRF. Given this understanding and inconsistent results, we believe that Lydian's approach is experimental, risky and that this risk can only be mitigated by making a commitment to active, long-term treatment of ARD if their approach fails.
- *Presence of upwelling and inflowing groundwater to the BRSF:* A number of springs are present in the BRSF footprint,[12] which indicates that upwelling groundwater will likely enter

[6] Smith et al., 2011. Available: https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/59368/items/1.0107713
[7] Samuel Engineering, 2017, NI 43-101 Technical Report, p. 366.
[8] http://www.gardguide.com/index.php?title=Chapter_2
[9] Two studies by MEND [http://mend-nedem.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/2.37.1.pdf and http://mend-nedem.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/2.37.3.pdf] have shown that amending acid-generating waste with alkalinity-generating material can delay the onset, but not slow the rate of ARD generation or effectively control metal leaching.
[10] See, e.g., Johnson and Hallberg, 2005. Available: http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.595.4733&rep=rep1&type=pdf
[11] Moodley et al., 2018. Available: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320929630_Environmentally_sustainable_acid_mine_drainage_remediation_Research_developments_with_a_focus_on_wasteby-products
[12] Golder, 2014, BRSF Groundwater Impact Assessment (ESIA, 2016, Appendix 6.9.5, p. 3).

the facility from below during mine operation. The clay or compacted soil liner will not necessarily prevent the entry of upwelling groundwater to the BRSF, and one ESIA appendix states that spring water will be allowed to flow into the BRSF and through NAG rock.[13] Although few tests have been done on the leachate quality of NAG waste, results from short-term leach tests on Upper Volcanics waste samples show that they will leach antimony, arsenic, chromium, and lead.[14] In addition, we saw evidence of rills and/or rivulets on the side of the BRSF during our site visit, indicating that surface runoff or groundwater is flowing into the facility from its side. If such waters enter the BRSF and react with sulfides in waste rock, unchecked ARD generation and metal leaching will occur in the BRSF for centuries to come, even if a surface cover has been applied over the waste rock. This observation suggests that a surface cover applied at closure may be ineffective in preventing ongoing ARD during closure and post-closure.

2. Water Treatment during operation and closure

We continue to have several concerns about water capture and treatment systems at Amulsar. Our earlier concern that treatment systems proposed at Amulsar should be designed for each and every contaminant predicted in mine water remains unaddressed. Additionally, the following concerns arose during our visit.

- *Use of passive system for treatment of ARD during operation and closure:* We do not know of any large mining operations with ARD that use only a passive water treatment system (PWTS) to treat acidic mine-influenced water, and we consider highly risky Lydian's proposal to strictly use passive treatment for ARD. The papers provided by Sovereign Consulting in an appendix to the ESIA[15] do not include any examples of passive treatment at active mines: of the three mines presented, one ended production in the early 1900s, another closed in 1956, and the third closed in 1945. The use of a PWTS to treat ARD at an operating mine is unprecedented. Unless Lydian provides new information on the exclusive use of a PWTS for ARD treatment at large active mines, their proposed system should not be considered a viable option. During our visit, we emphasized that passive systems are not designed to handle large volumes of sludge, such as expected to be generated at Amulsar. This will result in their failure. Additionally, we were told during our visit that ammonia in drainages from the BRSF, pit water and other acidic sources will easily be removed by bubbling oxygen. We know from theory and experience that this will not work.
- *Use of a PWTS for heap draindown:* We feel that the lack of design criteria for ammonia, arsenic, antimony and thiocyanate for the proposed heap draindown PWTS is an unacceptable omission. There are no known examples of PWTSs designed to remove thiocyanate, especially for water expected to contain 400 to 1,000 mg/L. We understand that Lydian has proposed a treatment scheme to detoxify the spent heap using hydrogen peroxide but feel that it has not been designed to meet the full challenges of this task. We disagree that full heap detoxification will only take 6-12 months;[16] we believe it is more

[13] Golder, 2014, BRSF Groundwater Impact Assessment (ESIA, 2016, Appendix 6.9.5, p. 5).
[14] ESIA, 2015. Appendix 4.6.2. Geochemical Characterization and Prediction Report, Appendix Table D-1: SPLP.
[15] ESIA, 2016; Appendix 8.19, Acid Rock Drainage Management Plan.
[16] Golder Associates, 2014. Hydrogeological Risk Assessment Proposed Heap Leach Facility. Section 2.1.2.2 Closure Water Quality. Report No. 14514150095.509/B.1.

likely to take 20 years, based on experience at other mine sites. Additionally, we know that peroxide treatment will not remove ammonia or thiocyanate and believe that a treatment plant specifically designed for their removal will be required. Our cost estimate indicates that such a treatment plant will cost approximately USD $10 million during its estimated 20 years of operation.

3. Environmental Monitoring Plan and Adaptive Management Plan for operational conditions

Environmental Monitoring Plan: The most recently available environmental monitoring plan is contained in Appendix 8.12 of the 2016 ESIA and was created in June 2016. This plan is not for operational conditions but instead describes baseline monitoring of surface water, groundwater, and other resources. The March 2018 Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) Manual states that a newer Environmental Monitoring Plan was created in October 2017,[17] but it is not available on either the Lydian Armenia or the Lydian UK website. Therefore, given the available documents and information, an official environmental monitoring plan for construction and mine operation does not exist. Yet the mine is in the late stages of construction, and a detailed plan for operational monitoring should have been submitted to the government for review and approval. A detailed, finalized and approved environmental monitoring plan for operational conditions must be in place before revised project approval. The monitoring points should be adequate in number, location, and sampling frequency to provide an early warning of the release of mine-related contaminants to the environment.

Adaptive Management Plan: Lydian's corporate environmental policy,[18] which was approved by its Board of Directors in August 2016, declares that it is committed to sustainable development and will use the results of environmental audits "as a basis for continuous improvement in environmental performance through an adaptive management process." Yet the Amulsar Project does not have an Adaptive Management Plan (AMP), and no mention of an AMP or adaptive management approach is included in the ARD Management Plan (2016), the Environmental Monitoring Plan (2016), the Environmental and Social Management System Manual (2018), or the Samuel Engineering NI 43-101 Technical Report (2017). Given the high likelihood that ARD will be generated at Amulsar and the sensitivity of the adjacent water bodies and environment, we feel it is imperative that Lydian prepare and receive approval for an AMP before the revised project is approved. This plan will define, among other issues, how it will detect contaminants released at the site, how it proposes to prevent them from reaching the receiving environment, and how it will evaluate the effectiveness of its measures. An AMP will address operational activities potentially requiring adaptive approaches, including but not limited to: mine waste management, water quality changes due to mining, mine-related impacts to groundwater levels and spring and stream flows, water treatment performance, and mine-related impacts to aquatic and terrestrial wildlife. Examples of AMPs for mines are available and can be consulted to aid the development of plans for government approval. An AMP should comprise the following general elements, with required timeframes:

[17] Available: https://www.lydianarmenia.am/img/uploadFiles/632643d4e294bd91af8c0-00-MAN-ENV-82043ESMSManualRev8.pdf (see pg. 44 of 46).
[18] Available: https://www.lydianarmenia.am/images/vacancies/policies/Environment-Policy.pdf

- *Identify thresholds or trigger levels that would require actions to be taken.* Trigger levels could be set at certain percentages of applicable water quality standards, for example. Environmental monitoring data would be used to determine whether thresholds have been exceeded and adaptive management actions should be initiated.
- *Identify actions that must be taken by Lydian when those action levels are reached.* Early actions could include re-evaluating data, resampling, and reanalysis; an intermediate action could include developing an action plan to control observed releases and evaluate the extent of the problem; implementation could include installing wells or other measures to capture the contamination, evaluating the extent of the plume and its impacts, or installing an improved treatment system. The effectiveness of the mitigation measures must be evaluated in a report submitted to the ministry.
- *Identify actions that must be taken by the Ministry of Nature Protection (MNP).* Actions taken by the MNP could include: reviewing and approving the submitted action plan within a certain number of days; following MNP enforcement policy; and reviewing progress of the implementation measures, including visiting the site to examine relevant environmental conditions.
- *Presenting the results of the adaptive management measures to the public.* An annual stakeholder meeting could be used to present the adaptive management measures required to be taken in the past year, the effectiveness of the actions, and updating the AMP based on recent experience.

For example, an AMP scenario for detecting mine-related water quality changes could include:

- *AMP trigger*: Close-in groundwater monitoring wells downgradient of the pit or the BRSF detect arsenic concentrations that are higher than background values and 50% of applicable standards.
- *Lydian actions*: Re-evaluation of water quality data within 14 days of the original measurement confirms the concentrations are valid; re-sampling is conducted within 14 days and again confirms the elevated arsenic concentrations. The extent of the plume is evaluated, and an action plan to contain the plume is created within 30 days of sample confirmation. After plan approval, pump-back wells are installed to limit the downgradient movement of the plume. A report evaluating the effectiveness of the measures is submitted to the MNP.
- *MNP actions*: Within 30 days of receipt of the action plan, the MNP reviews, asks for any modifications, and approves the plan. Within 30 days of receipt, MNP reviews the effectiveness report; if exceedences still exist within 90 days of completion of mitigation measures, mining is stopped.
- *Communication*: On an annual or more frequent basis, the results of the AMP actions are discussed at a stakeholder meeting. Any needed modifications are made to the AMP.

4. Financial Assurance

We continue to be concerned that the financial securities offered by Lydian are inadequate to cover the cost of protecting the environment in case of premature abandonment. These securities should cover costs for fully detoxifying the spent heap through closure and for long-term treatment of ARD.

Using examples from existing treatment plants comparable to those anticipated at Amulsar, we estimated these costs as follows:

- Our estimate of the cost of a treatment plant to remove ammonia and thiocyanate from spent heap draindown for 20 years is USD $10 million.
- Our estimate of the cost of a lime-based treatment plant to treat ARD generated at the site, primarily from BRSF seepage, for 200 years is USD $140 million.
- Our estimated cost for other reclamation-related activities is USD $15 million.
- Our estimate of the total financial security required to cover the costs of closure and post-closure water treatment is USD $165 million.

5. Lydian Commitments to Responsible Mining

We approached our visit to Amulsar in a spirit of open dialogue and constructive engagement and were given the impression by Lydian representatives that they engaged with us in the same spirit. We were very disappointed to learn that, during and after our visit to Amulsar, Lydian repeatedly distorted and misrepresented our views in public. They claimed that we agreed with them on facts and proposed management approaches that we disagreed with and that our own work supported their conclusions when it did not.

In our minds, Lydian's behavior casts doubt on their commitment to open dialogue and responsible mining. More than ever, we feel that robust systems of accountability – such as an Adaptive Management Plan and adequate Financial Assurance – must be required by the Armenian Government if it chooses to approve the mine.

Additional General Concerns

Capacity Building: During our visit to Armenia we became keenly aware of the general lack of experience in modern mining practices and the environmental effects of mining. We recommend that the Government of Armenia consider increasing its capacity to assess the potential and actual impacts from proposed and existing mining operations and to assess mine proposals during all phases of mining. For example, staff from the MNP could attend the excellent annual ARD field school conducted by Canadian experts[19] to obtain first-hand understanding and experience with the science and practice of ARD prediction and management. We believe that such an investment will pay dividends in promoting responsible mining in the country.

Risks from uncaptured contact water: Contact water that is not captured cannot be treated. To our knowledge, no estimates of the potential for uncaptured leachate from the mine facilities at Amulsar have been put forth. Uncaptured mine-influenced water can escape from the open pits, the BRSF, the HLF and other areas of the mine that create mine-influenced water. This uncaptured leachate can flow along faults, through or over the facilities to groundwater or surface water, and along other currently unidentified hydrogeologic pathways that would bypass capture and bring mine-influenced water to streams and downgradient groundwater. Such releases can be caused by liner failures, equipment malfunctions, inadequate storage, poor facility design, heavy rains, human

[19] See: http://bvcentre.ca/events/2018_annual_metal_leaching_acid_rock_drainage_field_school

error, or power failures.[20] MNP should require an estimate of the quantity and quality of uncaptured contact water its potential effects on water quality

Risks from climate change: Climate change has not been taken into account in the ESIA or the Samuel Engineering (2017) report. The effects of climate change on mine operations have been acknowledged by leading mining companies for a decade or longer, and guidance for reducing risks from and on climate change are available.[21] Challenges related to climate change at mine sites include flood and storm damage to infrastructure, transport disruption affecting supply chain reliability, and increased competition for climate-sensitive resources such as water and energy (EBRD, 2017).[22] Lydian should demonstrate that they have seriously considered and planned for risks associated with climate change, including adequately designing and sizing mine facilities at Amulsar to account for extremes related to climate change during operation and closure.

Closure

We have evaluated the potential environmental risks of the Amulsar Gold Project for over one year. We hope that our work has been helpful to the Armenian Government.

Sincerely,

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Buka Environmental

André Sobolewski, PhD
Clear Coast Consulting, Inc.

[20] US Environmental Protection Agency, 2014. An Assessment of Potential Mining Impacts on Salmon Ecosystems of Bristol Bay, Alaska. Volume 1 – Main Report. Available: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-05/documents/bristol_bay_assessment_final_2014_vol1.pdf

[21] See, e.g.: BSR. Adapting to Climate Change: A Guide for the Mining Industry. Available: https://www.bsr.org/reports/BSR_Climate_Adaptation_Issue_Brief_Mining.pdf; Ernest and Young, with support from Natural Resources Canada, 2015. Economic impacts of a changing climate on mine sites in Canada: Assessing proactive adaptation investment against estimated reactive costs.

[22] European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 2017. EBRD Extractive Mining Industries Strategy, 2018-2022. Available: https://www.ebrd.com/documents/natural-resources/mining-strategy.pdf

Appendix A: Meetings and Events

In Yerevan, we met with members of the national government, academia, civil society, and the public media/press sectors. We also met with Lydian Armenia staff and participated in a tour of the Amulsar site and associated laboratories on Thursday, June 21st. The entities and individuals we met with included:

- The Center for Ecological-Noosphere Studies National Academy of Sciences: Dr. Armen Saghatelyn, Seyzan Minasyan, and Shahen Khaehatzyan; Vardan Hayzapetyan, Environmental Monitoring and Impact Assessment Center
- Tevan Poghosyan: advisor to the President of Armenia
- Ministry of Energy, Infrastructure and Natural Resources: Deputy Minister Vardan Gevorgyan
- Ministry of Nature Protection: Erik Grigoryan
- Concerned environmentalists, including: Nazeli Vardanyan, Director, Armenian Forests; Arpine Galfayan and Levon Galstyan (geomorephologist), Armenian Environmental Front.
- United States Embassy in Armenia: Economic Section Chief Matt Eussen and US AID staff.
- Amulsar Project, site tour: Dr. Armen Stepanyan, Director, Sustainability; Larry Breckenridge, consultant with GRE in Denver, Colorado, USA; Anna Saghabalyan, Communications and PR Director, accompanied by Mr. Areg Gharabegian, Advisor to the Ministry of Nature Protection
- American University of Armenia, AUA Acopian Center for the Environment: Alen Amirkhanian, Director; Dr. Natella Mirzoyan, Research Assistant Professor; Sean Reynolds, Adjunct Lecturer & Researcher
- Prime Minister's Office: Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Avinyan.

In addition to the scheduled meetings noted above, a public meeting was held on Wednesday afternoon, June 20th, and a press conference was held on Saturday, afternoon, June 23rd.