



Diplomatiya Aləmi

World of Diplomacy

40/2015



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AZƏRBAYCAN RESPUBLİKASI XARİCİ İŞLƏR
NAZİRLİYİNİN JURNALI

JOURNAL OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN



DİPLOMATIYA ALƏMİ

WORLD OF DIPLOMACY
JOURNAL OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

№ 40, 2015

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"World of Diplomacy" journal is published since 2002.

Registration № 1161, 14 January 2005

ISSN: 1818-4898

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RƏSMİ XRONİKA – OFFICIAL CHRONICLE – ОФИЦИАЛЬНАЯ ХРОНИКА



DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, H.E. Mr. ILHAM ALIYEV IN THE SECOND SEMESTER OF 2015

FOREIGN VISITS OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN H.E. MR. ILHAM ALIYEV IN THE SECOND SEMESTER OF 2015

WORKING VISIT TO THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC

8 – 10 July 2015

List of meetings held during the working visit:

- Meeting with President of the Italian Republic Sergio Mattarelo
- Meeting with Prime Minister of the Italian Republic Matteo Renzi
- The ceremony of the "National day" organized at the Azerbaijan`s pavilion in the "Expo Milano 2015" international exhibition

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV ATTENDED THE CEREMONY OF THE "NATIONAL DAY" ORGANIZED AT THE AZERBAIJAN`S PAVILION IN THE "EXPO MILANO 2015" INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION

9 July 2015, Milan

On 9 July 2015, "National day" was organized at the Azerbaijan`s pavilion in the "Expo Milano 2015" international exhibition. An official presentation ceremony of the Azerbaijan`s pavilion was held as part of the "National day".

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and his spouse, President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation Mehriban Aliyeva attended the ceremony.



The event also brought together representatives of the Italian government, public figures, representatives of diplomatic corps in the country and other influential guests.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, his spouse, President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation Mehriban Aliyeva and his daughter Leyla Aliyeva

arrived in the territory of the "Expo Milano 2015" exhibition.

The foundation of the Azerbaijan`s national pavilion in the "Expo Milano 2015" was laid in July, 2014. The preparatory and construction work lasted for 18 months. The organizational work over the Azerbaijan`s national pavilion was conducted by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and the Heydar Aliyev Center. According to the motto of this year`s exhibition, the 4-storey national pavilion, which covers 1800 square meters, glorifies Azerbaijan`s history and cultural heritage, rich environmental potential, richness of flora and fauna and rare biodiversity. 300-man working group, consisting of local and foreign experts was created for the preparation of the project.

A "Mirroring Baku" – direct connection with Baku was created in the national pavilion of Azerbaijan, which became the novelty among participant states. At the entrance of the national pavilion, a mirror-shaped monitor, with the dimension of human was installed and supplied with wavy chair.

Such monitor is also installed in Baku – in front of the Heydar Aliyev Center. These monitors create unity and are connected to each other. The visitors of the pavilion can stand in front of the monitor, see the place where the second monitor was installed in Baku and can speak to the people. This also gives Baku residents and tourists opportunity to get familiar with the Azerbaijan`s pavilion and its visitors. The project "Mirroring Baku" creates condition for thousands of participants of the exhibition to have connection with Baku, the capital city of Azerbaijan which plays a role of bridge between the East and the West.

A video connection was first established with Baku at the Azerbaijan`s pavilion. Employee of the Heydar Aliyev Center Mahabbat Mehdiyeva greeted President Ilham Aliyev.

It is planned to organize various presentations during the next 6 months at the pavilion, which was designed in a special conception. Following the end of the "Expo Milano 2015", the Azerbaijan`s pavilion will be disassembled and will be installed in Baku.

President Ilham Aliyev and his spouse Mehriban Aliyeva were informed about the conception of the Azerbaijan`s national pavilion.

The 3 biospheres are embodying Azerbaijan, which is always able to keep and protect its environment and ancient culture in a harmony. The wavy wooden walls of the pavilion are a symbol of a wind, specific for Azerbaijan and a cultural and creative stream, which always circulates here. A pavilion "Azerbaijan. A treasury of biodiversity", which was created for the "Expo Milano 2015" reflects the unique natural and cultural treasury of this land, which plays a role of bridge between the North and the South, the East and the West.

The biosphere "Cross of the cultures" takes the visitors to very important historic and cultural places of the country. The second biosphere – "Biodiversity" is dedicated to the country`s natural biodiversity and cultural heritage. The construction in the center of the biosphere embodies a tree of pomegranate, which is a symbol of richness of Azerbaijan. The next biosphere is called "Innovation and tradition". There is a figure of a tree, the roots of which are directed to the sky. This symbolically demonstrates the loyalty of Azerbaijani people to traditions, and at the same time, that it is the innovative country, directed to the future.

The first floor of the pavilion is called a "Symphony of voices", and presents information about Azerbaijan`s history, culture and geography. The second floor – a "Symphony of colors" features climate, landscape and biological diversity. The third floor, which is called a "Symphony of tastes" presents information and examples of national cuisine and organic foods. This floor also has sections "Discover Baku" and "Personalities of Azerbaijan", which give opportunity to get interactively familiar with the country and its personalities from photos, maps and portraits of Azerbaijanis representing various spheres. The national pavilion also reflects the existence of 9 climate zones, and that the international organizations show Azerbaijan as one of the 25 spaces of biodiversity in the world. The monitors of the pavilion also demonstrate various information about pearls of Azerbaijani music and cinematography, traditions and art.

There is a restaurant on the terrace – 4th floor of the pavilion, which presents national cuisine and different concert programs.

An IDEA – Biodiversity Park, created in the yard of the national pavilion features information about the activity of the IDEA - International Dialogue for Environmental Action, various environmental projects and programs of entertainment.

The internal design of the pavilion reflects the work done in Azerbaijan towards protection of biodiversity and solution of ecological problems, provide and protection



of restoration of national natural resources, implementation of local and international ecological projects. Various scenarios were prepared up to now for shooting of short films on foresaid directions. The scenarios as usual cover food, agriculture, ecological resources, natural landscape, social development, export and infrastructure, culture, art, protection of environment

and actions to stop spreading out the genetically modified foods. These videos will be presented in the Azerbaijan`s pavilion until the end of the exhibition, and will provide visitors with visual presentation about the country.

On the eve of the "Expo Milano 2015", photos and videos of rich with biodiversity, existing in Azerbaijan`s various regions, rare landscape, natural resources and historic monuments in different regions were taken and shoot. On this purpose, a number of visits to Baku, Ganja, Nakhchivan, Lankaran, Yardimli, Shamkir, Shaki, Gabala, Shabran, Guba, Khizi, Siyazan, Shirvan, Absheron and other cities and regions were organized in April, 2014.

According to the opinion of the "Expo Milano 2015" Organizing Committee, Azerbaijan is among those countries, who first implemented the demands, put in front of the participating state at the initial level of preparation and installation process, and presentation about the context and design of the pavilion. Foreign press and leading Italian media hailed Azerbaijan as a leader for finishing the construction and design work of the pavilion. Official delegations of various countries and the leadership of the exhibition noted that the design of the Azerbaijan`s pavilion was much differed from others, and was suitable to the chosen theme. Because of the success of Azerbaijan, Armenia refused to attend the "Expo Milano 2015".

Later, President Ilham Aliyev attended the flag raising ceremony within the "Expo Milano 2015" international exhibition. Anthems of Italy and Azerbaijan were played, and state flags were raised.

Commissioner General for "Expo Milano 2015" Bruno Antonio Pasquino addressed the event.

Then, President Ilham Aliyev made a speech.

Following the speeches, the President and his spouse familiarized themselves with the Italian national pavilion at the exhibition.

"Expo Milano 2015" international exhibition is underway since May 1. This year`s exhibition, which is being organized under motto "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life" brings together 145 countries. Only 54 of them, including Azerbaijan are being represented by national pavilions. Other countries have just stands. The exhibition will end on October 31.

The world "Expo" exhibition is famous for the number of visitors and its scale. More than 11 million tickets were sold until May 1 - the start of this year`s exhibition, which organized in Milan. Since May 1, more than a million guests have visited Azerbaijan`s national pavilion.

President Ilham Aliyev signed the guest book of the Italian national pavilion.

The World "Expo" exhibition was first organized in 1851. The exhibition ranks third after the Olympic Games and World Football Championships for the number of visitors.

WORKING VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

10 – 11 September 2015

List of meetings held during the working visit:

- The ceremony marking the 550th anniversary of Kazakh Khanate
- Meeting with President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev
- The 5th Summit of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV
ATTENDED THE 5TH SUMMIT OF THE COOPERATION
COUNCIL OF TURKIC SPEAKING STATES**

11 September 2015, Astana

Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

Dear Nursultan Abishevich,
Distinguished members of delegations,
Ladies and gentlemen!

First of all, I want to thank you, Nursultan Abishevich, for the warmth and hospitality extended to us. I am very glad to be back to brotherly Kazakhstan.

Nursultan Abishevich, today you invited us to a commemorative event to mark the 550th anniversary of the Kazakh Khanate. I am grateful to you for that. The Kazakh people has a great history and culture. In your speech today you spoke at length about this.

In essence, the cooperation among Turkic-speaking states is underpinned by a common history, a common culture and ethnic roots. These are the factors that bring us together, and we are building our work on this foundation. Today, the Cooperation Council of Turkic-speaking States has secured a worthy place in the international arena. I am confident that the Council will continue to be even more successful.

We have major plans related to the humanitarian sphere. In fact, the humanitarian sphere is the main area that unites us. From this point of view, I want to specifically praise the work of TURKSOY. TURKSOY unites not only our states but also all Turkic peoples. I am convinced that we will continue to support the activities of this organization.

At the same time, along with TURKSOY, new organizations are emerging. I want to emphasize the Turkic Academy among them. I believe that the establishment

of the Foundation of Turkic Culture and Heritage will create an excellent opportunity for the implementation of various projects in the future. The creation of a common TV channel also manifests our intentions and demonstrates our policy. Talks on this issue were held for several years. A decision has already been made. I believe that our culture, history and national values, including our present life, will arouse a lot of interest among our peoples and the whole world.



I am sure that the common TV channel will soon access international audience and become a channel of great interest that reflects our policy. Information security has a special place in today's world, and each country must be prepared for that. We must provide for our own information security and inform the world about countries the way they are.

Issues of regional security are also of great importance. The declaration we will adopt today contains very valuable thoughts related to the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. This document reflects the norms and principles of international law.

As you know, Nagorno-Karabakh is native Azerbaijani land. The Azerbaijani people lived and worked in these lands for centuries. Not only Nagorno-Karabakh but also Zangezur, an ancient Turkic region, is our historical land. The separation in the early 20th century of Zangezur from Azerbaijan and its transfer to Armenia essentially disrupted the geographical connection of the Turkic world. Naturally, our relationship is strengthening with each passing day, but from a geographical point of view, we are separated from each other.

An injustice has been committed against the Azerbaijani people. It took place in the late 20th century. Today, Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding seven districts recognized by the international community as an integral part of Azerbaijan are under Armenian occupation. Armenia has violated all legal norms, conducted a policy of ethnic cleansing in these regions, and more than a million Azerbaijanis have become refugees and IDPs in their native land.

International organizations have expressed their views on this issue. The UN Security Council has adopted four resolutions demanding an unconditional withdrawal of Armenian armed forces from Azerbaijani lands. Unfortunately, Armenia ignores them,

continues the occupation and acts insincerely and unconstructively in the talks. This and all other conflicts must be resolved only on the basis of norms and principles of international law, sovereignty, inviolability of borders and territorial integrity of countries.

We also attach great importance to economic cooperation. Azerbaijan invests in neighboring countries, in Turkic-speaking states, and our country also receives investment. Azerbaijan has already become a transit country for Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Both energy and other cargo pass through the territory of Azerbaijan. Transport safety is of great importance for all members of the Council. Azerbaijan seeks to contribute to this cause by creating a modern infrastructure. A new international trade seaport is currently under construction in Baku. The total capacity of this port will be 25 million tons. At the same time, the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway is under way. I am confident that Azerbaijan will fulfill all its obligations in the coming months. This railway, in fact, links Asia with Europe. I should note that the first test container train was sent from China to Azerbaijan through the territory of Kazakhstan last month, and I believe that this first step has already been very successful. I am sure that after the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway is completed, tens of millions of tons of new goods will pass through our territory, thus providing for both economic and political interests.

In other words, dear friends, there are extensive opportunities for cooperation. Of particular importance are the issues of energy security. Today the security of any country, perhaps even primarily, is related to its energy security. We have already established a multi-format cooperation here. Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are engaged in successful operations in the Caspian Sea. At the same time, our main export routes pass through Turkey. Thus, these factors connect us to each other even more closely.

The main factors that binds us together are our unity, ethnic roots, a common history and culture. These are the factors that make us stronger. I am sure that future generations will also live with these ideas and our unity will be eternal.

Thank you.

WORKING VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

15-16 October 2015

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV
ATTENDED THE CIS HEADS OF STATE COUNCIL'S SESSION**

16 October 2015, Burabay

Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

I would like to point to two or three topics in my remarks. First, as it has already been mentioned, is the need to find new forms of economic interaction. The trade turnover among CIS countries has dropped. There is, of course, an objective factor in the form of certain processes occurring in the world. Many national currencies of CIS member-states have lost their power. Since we



conduct our settlements in dollars, this, of course, takes a toll on the statistics with a minus sign. So I would also like to join the idea of Vladimir Putin on the elaboration of the issue of transition to settlements in national currencies. This will allow us the opportunity to avoid certain financial risks that are not related to our activities, strengthen our national currencies and further advance the cause of economic integration. A search for new forms of cooperation in the economic sphere, as well as new forms of strengthening the new economic model, especially in countries rich in natural resources, are, of course, on the agenda of our countries. I think that we can conduct more active consultations and exchange views and experience in order to minimize the risks that have arisen.

Also, I must say that among many countries, the CIS states, I mean those possessing natural resources such as oil and gas, show the best resilience to crisis among many oil and gas producing countries. Azerbaijan is actively involved in issues of transport security, and we invite all CIS countries to join the initiatives we put forward, including the joint initiatives with some member countries of the Commonwealth. In August of this year, we already received the first container train from China through Kazakhstan to Azerbaijan, which is a good sign that the East-West corridor begins to take a new shape. This corridor has more of a geopolitical importance and will, of course, provide an opportunity for closer integration of the countries located along the way and those close to this transport route. We are working hard on the North-South corridor project, above all, with the Russian Federation and Iran. We have already reached serious agreements and made concrete decisions to accelerate

the connection of our railways. The project promises huge financial profits. This line is the most convenient and the shortest route linking the huge markets of China, India, Iran, Azerbaijan, Russia and Europe. I also wanted to inform you about this and invite our partner countries to join the project. It can be done in different ways – participation, investment, issues related to the provision of goods. I think we can work together in this direction. If there is a desire for investment, we would welcome that. If not, we can work together to mobilize possible new goods, so that this line becomes fully operational in the next couple of years.

And, of course, the third topic I would like to mention is the strengthening of security in the region. Some concerns have been voiced in the speeches today. We can all see and observe that. No country in the world can feel completely safe without all-round cooperation of the international community in the fight against terrorism. The CIS countries, at any rate most countries, have experienced international terrorism. It is a threat that bears immediate risks to countries of the region and potential risks to us all. Therefore, the fight against international terrorism should be a priority for all countries at this stage, and only by joining our efforts can we achieve this goal. Of course, it is necessary to work towards minimizing the risks, as well as identifying the causes that give rise to international terrorism. Of course, there are huge external causes, the funding of certain terrorist groups. But there are also an internal causes. The internal causes are poverty, illiteracy, backwardness, radicalism, fundamentalism and social injustice. If these objective reasons are not evident in a country, it will be very difficult for any external forces to create a nurturing ground for terrorism there. Therefore, joint efforts to resolve the issues of socioeconomic nature, issues of security and the fight against terrorism – all this forms the main agenda of our countries. We want to live in peace and harmony with the region, we want to develop and we want children to grow up literate, educated and healthy. For this, we need security. Therefore, Azerbaijan, for its part, will continue to make every effort to fight against international terrorism.

I think that the theses made here, the speeches of the heads of state are a good base for us to reexamine this issue from a more practical point of view and decide what more we need to do to secure our countries in the future.

OFFICIAL VISIT TO GEORGIA

5-6 November 2015

List of meetings held during the official visit:

- Meeting with President of Georgia Giorgi Margvelashvili
- Meeting with Patriarch of the Georgian Orthodox Church Ilia II
- Meeting with Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia David Usupashvili
- Meeting with Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Garibashvili
- Meeting with former Prime Minister of Georgia Bidzina Ivanishvili

List of documents signed during the official visit:

- Joint Declaration between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Georgia

***Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev
during the Press Conference***

Thank you very much, dear Mr. President.

Dear ladies and gentlemen.

First of all, I want to thank you for the hospitality extended to me and our delegation. I am very glad to be back on the brotherly Georgian soil.

Dear Mr. President, you also mentioned that Azerbaijan recently held a parliamentary election. I am paying my first official visit after the election to brotherly Georgia. This in itself shows how highly we value our bilateral relations.

The Joint Declaration signed today determines the prospects for the development of our relations. Our relations are underpinned by unity between our two nations, our shared history and brotherhood. The Declaration reflects very specific provisions on the prospects for our development. We can say that Georgia and Azerbaijan closely cooperate in all spheres. We successfully cooperate within international organizations. We support each other on all matters, particularly in matters related to the territorial integrity of countries. There are excellent opportunities for further cooperation in international organizations. I am sure that our two countries will continue to consistently support the positions of each other.

The Declaration also contains very accurate expressions related to the settlement of conflicts. All conflicts, including those on the territory of Georgia and Azerbaijan, should be resolved within the territorial integrity and sovereignty of countries and inviolability of borders. They should be resolved on the basis of the decisions and resolutions of international organizations. For many years now, the ancestral and historical part of Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as seven adjacent districts, has been under



occupation. Unfortunately, the conflict remains unresolved despite the fact that all influential international organizations have adopted resolutions and decisions on the settlement of the conflict within the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

We successfully cooperate in the economic sphere. We want our turnover to increase further. Of course, the mutual

interest is quite high. Azerbaijan invests a lot in Georgia. Georgia is a very attractive country for investments. Your country has established an excellent investment climate. I want to cordially congratulate you on this occasion.

Of course, we have widely discussed energy and transport issues today. We have once again expressed our will: these issues and projects should be implemented soon, in particular, the Southern Gas Corridor, which is being successfully implemented. If we had not built oil and gas pipelines such as the Baku-Supsa and Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipelines and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline, there would be no basis for the Southern Gas Corridor now. The Southern Gas Corridor today is of great economic and political importance for Georgia, Azerbaijan and Europe. This project is being successfully implemented. I am sure that Azerbaijani gas will be delivered to Turkey in 2018 and to Europe in 2020 in even greater volumes. This is a major project. I believe that this is the largest energy project in Europe today. There are plans to invest at least \$45 billion in the implementation of the Southern Gas Corridor.

Azerbaijan possesses ample reserves of gas. Proven gas reserves amount to 2.6 trillion cubic meters. This means that Azerbaijan will be able to provide both itself and neighboring countries, as well as Europe, with large volumes of natural gas for at least 100 years.

Of course, the joint activities of Azerbaijan and Georgia, our common position will show great reliability of this corridor in the future. This will increase the geopolitical importance of our countries. Of course, our revenues will also be increased.

Today, in an expanded meeting, I said that Azerbaijan had recently established the Coordination Council on transit cargo. We want Georgia and Azerbaijan to speak with one voice on issues of transportation. We can pursue a common tariff policy to substantially increase the volume of goods passing through our territory. This is possible. I believe that in the future the countries where goods will be delivered can conduct joint presentations. There is competition for goods in today's world.

The main thing is that this competition should be sound. In this case, the transit opportunities offered by Georgia and Azerbaijan will, of course, be preferable.

Today, of course, we also discussed other issues. I am very pleased that we have no differences on all the issues discussed. We are friends and brothers. My successful visit is, at the same time, an excellent step for our further dynamic cooperation.

I want to express my gratitude for the attention and hospitality extended to me and the delegation again.

Thank you.

**OFFICIAL DINNER RECEPTION HOSTED ON BEHALF OF THE PRESIDENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA GIORGI MARGVELASHVILI IN HONOR OF
THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV**

5 November 2015

Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

Dear Mr. President.
Ladies and gentlemen!

First of all, I want to thank you for the hospitality extended to me and the delegation during the visit.



I am very happy to visit your beautiful country again. Our countries and peoples have lived in friendship and good neighborliness for centuries. After regaining independence, we have successfully continued this relationship as strategic partners. The active political dialogue between Azerbaijan and Georgia is accompanied by regular mutual visits. I am pleased to remember your official visit to Azerbaijan in February of last year, as well as our meetings during my visit to Georgia to participate in the trilateral summit Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey in May of the same year. We carried out an exchange of views. I believe that high-level visits are useful for the discussion and solution of issues on the agenda.

Today we have considered many aspects of our bilateral and multilateral cooperation. I am sure that the meetings and discussions held, as well as the joint declaration signed, will contribute to the development and expansion of our cooperation. Our successful cooperation in the political, economic, energy, transport, investment, humanitarian and other spheres has wonderful results. However, I believe that there is great potential for further expansion of our economic relations and increasing trade.

Azerbaijan is one of Georgia's main trading partners and key investors in the country. Azerbaijani companies are among the biggest taxpayers to the Georgian budget. Our joint large-scale energy and transport projects – the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline, the Southern Gas Corridor and the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway – enhance the importance of our countries not only in the

region but also worldwide. These projects not only serve the development of the region, but also make an important contribution to the restoration of the historic Silk Road. Azerbaijan, along with its partners, plays an important role in meeting Europe's demand for energy. We have already proved to be a reliable partner, and continuous, stable and safe operation of the petroleum and transport infrastructure we have created is important for all parties.

Our relations continue successfully in the humanitarian sphere too. The Azerbaijanis living in Georgia and the Georgians living in Azerbaijan play the role of a bridge in the development of relations in this field. From this point of view, their active participation in the public and political life of their countries is very important for further strengthening the friendship and cooperation between our peoples and countries. Our countries also cooperate closely within the framework of the UN, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, GUAM and others. Our continued multifaceted cooperation in international and regional organizations is based on mutual support and represents particular importance.

As you know, the biggest source of threat to the development of the region is posed by unresolved conflicts. Azerbaijan has been subjected to military aggression from Armenia for more than 20 years. It has resulted in the occupation of 20 per cent of our territories – Nagorno-Karabakh, which is our historical land, and adjacent seven districts. A policy of ethnic cleansing has been carried out on these territories. More than a million people have become refugees and IDPs. International organizations have expressed their position on the conflict. There are four UN Security Council resolutions demanding unconditional and immediate withdrawal of Armenian forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. There are decisions and resolutions of the OSCE, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Non-Aligned Movement and other international organizations. However, aggressive Armenia flouts international law and does not comply with the decisions of international organizations. Our strong position is that the conflict must be resolved only within the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan in accordance with international law.

Mr. President, let me reaffirm my satisfaction with the visit to Georgia. I wish the brotherly Georgian people continued success.

WORKING VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

14-16 November 2015

List of meetings held during the working visit:

- G20 Summit in Antalya

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV
ATTENDED THE G20 SUMMIT**

15 November 2015, Antalya



President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev addressed discussions on economic development, investment and employment as part of the G20 Summit in Antalya.

Saying that invited by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Azerbaijan is for the first time attending such a high-profile event, the head of state thanked the Turkish leader for the invitation.

The Azerbaijani President offered his condolences to the Turkish and French people over recent terrorist attacks in Turkey and France, and said Azerbaijan stands by these countries.

President Ilham Aliyev highlighted Azerbaijan's economic accomplishments, and spoke of the work done to ensure favourable investment climate, remove unemployment and dramatically reduce poverty in the country.

During G20 Summit President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev addressed discussions on combat against terrorism and refugee crisis held during the working dinner in honor of the heads of state and government and international organizations.

“Azerbaijan takes an active part in the fight against international terrorism, and is one of the first countries to join the coalition forces in Afghanistan,” the President of Azerbaijan stressed.

The head of state noted that Azerbaijan is a country suffering from terrorism and that terrorism is one of the components of Armenia's state policy of aggression towards Azerbaijan. “More than 2,000 Azerbaijani citizens died as a result of terror acts committed by the Armenian terrorist organization.”

Touching upon the occupation of the Azerbaijani lands, President Ilham Aliyev said that Armenia occupied 20 percent of the country's territory. "Armenia carried out the policy of ethnic cleansing against Azerbaijan. As a result of Armenian aggression, Azerbaijan faced humanitarian crisis. Some one million of our compatriots have become refugees and IDPs. Twenty years pass since the UN Security Council adopted four resolutions demanding immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from the occupied territories. But Armenia has disregarded this so far." President Ilham Aliyev drew attention of the heads of state to the fact that Armenia ignores the resolutions of the world's number one organization.

The head of state said the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict must be settled only in compliance with the international laws, within the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

WORKING VISIT TO THE FRENCH REPUBLIC

17-18 November 2015

List of meetings held during the working visit:

- The Leaders' Forum of the 38th Session of UNESCO General Conference
- Meeting with former UNESCO Director General Koichiro Matsuura

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV
ATTENDED THE LEADERS' FORUM OF THE 38TH SESSION OF UNESCO
GENERAL CONFERENCE**

17 November 2015, Paris

Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

Mr. President of the General Conference, Mr. President of the Executive Board,
Madame Director General,

Dear friends,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all I'd like to express the deepest condolences of the people of Azerbaijan to the people of France in connection with a terrible act of terror in Paris on November 13th. The Azerbaijani people share the pain of the people of France and stand shoulder to shoulder with them in this tragic moment in the history of the French Republic. This terrible act of terror once again shows that the international community should unite its efforts to combat this evil. No country in the world can be hundred percent guaranteed against these terrible attacks. Therefore, only unified efforts of the international community can help us to combat this evil. Azerbaijan, as a country which suffered from numerous terror attacks in the past, plays its role in the battle against terrorism, and this role is appreciated by the international community.

Azerbaijan is an active member of UNESCO. It is more than twenty three years ago, almost immediately after restoration of our independence, that Azerbaijan became a member of UNESCO and is playing its role in the promotion of values of humanity. Azerbaijan signed and ratified almost all the conventions and other legal instruments of UNESCO. In 2003, Azerbaijan and UNESCO signed the framework agreement on cooperation in the areas of culture, science, education and communication, which allowed Azerbaijan to become one of the donors of UNESCO. This is our obligation and commitment in front of the least developed countries.

Azerbaijan itself experienced poverty, economic devastation, occupation and economic decline in the beginning of our independence when we were the recipients of the international aid. So now it is our turn to pay back and to contribute to the cause of the development in the world. I am absolutely sure that the areas of UNESCO's activities such as education, culture and, of course, science are the main areas for the development of the mankind, are the areas the development of which will make our world more secure and safe.

We are proud that historical monuments of Azerbaijan such as Old City, Shirvanshah Palace, Maiden Tower, Petroglyphs of Gobustan rocks are among the protected historical monuments of UNESCO in the list of world heritage. Azerbaijan is a land of ancient culture, history, traditions. But it is young as an independent state. Only 24 years. These years were the years of transformation from one political system to another, from plant economy to market economy. And during these years our country managed to succeed.

Today Azerbaijan is a reliable partner in the international arena. It is an active member of organizations which we are members of and our biggest political and diplomatic success was our election with the support of 155 countries to the United Nations Security Council in 2011. That was recognition by the international community of the role of Azerbaijan, our activity, our positive activity on the global arena and that was a sign of respect, sign of trust and sign of appreciation of what we have accomplished. And as a reliable member of the international community, during two years of our membership in Security Council, we addressed two important issues: fight against international terrorism, and intercultural dialogue. Unfortunately from the very beginning of our independence Azerbaijan became the subject of Armenian aggression. Occupation by Armenia of internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan continues until these days. As a result of policy of ethnic cleansing against Azerbaijanis more than a million Azerbaijanis became refugees and internally displaced persons. 250,000 Azerbaijanis were deported and ethnically cleansed from Armenia. 750,000 became internally displaced in our own country.

We suffered a humanitarian catastrophe. And that was at the time when we were not economically developed and were very poor. Today watching the TV reports about the migration crisis, which Europe now is facing, of course, we understand the pain of the people who have to leave their homes. At the same time, we understand that it creates difficulties for those who live in Europe. But at the same time, we remember 1992-1993, those years when we in Azerbaijan had to accommodate one million people. At that time population of Azerbaijan was something more than 8 million. So it was one of the highest per capita numbers of refugees and IDPs in the world and we did everything in order to integrate refugees, IDPs into our society. Today they play a very important role in the development of our country.



Armenia not only violates international law norms, but also violates the historic justice. United Nations Security Council adopted four resolutions demanding immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian troops from the territory of Azerbaijan. Unfortunately more than 20 years have passed since that time and these resolutions have not been implemented. And here we come

to a very important issue of the global security and global configuration on the international arena – decisions and resolutions of leading international bodies are ignored. And there is no punishment for that. Armenia continues to ignore Security Council resolutions and there are no consequences for that.

This issue must be seriously addressed. And we need to elaborate the mechanisms of implementation of the resolutions of Security Council to avoid double standards. Because we all know that in some cases Security Council resolutions are being implemented within days, if not hours. But in our case, for more than twenty years there has been no progress on the negotiation table because Armenia doesn't want peace. They don't want to live in peace with us. They want to keep occupational policy for as long as they can, and unfortunately they have succeeded so far.

But time is on our side. Time is on the side of justice, on the side of international law. And I am sure that Azerbaijan will restore its territorial integrity which is respected by the whole world. Territorial integrity of Azerbaijan has the same value as territorial integrity of any other country. As a result of the occupation our historical, architectural, religious monuments were destroyed.

You can find the images and videos on the internet. More than 600 historical and architectural monuments of Azerbaijan were totally destroyed by the Armenian armed forces. Twenty-two museums were destroyed, and 40,000 items, which were exhibited in those museums including the very precious items of our historical heritage, were stolen from our museums and then sold on different auctions. Ten mosques were demolished by Armenian occupants, while today in the center of Baku you can see an Armenian Church restored by the government of Azerbaijan. So this is the difference in approach to multiculturalism. This is the difference in approach to religious tolerance and this again shows that terrorism has no religion, has no nationality and it is absolutely unacceptable to link Islam with terrorism.

I represent a Muslim country, a country which suffered from Armenian terrorism, from occupation, from destruction of our historic monuments. Of course, we will

return to our lands, we will restore our cities, build new schools and hospitals there. But we will not be able to restore our historic monuments. Armenians destroyed our historical heritage. But they cannot destroy our will, the will of refugees and IDPs who want to go back to their homes and the will of their children and grandchildren, who were born in Baku and other cities of Azerbaijan, who never saw their historical land. But they live with a strong will in their heart to return. And they will return. We will do everything in order to restore territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Again I'd like to say that international law norms fully support Azerbaijan's position. At the same time Nagorno-Karabakh is a historic land of Azerbaijan. The word "Karabakh" has Azerbaijani origin. It means 'black garden'. It doesn't mean anything in Armenian.

Armenians were settled in that area in the middle of the 19th century. If you look at the maps of the Tsarist Russia of the beginning of the 20th century you will see that the absolute majority of the names of the cities and villages of all the toponymes of today's territory of Armenia have Azerbaijani origin. In 1918, when after the collapse of the Russian Empire the first Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan was established, one of the first decrees of that republic was to transfer Yerevan from Azerbaijan to Armenia. Today's capital of Armenia is our historic city of Iravan, population of which in the beginning of the 20th century was 80 percent of Azerbaijani origin. Today, it is completely ethnically cleansed. So history and international law supports our position. As you can imagine this issue is number one for Azerbaijan, for every citizen of Azerbaijan. Despite these tragic events and occupation which continues until now, Azerbaijan managed to achieve great success in transformation.

We created strong democratic institutions, a modern, political system, multi-party system. Azerbaijan is a country where all the freedoms are respected: freedom of political activity, media freedom, freedom of assembly. According to the World Bank's assessment in 2007, only 17 percent of Azerbaijan were internet users. In 2015, it is already 75 percent. And our plan is to cover the whole country with a broad band free internet. Therefore, this clearly demonstrates that the media freedom, freedom of information for us is one of the priorities.

As Mr. President mentioned, Azerbaijan made a great success in economic development. Despite of this heavy burden of refugees, economic growth during the last decade was one of the fastest in the world – more than 300 percent. By investing in human capital we managed to reduce dramatically the level of poverty from almost 50 percent to five percent in 10 years. Unemployment is even less than five percent. We have very low foreign debt - only 12 percent of GDP. And according to Davos Economic Forum Azerbaijan is number 40 with respect to global competitiveness of economy. So economic reforms allowed us to accumulate financial resources, and to channel them to social and infrastructural development.

We invest in the future, we invest in education. More than 3,000 schools were built during the last ten years in Azerbaijan taking into account that the number of schools, in general, is less than 5,000. We achieved almost hundred percent of literacy which creates a very strong intellectual potential for our future. More than 500 hospitals and medical institutions built during the last ten years allow our people to have access to modern medical services. So, human capital development for us always was and is a serious priority.

As Mr. President mentioned Azerbaijan plays a very active role in the dialogue of civilizations and cultures. We are proud that UNESCO is an official partner of the three forums which we held on intercultural dialogue and unique role which Azerbaijan plays as a country situated between East and West, a country with a predominantly Muslim population, but with secular society and secular government, which is a member of the Council of Europe and the Islamic Cooperation Organization. And we are trying to use this great opportunity to bring peoples closer, civilizations closer. Baku Process which we launched in 2008, when we invited the ministers of culture of members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to attend a meeting of ministers of culture of the Council of Europe in Baku was the first step. Then, in 2009, we did the opposite way. There was a meeting of ministers of culture of Islamic states, and we invited members of the Council of Europe.

Intercultural dialogue today is needed as never before. When we launched Baku Process situation in the world in 2008 was absolutely different. Today we see that the level of mutual mistrust is growing. We see that if we don't take adequate measures the confrontation based on the religious, ethnic grounds will create even bigger problems for all of us. But we can live in peace. And, I think, the example of countries like Azerbaijan demonstrates that. In our country representatives of all religions live in peace and friendship. Our government, state invests into the construction of not only mosques, but construction and reconstruction of churches, Orthodox and Catholic churches, synagogues. We are proud that one of the oldest, maybe the oldest church in the Caucasus, is situated in Azerbaijan, near the ancient city of Shaki. We are also proud that one of the most ancient mosques, which was built in 1743, is situated in the ancient Azerbaijani city of Shamakhi. All the representatives of different confessions celebrate religious holidays at the same table.

Therefore, multiculturalism for us is not just an idea which is being discussed today whether it works or doesn't work, whether it's failed or not, for us multiculturalism is our tradition. Today it is not only tradition, it is a straight state policy, and our lifestyle. And it is possible. Because again we accumulated very important experience in that area. One example, this year Azerbaijan hosted the inaugural European Games. I think it was very strange that all the continents except Europe had their Games. The motherland of the Olympic Games is ancient Greece. Then Baron de Coubertin

restored it here in France, but Europe never had it. So a very wise decision of the European Olympic Committees to hold the first Games in a Muslim country shows that ideals of multiculturalism, tolerance are very important for all of us.

The games were a real success with more than 6,000 athletes representing 50 Olympic committees of Europe. In 2017, we will host Islamic Solidarity Games. And Azerbaijan and Baku probably will be the only country in the world for many-many years to come that will have these two events in one and the same city. And we will continue to contribute to the cause of mutual understanding because multiculturalism is based on mutual understanding, on mutual respect. You should respect other religions the same ways as you respect your own. You should live side by side with your neighbors not asking him his nationality and whether he prays in the church, synagogue or in the mosque. Only in this case we can reduce potential risks, we can eliminate growing tensions. Situation in the world is changing, and, unfortunately, not in the direction we would like to see. We need to unite the efforts. We in Azerbaijan are doing our part of the job in order to bring continents, civilizations together. As Mr. President of the Conference mentioned next year we will host the Alliance of Civilizations Forum, which will be a global event particularly aimed at discussing the issues of multiculturalism, religious and ethnic tolerance. And I'd like to underline the unique role of UNESCO in these issues. We fully support the activity of UNESCO and a strong leadership of Director General Madame Bokova. Azerbaijan will do everything in order to support UNESCO in all its noble activities.

Once again, I'd like to welcome you, express my respect to you, and congratulate UNESCO on the 70th anniversary.

Thank you very much.

OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

28 November 2015

List of meetings held during the official visit:

- Meeting with President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko

List of documents signed during the official visit:

- Joint Declaration of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the President of the Republic of Belarus
- Agreement on Socio-Economic Cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Belarus until 2025
- Protocol on Cooperation in the Field of Compulsory State Social Insurance between the State Social Protection Fund of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Belarus
- Agreement on Cooperation between Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, Science Development Foundation under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Belarus National Academy of Sciences, Foundation for Fundamental Research of the Republic of Belarus

***Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev
during the meeting in an expanded format***



Thank you very much, dear Alexander Grigoryevich. First of all, I would like to thank you for your hospitality and for the invitation to come to Belarus again on an official visit. I am always happy to visit your country and feel at home here.

As you mentioned, in recent years our countries have established a very trustful level of relations, which are developing very successfully. And today we discussed both what has been done and what we still plan to do. But first of all I would like to sincerely congratulate you on your convincing victory in the presidential election. The people of Belarus have once again shown confidence in you and the outcomes of the election are actually the results of your work as leader of the country.

I think that members of my delegation once again saw today how successfully Belarus is developing – rapidly and effectively. Minsk has become a beautiful city – beautiful, comfortable and clean. I am sure that it is a pleasure to live and work here, and to come here. Our countries have relations of the highest level. You are

quite right that we worked hard on this. Over all these years of active cooperation, which began just over 10 years ago, I think we have tested each other in different situations. We have passed the tests of durability and reliability and never failed each other. So today we believe in each other and our words are just as trustworthy as signatures on the documents.

Today we will sign documents that will determine the directions for cooperation in the future. But most importantly, we have agreement on many issues. We are delighted that Belarus is developing successfully. As you said, we live in a difficult time. The economic crisis is exacerbated by political and in many countries by military-political crises. We live in a period of confrontation, which, of course, demands new approaches to the solution of international issues. And under such circumstances the political stability existing in Belarus is the main indicator of success and the main guarantee that this success will be continued. We, as friends, are very happy about that.

For us, Belarus is a friendly and brotherly country. I am sure that after this visit our relations will develop even faster.

***Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev
during the Press Conference***

Thank you, dear Alexander Grigoryevich,
Dear ladies and gentlemen!

First of all, I would like to thank you again, Alexander Grigoryevich, for the invitation and the hospitality my delegation and I have enjoyed in Belarus. I am glad to visit the friendly and brotherly Belarus again, so we could identify ways of further development of our relations together.



Important documents that will determine our future relations in various fields have been signed today. I would like to highlight the signing of the Joint Declaration by Presidents. The Declaration covers almost all spheres of our life. It also dwells upon our interaction in international organizations where we always support each other. It touches upon economic and political cooperation, cooperation in the humanitarian sphere, in the sphere of industrial production and the military-industrial area. On all these issues we have established a very close relationship, a relationship based on friendship, brotherhood and mutual

trust. As we noted with Alexander Grigoryevich today, we built this relationship for years. Today they have reached a level that meets the interests of our peoples and allows us to characterize it as a relationship between strategic partners.

We have always tried to support each other and will continue to do everything in our power for Belarus and Azerbaijan to always feel each other's support. In the international structures, within the framework of economic cooperation and on all matters we have very sincere relations.

We have identified ways of further economic cooperation. Of course, I want to share the view of Alexander Grigoryevich that it is gratifying that the turnover between our countries has remained stable even in a crisis period. But we have also discussed in great detail the projects that can significantly increase our turnover. We should pay more attention to mutual trade, in particular, the imports of products which we import from other countries – from Belarus to Azerbaijan and from Azerbaijan to Belarus. The creation of joint ventures already has a good history, and the Ganja Plant is a good example of that – in a very short time, in less than a year, it has established production on the basis of Belarusian technologies. Today, this plant is an important industrial facility in Azerbaijan.

We are ready to consider establishing other enterprises using Belarusian technologies in Azerbaijan, as well as facilities to process Azerbaijani agricultural products in Belarus. In other words, there is a strong political base for strengthening the economic ties and cooperation among business circles. And my visit to Belarus is explicit confirmation of that. This year, Alexander Grigoryevich visited Azerbaijan to attend the opening of the First European Games. I would like to take this opportunity to invite Mr. Lukashenko to pay an official visit to Azerbaijan next year.

These visits are a good message to our peoples and the region. Also, from a practical point of view, they are very useful because it is during these visits that we agree plans and projects which we later implement. I think that one of the characteristics of our relationship is that whatever we agree on, we always implement that. We are reliable partners and value our relationship and friendship. I am confident that the development of our relations will continue to be provided in the future. Belarus and Azerbaijan, as two friends, will move forward successfully. Thank you very much again for the hospitality and the attention extended to our delegation.

Thank you.

STATE VISIT TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

8 – 11 December 2015

List of meetings held during the state visit:

- Meeting with Governor of Shaanxi Province of China Lou Qinjian
- Meeting with Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China Zhang Dejiang
- Meeting with State Council of the People's Republic of China Li Keqiang
- Meeting with President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping

List of documents signed during the state visit:

- Joint Declaration on the Expansion and Deepening of Friendly Relations and Cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the People's Republic of China
- Memorandum of Understanding on Joint Encouragement of the Establishment of “Silk Way Economic Belt” between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the People's Republic of China
- Agreement on Prisoner Handover between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the People's Republic of China
- Agreement on Phytosanitary Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the People's Republic of China
- Agreement on Civil Air Transport between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the People's Republic of China
- Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Education in 2016-2019 between the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China
- Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Transport between the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Transport of the People's Republic of China
- Memorandum of Understanding on Encouragement of Economic Cooperation between the Ministry of Economy and Industry of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China
- Memorandum of Understanding between the State Agency for Renewable and Alternative Energy Sources of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the National Energy Administration of the People's Republic of China
- Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Railway Transport between Azerbaijan Railways CJSC and the National Railway Administration of the People's Republic of China

***Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev
during the meeting in an expanded format***



Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I want to thank you for the invitation to come to your country on a state visit. This visit will further strengthen the friendly relations between our countries. I also want to thank you for your condolences over the tragic events that took place in Azerbaijan and the death of many oil workers. Your condolences are the words of a friend. I am very grateful to

you for that.

We have a strong relationship. We cooperate in many spheres as friends and partners. I know your kind attitude towards our country. The people of Azerbaijan know you very well, and appreciate your role in world affairs and your kind attitude towards Azerbaijan.

As you said, we met last year to discuss a wide range of relations between our countries. In the past year since our meeting in Shanghai, our relations have further strengthened. Today we will sign many important documents that will define the future development of our relations. Among them, of course, I would like to highlight the Declaration that we will sign. It reflects our intentions. We want to build up our relationships, develop the political dialogue, continue to cooperate actively in international organizations and strengthen our economic ties. We in Azerbaijan very much appreciate your initiative to create the Silk Road Economic Belt.

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV VISITED RENMIN UNIVERSITY OF CHINA

11 December 2015, Beijing

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev was conferred a diploma of Honorary Professor of History by Renmin University of China.



At the ceremony, Rector of Renmin University of China Liu Wei once again welcomed President Ilham Aliyev. He briefed the participants on the history and culture of Azerbaijan, and also highlighted the history of bilateral relations between the two countries. The rector said he was honored to present the diploma of Honorary Professor of History to the Azerbaijani President. Then the diploma of Honorary Professor of History of Renmin University of China was presented to the head of state

Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

Dear President and vice president of Renmin University,
Dear students and friends,

First of all, I'd like to express my deep gratitude to the leadership of the university for awarding me with this honorary degree of professor. I consider it as a sign of friendship between our countries.

Friendship between China and Azerbaijan has a long history, our peoples have communicated during the different times of our history. As an independent country Azerbaijan, for twenty-three years since the establishment of bilateral relations with China we have actively cooperated in different areas.

My state visit to China is coming to an end today. I started the visit in the ancient city of Xian. I had an opportunity to visit the museum of Terracotta Warriors, and once again to see great culture, traditions and history of your people. This once again demonstrates that during ages of history of the Chinese people you created masterpieces, you created history and your modern success is based on that historical legacy.

Relations between our countries today developed very successfully and I am very satisfied with the result of my state visit. During these several days, which I spent in your beautiful country, I had meetings with the senior leadership of China. During these meetings, discussions and negotiations were held in an atmosphere of friendship, partnership and mutual understanding. We once again agreed that we need to continue positive developments in our relations. We are friendly countries. We have a strong mutual will to develop and deepen our bilateral relations. We have excellent political relations, and my state visit to China once again proved that we support each other in many areas.

We support each other in international organizations. Azerbaijan is strongly committed to the principle of one-China. China, in its turn, supports Azerbaijan with respect to resolution of Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict based on principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and based on the implementation of resolutions of United Nations. These and many other important aspects of our bilateral relations were reflected in the joint declaration which chairman Xi Jinping and myself signed yesterday. Apart from this very important political document, nine other agreements were signed making a total of 10 agreements which were signed yesterday, covering many areas of economic, political and social development and cooperation between our countries.

We have a very active cooperation in United Nations. Azerbaijan became - with the support of China - the partner for dialogue in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization this year.

We actively cooperate in economic area. Recently the joint intergovernmental commission was held here in China and that commission was addressing the issues which found their resolution during my visit. It was a commission to prepare my state visit.

Azerbaijan joined the Chinese initiative and became a co-founder of the Asian Bank of Infrastructure and Investment. This is also a very good sign of our economic cooperation. Many Chinese companies are actively working in Azerbaijan. I, during my visit, visited two companies: one car factory in Xian which has already exports to Azerbaijan, and is increasing the export to our country; and yesterday I visited the office of Huawei corporation, which also actively works in Azerbaijan. We want to see more Chinese companies in our country. I also underlined during my meetings with the senior leadership of China that we want more companies to work in different areas of Azerbaijan, in infrastructure, in construction. Of course, we would like to see Chinese companies as investors, because in Azerbaijan we have a very good investment climate.

We have very good prospects for cooperation in the area of transportation. We fully support the initiative of chairman Xi Jinping on the creation of the economic belt of the Silkroad. Azerbaijan is contributing to the creation of very modern transportation infrastructure in our country. And I can tell you that this August, the first container train from China came to Azerbaijan across the Caspian Sea. Yesterday we broadly discussed the prospects of cooperation in the area of transportation. Geographical location of Azerbaijan makes our country a center of the transit of goods from Europe to Asia, from Asia to Europe. We are investing now in modernization of our railroads, creation of the biggest Sea port in the Caspian and also railroad connection between Azerbaijan and Europe which hopefully will be in operation next year. The construction of Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad will connect Asia and Europe, create railroad connection missing now to assemble the historical Silk Road. This transportation route will be the shortest to bring goods from China to Europe and from Europe to China.



In other words, our cooperation is very broad. It covers political area, area of international relations. We have very close cooperation, as I said, in international organizations. We concentrate on practical issues of our economic cooperation and with the transportation initiatives, of course, we create a good opportunity for cooperation between a number of countries. Economic and transportation projects unite the countries, they bring economic dividends, they create better conditions for mutual understanding between different countries. Countries may have different foreign policy priorities, different views on what's happening in the world, and this is natural. But, through economic cooperation, through broad, regional cooperation, we can create better conditions for mutual understanding. Our position is based on that, and in many areas the views of China and Azerbaijan coincide.

We jointly fight against terrorism, extremism, radicalism. We promote the values of multiculturalism and try to contribute to the reduction of tensions in the world and in our region. We are very satisfied with the current status of bilateral relations between our countries, and I am sure that good results of the visit, documents signed, especially the joint declaration between China and Azerbaijan, will be a good basis for future development. The joint declaration covers almost all the aspects of our joint activity, political, economic, issues related to conflict resolution, transportation, cultural dimension.

We want to have more active cooperation in the area of education and as we discussed with Mr. President, after awarding me with the honorary professorship, I am sure, more young people from Azerbaijan would like to come to study in Renmin University, which is one of the leading universities of your country. So, I am leaving your country with good memories, with good results and I am sure that in the coming years we will see the practical implementation of the agreements. Also today I'd like to tell a little bit about Azerbaijan, the development, the plans of our country. Azerbaijan is a very ancient land. Throughout the centuries our people created values and a lot of historical places in Azerbaijan reflect the great history of our nation. Azerbaijan is situated on the historical Silk Road and is closely connected with the European and Asian continents. Actually, it is situated in the middle of Eurasia. But as an independent country we are very young - only twenty-four years. And these years were the years of transformation, development, modernization, and we achieved substantial results.

Today Azerbaijan is an active member of the international community. We were elected to United Nations Security Council with the support of 155 countries, including China, four years ago. That was a reflection of broad international support to Azerbaijan and appreciation of our activity on international arena. Azerbaijan's economy is one of the fastest growing economies in the world. During the last ten years, our GDP grew more than three times. That allowed us to invest a lot in infrastructure, including social infrastructure, and allowed us to reduce dramatically the level of unemployment, which is now around five percent. Rapid economic growth created more opportunities for our country. Today Azerbaijan is also an investor. Outside, we invest in other countries and economic and financial stability, of course, is one of the most important elements of our political independence. Because we are only twenty-four years old as an independent country, we are a young country, a country which values its independence more than anything else.

Among the problems which we are facing the main problem is the occupation of our territory by Armenia. United Nations Security Council, more than twenty years ago, adopted four resolutions demanding immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian troops from Azerbaijan's territory. But unfortunately Armenia continues to ignore these resolutions. United Nations Security Council is the highest international body in the world. And resolutions which were adopted are based on international law, justice. But, still, almost twenty percent of the internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan is under occupation. More than one million people of Azerbaijan are refugees and internally displaced. We were a subject of ethnic cleansing, and historic land of Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh and seven districts surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh are under occupation for more than twenty years. We have a ceasefire regime since 1994. But it doesn't mean peace. Peace will be achieved when our lands are freed and our refugees and IDPs are able to return to their homes. The

conflict must be resolved only based on the norms and principles of international law, territorial integrity, sovereignty of Azerbaijan and implementation of security resolutions of United Nations. In the joint declaration which we signed today with chairman Xi Jinping all these approaches are reflected. And we are very grateful to China for this approach in resolution of this conflict.

Despite this major problem Azerbaijan is rapidly developing. We have energy resources, and, of course, it helps us to accumulate financial resources. But now when the oil price dropped almost three times within one year, of course, it's time to demonstrate capability.

And Azerbaijan is demonstrating good governance. Among the oil producing countries we are one of the few which still continues to develop. This year we expect economic growth around four percent despite a very serious reduction of our incomes. That was achieved mainly due to the policy of diversification of economy. We opened the doors for investment. Per capita foreign direct investment in Azerbaijan is on a very high level. We invested our own funds to create industrial sites, to create infrastructure and to invite investors to Azerbaijan. Diversification of economy proves to be successful and we hope to see more Chinese companies work with us, especially in the areas of industrial production, in the areas of information technologies, high technologies, agriculture, and many other areas. Because having such good friendly relations between our countries we need to add a very important economic component. Azerbaijan, from the point of view of investment, is a very attractive country. Foreign investments are duly protected in our country.

So the country is developing, we have big plans for the future. Our goal is to transform Azerbaijan into a developed country of the world. I think we have good opportunities for that.

We pay big attention to education because this is the future of every country. It is not natural resources, but education, the intellectual level of society, which drives economies and demonstrates the success of the country. And in this area we want to have a more active cooperation with China. As I said we want to see more cooperation between Renmin University and our universities because education for us is one of the main priorities. We have a literacy of almost hundred percent, and our main goal is to have such education which will allow Azerbaijan to develop regardless of temporary difficulties with respect to the price of energy resources. Our main goal was to create a strong non-energy sector of our economy, to develop technology, to invest in education, science and to create a better life for our people. Therefore, our economic reforms were backed by a strong social policy, and reduction of poverty and unemployment demonstrates that it was a successful policy. So, this is briefly about our development.

As I said, our plans for the future are based on our national interests. We want to have peace in the region. We are investing our political efforts in the reduction of tensions. As I said, we are actively combating international terrorism, radicalism, separatism. We are proud of having a multicultural society where all the representatives of all religions and ethnic groups live in peace and harmony. Azerbaijan is already considered as one of the centers of multiculturalism in the world. This is our big asset and we want to promote these values.

Once again, I'd like to express my gratitude for this high degree of honorary professor. I am now a member of your family, and I will always keep this badge. I hope that we will see you in Baku. I already invited the leadership, and now I want to invite the students to come and to know our country, and to strengthen our friendship.

Thank you very much.

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV
ATTENDED THE OPENING OF THE 12TH SESSION
OF ISESCO GENERAL CONFERENCE**

26 November 2015, Baku

Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

Dear Mr. Director General,
Distinguished ladies and gentlemen!

First of all, I cordially welcome all of you to Azerbaijan. Welcome to Azerbaijan! The 12th session of the ISESCO General Conference being held in Baku is a significant event for our country. I am very pleased that this event is being held in Baku, Azerbaijan. I am sure that guests will get a good opportunity to become acquainted with the past and present realities of our country.



In recent years, ISESCO has become a very important international organization. The main objective of ISESCO is to develop science and education in the Muslim world and preserve its rich cultural heritage. ISESCO has made huge strides in this area. At the same time, ISESCO today holds a special place among international organizations on a global scale. As I have noted, ISESCO under the leadership of Director General Mr. Altwajri has become a very important organization enjoying great respect in the world in recent years.

We in Azerbaijan always strive to further increase the credibility of ISESCO. Azerbaijan is one of the active members of ISESCO. ISESCO is represented in many events we organize in Baku, while Mr. Altwajri often comes to Azerbaijan. In 2009, with the support of ISESCO, Baku was declared the capital of Islamic culture. In 2018, this honorary title was awarded to another ancient Azerbaijani city – Nakhchivan. This is a high assessment ISESCO is giving to Azerbaijan, Azerbaijani culture and the role Azerbaijan plays in the Muslim world today.

I would also like to note that a regional center of ISESCO will be created in Baku in the near future. The Azerbaijani state is taking all necessary measures to establish the center. I am sure that the center's activities will play an active role in deepening the humanitarian cooperation and strengthening Islamic solidarity not only in the region but also throughout the Islamic world.

ISESCO has always supported Azerbaijan. In particular, ISESCO has always openly supported Azerbaijan's position of justice in the settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In his numerous speeches, Mr. Altwajri expressed an unequivocal position on this issue. We are grateful to ISESCO and the whole Muslim world for this.

As you know, the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has remained unresolved for many years. Azerbaijan has suffered from Armenian occupation for many years. Twenty per cent of our internationally recognized territory is under Armenian occupation. As a result of this occupation, over a million Azerbaijanis have become refugees and IDPs in their native land. The Armenians have conducted a policy of ethnic cleansing against our people. The Armenians have committed the Khojaly genocide. Today, more than 10 countries have recognized the Khojaly tragedy as an act of genocide. Armenia flagrantly violates all norms of international law. There are four UN Security Council resolutions on the conflict, which require an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian armed forces from Azerbaijani lands. For over 20 years, Armenia has ignored these resolutions. Similar decisions and resolutions have also been adopted by other international organizations, including the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Non-Aligned Movement, the OSCE and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. In other words, international law fully supports the position of Azerbaijan. At the same time, historical justice is also on our side, because Nagorno-Karabakh is native Azerbaijani land. The Azerbaijani people have lived on these lands for centuries. The word "Karabakh" is of Azerbaijani origin. Therefore, both history and international law support the position of our country, and this conflict can only be resolved on the basis of territorial integrity and inviolability of borders.

I should also mention that the OSCE has sent two missions to the occupied territories. Mission reports state that everything on the occupied lands has been destroyed – our cities, villages, historical and religious monuments. The Armenians have destroyed 10 mosques on our occupied lands. This is barbarism. It is an act of terror against Islamic culture. I want to note again that ISESCO has always supported the just cause of Azerbaijan in this issue.

I should also note that in the early 1990s, Armenian terrorist organizations committed more than 30 acts of terror in Azerbaijan, killing more than 2,000 innocent people. We have repeatedly stated that terrorism has neither nationality nor religion. Unfortunately, some Western circles and media representatives have been trying in recent years to link Islam to terror. We strongly condemn these dirty deeds. Islam is a religion of peace, mercy and friendship. We in Azerbaijan work hard to introduce Islamic values to the world. Azerbaijan is one of the countries to have played an active role in the organization of an Islamic section in the most famous museum of the world – the Louvre. We have made a financial contribution to that.

Azerbaijan is the first Muslim country to have demonstrated an exhibition at the Vatican.

We openly fight against Islamophobia. Statements have been made at the highest level – at the level of the President. Islamophobia is a huge threat and a great injustice. It could lead to conflicts between civilizations in the future. Therefore, we promote Islamic culture both at home and abroad. Azerbaijan regularly organizes exhibitions, presentations and cultural programs in developed countries of the world. Azerbaijan also plays an active role in developing inter-religious and inter-ethnic relations. On our initiative, Baku has repeatedly hosted the International Humanitarian Forum. We have hosted three Forums on Intercultural Dialogue. A summit of leaders of world religions has been held in Baku. Next year we will host a Global Forum of the UN Alliance of Civilizations. I should note that ISESCO is actively involved in all these activities. That is our contribution to interreligious and intercultural relations.

The International Centre for Multiculturalism has recently been established in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan is already known worldwide as a center of multiculturalism. Azerbaijan has never had, and, I am sure, never will have any confrontations on ethnic or religious grounds.

We strongly believe that multiculturalism has a great future. Some politicians and public figures should be more careful in their statements, because there is no alternative to multiculturalism. The alternative is discrimination, Islamophobia and xenophobia. This path can't lead to the future. Therefore, our policies and initiatives seek to strengthen inter-religious relations in the region.

Azerbaijan is a country with a rich history. I am sure that our guests will get acquainted with the ancient historical monuments of Baku. Azerbaijan works hard in the international plane to strengthen Islamic solidarity and protect Islamic values.

I should also note that Azerbaijan is a newly-independent state. We have lived as an independent country for only 24 years. Whereas in the Soviet period there were only 17 mosques in Azerbaijan, today their number exceeds 2,000. We are proud that one of the oldest mosques in the world, the Shamakhi mosque built in 743, is located in Azerbaijan. The mosque has been recently renovated. Today it is both a religious monument and a monument of architecture. Therefore, the role of international organizations and leading politicians in these matters, of course, is quite big, especially in the present circumstances and at this very sensitive moment. Unfortunately, conflicts in the world are getting further inflamed. There are more and more confrontations. Azerbaijan, for its part, is trying for humanitarian cooperation to reduce risks.

Azerbaijan successfully develops the spheres UNESCO is directly involved with. As I mentioned, we have a rich historical heritage and an ancient culture. All our cultural monuments are protected by the state. A lot of attention is being paid to education. Literacy in Azerbaijan has reached nearly 100 per cent. A lot of attention is being paid to the development of science. Substantial work is under way to develop science. Funds are allocated. A Science Development Fund has been established. Azerbaijan develops new technologies. A few years ago, Azerbaijan became a member of a limited club of space-faring nations. Azerbaijan is rapidly developing its space industry because the future of any country depends on the level of science and education. In the future, it will depend on this even more, because the development of countries is mainly due to new technologies, innovation, and the development of science and education. We are paying great attention to this area. I believe that Azerbaijan's experience may prove interesting for some countries.

This year Baku hosted the first European Games in history. It should also be noted that European Games were held in Azerbaijan at the level of Summer Olympics. More than 6,000 athletes and thousands of visitors came to our country. All preparations were made in a short period of time – just two and a half years. The Games went down in history as the most beautiful, magnificent and well-organized Games. I believe that the holding of the First European Games in a Muslim country is not just a sports issue. At the same time, as I said earlier, it was our valuable contribution to multiculturalism, inter-religious and inter-ethnic relations. Two years later, in 2017, Baku will host Islamic Solidarity Games. Over the course of two years, Azerbaijan will hold European and Islamic Solidarity Games. These two events clearly show what positions Azerbaijan currently holds.

In 2008, we initiated the "Baku process". At that time, we invited the ministers of culture of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation member-states to a meeting of culture ministers of Council of Europe member countries held in Baku on Azerbaijan's initiative. Azerbaijan is a member of both the Council of Europe and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. It was the first such meeting. After that, we invited ministers from Council of Europe member-countries to the meeting of culture ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. This process was called the "Baku process". The "Baku process" is already playing a special role in the world. We try to address all of these issues, bolster understanding in the world, prevent confrontation and give people the chance to live in peace.

As I said, the holding of the 12th session of the ISESCO General Conference in Baku is a major event for our country. I am sure that guests will work effectively here. The issues discussed here will strengthen Islamic solidarity in the future, give an even greater impetus to work in the humanitarian sphere and serve mutual understanding on a global scale.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize the activities of the great friend of the Azerbaijani people, Mr. Altwajri, again. Mr. Altwajri plays a huge role in the world as the head of ISESCO and as a public figure. He supports Azerbaijan. He owns outstanding achievements in elevating ISESCO to its current level. I would like to perform a pleasant mission at today's forum with the participation of our guests. By my order, Mr. Altwajri is being awarded the State Order of Azerbaijan – the Order of "Friendship". Today I want to present this award to him.

MEETINGS OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN
H.E. Mr. ILHAM ALIYEV

- 11.07.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Special Envoy and Coordinator for International Energy Affairs at the US Department of State Amos Hochstein
- 23.07.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs James Warlick of the United States, Igor Popov of Russia, and Pierre Andrieu of France, as well as Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Andrzej Kasprzyk
- 10.08.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to Azerbaijan Nikolai Patskevich who is completing his diplomatic mission in the country
- 01.09.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation Sergei Lavrov
- 02.09.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received Director-General of the International Organization for Migration William Lacy Swing
- 03.09.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by President and Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Malaysian Petronas company Datuk Wan Zulkiflee Wan Ariffin
- 07.09.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received Secretary General of the World Customs Organization Kunio Mikuriya
- 08.09.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister of Foreign Affairs of San Marino Pasquale Valentini
- 15.09.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister of Health of the Russian Federation Veronika Skvortsova
- 16.09.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey Feridun Sinirlioglu
- 22.09.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Iraq Heydar Shiya Gubeyshi Al-Barrak as he ends his diplomatic mission in the country

- 23.09.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Chief Executive Officer of Italy's Snam Company Carlo Malacarne
- 28.09.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications of the Republic of Serbia Rasim Ljajic
- 28.09.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received Deputy Prime Minister of Turkmenistan Baymyrat Hojamammedov
- 29.09.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received the credentials of the newly-appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Hungary Imre Laslotsky
- 29.09.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Korea Choi Suk-inn as he ends his diplomatic mission in the country
- 30.09.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by European Union Special Representative for the South Caucasus Herbert Salber
- 01.10.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Governor of Saint Petersburg, the Russian Federation Georgy Poltavchenko
- 01.10.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received former President of the State of Israel Shimon Peres
- 02.10.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Customs and Trade of the Republic of Turkey Cenap Ascı
- 05.10.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received outgoing Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the French Republic Pascal Meunier
- 05.10.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Chief of the General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces Army General Hulusi Akar
- 08.10.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received participants of the 18th meeting of the Conference of Special Service Bodies of Turkic-speaking States

- 08.10.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received President of the International Fair Play Committee Jenö Kamuti, President of the European Fair Play Movement (EFPM) Christian Hinterberger and Vice-President Erdogan Aripinar
- 08.10.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received Chair of the Board of Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative Clare Short
- 10.10.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Garibashvili
- 19.10.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia Giorgi Kvirikashvili
- 19.10.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister of Foreign Affairs and Religion of the Republic of Costa Rica Manuel Gonzalez Sanz
- 20.10.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Governor of the Islamic Republic of Iran`s East Azerbaijan Province Esmail Jabbarzadeh
- 20.10.2015 President Ilham Aliyev accepted the credentials of newly-appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United Arab Emirates Mohammed Hamel Al Qubaisi
- 20.10.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received the credentials of newly-appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Swiss Confederation Philipp Stalder
- 22.10.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received head of the Republic of Dagestan of the Russian Federation Ramazan Abdulatipov
- 22.10.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received President of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Council Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu and chairperson of the Interstate Aviation Committee Tatiana Anodina
- 23.10.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by the World Bank's newly-appointed Vice President for Europe and Central Asia Cyril Muller

- 26.10.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Japanese Minister in charge of Economic Revitalization, Total Reform of Social Security and Tax, Minister of State for Economic and Fiscal Policy Akira Amari
- 27.10.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Prime Minister of Montenegro Milo Dukanovic
- 28.10.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs James Warlick of the United States, Igor Popov of Russia and Pierre Andrieu of France, as well as Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Andrzej Kasprzyk
- 29.10.2015 President Ilham Aliyev accepted the credentials of the newly-appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Arab Republic of Egypt Suzanne Mohamed Gamil
- 29.10.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received the credentials of the newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of India Sanjay Rana
- 01.11.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Speaker of the Parliament of Malta Anglu Farrugia
- 01.11.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received chairman of the Russian State Duma Committee on CIS Affairs, Eurasian Integration and Relations with Compatriots Leonid Slutsky
- 01.11.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received a Pakistani delegation led by Chairman of the Senate Defence Committee Mushahid Hussain Syed
- 01.11.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received Co-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP), former Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Philippines Jose de Venecia and Co-Chairman of the Standing Committee and Secretary General of the ICAPP Chung Eui-yong
- 01.11.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received Deputy Chairman of the Council of the Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation Ilyas Umakhanov

- 01.11.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation of members of the Australian Parliament led by member of the House of Representatives Luke Simpkins
- 02.11.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by chairman of the Executive Committee of the CIS, head of the CIS observation mission, who monitored the parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan, Sergey Lebedev
- 07.11.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by the United States Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus
- 10.11.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received the credentials of the newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Korea Kim Chang-gyu
- 10.11.2015 President Ilham Aliyev accepted the credentials of the newly-appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the French Republic Aurelia Bouchez
- 11.11.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received UN Resident Coordinator Antonius Broek as he ends his diplomatic mission in the country.
- 12.11.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Babatunde Osotimehin
- 13.11.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received a British delegation including member of the House of Lords, representative of the Labour Party, founder of the Senate Consulting Ltd and project manager of “Discover Azerbaijan: Baku 2015 Edition” book Lord David Evans, member of the Conservative Party Lord Richard Risby, members of the UK Parliament, representatives of the Labour Party Roger Duncan Godsiff, Stephen James McCabe, Patrissia Scotland and Executive Director of the Senate Consulting Ltd Caroline Minshell
- 23.11.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by US Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs Bridget Brink
- 25.11.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister of Economics of Latvia Dana Reizniece-Ozola

- 25.11.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received Director General of ISESCO Abdulaziz Othman Altwajri
- 26.11.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia Giorgi Mgebrishvili
- 26.11.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Secretary of State for Territorial Reform at the French Ministry of Decentralisation and Public Service, member of the government Andre Vallini
- 27.11.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Foreign Affairs Minister of the Turkish Republic Mevlut Cavusoglu
- 03.12.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister for Welfare of Latvia Uldis Augulis
- 03.12.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received chairman of the Russian Cinematographers Union, film director Nikita Mikhalkov
- 22.12.2015 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey Ismail Kahraman



**ACTIVITY OF THE MINISTER
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN,
Mr. ELMAR MAMMADYAROV
IN THE SECOND SEMESTER OF 2015**

**MEETINGS OF THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN Mr. ELMAR MAMMADYAROV**

- 23.07.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Richard Hoagland, United States Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs
- 23.07.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Tatiana Anodina, chairperson of the Interstate Aviation Committee
- 29.07.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Rafael Harpaz, Ambassador of the State of Israel to the Republic of Azerbaijan upon the termination of his diplomatic tenure.
- 29.07.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Nikolai Paskevich, Ambassador of the Republic of Belarus to the Republic of Azerbaijan upon the termination of his diplomatic tenure
- 25.08.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the delegation headed by Iyad bin Ameen Madani, the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.
- 25.08.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the delegation headed by Milica Markovic, the rapporteur of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
- 26.08.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Juris Maklakovs, the newly appointed Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia to the Republic of Azerbaijan

- 26.08.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Dan Stav, the newly appointed Ambassador of the State of Israel to the Republic of Azerbaijan
- 27.08.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Gennady Akhramovich, the newly appointed Ambassador of the Republic of Belarus to the Republic of Azerbaijan
- 03.09.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received William Lacy Swing, Director General of the International Organization for Migration
- 03.09.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Senator Nuzhat Sadiq, Chairperson of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Senate of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan
- 08.09.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Pasquale Valentini, Minister for Foreign and Political Affairs of the Republic of San Marino
- 14.09.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Jose Luis Cancela, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay
- 15.09.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Robert Walter, rapporteur of the Political Affairs Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict
- 16.09.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Feridun Sinirlioglu, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Turkey
- 18.09.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Pascal Aebischer, the Ambassador of Swiss Confederation to the Republic of Azerbaijan upon the termination of his diplomatic tenure
- 18.09.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the delegation headed by Dr. Evelyn N. Farkas, United States Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia, Ukraine and Eurasia
- 18.09.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Imre Laszloczki, the newly appointed Ambassador of Hungary to the Republic of Azerbaijan
- 01.10.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, the UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations

- 09.10.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Mohamad Ahmed Hamil Al-Qubaisi, the newly appointed Ambassador of United Arab Emirates to the Republic of Azerbaijan
- 09.10.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Sanjay Rana, the newly appointed Ambassador of the Republic of India to the Republic of Azerbaijan
- 09.10.2015 Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Ambassador of the Republic of Korea Choi Suk-inn to the Republic of Azerbaijan upon the termination of his diplomatic tenure
- 09.10.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Philipp Stalder, the newly appointed Ambassador of the Swiss Confederation to the Republic of Azerbaijan
- 09.10.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Suzanne Mouh Gamil, the newly appointed ambassador of Arab Republic of Egypt to the Republic of Azerbaijan
- 13.10.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Patrick Vial, regional director of the International Committee of the Red Cross for Europe and Central Asia
- 13.10.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Heydar Shiya Gubeysi al-Barrak, the Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to the Republic of Azerbaijan upon the termination of his diplomatic tenure
- 14.10.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Mohammad Alahaddin Ali Shouki-Hadid, special representative of the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt on Egypt's non-permanent membership to the UN Security Council
- 19.10.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received a delegation headed by Giorgi Kvirikashvili, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Georgia
- 20.10.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the delegation headed by Manuel Gonzalez Sanz, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Religion of the Republic of Costa Rica

- 20.10.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the delegation headed by Ismail Jabbarzadeh, Governor of East Azerbaijan province of the Islamic Republic of Iran
- 21.10.2015 Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Pascal Meunier Ambassador of French Republic to the Republic of Azerbaijan upon the termination of his diplomatic tenure
- 23.10.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the newly appointed ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the Republic of Azerbaijan, Kim Chang Gyu
- 02.11.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the delegation headed by David Wolpe, Rabbi of Sinai synagogue in Los-Angeles
- 02.11.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the delegation of Members of the Australia-Azerbaijan Inter-parliamentary Friendship Group headed by Luke Simpkins, Member of Australian Parliament
- 03.11.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the newly appointed Ambassador of the Republic of France to the Republic of Azerbaijan, Aurelia Bouchez
- 13.11.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the delegation headed by Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- 23.11.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the delegation headed by Bridget Brink, the U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs
- 27.11.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the delegation headed by Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Turkey
- 02.12.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the Minsk Group Co-Chairs
- 03.12.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Federal Foreign Minister of Germany
- 03.12.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Harlem Desir, Secretary of State for European Affairs of France

- 03.12.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received George Vella, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Malta
- 03.12.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Michael Link, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
- 03.12.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Ignacio Ybanez, Spanish Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
- 03.12.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Herbert Salber, European Union Special Representative for the South Caucasus
- 16.12.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the delegation headed by Thomas Mayr-Harting, Managing Director for Europe and Central Asia in the European External Action Service
- 16.12.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Antonius Broekon, UN Resident Coordinator in Azerbaijan, UNDP Resident Representative upon the termination of his mission
- 17.12.2015 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Assad Jose Jater Pena, Charge d’Affaires of the Embassy of the Republic of Colombia to the Republic of Azerbaijan upon the termination of his diplomatic term

INTERVIEW BY FOREIGN MINISTER ELMAR MAMMADYAROV ON THE CASE OF CHIRAGOV AND OTHERS V. ARMENIA

7 July 2015, Baku

Question: *On 16 June 2015, the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) announced its judgment (Merits) on the case of Chiragov and others v. Armenia. At the outset, could you please provide some general background information on this case?*

Elmar Mammadyarov: As you know, the case that you are referring to originated in an application against the Republic of Armenia lodged with the ECHR on 6 April 2005 by six Azerbaijani nationals, who were forcibly expelled from the occupied Lachin district of Azerbaijan during the Armenian aggression. In essence, the applicants submitted to the Court that they were prevented from returning to their homes in the Lachin district and were thus unable to enjoy their properties located there due to continuing occupation of the district of Lachin by the armed forces of Armenia. They submitted that this amounted to continuing violations of their property rights, guaranteed under Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and Article 8 of the Convention that protects the right to respect for private and family life. They also submitted that there was a violation of Article 13 of the Convention in that no effective remedy was available in respect of the above complaints. Finally, with a view to all complaints set out above, they complained that they were subjected to discrimination by virtue of ethnic origin and religious affiliation in violation of Article 14 of the Convention.

Question: *What the general conclusion the Court has arrived at?*

Elmar Mammadyarov: The Court ruled in favor of the applicants, recognizing continuing violations by Armenia of a number of their rights under the Convention. However, the importance of this ruling by an authoritative international court as this one goes beyond that.

Question: *What is in view of the Republic of Azerbaijan the primary significance of this judgment by ECHR?*

Elmar Mammadyarov: The judgment of the Court is indeed significant from a number of angles. First and foremost, ECHR effectively put an end to Armenia's persistent denial of its responsibility for the unlawful occupation of and military presence in the territories of Azerbaijan. As is known, since the beginning of Armenian aggression and in the course of the Court's proceedings in this case, in its usual attempts to mislead the international community and distort the root causes and essence of the conflict, the Republic of Armenia alleged that its jurisdiction did not extend to the

territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding territories; that it did not and could not have effective control of or exercise any public power on those territories; that it had not participated in the military conflict in question; that it had not taken part in the seizure of the Lachin district and in any later military actions; and that it did not have any military presence in Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding territories.

The Court, having examined the evidence presented to it by the applicants and the Government of Azerbaijan rejected all these allegations submitted by Armenia.

Furthermore, in paragraphs 14-18 of the judgment, ECHR noted in particular, that the war had started with calls for the incorporation of Nagorno-Karabakh into Armenia and specifically referred in that regard to a joint resolution on the “reunification” adopted in December 1989 by the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian SSR and the Nagorno-Karabakh regional council. Essentially, the Court confirmed that Armenia’s territorial claims and its attempts aimed at annexation of a part of the territory of Azerbaijan were the root cause of this armed conflict and triggered a full-fledged war.

In paragraph 180, the Court also confirmed, and I am quoting the judgment here, that “the Republic of Armenia, through its military presence and the provision of military equipment and expertise, has been significantly involved in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict from an early date”, that “[t]his military support has been – and continues to be – decisive for the conquest of and continued control over the territories in issue” and that “...the evidence ... convincingly shows that the armed forces of Armenia and the ‘NKR’ are highly integrated”. Based on this and other evidence testifying to the political, financial and other dependence of the separatist entity from Armenia, the Court in paragraph 186 concluded that “... the Republic of Armenia, from the early days of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, has had a significant and decisive influence over the ‘NKR’, that the two entities are highly integrated in virtually all important matters and that this situation persists to this day” and that “the ‘NKR’ and its administration survives by virtue of the military, political, financial and other support given to it by Armenia which, consequently, exercises effective control over Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding territories, including the district of Lachin”.

Question: *Despite of this unequivocal judgment of the Court, the Armenian side still asserts that Armenia does not occupy the territories of Azerbaijan and that there is nothing in this judgment of the Court that would testify the opposite. Armenia also claimed that this judgment applies only to the protection of the rights pertaining to the European Convention on Human Rights. What would be your reaction to these statements?*

Elmar Mammadyarov: It is unfortunate that Armenia, instead of drawing long overdue conclusions and embarking on a constructive path in the negotiations, sticks to its usual pattern of denial of undeniable with the sole purpose of misleading the international community and covering up its policy of occupation. Indeed, these allegations cannot be further from the truth. In order to refute these groundless speculations, suffice it to just read carefully the judgment, including in particular the paragraphs that I have just quoted.

The Court, referring to its case-law, observed that occupation within the meaning of international law exists when a State exercises actual authority over the territory or part of the territory of another State. In the Court's view, the requirement of actual authority is widely considered to be synonymous to that of effective control. Consequently, having examined the evidence presented, the Court concluded that Armenia exercised and continues to exercise effective control over the Nagorno-Karabakh and other occupied territories as a consequence of military occupation of these territories (paragraphs 96 and 168).

In contrast to what the Armenian officials assert, the Court arrived at an important conclusion that Nagorno-Karabakh, the district of Lachin and the other surrounding districts are part of Azerbaijan now under military occupation (paragraphs 146 and 173), that the international law of belligerent occupation/international humanitarian law applies in a given situation (paragraphs 96-97) and that Armenia is an occupier of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and exercises effective control over those territories as these terms are understood under international law.

Thus, the fact of occupation and effective control of the territories of Azerbaijan by Armenia is undisputed. The Court simply confirmed what has long ago been a matter of general repute and public knowledge internationally.

Question: *During the Court proceedings, as evidenced from the judgment, it appears that the Armenian side tried to justify the invasion, destruction and burning of Lachin and forcing of the Azerbaijani population to flee by “self-defense” and the “need to deliver food, medicine and other supplies into Nagorno-Karabakh”. The Armenian side claims that the Court took note, and I would like to quote them on that, “that in the situation of the ‘Azerbaijani aggression’ the ‘liberation’ of Lachin had a vital importance for the survival of the population of Nagorno-Karabakh”. Did the Court make such controversial statements?*

Elmar Mammadyarov: Obviously, sense of impunity of Armenia encourages it to solidify its notorious track-record of falsifying and distorting the facts on the ground and the documents of international organisations. These allegations are nothing more than another piece of blatant lie. Armenia even does not shy away from brazenly

attempting to manipulate the judgment of such a prominent institution as ECHR in broad daylight. There is no reference to “Azerbaijani aggression” or “liberation of Lachin” whatsoever in the judgment. I would simply invite all interested to consult the judgment of the Court which is available online. In fact, the Court rejected all the Armenian arguments that were designed to justify armed attacks and mass forcible expulsion of the civilians by ‘military necessity’

What is worrisome is the dangerous attempts of Armenia to justify its internationally wrongful acts by farfetched reasons. This is unacceptable and may seriously undermine the international efforts to protect universally recognized human rights norms guaranteed by the Convention and may compromise the Convention’s role as a constitutional instrument of European public order. The international community should be firm in rejecting such irresponsible attitude to the Convention and to ECHR.

Question: *What was the assessment of the Court of the circumstances under which the Azerbaijani population of Lachin was forced to leave their homes?*

Elmar Mammadyarov: Of particular importance is the determination by the Court, in paragraphs 19-20, that the district of Lachin, in particular the town of Lachin, was under military attack; that in mid-May 1992, Lachin was subjected to aerial bombardment, in the course of which many houses were destroyed; that the town was looted and burned; that Lachin and the surrounding villages were completely destroyed during the military conflict. The Court thus confirmed that the intension of the Armenian side was to inflict as much damage and sufferings as possible to the Azerbaijani population, forcing it to flee for their lives. We remember that the OSCE officials who visited the conflict area back in 1992-1993, condemned as unacceptable the Armenian side’s ‘scourged earth’ tactics, as they put it in their own words that very much resembled the notorious practice of ethnic cleansing.

One should also recall that military operation against the town of Khojaly in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, which was recorded in the history as the largest single day massacre of the Azerbaijani population in the course of the conflict, and attack on Lachin and subsequent invasion and occupation of the district of Kelbajar that were carried out with direct involvement of the armed forces of Armenia, elicited a series of well-known U.N. Security Council resolutions.

In this regard, one should recall that invasion and attack by the armed forces of a State of the territory of another State, or military occupation however temporary, resulting from such invasion or attack, as well as bombardment by the armed forces of a State against the territory of another State or the use of any weapons by a State against the territory of another State are the most egregious manifestations of aggression, as per 1974 consensus definition of the UN General Assembly.

Undeniably, military attacks by the Armenian and Armenian-backed troops against Lachin and other towns and villages of Azerbaijan and aerial bombardments, as was confirmed by the Court, constitute armed attacks, triggering the right of self-defense of Azerbaijan in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter and customary international law that solidifies once and for all.

Question: *After the announcement of the judgment, the Armenian side made a number of contradictory statements. While the deputy minister of justice and authorized representative of Armenia in ECHR, Emil Babayan stated on 13 June that the Court's ruling may have political and geopolitical implications and that any ruling will inevitably have its impact on the peaceful settlement of the conflict and the negotiations process, Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian in his recent comments asserted that this ruling of ECHR on the Chiragov case cannot have any impact on the negotiation process. What is, in your view, behind these conflicting messages coming from Yerevan and could you please elaborate on the potential impact of the judgment on the negotiation process?*

Elmar Mammadyarov: Obviously, as was expected, the judgment created a shock wave throughout Armenia. The conflicting statements indicate that the Armenian side is worried about this unprecedented judgement of the Court and its inevitable far-reaching implications.

As I noted, this ruling by ECHR is significant in many respects. This is the first judgment of an authoritative Court that, while considering the merits of the case, provided impartial, third party analysis of the situation and legal assessment of the circumstances that led to the violation of fundamental human rights of Azerbaijani citizens guaranteed under the Convention.

In particular, the Court reaffirmed the right of displaced persons to return to their homes or places of habitual residence and recalled the relevant standards and principles of international humanitarian and human rights law relating to the legal and technical issues surrounding housing and property restitution. In this context, in the Court's view, as reflected in paragraph 195 of the judgment, continued presence of Armenian and Armenian-backed troops and ceasefire breaches is the major obstacle for the Azerbaijanis to return to their homes in the current circumstances.

From day one Azerbaijan has been saying that continued illegal presence of the armed forces of Armenia in the occupied territories is the major threat to regional peace and the obstacle for the conflict resolution. The Court essentially concurred with the position of Azerbaijan that the withdrawal of Armenian troops is a sine qua non condition for the protection of the rights of the Azerbaijani citizens under the Convention and more broadly for the conflict resolution.

Furthermore, for us the return of the Azerbaijani population to their homes in the Nagorno-Karabakh region and the surrounding territories that are now under occupation is one of the most important, and, I would say, existential issue. Armenia, on the contrary, always tried to prevent or condition the return of the Azerbaijani population to their homes. The Court made it clear that the ongoing negotiations within the OSCE Minsk Group do not provide a legal justification for the interference with the rights of the Azerbaijani internally displaced persons, including the proprietary rights that are still valid, and recalled Armenia's obligations towards Azerbaijani citizens who had to flee during the conflict. According to the Court (paragraph 148 of the judgment), attempts of the Armenian side to extinguish the land rights of the Azerbaijani displaced persons who had fled the occupied territories cannot be considered legally valid. Having found the violation by Armenia of the rights of the Azerbaijani internally displaced persons, the Court concluded that Armenia had failed to discharge the burden of proving the availability to the applicants of a remedy capable of providing redress in respect of their Convention complaints and offering reasonable prospects of success. For the same reasons, the Court found that there was no available effective remedy in respect of the denial of access to the applicants' possessions and homes in the district of Lachin.

The ruling of the Court reaffirmed that the right to return of the Azerbaijani population is undisputed and any solution will have to ensure effective exercise of this right.

What should not be overlooked is that the said judgment of the Court's Grand Chamber is final and legally binding. The Council of Europe has a well-established mechanism to monitor the implementation of the Court's decisions. After the judgment of ECHR, the issue of protection of the rights of Azerbaijani population expelled from the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh and the other surrounding territories shall remain on the radar screen of the Council of Europe and its structures.

Question: *In the context of impact of this ruling on the negotiation process, what international responsibilities of Armenia are derived from this judgment?*

Elmar Mammadyarov: The major conclusion from the Court's judgment must be that due to its initial and continuing aggression against Azerbaijan and military occupation of its internationally recognized territory, expulsion of hundreds of thousands of the citizens of Azerbaijan from the occupied territory and the denial of their return to their homes and access to their property in those areas, the Republic of Armenia bears full international responsibility for the breaches of international law that have occurred and continue to occur.

A key element of State responsibility, and one particularly significant for present purposes, is the obligation to cease violations, to offer appropriate assurances and guarantees that they will not recur and to provide full reparation for injury.

Consequently, Armenia is under the obligation, in the first place, to put an end to the occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan and to withdraw immediately, completely and unconditionally its armed forces from these territories. The implementation of that obligation, which would create necessary conditions for the return of Azerbaijani internally displaced persons, can in no way be considered or introduced as a compromise and used as a 'bargaining chip' in the conflict settlement process.

Question: *What was the position of the Court on the illegal regime established by Armenia in the occupied territories?*

Elmar Mammadyarov: During the Court proceedings, Armenia asserted that “the ‘NKR’ was a sovereign, independent state possessing all the characteristics of an independent state under international law”; that “it exercised control and jurisdiction over Nagorno-Karabakh and the territories surrounding it”; that “the Republic of Armenia and the ‘NKR’ were different countries”, and that “the ‘NKR’, since its formation, had carried out its political, social and financial policies independently”.

The Court having considered the evidence presented, rejected these allegations and confirmed in paragraph 148 its conclusion from the admissibility decision of 14 December 2011, according to which “the ‘NKR’ is not recognized as a State under international law” and reaffirmed in paragraph 28 that “self-proclaimed independence of the “NKR” has not been recognised by any State or international organization”, thus reiterating the position of the international community that overwhelmingly rejected this entity and refused to recognise as legitimate the situation created through the use of force against the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, accompanied by the notorious practice of ethnic cleansing and other flagrant violations of the peremptory norms of international law. Moreover, the Court made it clear that the separatist regime is totally dependent on Armenia and “survives by virtue of the military, political, financial and other support given to it by Armenia” (para 186).

Question: *What consequences for other States arise in light of the ruling of the Court?*

Elmar Mammadyarov: The Court in its judgment made specific references to the relevant international humanitarian law instruments dealing with the military occupation and ruled that they apply in the present case. Serious breaches of obligations under peremptory norms of general international law, and Armenia violated a number of such norms, give rise to additional consequences affecting not only Armenia, but also all other States, which include, inter alia, duties of States to cooperate in order to bring to an end such breaches by lawful means and not to recognize as lawful a situation created by a serious breach, nor render aid or assistance in maintaining that situation.

It is an established principle of general international law that no territorial acquisition resulting from the threat or use of force shall be recognized as legal, as reaffirmed by UN Security Council resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993) adopted with regard to the armed conflict in question. This understanding also applies to individual rights and freedoms, the violation of which can in no way produce the outcome that was designed by the perpetrator and that would serve for its benefit.

It is therefore critical that the international community insist on the implementation of the above-mentioned U.N. Security Council resolutions, to which the Court refers extensively in its judgment, that demand the withdrawal of the Armenian occupying forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and support the return of displaced persons to their places of origin in safety and dignity. It is obvious that the judgment of the Court should also guide the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

Question: *The Armenian side claims that, in its address at the PACE Summer Session on 22 June, Mr. Igor Crnadak, Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, allegedly confirmed that the conflict settlement process runs within the framework of the Minsk Group Co-chairs and has nothing to do with the mentioned judgments of ECHR. How would you comment this statement?*

Elmar Mammadyarov: The Armenian side's allegations are yet another falsification. The video-recording of Mr. Crnadak's remarks is available online. In reality, in response to a question on the implementation of the Court's decision, Mr. Crnadak said, and I quote him here, that "[t]he Committee of Ministers will commence the supervision of the execution of these judgments and certainly the Chairmanship will be very much focused on this and this will be important for us." He also said that "[e]xecution of the Court judgment is the obligation under article 46 of the European Convention on Human Rights and should go hand in hand with continuing efforts to establish an overall peace settlement". The Armenian side is also inaccurately paraphrases Mr. Crnadak's statement on the mediation efforts. Mr. Crnadak noted that "[m]ediation for the settlement of the conflict is the responsibility of the OSCE Minsk Group". It is irresponsible, to say the least, to put words into the mouth of such high-ranking official of the Council of Europe.

Question: *The Armenian side claims that there are certain formulations in the Sargsyan vs. Azerbaijan case that make Azerbaijan to refrain from reacting to this case. Is this the case and what is the reaction of Azerbaijan vis-à-vis this judgment of the Court?*

Elmar Mammadyarov: First, we were never approached for the comment on this particular case. But, I will gladly satisfy the curiosity of our Armenian colleagues. As you may know, when Azerbaijani applicants lodged the case with ECHR on

the violation of their rights under the Convention, as is always the case, Armenia followed the suit and made an Armenian national, certain Minas Sargsyan, to lodge with the Court a similar complaint in 2006 in an effort to mitigate the fall-out from the unprecedented consideration by ECHR of the violation of the fundamental rights of Azerbaijani IDPs on a massive scale as a result of occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan by Armenia.

In short, the case originated in an application by this applicant who alleged the denial of his right to return to the village of Gulistan in Goranboy district of Azerbaijan and to have access to his property there. I should mention in the outset that in paragraph 218 the Court specifically emphasized that the applicant was not deprived of his rights in respect of the house and land in Gulistan. It continued that the case does not involve a deprivation of property. Nor has it been claimed that the situation complained of was the result of any measures aimed at the control of the use of property.

Now, I cannot emphasize enough that the position of Azerbaijan on the issue of IDPs and refugees has been consistent and has not changed. We are the most interested party in the early return of displaced people to their homes. Population displacement is a direct result of Armenia's unlawful actions that the Court referred to in the Chiragov case. Indeed, it is Armenia who constantly introduces obstacles and unrealistic conditions to prevent by all means the return of displaced population, in particular to the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan and to consolidate the results of ethnic cleansing carried out on a massive scale. We have consistently stated on numerous occasions that a number of measures, starting with the withdrawal of the Armenian forces, removal of UXOs, rehabilitation of the territories need to be taken to create conditions and to ensure safe and dignified return of the displaced population.

As far as the Sargsyan vs. Azerbaijan case is concerned, there are number of provisions in this judgment that the Armenian side simply downplays and fails to mention because they make them uncomfortable, to say the least. Thus, to the disappointment of Armenia, in paragraphs 215-216 the Court once again observed that the conflict is between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In paragraph 30, the Court noted that former "Shahumyan" district (Goranboy) "was... claimed by the 'NKR' as part of its territory". Having considered the evidence presented, the Court in paragraphs 134 and 139 determined that this district, in which the village Gulistan is situated, is an internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan, thus rejecting Armenia's claims. Furthermore, in paragraph 130, the Court reaffirmed that military occupation is temporary in nature and does not result in the transfer of sovereignty.

Question: *The Armenian side, while commenting on the statement by Azerbaijan that the withdrawal of the armed forces of Armenia will ensure conditions conducive to the return of displaced people and that this issues should in no way be*

considered as a compromise, claimed that Azerbaijan by its 'arbitrary' and 'selective interpretations' once again opposes the proposals contained in the five statements of the leaders of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-chair countries. The Armenian side also stated that the Co-chairs consider these elements as an integrated whole as any attempt to select some elements over others would make it impossible to achieve a balanced solution". How would you comment this?

Elmar Mammadyarov: This is not the first time that the Armenian side distorts the essence of the negotiation process. The position of Azerbaijan on this issue has been repeated in the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan of 16 June in the wake of announcement by ECHR of its judgment on Chiragov case. We made it clear that Azerbaijan does not consider the withdrawal of Armenian forces and return of displaced population as a 'compromise'. The attitude of the Armenian side that you refer to clearly shows who is creating obstacles for the realization of the fundamental rights of IDPs that the Court ordered to be protected.

Furthermore, there is indeed nothing in the proposals of the Co-Chairs that identify the withdrawal of the Armenian forces or return of Azerbaijani IDPs to their homes as a "compromise". These are key steps without which there will be no settlement. Azerbaijan adheres to the phased approach in the conflict settlement, which is inevitable and has no alternative. The Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group are aware of this, and their mandate is based on this understanding.

The resolution of the conflict is possible only on the basis of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders. The territorial integrity of Azerbaijan has never been and will never be a subject of negotiations. Azerbaijan remains committed to the conflict settlement process based on this understanding.

The statements of the Co-Chairs cannot be a substitute for a comprehensive peace agreement based on international law that Azerbaijan has been proposing to start working on a while ago. Rather than seeking ways to prolong the status-quo of occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan, Armenia must reconsider its unconstructive stance that will be more and more difficult to stick to, especially in light of the recent judgment of ECHR. The sooner Armenia reconciles with the reality, the earlier the conflict will be resolved and the countries and peoples in the region will benefit from the prospects of cooperation and economic development.

Azerbaijan once again calls on the Armenian side, instead of wasting time and misleading its own people and the international community, to cease its policy of annexation and ethnic cleansing and to engage constructively in the conflict settlement process and comply with its international obligations.

**SPEECH BY MR. ELMAR MAMMADYAROV, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, AT THE MEETING
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE COOPERATION COUNCIL OF TURKIC SPEAKING STATES**
10 September 2015, Astana

Distinguished Ministers,
Mr. Secretary General,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Expressing my delight for participating in today's meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Turkic Council, I greet the delegations from friendly and fraternal countries and representatives of relevant bodies of the Council. I avail myself of this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan for extended warm hospitality and excellent arrangement of our meeting.

Our organization was established on the basis of our common language, history, culture and traditions. One of the main priorities of the Turkic Council is to develop and strengthen multilateral cooperation among the member states through concrete projects in various fields, like security, economy, energy, transport, culture, tourism, education, science and technology.

1. Security challenges

We strongly believe that peace and stability are much more needed to have sustainable development and prosperity. Azerbaijan makes its contributions to the international cooperation in the field of regional security and fight against terrorism. We make every effort to maintain peace, stability and wellbeing not only in our region, but also beyond it.

Two member states of our organization: Azerbaijan and Turkey have strengthened military ties in the last years; they have engaged in more frequent and larger military exercises in both countries. Such an increasing military ties between Azerbaijan and Turkey will improve combat readiness and ability, as well as organization of interaction giving both countries more flexibility in the strategic, but sensitive Caucasus region.

Availing myself of his opportunity I would like to extend my deepest condolences to our brother Mr. Feridun Sinirlioglu and the families of victims of the recent heinous terror attacks that took place in Turkey.

Recent developments all over the world once again confirmed that the main pillars to maintain peace and stability are the respect by the states for each other's sovereignty,

territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized borders, as well as refraining from policy of aggression. Nevertheless, Azerbaijan's sovereignty and territorial integrity have been violated for more than 20 years as result of Armenian occupation. 20% of Azerbaijan's land is still under occupation. Ethnic cleansing policy against our indigenous population executed by Armenia and almost one million Azerbaijanis became refugees and internally displaced. All international norms and principles, including basic conventional human rights were impudently violated. Still now, Armenia flagrantly ignores four UN Security Council resolutions adopted in 1993 on immediate, unconditional and complete withdrawal of Armenian occupying forces from Azerbaijan's lands.

2. Economic privileges

As far as economic cooperation within the Turkic Council, it is important to highlight that geographic location of member states provides an ample opportunity to benefit from our countries' competitive transit potential. Therefore, I believe that developing transport infrastructure, and most importantly, interconnectivity and infrastructure in our geography should remain one of key areas of cooperation. An ever increasing demand for passenger and cargo transportation across Eurasia makes it imperative to strengthen the East-West transport corridor (specifically its Trans-Caspian component) that would undoubtedly help revive the Historic Silk Road so much cherished by our ancestors. It is also important to develop logistic capabilities of our ports and promote policies on simplifying the transit system and increasing the quality of multimodal cargo transportation. The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway due to be commissioned next year will pave the way for competitive, reliable and time-friendly shipments of passengers and cargo from China to Europe and vice versa and would help unlock the huge transit potential of our countries and generate a stable source of income for our economies. To this end, we strongly support the regular meetings of relevant ministries and entities in the framework of the Turkic Council and welcome proposals that would strengthen the capability of the afore-mentioned transport corridor.

As you are aware, Azerbaijan has always offered its infrastructure for the transit of the Caspian energy resources to Western markets. Today, Azerbaijan also plays a significant role as an initiator and enabler of mega energy projects of trans-regional importance, such the Southern Gas Corridor. The expansion of the South Caucasus Pipeline and construction of TANAP and TAP pipelines, main components of the Southern Gas Corridor, is well under way. It will connect the giant Shah Deniz gas field in Azerbaijan through Georgia and Turkey to Europe.

We also support initiatives on cooperation in ICT, renewable energy, small and medium size entrepreneurship development and private sector engagement among

the member states. I would like to emphasize the importance of our partnership in tourism and exploring new investment opportunities in this sector.

3. Humanitarian collaboration affairs

Cooperation in the humanitarian field is one of the main areas of our partnership. We do appreciate the work done by TURKSOY which have played a significant role in promoting culture of Turkic nations since its inception. I think it's very important for Turkic Academy and Turkic Cultural Heritage Fund, which have been founded in 2012, to complete relevant procedures and to act as international organizations as soon as possible. Regular meetings of ministers and working groups in the field of education will allow us to implement joint projects in this direction. Projects like preparation of joint book on Turkic history, interuniversity association, student-teacher exchange programs, will give an impetus to the development of our cooperation in this field. Yet another promising dimension of our engagement within the Turkic Council could be youth and sports.

Taking into account the expansion of the global information space with each passing day and the use of it as a powerful outreach activity mechanism, holding this year's Summit under the slogan "cooperation in the fields of media and information" meets requirements of today. We do appreciate cooperation in this field and support recently adopted resolutions during the first meeting of the heads of media and information structures of the Member States in Astana.

It is important to continue cooperation towards coordination and mutual support for the candidacies of the member states and common position within international organizations, especially United Nations. We have to strengthen our efforts in the direction of gaining observer status for Turkic Council to UN and OIC. On the other hand the Council's cooperation with OIC, OSCE, UN agencies - World Tourism Organization and UN Development Programme is laudable.

In conclusion, I would like to wish successful deliberations to this important event and express our high appreciation to Turkic Council Secretary General and his highly dedicated team for the professionalism in the realization of the goals and principles of our Organization.

See you on informal meeting in New York on the margin of the United Nations General Assembly.

Thank you.

**INTERVIEW BY FOREIGN MINISTER ELMAR MAMMADYAROV
ON EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION**

16 September 2015, Baku

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov in the framework of joint press-conference with Ferudun Siniroghlu, Foreign Minister of Turkey in an interview on European Parliament Resolution stated the following:

This resolution has inflicted damage to the relations of Azerbaijan with the European Union.

The resolution adopted in hasty manner puts biased and slanderous claims against Azerbaijan. Contrary to any essence of international relations, absurd and insulting accusations beyond ethical norms are used in Resolution. This is utterly unacceptable.

Adoption of the Resolution can't be explained within diplomatic logic. Azerbaijan is an independent and sovereign country. There is no way a sovereign country could accept political pressure and dictate.

We think it would be more appropriate for the European Parliament to pay necessary attention to more important and critical problems spread through Europe, such as discrimination and xenophobia, Islamophobia, radicalism, extremism and inhumane treatment of migrants.

It is regrettable that the European Parliament can't find the same courage to discuss and formulate an opinion with regard to the case of presenting the death of migrant kid as an object of caricature and joke under the freedom of press.

We state that any organization chosen the way of expression beyond ethical norms and cross the "red line", will get the same adequate and non-adequate response by our side.

STATEMENT BY MR. ELMAR MAMMADYAROV, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, AT THE UNITED NATIONS SUMMIT FOR THE ADOPTION OF POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

26 September 2015, New York

Mr. President,

It is one of the historic moments as we have gathered to take a decision on the adoption of a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centered set of universal and transformative goals. I commend the successful conclusion of the negotiations on the post-2015 Development Agenda.

As one of the fastest growing economies, Azerbaijan has achieved impressive results in the field of development. Despite global economic and financial crises, in the first half of 2015 Azerbaijan registered economic growth of 5.7%, with the growth in the non-oil sector was 9.2%. Azerbaijan has managed to become one of crucial players of the global market in energy infrastructure projects such as Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline through the construction of Trans-Anatolian and Trans-Adriatic natural gas pipeline and the Southern Gas Corridor which will connect energy pipeline networks of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey, Greece, Albania and Italy. Azerbaijan also has initiated strategic transport infrastructure projects, such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway project which will connect railroads systems of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey, and the new Baku International Sea Trade Port allowing short and efficient connection between East and West as reviving ancient Silk Road.

With a view to delivering equitable and efficient services to the citizens, the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations was established in Azerbaijan. This Agency already covers most of the goals of a new sustainable development agenda adopted by our Summit yesterday. Success of this innovative model is widely recognized and was awarded with the United Nations Public Service Award 2015.

The commitment to contribute to international development is widely shared across our public. The leading non-governmental organization in Azerbaijan, the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, has implemented numerous social, humanitarian and development projects in a number of countries.

We attach primary importance to the promotion of intercultural dialogue, religious tolerance and understanding among peoples. Azerbaijan is going to host the 7th Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in 2016. We are proud that the First European Games was held this year in Azerbaijan, and in 2017 Azerbaijan will host the Islamic Solidarity Games.

Regretfully, the challenges to peace and security were and are one of the impediments to the regional sustainable development and cooperation. The ongoing military occupation by neighbouring Armenia of almost 20% of the territories of Azerbaijan, in blatant violation of international law and the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council, continues to represent a serious threat to international peace and security. By impudently violating basic conventional human rights, Armenia carried out ethnic cleansing policy against almost one million Azerbaijani population in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and in Armenia itself. As a result they became refugees and internally displaced. Putting an end to the occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan and ensuring the return of the forcibly displaced people to their homes, is an essential element for the implementation of sustainable development agendas in our region.

Thank you.

**STATEMENT BY MR. ELMAR MAMMADYAROV,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC
OF AZERBAIJAN, AT THE PEACEKEEPING SUMMIT**

28 September 2015, New York

Honorable Ministers,
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to join the previous speakers in honouring the memory of the peacekeepers who have lost their lives in the cause of peace and in paying tribute to all the men and women who have served and continue to serve in peacekeeping operations.

We express our appreciation to the UN Secretary General and the President of the United States for initiating this political process in support of the peacekeeping activities of the United Nations.

The tenfold increase in the personnel size and significant diversification in the mandates of UN peacekeeping operations during just over ten years testify to the magnitude of the threats to international peace and security. On the other hand, it confirms the confidence of Member States in the United Nations as the central organization for international efforts to maintain global peace and security.

However, we cannot achieve international peace and security by peacekeeping alone. Peacekeeping is a response to an underlying problem, which usually arises due to blatant violation of the norms and principles of international law. Without diminishing the importance and contributions made by peacekeeping, we need remember that first and foremost requirement for restoring and preserving peace and security is to ensuring compliance by States with their obligations under international law, most notably those relating to respect for the political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

Azerbaijan supports peacekeeping operations of the United Nations as one of the indispensable mechanisms in maintaining international peace and security. As a country suffering from military aggression, occupation and ethnic cleansing by neighbouring Armenia and situated in the proximity to other conflicts, Azerbaijan is committed to establishing lasting peace and security in the region and beyond on the basis of the generally accepted norms and principles of international law. Since 1999, Azerbaijan has contributed considerable military personnel to the peacekeeping missions in Kosovo (KFOR), Afghanistan (ISAF), and Iraq.

Currently, Azerbaijan participates in the NATO-led “Resolute Support” operation in

Afghanistan. We are looking forward to further cooperating and supporting the UN peacekeeping activities, including by providing training facilities in Azerbaijan for capacity building, as well as for other mission support with staff offices.

Thank you.

STATEMENT BY MR. ELMAR MAMMADYAROV, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, AT THE HIGH-LEVEL FORUM ON LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES “LINKING LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES INTO GLOBAL OPPORTUNITIES”

28 September 2015, New York

Excellencies,
Honorable Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great privilege to participate at this high-level forum on landlocked developing countries.

According to UNESCAP statistics, Azerbaijan’s development cost of being landlocked equals to 11.24%. As a landlocked developing country, Azerbaijan has always viewed its integration in global economy as an important policy choice to achieve sustainable and inclusive development and accelerate economic diversification.

Azerbaijan welcomes the Vienna Programme of Action for landlocked developing countries as a strategic guidance for successful realization of its long-term economic sustainability goals. We believe that concerted actions of participating States to promote implementation of the Programme will help turn the challenge of being landlocked into an opportunity for mutually beneficial cooperation. Over the course of past several years, Azerbaijan has pioneered a number of important initiatives in ICT, transport and energy that have undoubtedly contributed to unlocking the region’s huge potential to meet its development aspirations.

According to UNESCAP, Azerbaijan has the most robust cross-border connectivity and a highly developed ICT sector among the landlocked developing countries. Consequently, Azerbaijan has emerged as an important ICT hub for the region, especially through the implementation of Trans Eurasian Information Super Highway (TASIM) initiative. TASIM will help build broadband connectivity, promote development of ICT infrastructure and e-commerce across Eurasia and will further contribute to bridging the digital divide well beyond the boundaries of the immediate region.

We are also aware of the reality that effective integration of the landlocked developing countries into the global economy requires building efficient multimodal transport links. In this context, the restoration of the Historic Great Silk Way bears a strategic role in strengthening economic ties between Europe and Asia. Azerbaijan’s state-of-the-art transport transit infrastructure provides excellent avenues for its partners to

expand inter and intra-regional trade through securing a more reliable, sustainable and economically viable route for international carriage of passengers and goods and increasing the volume of multimodal transportation.

In partnership with neighboring Turkey and Georgia, Azerbaijan has supported and financed the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) railway as the shortest transport connection between Europe and Asia. The country has also successfully put into operation the new Baku International Sea Trade Port. The first test container arrived at the new Port from China across the Caspian in August 2015. Importantly, Azerbaijan's recent accession to the Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) will provide a uniform framework for the international carriage of passengers and freight by rail between Asia and Europe and vice versa.

Contribution to regional energy security remains the cornerstone of our vision. Azerbaijan has demonstrated its leadership in the process of initiating a number of energy projects of trans-regional value. The projects launched by Azerbaijan have fostered socio-economic progress in the region and have had a positive spill-over effect well beyond the country's national borders. In this regard, as an enabler of the Southern Gas Corridor, we believe that contributing to European energy security is, in fact, a win-win situation for other energy producers of the region, consumers and transit countries alike.

I would be remiss if I did not mention an important challenge for my country to be able to reap the benefits of regional cooperation. This challenge is being linked to the ongoing occupation by Armenia of the territories of Azerbaijan, in blatant violation of international law and the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council, that has had a heavy human toll, forced hundreds of thousands civilians to leave their homes, led to the destruction of considerable parts of the country's infrastructure and continues to pose a serious economic burden.

I would like to conclude by emphasizing that Azerbaijan is open for a constructive dialogue and cooperation in the LLDC framework with a view to further contributing to the socio-economic prosperity of the region.

Thank you.

STATEMENT BY MR. ELMAR MAMMADYAROV, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, AT THE INFORMAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION (BSEC) MEMBER STATES

29 September 2015, New York

Mr. Chairman,
Dear Ministers and Heads of Delegations,
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to greet the participants and thank you, Mr. Chairman, for organizing this meeting. I would also like to warmly welcome Ambassador Michael Christidis and wish him the best of luck and every success in discharging the demanding functions of the Secretary General.

This informal meeting is another opportunity for exchanging views on recent developments within the Organization and for shaping our common vision with respect to BSEC's role in the wider geography.

Taking stock of BSEC's activities over the course of the recent decade, we believe that pursuing the path of consistent reforms within the Organization adds value to the ongoing debate on the necessity to raise the effectiveness and efficiency of the Organization, enhance its legal and institutional capabilities and, most importantly, achieve a flexible decision-making mechanism.

The process of reforms should also lead to transforming BSEC PERMIS into the strong professional executive body, capable of generating ideas and initiatives as well as fulfilling respective decisions and resolutions. We should also restrain from embracing every field of cooperation. Our activities should be based on specific and agreed priorities and be relevant to our organizational capacities and limited human and financial resources. As one of the BSEC founding members, Azerbaijan realizes the important role that BSEC plays in the region and is genuinely interested in strengthening the effectiveness of the Organization. In this regard, we support the BSEC reform process that would help it better adapt to the changing realities of the global development agenda and better respond to the needs of its members.

To be precise, we suggest that the number of BSEC subsidiary bodies be reduced and the efforts be taken towards the consolidation of their activities. It is also important to strengthen the activity of the Working Groups as a core part of the subsidiary bodies.

With this in mind, Azerbaijan has recently assumed the duties of the country-coordinator of two Working Groups, namely, on Customs Matters and on Science and Technology. We hosted the meetings of these groups, during which important policy issues were discussed and the road maps for streamlining cooperation within these Working Groups were adopted. With a view to further contributing to the work of the Organization, Azerbaijan has also volunteered to take up the functions of the country-coordinator within the Working Group on Information and Communication Technologies. We believe that scientific development in cohesion with ICT is one of promising areas of successful cooperation in the BSEC region. We are in a position to allocate sufficient resources and establish an interactive working platform for sharing of expertise and project generation that would undoubtedly strengthen the effect of our common endeavors in the respective area.

As far as practical modalities of the functioning of the Organization are concerned, we uphold the view that strengthening the BSEC's financial and budgetary system is an inevitable precondition for the effective implementation of challenges that the Organization is currently facing.

Mr. Chairman,

Development of economic cooperation depends on an adequate and timely response to numerous and complex challenges encountered by the BSEC Member States. One of key obstacles for ensuring a full-scale regional cooperation is the existence of protracted armed conflicts, which are the major source of instability and a serious impediment to the economic development. For that reason, while setting its reform guidelines, our Organization should not overlook the existing and potential threats present in the BSEC region and be able to timely identify and adequately respond to them. Needless to say that lasting peace, stability and cooperation in the region require, first and foremost, the resolution of these conflicts on the basis of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the internationally recognized borders of States.

Thank you.

**STATEMENT BY MR. ELMAR MAMMADYAROV,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, AT THE NINTH CONFERENCE
ON FACILITATING THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE
NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY
29 September 2015, New York**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to express our appreciation to H.E. Mr. Lassina Zerbo, Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), for his enduring work aimed at the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and ensuring the effectiveness of CTBTO activities. We are also grateful to the Presidents of the Conference for their dedicated efforts towards facilitating the preparation for this important Conference.

We welcome the fact that CTBT has achieved near universal adherence with signatures by 183 States and ratification by 164 States. At the same time, despite the aspiration to achieve the early entry into force of the treaty, which has been so clearly expressed by the international community on numerous occasions, more should be done to ensure the universality of CTBT and worldwide nuclear security.

We commend the efforts undertaken so far by the Preparatory Commission and the Provisional Technical Secretariat on the implementation of the treaty clauses, in particular on the establishment of the International Monitoring System, the On-site Inspection elements and the International Data Center in Vienna.

In addition to its primary function, the treaty verification system brings scientific and civil benefits, including disaster alert systems, through civil and scientific applications of waveform and radionuclide technologies and use of the data. We are encouraged that CTBT verification regime has demonstrated its utility in providing accurate real-time data relating to major earthquakes, tsunamis and nuclear accidents, as well as other civil scientific applications to all signatory States. Since the data accumulated in the International Data Center could be used for the civil and scientific purposes, it is important to seek the ways to ensure that those capabilities are broadly benefited by the international community.

We also commend the Provisional Technical Secretariat for providing relevant training courses and workshops, and rendering assistance to the signatory States

for advancing their capabilities to ensure the effective implementation of the treaty clauses.

In that regard, we note the technical assistance provided three years ago within the framework of the Capacity Building Program that ensured the provision of relevant basic equipment and technologies for the National Data Center established in the Institute of Geology of the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan. While this assistance significantly contributed to the capabilities of the National Data Center in Azerbaijan, more efforts are needed to revitalize the activities and operation and to receive more capacity building assistance for the Center.

Azerbaijan is interested in further strengthening its national capacities, especially through receiving state-of-the-art technologies and expanding training opportunities for specialists on verification technologies, and other areas of activities of CTBTO.

Thank you.

**STATEMENT BY MR. ELMAR MAMMADYAROV,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN,
AT THE HIGH-LEVEL THEMATIC DEBATE OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE UNITED NATIONS ON THE THEME OF “MAINTENANCE
OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY” IN COMMEMORATION
OF THE SEVENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

1 October 2015, New York

Mr. President,

Since the establishment of the United Nations, significant achievements have been attained in practical implementation of the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.

Throughout this period, the international security environment has changed considerably. Threats have become more complex and interlinked, the line between traditional and emerging challenges has become blurred. The balance of power in international relations has also shifted. What we also observe is that the principles of the UN Charter guiding inter-State relations are being misinterpreted or implemented with reservations, if not neglected at all, while some of them are being referred to cover up unlawful actions: the threat or use of force, territorial acquisitions, and forcible population displacement. Double standards in application of the principles contribute to instability, stalemate in conflict settlement processes and have the potential to escalate the situation.

The deterioration of the security throughout the world especially during the past two decades has increased human sufferings. This has also drained huge resources from the United Nations, which is evident from the significant increase in its peacekeeping activities. Therefore, there is a need for more proactive efforts by the UN in conflict prevention, mediation and peace building.

We regard the ensuring coherence and balance among core functions of the United Nations as a key prerequisite for realization of the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. In international relations, States should make efforts to maintain international peace and security to enable conditions for sustainable development and cooperation and promoting respect for human rights. The vast majority of human rights violations are directly or indirectly related to armed conflicts and blatant disregard of the norms and principles governing inter-State relations. Therefore, it would be appropriate if the United Nations had a reinvigorated approach to addressing international security with the similar perseverance and energy as it rightly embraces on the development agenda. Probably, we might consider the idea of setting tangible security goals to improve collective measures on prevention, removing and suppression of aggressions against the sovereignty and territorial

integrity of States, terrorism, violent extremism and other threats to the peace.

In this regard, I would like to specifically refer to the ongoing conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Armenia's destructive policy represents a serious challenge to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and to the Organization as a whole. Armenia continues to use force against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of another Member State and occupy its territories, to enjoy impunity for mass atrocities against the Azerbaijani civilians, to consolidate the current status quo of the occupation, to disregard the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council and to disrupt any attempt to settle the conflict by peaceful means on the basis of international law. For more than twenty years, Azerbaijan has been waiting for effective international actions with respect to Armenia's grave breach of peace and act of aggression.

Thank you.

**STATEMENT BY MR. ELMAR MAMMADYAROV, MINISTER OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, AT THE ANNUAL
COORDINATION MEETING OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE
ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION MEMBER STATES**

1 October 2015, New York

Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Secretary General,
Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman Sheikh Sabah Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and the Secretary General, Mr. Iyad Ameen Madani, for having organized this Annual Coordination Meeting. We express our gratitude to the State of Kuwait for successful hosting of the 42nd Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers and for the excellent leadership of the OIC Group in New York.

Distinguished Colleagues,

Developments occurring nowadays in a number of OIC Member States, increasing security threats and challenges they are facing, as well as the deteriorating humanitarian situation in some of our countries remain a source of deep concern. Those threats and challenges, especially those relating to the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Member States, require an increased solidarity within OIC. Only by strict adherence to our principles and upholding the centrality of political unanimity, we will be able to succeed in institutionalising OIC as a venue where crucial decisions are taken and implemented for the enduring peace, security and prosperity of the Islamic world.

Since the eruption of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, OIC, on the basis of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, has explicitly determined the actions of Armenia on the territory of Azerbaijan as aggression and condemned in the strongest possible terms the use of force against Azerbaijan and the occupation of its territories. Taking this opportunity, I would like on behalf of Azerbaijani people and first of all refugees and IDPs once again reiterate our cordial appreciation and thanks the OIC Member States for their solidarity with and support for the just cause of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Chairman,

Azerbaijan reaffirms its full support to the brotherly people of Palestine in their struggle for achieving peace and establishing an independent State, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Azerbaijan is committed to a two-State solution that would bring peace and stability to the Middle East and commend all efforts towards that end.

The recent adoption by the UN General Assembly of a resolution on raising the flags of non-member observer States at the United Nations, including that of the State of Palestine, raised at Headquarters and United Nations offices alongside the flags of the States Members of the United Nations, has become a yet another reflection of the legitimate will of the State of Palestine to become a full-fledged member of the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

The terrorist acts perpetrated over the past several months in Bahrain, Cameroon, Egypt, Kuwait, Nigeria, Tunisia, Turkey and Yemen have once again demonstrated the need for stronger solidarity with the countries and peoples at the forefront of a struggle against terrorism, as well as for strengthened international cooperation and enhanced individual and collective efforts towards eradicating this scourge. We express our deep sympathy and condolences to the families of those killed, as well as to the peoples and Governments of the States subjected to terrorist attacks.

Azerbaijan strongly condemns violent extremism and terrorism in all their forms and manifestations. All terrorist acts are unjustifiable regardless of their motivation, constitute serious crimes and must be condemned and prosecuted.

At the same time, the war on terrorism cannot and must not be used to target any religion or culture. That principle must be part and parcel of any counter-terrorism strategy. We cannot but once again express our deep concern over the alarming rise of Islamophobia. We strongly condemn all attacks against our religion and reject any attempt to justify them under the pretext of freedom of expression. Further consolidation of our efforts is required to stop the cultivation of hatred and false prejudices towards Islam and Muslims.

Mr. Chairman,

Azerbaijan supports the programs and initiatives of OIC and has attached particular importance to the implementation of the OIC Ten-year Program of Action and the relevant measures taken on its basis. In that regard, we look forward to the soonest adoption of the “OIC-2025: Program of Action”, which would provide us with the further roadmap to be pursued during the next decade.

In conclusion, I would like to wish successful deliberations to this important event and extend our appreciation to the OIC Secretary General Madani and his highly dedicated team for the professionalism in the realization of the goals and principles of our Organization.

Thank you.

STATEMENT BY MR. ELMAR MAMMADYAROV, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GROUP OF FRIENDS OF THE UNAOC

1 October 2015, New York

His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon,
High Representative of the Secretary-General for Alliance of Civilizations H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the contemporary world of growing intolerance, discrimination and violence based on religion or belief, intercultural and interreligious dialogue has become one of the most important tools in promoting tolerance, sustainable peace, stability and development. The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations plays an important role in fostering a global dialogue and cooperation for the promotion of tolerance, peace and better understanding across countries, cultures and civilizations.

Azerbaijan attaches primary importance to the promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue at all levels and fully supports the activity of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations to that end.

Located at the crossroads of the East and the West and thus maintaining the values of both civilizations, Azerbaijan is playing not only the role of a geographical bridge, but also acts as an intercultural bridge between civilizations. We consider our country's cultural diversity as strength and advantage, which gives it an ample opportunity to contribute to the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue and understanding, encourage ethnic and religious diversity and develop inter-communal links.

Over the period passed since joining the Groups of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations, Azerbaijan has hosted a number of high-profile and action-oriented events, bringing together political, cultural and religious leaders from the region and other countries to promote intercultural and interfaith dialogue. We are planning to hold the Seventh Global Forum of UNAOC in Baku in April 2016 and count on practical outcomes of this event.

Moreover, Azerbaijan has put forward important initiatives aimed at disseminating ideas of cultural diversity throughout the world. Since 2011, in partnership with the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, UNESCO, World Tourism Organization, the Council of Europe, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and ISESCO, we

organized three “World Forums on Intercultural Dialogue”, also known as the “Baku process”.

I am confident that our today’s meeting will make an essential contribution to the efforts aimed at overcoming the stereotypes and misconceptions, diminishing hostility and promoting dialogue, understanding and mutual respect among peoples of different cultures and religious.

Thank you.

**JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE
OF MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN,
ELMAR MAMMADYAROV AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER OF GEORGIA, GIORGI KVIRIKASHVILI
19 October 2015, Baku**

Ladies and gentlemen!

Welcome to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As you probably know, it is the first official visit to Azerbaijan by Giorgi Kvirikashvili, Foreign Minister of Georgia. On the first day of the visit, Minister was received by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, H.E Mr. Ilham Aliyev, Prime Minister Mr. Artur Rasizade and Speaker of Parliament Mr. Ogtay Asadov.

We discussed a number of issues with my counterpart in private and multilateral meetings. The strategic cooperation between Georgia and Azerbaijan is being developed day by day. In political sphere, Azerbaijan and Georgia share the same positions in the framework of international organizations. We had extensive discussions on economic sphere, namely, energy and the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway project.

We exchanged views on the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway, as well as development of transport corridor. Just for your information, H.E Mr. President proposed that the transport corridor to be jointly presented to the world by Georgia and Azerbaijan. We do hope that the project which covers a wider geography like Central Asia and China will be launched as soon as possible. As you probably know, the section of Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway in the territory of Georgia has been completed. We do believe that the section passing through Turkey will be completed by the end of this year or in the beginning of next year. As of today, we will joint our efforts in putting in force the sections which are ready to be used before the completion of section in the territory of Turkey.

We also exchanged views on official visit of the President of Azerbaijan, H.E Mr. Ilham Aliyev to Georgia on November 6 and draft documents to be signed during the visit.

We touched humanitarian aspects of our relationship. In this regard, Giorgi Kvirikashvili promised to be helpful addressing the issue of Drama Theatre.

Furthermore, we highlighted the importance of continuation of activities by the related Commission on delimitation. As you probably know, the discussion over delimitation issue was held in Baku in March 2015 with attendance of Georgian side. We decided to hold the next meeting of the Commission no later than the beginning of 2016.

Thank you.

**JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE OF FOREIGN MINISTER
OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, ELMAR MAMMADYAROV
AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND RELIGION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF COSTA RICA,
MANUEL GONZALEZ SANZ
20 October 2015, Baku**

Ladies and gentlemen!

Welcome to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As you probably know, Manuel Gonzalez Sanz, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Costa Rica, is paying his first-ever official visit to Azerbaijan. In this regard, we could call the visit as the historical one.

Relationship with Latin American and Central American states is one of the important directions in the foreign policy agenda of Azerbaijan. Mutual official visits are being paid, in this regard, I may recall my official visit to the Republic of Panama last month and now we are hosting Foreign Minister of Costa Rica in Azerbaijan.

We discussed establishment of broader and comprehensive relations with the Central American countries at the multilateral meeting. We also exchanged views on cooperation in the framework of international organizations, including UN's offices in New York and Geneva.

I briefed my counterpart about the current status of negotiations over Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict and about issues relating to internally displaced persons.

In the field of economy, given the high development indication of Costa Rican economy, the investment by Azerbaijani side would be considered beneficial in this regard. There are also window of opportunities for cooperation in tourism sector.

Right after the press conference, Minister will have meetings at the ADA University and the Agreement on Cooperation will be signed as well. Meanwhile, treaty project on visa free regime for diplomatic and service passport holders are being considered by Azerbaijani side.

Q&A session

Question: *Mr. Minister, a pause is being observed on the negotiation process over Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. What would you say about a possible meeting of Presidents? Will you attend the OSCE's Ministerial meeting to be held in Belgrade on December 2, 2015?*

Elmar Mammadyarov: Co-chairs will be visiting the region next week, on October 26-28. We had comprehensive discussions on the preparation of the meeting between Presidents in New York. But we should still wait for the proposals by co-chairs. Right now, there are two options on the table: Presidents will define the issues to be discussed by themselves; second option is the discussions would be over the proposals suggested by co-chairs. By now, the issue is still open.

Azerbaijan will for sure attend the OSCE's Ministerial Meeting.

Thank you!

**SPEECH BY MR. ELMAR MAMMADYAROV, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, AT THE JOINT CONFERENCE
OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND UN IN AZERBAIJAN ON THE
THEME OF AZERBAIJAN AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

23 October 2015, Baku

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to offer our heartfelt congratulations to all of you gathered here on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the United Nations. I am delighted being here, at the anniversary of the universal organization, which we highly value in Azerbaijan. The ideals of the United Nations are widely supported and shared by the people and Government of Azerbaijan. Personally, I feel proud that I came to work closely with and at the United Nations throughout my career.

Over the past seventy years, the United Nations have decisively established itself as the universal organization working for the noble cause of maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among States and achieving international cooperation. Purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the organization have laid a solid foundation for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world.

Throughout these 70 years, however, the international security environment has changed considerably. Threats have become more complex and interlinked. The balance of power in international relations has also shifted.

To our deepest regret, the world continues to face deterioration of the international security situation and increased human suffering, which requires huge resources from the United Nations. It also testifies to the need for the Member States to work faithfully towards realization of the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Since joining the UN on March 2, 1992, the Republic of Azerbaijan has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to the Charter of the UN.

Azerbaijan has contributed with its military personnel to the UN-mandated peacekeeping operations in various parts of the world to advance the efforts for maintenance of international peace and security. During its non-permanent membership at the United Nations Security Council in 2012-2013, Azerbaijan has defended the imperativeness of international law and took an active participation in the activities of the Council.

Being committed to the development goals set forth within the UN, Azerbaijan has integrated them into its national targets and achieved impressive results in development area, especially in ensuring rapid and sustainable growth, eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, ensuring universal primary education and promoting gender equality. In recognition of Azerbaijan's outstanding achievements in implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, my country received the 2015 South-South Award.

On human dimension, Azerbaijan continues to promote tolerance, multiculturalism and understanding among peoples. We are proud that the First European Games in the history of the European Continent was held this year in Baku, with the participation of 6000 athletes from 50 countries, and that in 2017 Azerbaijan will host the Islamic Solidarity Games. We are also planning to hold the 7th Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in Baku in 2016 and count on practical outcomes of this event.

The rapid development at national level enabled Azerbaijan to embark on a new road of official development assistance in the status of an emerging donor. Over the past years, Azerbaijan has continued responding to humanitarian and socio-economic challenges faced by the developing countries through the Azerbaijan International Development Agency-AIDA and other channels.

Elaboration and implementing the programs in cooperation with the UN agencies, aimed at meeting development was one of useful inputs that facilitated the successful implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in Azerbaijan. We highly appreciate the contributions that the UN country team in Azerbaijan has made so far and look forward to the continued presence in and support to Azerbaijan by the UN system, particularly the UNDP in assisting to keep momentum success from the realization of the MDS to that of the Sustainable Development Goals. We are of the view that the UN development agencies, most notably the UNDP, should rather expand presence in Member States as a catalyst and networking tool for sharing best practices and innovative ideas.

In this regard, we believe that the United Nations-Azerbaijan Partnership Framework document for years 2016-2020, which was successfully negotiated, will serve as a new guide for future cooperation between Azerbaijan and the UN country team in realizing the key national development priorities as well as meeting the sustainable development goals.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank the United Nations Resident Coordinator and the entire country team of the UN for the valuable support they extended to Azerbaijan during more than two decades of fruitful cooperation. In particular, I

would like recall with a sense of gratitude the valuable humanitarian assistance by the UN Office of UN High Commissioner for Refugees rendered to Azerbaijani refugees and IDPs.

All these achievements were attained despite the grave consequences of the ongoing military aggression and occupation by Armenia, which represents a serious challenge to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and to the Organization as a whole.

In response to the occupation of territories of Azerbaijan by Armenia, numerous resolutions were adopted by the UN Security Council and UN General Assembly condemning the occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan and reaffirming respect for its sovereignty and territorial integrity and the inviolability of its internationally recognized borders. The fact that those resolutions remain on paper does not serve the credibility of the UN.

Azerbaijan stands for a negotiated settlement of the conflict without prejudice to its rights under the Charter of the United Nations, in particular those set forth in the Article 51. The Government of Armenia must realize that the military occupation of a territory of another State does not represent a solution and its reliance on the status-quo is wrong, counter-productive and dangerous. Azerbaijan will never compromise its territorial integrity and the rights and freedoms of its citizens violated as a result of the aggression.

Notwithstanding all those challenges and difficulties, Azerbaijan remains optimistic and faithful to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. I would like to conclude by reiterating our firm belief in the value and importance of the UN Charter and that it will continue to guide the international community in the decades ahead.

Thank you.

REMARKS BY MR. ELMAR MAMMADYAROV, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, AT THE SIXTH EASTERN PARTNERSHIP INFORMAL MINISTERIAL DIALOGUE

26 November 2015, Tbilisi

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Many things changed since Riga Summit, such as tragic events in Paris, developments on the Syrian border. We must cooperate to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. This is of utmost importance. We welcome the differentiation approach as has been announced in ENP review document. There should also be a balance between addressing the challenge of migration and human rights issues, fundamental freedoms versus anti-radicalism and it is also important to curb the rise of Islamophobic tendencies in Europe. We, as EaP partners constantly hear criticism with regard to human rights issues in partner states. But how is about EU itself? The civil society forum should also highlight critical human rights issues in EU member states as well if we are seriously considering mutual ownership.

Energy has always been and will be an important area of cooperation with EU. The work on the Southern Gas Corridor is proceeding smoothly. We expect the gas from Azerbaijan to reach Europe at the end of 2018 or early 2019. That said, EU's overall support is important for the SGC to be realized in a timely manner.

Transport - another important area of cooperation. The Silk Road (Silk Wind) initiative by Azerbaijan, Turkey and Georgia is important not only for us, but also for EU that wishes to intensify cooperation with Central Asia. This transport corridor will link Europe to this region via Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey and even further eastwards to China.

Conflict resolution is definitely the weakest brick in the wall of cooperation. We are working on the proposal put forth by the Russian side on behalf of the Co-Chairs. The withdrawal of Armenian occupying forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, return of IDPs, people-to-people contacts between Azerbaijani and Armenian communities of Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan are all important elements we need to focus on. We all are united in the view that unresolved conflicts seriously impede cooperation in the region.

Thank you.

**JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE OF FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC
OF AZERBAIJAN, ELMAR MAMMADYAROV AND FOREIGN MINISTER
OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY, MEVLÜT ÇAVUŞOĞLU**
27 November 2015, Baku

Ladies and gentlemen!

As you probably know, according to the traditions, the first ever visit of President, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan and Turkey should be paid to either Baku or Ankara. As usual, I am very glad to welcome Mr. Çavuşoğlu in Baku. As you may know, Mr. Çavuşoğlu has been received by the President of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr Ilham Aliyev. Mr. Çavuşoğlu had also meetings with the Prime Minister, Mr. Artur Rasi-zade and Speaker of Parliament, Mr. Ogtay Asadov.

We discussed a number of issues of mutual interest with my counterpart at one-by-one and multilateral meetings. Firstly, I briefly informed Mr. Minister about the current status of negotiation process over Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. As you probably know, Foreign Minister of Russia, Mr. Sergey Lavrov, visited Baku and Yerevan in the previous months. Minister Lavrov put forward certain proposal in order to give an impetus to the negotiation process. The proposal was presented on behalf of the Minsk Group Co-chairs. Presence of military forces of Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan by Armenia has been and remains a major hurdle in the process. It is also main obstacle for security, social welfare and development of economy in the region. As an outcome of the last visit by Co-chairs, holding the meeting of Presidents was proposed. Azerbaijan positively responded to the proposal. The meeting to be likely held in coming month; till the end of the year. Co-chairs are working on arrangement of the meeting right now.

Furthermore, we exchanged views on mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of energy. Azerbaijan and Turkey share the same position on this issue. TANAP project is being implemented in a timely manner. Yesterday, within the meeting with my Georgian counterpart in Tbilisi we agreed on holding trilateral meeting till the end of the year and Mr. Çavuşoğlu also supported the idea. Probably, the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey will be held in Georgia till the end of the year. We plan to visit the sector of Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway in Georgian territory after meeting.

We do believe that this project of high importance will be completed by the beginning of the next year. Mr. Çavuşoğlu informed me that Turkey is planning to deliver its part of railway project till the beginning of the next year. I am pretty much sure that the implementation of railway project will give a new turn to the advanced relationship between our countries.

Thank you.

**ADDRESS BY MR. ELMAR MAMMADYAROV,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN,
AT THE NATO RESOLUTE SUPPORT MINISTERIAL**

1-2 December 2015, Brussels

Mr. Secretary General,
Generals,
Colleagues and friends,

First of all, let me wholeheartedly welcome Minister Rabbani. He represents the National Unity Government, which together with the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces plays a critical role for the successful future of Afghanistan.

Today, Afghanistan remains challenged and we should all do more with our Afghan friends. Azerbaijan is committed to continue its efforts to this end and contribute significantly to the Resolute Support Mission (RSM) by providing troops, multimodal transit, training and financial assistance.

In this regard, I firmly reiterate my country's commitments to continue its contribution to Resolute Support Mission with the same troop number throughout 2016. In addition, Azerbaijan has already made one million Euros donations to the Afghanistan National Army (ANA) Trust Fund and pledged 2 million Euros to ANA Trust Fund by the end of 2017. The first tranche was already transferred to the NATO ANA Trust Fund. Moreover, I would like to emphasize our principled agreement to join NATO's enhanced Enduring Partnership mission after completion of RSM.

Finally, let me also stress that my country's contribution to the stability of Afghanistan goes well beyond our involvement in NATO operations. We support Afghanistan on its path of reforms towards self-reliance by enhancing practical contributions in the areas of education and training, infrastructure and transport development, investments, and through financial aid. Azerbaijan is a critical piece of the New Silk Road, which will link Afghanistan to Europe, thus, opening a lifeline for Afghanistan's sustainable future.

Thank you.

**STATEMENT BY MR. ELMAR MAMMADYAROV,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN,
AT THE 22ND OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL MEETING**

3 December 2015, Belgrade

Mr. Chairman,
Dear colleagues,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate Mr. Ivica Dačić, the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE, for hospitality and excellent organization of the 22nd meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council. I also wish every success to Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier of the Federal Republic of Germany, as the incoming OSCE Chairperson-in-Office.

This year's Council is taking place in a time of serious threats to European security. The recent terrorist acts in Turkey and France, military occupation of the territories of the participating States and persistent IDP and refugee crisis continue to confront us.

There is a broad understanding that streamlining the work of the OSCE, as we mark the 40th anniversary of the ever-relevant Helsinki Final Act, requires more than just reaffirming the principles. It should include practical measures to ensure that participating States strictly comply with their obligations and commitments. We believe that there is no contradiction or conflict between the principles, as some assert. The drafting history of the Final Act clearly demonstrates a consensus among the participating States on the need to put the obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against territorial integrity and internationally recognized borders at the core of the comprehensive concept of security to maintain peace on the European continent. This remains the main thrust of the Final Act.

Dear colleagues,

The inherent balance of three dimensions of OSCE's comprehensive security is undermined today. Prevailing attempts to misuse the human dimension as a tool of pressure have only aggravated the crisis of trust within the OSCE. Ignorance to violations of mandates and serious deficiencies in activities of the OSCE executive structures and field presences question their relevance. If a participating State flags a serious violation of the mandate by an executive structure, such a case should be addressed and resolved for the interests of the OSCE.

In this context, I would like to refer specifically to the situation emerged as a result of the refusal by the OSCE/ODIHR to cooperate with the participating State requesting its assistance with regard to the elections. Such a violation by the OSCE institution

of its mandate cannot go without seriously undermining the prospects of our future cooperation with the ODIHR. In this connection, we are of the strong view that this situation must be addressed and proper procedures should be put in place to prevent re-occurrence of such incidents in the future. I encourage the Ministerial Council to seriously consider the proposal put forward by our Delegation.

Mr. Chairman,

The protracted conflicts in the OSCE area remain the major threat and challenge to peace and security on the European continent. I regret to inform the Ministerial Council that no substantive progress has been achieved in the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict since the last Ministerial Council meeting in Basel. Armenia continues to disregard the calls of the international community, including the Presidents of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries to start result-oriented negotiations on a peace agreement. The leadership of Armenia imitates the engagement with a view to consolidating the volatile status-quo created through the unlawful use of force and ethnic cleansing.

So-called “balanced” or undifferentiated attitude to the aggressor and the victim will never produce a desired outcome. The policy of appeasement only emboldens the aggressor. As an example, I need to mention the ongoing efforts by Armenia towards consolidating the occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan through implantation of settlers, infrastructure changes, as well as exploitation of and illicit trade in assets, natural resources and other forms of wealth in the occupied territories, in clear violation of international humanitarian and human rights law. In this context, it is critical that the OSCE participating States demonstrate a principled position in defending the principles and values that this Organization is striving for in order to keep the prospects of political settlement alive.

The unlawful presence of the armed forces of Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan is the major destabilizing factor with the potential to escalate at any time with unpredictable consequences. The settlement of the conflict must, therefore, start with immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian forces from Azerbaijani territories, as demanded by the UN Security Council resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993) and as implied by the mandate of the co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group.

Putting an end to Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan and withdrawal of Armenia’s troops will be a significant confidence building measure completely changing the dynamics of peace process and opening up immense opportunities for the development of South Caucasus. This would pave the way for a safe and dignified return of the forcibly displaced population to their places of origin, normalization of

relations and restoration of the communications in the region, as well as for the creation of objective conditions for the Azerbaijani and Armenian communities of the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region to discuss their joint future within Azerbaijan.

In this regard, latest ideas proposed by Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, supported by other OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs can provide a very good impetus to reach a breakthrough in peace talks.

Thank you.

**INTERVIEW BY FOREIGN MINISTER ELMAR MAMMADYAROV
TO AZERBAIJAN STATE NEWS AGENCY**

21 December 2015, Baku

Question: *The next meeting of the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia took place on the 19th December, 2015 in Bern, more than a year gap, after Paris meeting in October, 2014. What would you say about this meeting?*

Elmar Mammadyarov: During 2014, Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia, with the attendance of the OSCE's Minsk Group Co-chairs, met in August 10, in Sochi by the initiative of Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, in September 4th in New Port (Wales) by the initiative of John Kerry, Secretary State of the U.S. and in October 27 in Paris by the initiative of Francois Hollande, President of French Republic. As a result of the meetings some progress was achieved and after Paris meeting Francois Hollande, President of French Republic, invited parties to the conflict, Azerbaijan and Armenia, to work on the Peace Agreement. On December 4th 2015, OSCE's Minsk Group Co-chairs on the level of Foreign Ministers issued a statement calling Armenia and Azerbaijan to work on the Peace Agreement without any delay. Azerbaijan even at that time stated its readiness to start working on the Peace Agreement.

Right after the Paris meeting Armenia conducted large-scale military exercises in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, with the involvement of 46.000 personnel and more than 5000 military equipment as reported by official Yerevan. As a consequence of the conducted military exercises, Armenia provoked the occurrence of well-known helicopter incident and it avoided achieving any progress in the settlement of conflict and served for escalation of the situation.

Therefore, arrangement of the meeting by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs at the level of Presidents on December 19, 2015 in Bern, in the capital city of Swiss Confederation, should be considered as a positive development. We appreciate all the efforts by OSCE's Co-chairs and Swiss Government, as a host, for organizing the meeting.

OSCE's Co-chairs statement dated on December 3rd 2015 and statement after Presidents' Bern Meeting dated on December 19th 2015, Armenia and Azerbaijan are invited to continue discussions from the Sochi, New Port, and Paris Summits of 2014 on elements of a comprehensive settlement, and intensify their dialogue in 2016 on the basis of proposals currently under discussion.

As a country suffering from occupation and aggression and having more than one million of IDP and refugee community and the most interested side in the soonest resolution of the conflict, Azerbaijan has been and remains in favor of holding result-

oriented and substantial negotiations. At the given moment, Azerbaijan stands ready for constructive discussions based on the proposals on the table and this stance was reiterated at the Bern meeting.

Question: *What do proposals on the table, which Co-chairs refer to, consist of? Do you imply the proposals suggested by Sergey Lavrov, Foreign Minister of Russian Federation, in OSCE's Belgrade meeting of Foreign Ministers in December 3-4, 2015?*

Elmar Mammadyarov: As one of the Co-chair country, Foreign Minister of Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov presented proposals on resolution of the conflict to Azerbaijan and Armenia, the parties to the conflict. Those proposals are supported by other co-chair countries. During 2015, in order to hold discussions over these proposals, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov paid working visits to Baku and Yerevan and exchanged views with Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia over the proposals. We highly appreciate Russia's efforts towards settlement process of the conflict as OSCE co-chair country.

Those proposals included the agreements of the Sochi, New Port and Paris meetings of the Presidents and prepared on the basis of Updated Madrid Principles. A 6 point Updated Madrid Principles is well known to the wider public. Updated Madrid Principles include the step-by-step liberation of adjacent districts of Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, as well as other related issues.

It is the time to start working on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement based on the proposals prepared in accordance with the updated Madrid Principles and supported by the OSCE's Co-chairs. But Armenia is waiting for what?

Armenia by committing provocative-sabotage acts along the contact line of Armenia and Azerbaijan forces and through the borders of two countries and conducting illegal actions in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan aims at escalation of the situation and by all means avoiding any progress in the settlement of conflict.

Despite the fact that there are concrete proposals on the negotiation table, in the statements Armenian side omits to refer to them and tries to deviate from the core target of the negotiations by putting emphasize on secondary issues like investigation of incidents and continues to make speculative statements only for demands of local audience. Even Armenian lobby organizations in the United States and other countries are mobilized to divert attention from the fundamental issues which can serve for the comprehensive settlement of the conflict, thus, the focus was oriented towards the mechanism on investigation of incidents.

Question: *What does investigation of incidents mechanism mean? And what is the official position of the Government of Azerbaijan in this regard?*

Elmar Mammadyarov: As one of the elements of set of measures in resolution of this conflict, investigation of incidents mechanism was reflected in the Sochi statements (March 5, 2011; January 23, 2012) of the Presidents of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Russia. Just to make it clear, investigation of incidents mechanism is not a target, it is one of the means that would serve for the comprehensive resolution of the conflict.

First of all, we should find out why the incidents occur? The military forces of Armenia are present illegally in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. After withdrawal of the armed forces of Armenia from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan the incidents would not occur and investigation of incidents mechanism wouldn't be needed.

After the New York meeting of Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia with participation of OSCE's Minsk Group Co-chairs it was once again stated by Azerbaijani side that investigation of incidents mechanism should be part of the withdrawal process of military forces of Armenia from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

In general, as a mechanism, investigations of incidents leave some questions on the ground and application of this mechanism at the points alongside the occupied territories of Azerbaijan with the state border of Armenia could be considered.

Armenia deliberately throws out the most important element of comprehensive settlement of conflict, which is withdrawal of military forces of Armenia from all occupied territories of Azerbaijan, and brings the mechanism of investigation of incidents to the spotlight. It is crystal clear that under the pretext of mechanism Armenia intends to consolidate occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan and maintain the status –quo which is considered unacceptable and unsustainable in the statements issued by the Presidents of the OSCE's Minsk Group Co-chair countries.

Question: *Were the humanitarian aspects of the conflict, including release of Dilgam Asgarov and Shahbaz Guliyev, two Azerbaijani civilians still being taken as hostages by Armenia, as a follow up the Paris meeting, discussed in Bern?*

Elmar Mammadyarov: Humanitarian aspects of the conflict were also subject of discussion at the Bern meeting of the Presidents. Release of Dilgam Asgarov and Shahbaz Guliyev was once again raised by H.E Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

I just want to recall the Astarخان (October 27, 2010), Sochi (March 5, 2011; January 23, 2012) statements of the Presidents of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia which envisaged cooperation on exchange of hostages and prisoners of war, return of bodies of the dead and humanitarian aspects of the conflict at large. At the Paris

meeting of the Presidents in order to identify the fates of the missing person establishment of data exchange mechanism through International Committee of the Red Cross was proposed. Azerbaijan, the country with having more than 4000 missing persons, fully supports this humanitarian initiative of François Hollande, the President of France.

In this regard, we appreciate humanitarian missions conducted by the ICRC and Swiss Government. According to the last updated list prepared by the ICRC 4496 persons have been identified as missing. We do hope that after successful implementation of this project, it would be possible to provide the families the information on the fate of missing persons. These are persons considered missing for more than 20 years.

In the statement issued by the OSCE's Minsk Group Co-chairs dated on December 3, 2015, Azerbaijani authorities' decision to return an Armenian soldier who crossed the Line of Contact and an Armenian civilian was mentioned as a helpful humanitarian gesture and consistent with international humanitarian obligations. Furthermore, Parties to the conflict were urged to return all remaining prisoners in the spirit of the Astrakhan Declaration of October 2010 issued by the Presidents of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the Russian Federation.

I would also like to add that even before that as a sign of goodwill demonstrated by Azerbaijan, a family was returned to Armenia.

So, it is Armenia's turn. Official Yerevan should cooperate on data exchange on missing persons and provide the soonest release of Dilgam Asgarov and Shahbaz Guliyev consistent with its obligations under the international humanitarian law and calls of OSCE's Minsk Group Co-chairs.

I would like to reiterate that the Republic of Azerbaijan stands ready to the result-oriented negotiation that would serve for the eradication of the consequences of Armenian occupation, restoration of its territorial integrity and sovereignty within internationally recognized borders, return of IDPs and refugees to their place of origin.

Azerbaijan will actively continue its cooperation with OSCE's Minsk Group Co-chairs towards settlement of the conflict in 2016. Armenia should understand that, as international community demands, unacceptable and unsustainable status-quo should be changed and military forces of Armenia should be withdrawn from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Only after that sustainable peace and stability could be restored and windows of opportunity for the full-fledged economic development could be open up in the region.

SƏFƏRLƏR – VISITS – ВИЗИТЫ

THE OFFICIAL VISIT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL TO THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

22 July 2015, Baku

Statement by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev during the Press Conference

Dear Mr President,
Dear guests,

Welcome to Azerbaijan. Your visit is of great importance in terms of relations between European Union and Azerbaijan. We want to develop this partnership in the future and we are very satisfied that we have already a big asset - many years of active cooperation between EU and Azerbaijan.

Today we discussed a broad range of issues of bilateral relations, regional issues. We see positive developments in EU-Azerbaijan partnership. Your visit, Mr. President, is a good indicator of the importance of these relations. We have close political ties and want to develop them in the future.



We discussed today the issues of regional security, particularly Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and ways how to resolve this conflict. I informed Mr. President of the current situation on the negotiation table and the history of the conflict. The conflict lasts for more than two decades. Internationally recognized part of Azerbaijan - Nagorno-Karabakh and seven other districts - are under Armenian occupation for more than twenty years. United Nations Security Council adopted four resolutions demanding immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian troops from our territories. But they are not implemented. Armenia occupies Nagorno-Karabakh and seven other districts of Azerbaijan, millions of Azerbaijanis are victims of this aggression. They became IDPs and refugees and our people were subject to ethnic cleansing from Armenia. The soonest resolution of the conflict, based on the international law norms and relevant UN Security Council resolutions, will be to the benefit of all the people of the region of South Caucasus. We hope that international

community will put more pressure on aggressor to start de-occupation of Azerbaijani lands and as soon as the de-occupation starts, I think the process of normalization of relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia can also start. Territorial integrity of Azerbaijan has the same value as the territorial integrity of any other country and the conflict must be resolved on this basis.

We discussed our economic cooperation and we are very glad that Europe is our main trading partner. Almost half of our foreign trade is with member states of European Union. And European Union countries are our main investors - also about fifty percent of foreign investments come from European Union. There is good potential to develop this economic cooperation through investments, other forms of economic activity. One of the elements of potential cooperation is transportation. We are now together with our neighbors in the phase of completion of the railroad, which connects Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey and thus connects Europe and Asia. This will be new a silk route, which will increase mutual trade volumes between Europe and Asia and Azerbaijan as a transit country will play its important role.

Also, of course, we discussed today issues related to the energy security. We are good partners with Europe. The Southern Gas Corridor project, which was launched last September in Baku already is in the active phase of implementation. Azerbaijan initiated this project and is actively working together with partners, neighboring countries and the investors to implement the project on time. We have huge gas reserves. Proven reserves are about 2.6 trillion cubic meters. Shahdeniz gas field, which is so far the only resource base for the Southern Gas Corridor, contains more than one trillion cubic meters of gas. So our reserves will be enough to supply European consumers with natural gas for decades ahead. Southern Gas Corridor is a project, which unites countries and which is to the benefit of the producers, transitors and consumers. I think we found the right balance between these three segments of this energy project, which was reflected in the declaration adopted here in Baku in February at the first meeting of the consultative board of Southern Gas Corridor.

This March TANAP, which is part of Southern Gas Corridor, also started to be constructed. So we are on time. This is a project of energy security. Today energy security cannot be separated from the national security of the countries. This is a project of energy diversification, because Southern Gas Corridor is not only diversification of routes, but most importantly, it is diversification of supply sources. Azerbaijan with its resources, infrastructure and with the experience of implementing these mega energy projects, of course, is playing its role and we are very glad that the role of Azerbaijan in this area was reflected in the recently adopted documents of EU.

We discussed also the regional security issues in the broad region of Caspian, Middle East, Central Asia. Also we have a good potential of cooperation in the area of culture, in the humanitarian area. The issues related to religious tolerance, interreligious dialogue are very actively addressed here in Azerbaijan. Actually, Azerbaijan is known already as one of the international centers of multiculturalism. I think this also could be part of the future format of cooperation between EU and Azerbaijan. We have very active relations with most of the member states of European Union in political, economic and other areas. So this shows that the picture is very positive. Of course, the visit of Mr. President is a good sign of our partnership and it opens the way for future active and productive cooperation.

Mr. President welcome once again.

THE OFFICIAL VISIT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC TO THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

15 – 16 September 2015, Baku

List of documents signed during the official visit:

- Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Czech Republic
- Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of agriculture between the Agriculture Ministry of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Agriculture Ministry of the Czech Republic

Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev during the Press Conference

Dear Mr. President,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen!

Mr. President, let me warmly welcome you to Azerbaijan again. Welcome to our country! We attach great importance to your visit. I am confident that the visit will be successful and its results will bring our countries even closer together.

Our relations are developing successfully. There are excellent results in political, economic and cultural fields. We successfully cooperate in the political sphere. We also work and cooperate in the international plane, within the framework of international organizations. Today, we have sincerely and thoroughly discussed various aspects of our relations. We see once again that there are no obstacles for the deepening of bilateral cooperation. On the contrary, there are partnership and friendly relations between us.

The declaration on strategic cooperation we have signed today is a clear proof of my words. It is a very serious political document that reflects the essence of our bilateral relations and has lifted our relations to the level of strategic partnership.

I told you that we have seven similar agreements and declarations with member-states of the European Union. We have already signed documents on strategic partnership with eight member countries of the European Union.

This Declaration reflects the various aspects of our relations. At the same time, it points to the essence of our most painful problem – the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the ways of its settlement. Thank you for this position and for your support. The Declaration states that the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-

Karabakh conflict must be resolved on the basis of the UN Charter, relevant UN Security Council resolutions, the Helsinki Final Act, sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of borders of countries. This is the only possible solution. All conflicts must be resolved on the basis of norms and principles of international law.



The internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent seven districts, have been under Armenian occupation for many years. A policy of ethnic cleansing has been carried out against our people in these districts. As a result of this policy, more than a million Azerbaijanis have become refugees and IDPs in their native land. Twenty per cent of our land is under occupation, while Armenia continues its aggressive policy and ignores the calls of international mediators. The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs dealing with the issue – Russia, France and the United States – have stated at the highest level that the status quo related to this conflict was unacceptable and had to be changed. Changing the status quo, of course, means an end to occupation. We want that and the international community wants that. I am sure we will achieve that. Azerbaijan will restore its territorial integrity and international law and justice will prevail.

The statement also reflects other areas. We successfully cooperate in the field of economy. I can say that we discussed mainly bilateral economic cooperation both at the level of delegations and in the bilateral format. There is excellent potential here. Trade between our countries is growing. At the same time, major funds are allocated for Czech banks to implement projects in Azerbaijan. We are grateful for this because these funds help implement various infrastructure projects in Azerbaijan, primarily those in the transport sector. We have had a thorough exchange on this issue and, of course, appreciate the results. At the same time, we must look to the future. I am sure that the Czech-Azerbaijani business forum tomorrow will be an important event for the deepening of bilateral economic cooperation.

Issues of mutual investment are also important. Both the Czech Republic and Azerbaijan are very favorable countries for foreign investment. Foreign investment is protected at a high level. We must try to ensure that our businessmen know each other better and that cooperation is deepened. A meeting of the intergovernmental commission has also been held recently. It is also a very important format. Thus, I am sure that even better results will be achieved in the economic field in the coming years. I can already say that we may be pleased with the level of trade.

Cooperation in the energy sector, of course, is also a subject of negotiations. Azerbaijan exports crude oil to the Czech Republic. Azerbaijani oil accounts for a certain part in the energy balance of the Czech Republic – about 30 per cent. This is also a very important event. At present, Azerbaijan is engaged in the realization of the Southern Gas Corridor. It is a giant energy project. Its total cost is \$45 billion. It will contribute to the second phase in the development of the "Shah Deniz" gas field. At the same time, three new gas pipelines will be built: the South Caucasus gas pipeline linking Azerbaijan with Georgia, TANAP passing through Turkey and TAP, a third gas project stretching from the border of Turkey to the borders of Italy. Along with the development of the "Shah Deniz-2" gas field project, these four giant projects form the Southern Gas Corridor, and Azerbaijan is acting as the leader of all this. Azerbaijan participates in all these projects as an investor and in some projects as the main investor. Despite the fact that oil prices have fallen sharply in recent months, there are no delays with this project and all work is being done in a timely manner. Azerbaijan is absolutely confident that as a result of international cooperation this project will be implemented. Therefore, the construction of a new gas pipeline from Azerbaijan to Europe will be ensured.

There are good prospects for cooperation in other areas as well. I want to emphasize the humanitarian sphere. People in Azerbaijan are very interested in the culture and history of the Czech Republic. I am confident, Mr. President, that you and members of your delegation will become acquainted with this area.

I welcome you again - welcome to Azerbaijan! I am confident that your visit will be successful.

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV AND
PRESIDENT OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC MILOS ZEMAN ATTENDED THE
AZERBAIJANI – CZECH BUSINESS FORUM**

16 September 2015, Baku

Speech by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

Dear Mr. President,

Distinguished guests,

Dear business forum participants!

I would like to welcome you to Azerbaijan once again. Mr. President and I had a very extensive discussion and exchange of views on our bilateral relations yesterday. Our bilateral relations are developing very positively and dynamically. Our ties serve the interests of both countries. Thanks to this positive development, we have signed a joint declaration on strategic partnership between the Czech Republic and the Republic of Azerbaijan, which covers all areas of cooperation, including economic relations.

Strategic partnership is the highest possible level of cooperation between countries. In my view, it represents a solid basis for a more active development of economic relations and contacts between business circles. I think that for coordinating the business activities of our business circles we have such an effective mechanism as a joint intergovernmental economic commission, which deals with important issues related to the economic sphere.

Today's event is not the first forum to be held between our business people. However, during this business forum, both presidents will encourage the business people of our countries to cooperate more actively. There are ample opportunities for the expansion of our economic partnership.

In our one-on-one meetings with Mr. President and at the level of delegations, we already discussed the work done and plans for the future. We are very pleased with the participation of Czech banks in projects being implemented in Azerbaijan. These projects allow us the opportunity to modernize our infrastructure. At the same time, Azerbaijan is a reliable partner fulfills its financial obligations. I think that this is also a good indicator of our relationship, as we can trust each other. We have already passed the test.

I believe that in the coming years we will focus on the traditional areas of cooperation and identify new areas. Among traditional areas of cooperation, I would like to mention the transport sector, because in order to make the best of our geographical location, we are investing a lot in the modernization of transport infrastructure in



Azerbaijan. Currently, we are at the stage of completion of the East-West railway corridor. At the same time, with the support of the banks of the Czech Republic, we are in the final stages of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway project. This project will link Asia with Europe via Azerbaijan and other countries and open up a new transit corridor. This will happen parallel to the construction of

the new Baku International Sea Port and related facilities on the east coast of the Caspian Sea. Thus, we will create highly reliable and cost-efficient transport routes.

Yesterday, I informed our guest also about the North-South corridor, where Azerbaijan takes an active part. The North-South corridor will enable transportation of millions tons more of cargo through Azerbaijan and neighboring countries. And this, it seems to me, would be beneficial to all players in Asia, in our region and in Europe. I urge Czech financial institutions to seriously think about investing in this project and providing financial support.

I think that another area of cooperation where new steps will be taken is the energy sector. We are already working hard on this. Azerbaijan is a very reliable supplier of oil to the Czech Republic. As far as we know, about a third of oil consumption in your country is provided by Azerbaijan. We plan to continue this cooperation.

At the same time, Azerbaijan has already become an important player in the European gas market. I believe that the Southern Gas Corridor project put forward by Azerbaijan is one of the largest infrastructure projects in Europe, as investment in it will exceed \$45 billion in the next few years. Azerbaijan participates in the project as an investor, contractor and organizer. Thanks to this project, we will be able to export as much gas as we produce and help European consumers to diversify their supply routes. This will benefit all parties – suppliers, transit countries, which will benefit a lot from transit fees, and consumers, who will have alternative routes. Energy security and the availability of alternatives in other fields is always good.

At present, Azerbaijan is the only new source of gas for Europe. We know all other potential suppliers, but as for other suppliers, the possibility of delivery is still not entirely clear. As for us, we have already signed an agreement to sell gas to some of your neighbors. Taking into account the vast reserves of gas in Azerbaijan, i.e. confirmed gas resources of our country of 2.6 trillion cubic meters, this project will last for decades to come.

I think that while implementing this project we can identify ways of cooperation with Czech companies and, at some point in time, address issues of supplies to the Czech Republic, as Azerbaijan can expand the geography of supplies of its natural resources.

Of course, we do want to see Czech companies as investors in Azerbaijan. Our country has a favorable investment environment, as foreign investment is securely protected by the legislation. Last year, Azerbaijan received \$27 billion in investments. Of these, 30-35 per cent was direct foreign investment. Even in the most difficult years of economic crisis, we see a high level of foreign investment in the country. Foreign companies trust and have confidence in us. We are a reliable partner and always meet our obligations. The investment environment is very positive.

In addition, Azerbaijan is one of the 40 most competitive economies in the world. According to the calculations of the Davos World Economic Forum, we are in 38th place in the global competitiveness index. We achieved this result in a short time. When we gained independence, our economy was fully formed in the public sector. Today, more than 80 per cent of the economy and the gross domestic product are provided by the private sector.

I think that agriculture may appeal to your companies, as infrastructure projects implemented in our country, including the ease of access to the markets of neighboring countries, make Azerbaijan an interesting place in terms of investment in the agricultural sector and establishment of joint ventures. I think that this opportunity can also be explored.

Over the past few years, we have invested heavily in the sphere of high technology. We have created a space industry. We have two satellites. One, "Azerspace", is used in the field of telecommunications, and the other, "Azerisky", for observation. In short, space industry is developing in the country too. We can work together and further expand our cooperation at the level of research institutions.

As for the overall economic situation in Azerbaijan, the situation is stable. In the first eight months of this year, the economy grew by more than 4 percent. Growth in the non-energy sector exceeded 7 per cent. The level of direct foreign debt is very low - just over 10 per cent. All these are very positive elements for the attraction of investments and cooperation with various companies.

Yesterday, we also discussed the possibility of Azerbaijani companies investing in the Czech Republic. In terms of investment, your country is very attractive and developed. It has a strong industrial potential and economic stability. As we know, the difficult economic and financial situation in many European countries has not

had a negative impact on your development. I want to congratulate your leadership on these achievements.

I believe our countries show in their regions that thanks to a strong political will, an independent foreign policy based only on national interests and judicious economic policies, we can achieve success and maintain economic stability even in difficult times. You can imagine that a drop in the oil prices more than in half is a huge challenge for us. When we adopted the budget for this year, the price of oil was estimated at \$90 per barrel. Today or yesterday, the price was \$46. It is clear that we did not receive the expected revenues. But thanks to diversification and the fact that 70 per cent of the gross domestic product is contributed by the non-energy sector, we managed to maintain stability, have implemented all social programs and still continue investing.

In other words, I am very optimistic about the cooperation between our business communities. First, there is strong political support. Today we are demonstrating that. Second, we have already gained a very positive experience in this cooperation. Third, the capacity of our economies and business people is fairly large, and we must do everything possible to identify new areas of cooperation. I am confident that this business forum will be a very important step in this direction.

Mr. President, I want to welcome you and all our guests again. I am sure you will be satisfied with the visit to Azerbaijan.

Thank you.

**THE OFFICIAL VISIT OF THE PRIME MINISTER
OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
TO THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN**

3 December 2015, Baku

***Statement by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev
during the Press Conference***

Dear Prime Minister,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen!

Let me welcome you to Azerbaijan again. Welcome to Azerbaijan! I am very glad that you are paying your first visit after the parliamentary election to the fraternal Azerbaijan. Taking this opportunity, I want to congratulate you on behalf of the Azerbaijani people on the great victory the Party you are leading has won in the parliamentary election. Your first official visit after the parliamentary election demonstrates once again the high level of Turkish-Azerbaijani relations.

At the same time, I want to congratulate Turkey on the recent G20 Summit held in Antalya. I would like to express my appreciation for the fact that Turkey invited Azerbaijan to this summit. You could invite only one country, and this country was Azerbaijan. I am grateful to you for that. It is very important for us - first of all, because Turkey, Azerbaijan and the world community saw how close we are to each other. In my opinion, there are no other countries in the world that would be so close to each other. We are united by history, a common culture, ethnic origin and language. At the same time, Turkey and Azerbaijan as two independent states are closely cooperating with each other. Turkey was the first country to recognize the independence of Azerbaijan. Since that day, our ties have been developing rapidly and comprehensively.

We are always next to each other and support each other at all times and in all matters. This is an unchanging policy. It is based on justice and our historical past. We want future generations also to maintain these relations at a high level. There are all the opportunities to do that, because our political interests overlap. We want our region to have peace and quiet and not to have confrontation. We want all nations and peoples to live peacefully, build their lives so that no-one interfered in the internal affairs of each other.

Turkish-Azerbaijani unity and policies play a stabilizing role in the region. Unfortunately, stability of the region has been disrupted, new threats and risks are emerging. We must be ready and we are prepared for these challenges. Of course, the stronger Turkey, the stronger Azerbaijan.



We always support each other in all international organizations. In particular, I wish to thank the Turkish people and government for supporting Azerbaijan's position in resolving the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. As you know, Azerbaijan has been suffering from Armenian occupation for many years. Twenty per cent of our internationally recognized land is under

Armenian occupation. Our cities, villages, mosques and historical monuments have been destroyed by the Armenians. The UN Security Council has adopted four resolutions related to the settlement of the conflict. The resolutions demand an unconditional withdrawal of Armenian forces from our occupied lands, but Armenia ignores them, and these resolutions have remained on paper for more than 20 years. This and all other conflicts must be resolved in accordance with international law and within the territorial integrity of countries. There is no other option.

Today, we also exchanged views on our joint energy and transport projects. The work we are doing us for our countries, peoples, region and the world is of great importance. In particular, I want to highlight the TANAP project. TANAP is a Turkish-Azerbaijani project. We have started implementing this project together. Today, this project is an international project is the focus on a global scale. There are no problems with the implementation of TANAP. Today we discussed this issue once again. I am confident that this project will be implemented in due time - in 2018, perhaps even earlier. Thus, Azerbaijan will be able to export even larger volumes of natural gas to Turkey and then to Europe. Turkey and European countries will have access to new alternative sources. This project will only bring benefit to all parties.

Azerbaijan is rich in natural gas reserves. Proven gas reserves amount to 2.6 trillion cubic meters. Of course, our main resource base is the Shah Deniz project. But outside it, there are other huge gas fields, and our main export path is already known. It is Turkey and through Turkey – other European countries.

I am glad that along with this, we are successfully engaged in mutual investment. Both Turkish and Azerbaijani companies make mutual investments. In the coming years, Azerbaijan will invest about \$20 billion in Turkey. Some of this investment has already been made, and this, of course, once again reflects our political will. One can make such investments only in friendly economies.

There is close cooperation in all other areas, including the humanitarian sphere. Excellent cooperation is maintained in the military sphere. Azerbaijan purchases

weaponry for our army from Turkey. At the same time, we have repeatedly held joint military exercises both in Turkey and in Azerbaijan. This once again demonstrates our unity and multiplies our strength. Turkey and Azerbaijan are already a major factor in the developments unfolding in the region and Europe today.

We, as friends and brothers, are very pleased with the development and strengthening of Turkey in recent years, its growing role on a global scale. I want to say again that this multiplies our strength. We are becoming stronger, we are friends and brothers. This is the main thing, and we will continue to support each other. We will be next to each other in all matters.

Dear Prime Minister, I warmly welcome you again. Welcome to Azerbaijan!

THE OFFICIAL VISIT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN TO THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

22 December 2015, Baku

List of documents signed during the official visit:

- Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of labour, social protection and employment between the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
- Agreement on cooperation between the Azerbaijan Television and Radio Broadcasting Closed Joint Stock Company and the National Radio and Television of Afghanistan

Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev during the meeting in an expanded format

Dear Mr. President,
Distinguished guests!



I would like to welcome you to Azerbaijan once again. We are very glad that you are visiting our country on an official visit. We have discussed and recalled your last year's visit. But that was a very short visit, while the current one is official. It is a good sign of our cooperation. We have briefly

discussed various aspects of our bilateral cooperation. We are already seeing good opportunities and good achievements. Our countries are friendly.

This friendship is based on the history and current common interests of our countries. We are engaged in a very active political dialogue in international organizations and cooperate closely in the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Economic Cooperation Organization. We are very grateful to your country for its continued support for the settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict within the framework of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. You supported us during the voting in the UN General Assembly. You supported us when Azerbaijan was a candidate for nonpermanent membership in the UN Security Council. We are very grateful to you for that. At the same time, we also support Afghanistan in all of its initiatives and in all international organizations. With such perfect political ties we must focus on economic issues now.

We have discussed the presence of very good opportunities for increasing the turnover and a package of investment projects. Both public and private companies of Azerbaijan are ready to invest in your country and strengthen the economic component of our cooperation. Today we also discussed issues related to communication and the railway link. I informed you that we are completing the remaining part of the Silk Road – the rail link between Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. I hope that next year we will celebrate the opening of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway. However, we in Azerbaijan have already received first container trains from China for transit through the territory of Azerbaijan. We are already testing the route. Of course, we want to enhance international cooperation in the transport sector. There are good opportunities also in the field of energy resources. Therefore, we want to expand our cooperation in all areas. As we discussed, Azerbaijan is a member of the Resolute Support Mission, and we are trying to contribute to peace and development in your country. I want to congratulate you and your government on the successes Afghanistan has achieved in this transformation.

Mr. President, welcome to Azerbaijan again.

BƏYANATLAR – STATEMENTS – ЗАЯВЛЕНИЯ

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

31 August 2015, Baku

According to press reports, the so-called “elections” to the “self-governing bodies” of the puppet separatist regime in the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan will be held on 13 September 2015.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan reiterates in this regard that the separatist regime established by Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan is ultimately nothing other than the product of aggression and racial discrimination; it is under Armenia’s direction and control and survives by virtue of its military, political, financial and other support, as was confirmed recently by the European Court of Human Rights in its judgment of 16 June 2015 on the case of Chiragov and others v. Armenia.

It is well known that Armenia unleashed the war and used force against Azerbaijan, occupied almost one fifth of its territory, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region and seven adjacent districts, carried out ethnic cleansing of the seized areas by expelling about one million Azerbaijanis from their homes and committed other serious crimes during the conflict. The international community has consistently deplored, in the strongest terms, the use of military force against Azerbaijan and the resulting occupation of its territories, as reflected in United Nations Security Council resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993), thus rejecting any actions violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and refusing to recognize as legitimate the situation created through such actions.

The holding of the so-called “elections” is a yet another clear manifestation that, by undertaking consistent measures to maintain the status-quo, consolidate the results of its occupation policy and annexationist aspirations, Armenia is not genuinely interested in seeking a political settlement of the armed conflict and, instead, pursues the path of provocations and escalation.

Against the background of continuing military occupation and ethnic cleansing of the territories of Azerbaijan, this mock “election” exercise constitutes a clear violation of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the norms and principles of international law, and, therefore, have no legal effect whatsoever.

Armenia’s policy of attempted annexation of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan has no chance of succeeding. The only way to achieve a durable and lasting conflict

settlement is to ensure the unconditional and complete withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from the Nagorno-Karabakh region and other occupied territories of Azerbaijan, as the UN Security Council demands in its above-mentioned resolutions, and the exercise by the forcibly displaced Azerbaijani population of its inalienable right to return to their homes and properties in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan and adjacent districts. This conflict can only be resolved on the basis of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders. No peace settlement of the conflict can be reached which violates the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan and is inconsistent with international law. No acquisition of territory by force shall ever be recognized by the international community as lawful. Never Azerbaijan shall reconcile with the seizure of its territories. The military occupation of the territory of Azerbaijan does not represent a solution and shall never produce a political outcome desired by Armenia.

The Republic of Azerbaijan calls on all members of the international community, in line with their obligations under international law, not to recognize as lawful the situation resulting from the occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan, nor render aid or assistance in maintaining that situation and take effective measures to this end.

Armenia must drop its futile attempts to mislead its own people and the wider international community, cease its policy of annexation and ethnic cleansing, engage constructively in the conflict settlement process and comply with its international obligations.

The responsibility for the consequences of any action which the Republic of Azerbaijan may be obliged to take in connection with the continued illegal presence of the Armenian armed forces and unlawful activities in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan in order to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders will lie entirely with the Republic of Armenia.

**STATEMENT BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN**

3 November 2015, Baku

According to the conclusions by local and international observer missions, including Election Observation Mission of PACE (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe), Parliamentary elections of the fifth call to the Milli Majlis of Azerbaijan held on November 1, 2015 were affirmed as free, democratic and transparent and reflecting the free will of voters. It was also noted that the preparatory measures to the elections and voting processes met high professional and technical merits.

Any particular violations of Election Code were reported neither by Central Election Commission, nor observers in the voting process.

The groundless claims by certain circles as if the elections were “boycotted” and had lower voter turnout, as though Azerbaijan did not allow the OSCE’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to observe the elections, as well as the attempts of casting shadow on the outcome of voting, to speak on behalf of Azerbaijani electorate and candidates, furthermore publishing biased information on some international mass media without referring to the official sources are unacceptable.

According to the primary information by the Central Election Commission, voting process started and ended at all polling stations on time (08:00 am, 7:00 pm). General voter turnout was 55.7 % countrywide. Thus, 2 million 897 thousands and 188 out of 5 million 198 thousand 658 voters were attended the elections. It shows about 6 % of increase in numbers comparing to previous parliamentary elections.

Furthermore, all necessary conditions were established for freely conducting promotional campaigns by candidates.

On the Election Day, for monitoring the entire process from the beginning till the end 1000 polling stations were equipped with web cameras.

“EIs” Independent Research Center, “Opinion” Monitoring Center, a French Sociological Research Center of “Opinion Way”, Center of Protection of Rights of Azerbaijani Youth and a US based “AJF&Associates.Inc” jointly held exit-poll as Citizen’s Labor Rights Protection League.

Elections were monitored by more than 500 foreign and 63.000 local observers. International observers presented more than 40 international organizations, including PACE, Commonwealth of Independent States, Cooperation Council of Turkic

Speaking States, Organization for Democracy and Economic Development: GUAM, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Parliamentary Assemblies of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and Turkic Council, as well as 27 states.

Local mass media agencies widely covered elections without any registration or accreditation. At the same time, 42 members from 27 foreign mass media have been accredited by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Central Election Commission for the coverage of the election process.

OSCE/ODIHR had also been invited by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to observe the elections in July, 2015. OSCE/ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) were in Azerbaijan from 12-14 August, 2015 and issued Report on the outcome of the visit. In Report, NAM recommended, in addition to a core team of experts, the deployment by OSCE participating States of 30 long term observers and 350 short-term observers. In this regard, Azerbaijani side addressed the letter to OSCE/ODIHR and pointed out that Azerbaijan would welcome deployment of 6 long term and 125 short term observers in accordance with the ratio between number of population and 125 constituencies and also asked to reconsider NAM's Report. As a result, without any clarifications about the criteria and methodology in identifying the ratio between the number of population and 125 constituencies and number of observers, OSCE/ODIHR refused holding consultations on its questionable recommendations. Furthermore, OSCE/ODIHR, under the pressure of certain circles and contrary to its mandate, unilaterally decided not to deploy an election observer mission to Azerbaijan to monitor parliamentary elections, as though Azerbaijani side put a limit on the number OSCE/ODIHR observers. OSCE/ODIHR doesn't have authority to make such kind of decision unilaterally itself. This institution, according to its mandate, should provide technical assistance in organizing elections in the participating States.

In an unconstructive manner ODIHR also rejected Azerbaijan's proposal on holding constructive consultations in attendance with Serbia, OSCE's Chairperson-in Office, at the OSCE's Permanent Council, for discussion of the issue, as well as deployment of technical support expert group.

After demonstration of such biased and unprofessional attitude, which reflected grave violation of its mandate, OSCE/ODIHR and also certain circles do not hold any right to make a judgment on the results of the elections held in Azerbaijan.

People of Azerbaijan freely attended the elections, exercising their right to vote and expressing their free will.

Only the will of Azerbaijani voters, their turnout and casted votes determine the results and legitimacy of elections.

YENİ TƏYİNATLAR – NEW APPOINTMENTS – НОВЫЕ НАЗНАЧЕНИЯ

- 23 July 2015 The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan granted Dursun Hasanov the diplomatic rank of Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Second Category
- 23 July 2015 The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Dursun Hasanov as the Deputy Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Republic of Georgia
- 10 September 2015 The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan granted Rashad Ismayilov the diplomatic rank of Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Second Category
- 10 September 2015 The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Rashad Ismayilov as the Council General of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the city of Batumi of the Republic of Georgia
- 05 October 2015 The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Aghaselim Shukurov as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Republic of Livan
- 06 October 2015 The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan granted Gunay Efendiyeva the diplomatic rank of Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Second Category
- 23 December 2015 The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Rashad Mammadov as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Republic of Kazakhstan.
- 23 December 2015 The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Hasan Zeynalov as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Republic of Turkmenistan.

REDAKSİYANIN QONAĞI – EDITORIAL BOARD GUEST – ГОСТЬ РЕДАКЦИИ

H.E. Saud Abdulaziz Mohammad Al-Shamlan Al-Roumi
Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Republic of Azerbaijan



Date of birth: Jan 29, 1957

Former ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Republic of Argentina

Married

Mr. Ambassador, how would you briefly describe the history of your country?

On the 25th of February each year, the people of Kuwait celebrates the 54th anniversary of independence-the national holiday of the State of Kuwait, 25th anniversary of Freedom Day and 10th anniversary of accession to power of the Amir of the State of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

British protectorate was abolished and Kuwait declared its independence on July 19, 1961, subsequently adopting the constitution of Kuwait on November 11, 1962. Iraq attacked Kuwait on August 02, 1990. Afterwards, by the UN consent US-led coalition forces from 34 countries launched military operations against Iraq to liberate Kuwait from the invasion. These operations were acknowledged to be a war of liberation of Kuwait. 7 months later, Kuwait was freed from Iraqi invasion on February 26, 1991.

On January 29, 2006, Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al Sabah became the Amir of the State of Kuwait and on the same day swore a constitutional oath.

The State of Kuwait commissioned its embassy in Azerbaijan in 2006 and thereafter celebrates its national holiday with official reception. The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, His Excellency Ilham Aliyev was represented at these receptions by one of the honorable ministers. The receptions are attended by government officials, MPs, members of the foreign diplomatic missions in Azerbaijan, as well as representatives from various segments of the society.

What could you say about the relations between the State of Kuwait and the Republic of Azerbaijan?

Relations between the State of Kuwait and the Republic of Azerbaijan started with the early years of Azerbaijan's independence. I would like to highlight that Kuwaitis did not leave their Muslim Azerbaijani sisters and brothers alone vis-à-vis great challenges in 1990s and rendered necessary aids to refugees and IDPs via the Committee of Muslims of Asia, a Kuwait-based NGO. These made up not only material but also educational, healthcare, humanitarian and other aids.

Diplomatic relations between the State of Kuwait and the Republic of Azerbaijan were established on October 10, 1994. The Embassy of Azerbaijan was launched in Kuwait at the end of 2004. The Embassy of the State of Kuwait became operational in Azerbaijan in 2006.

The State of Kuwait enjoys close political relations with Azerbaijan. It should be pointed out that both states maintain common postures over many international affairs. On March 14, 2008, The State of Kuwait supported the resolution on “The Situation in the Occupied Territories of Azerbaijan” adopted by the UN.

The State of Kuwait also has always supported just position of Azerbaijan with regard to the Nagorno-Karabakh issue and demands resolution of the conflict within the frames of the international laws and in compliance with 4 resolutions of the Security Council. We, as sons of the nation once suffered from invasion, understand very well the feelings of the people of friendly country that have faced an aggression as well.

Kuwait-Azerbaijan relations have significantly improved in these years. The sound foundation of these relations was laid at the meeting held between ex-president Haydar Aliyev and ex-Amir of Kuwait, Jaber al-Ahmad al-Jaber within the frames of the summit of the Organization of Islamic Conference that took place in Casablanca on December 13, 1994. Ex-president expressed solidarity of the people of Azerbaijan with that of Kuwait and even at that time stressed the necessity to establish friendly and fraternal relations which was upheld by ex-Amir as well. It should be noted that Mister President Ilham Aliyev successfully pursues this policy and relations between both states are successfully developing in all the spheres.

His Excellency, Mr. President Ilham Aliyev's visit to Kuwait in February 2009 and treaties such as: Treaty on the establishment of a cooperative commission between the Governments of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the State of Kuwait, Treaty on mutual promotion and protection of the investments between the Governments of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the State of Kuwait, Treaty on elimination of double taxation with regards to income and property taxes as well as prevention of tax evasions between the Governments of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the State of Kuwait, Treaty on trade between the Governments of the Republic of Azerbaijan and

the State of Kuwait, as well as Treaty on cooperation in tourism sector between the Governments of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the State of Kuwait signed during the visit make the basis of this successful development. I should note that most of these treaties have already been ratified by the respective parliaments of both countries and have become effective enabling to take concrete steps in terms of cooperation between two countries. The Amir of Kuwait decorated the president of Azerbaijan with Mubarak al-Kabeer order, the highest award of Kuwait and the president of Azerbaijan honored His Highness with the “Haydar Aliyev” order which is the highest award of his country.

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait participated in the 32nd session of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs from the member countries of Organization of Islamic Cooperation held in Baku on July 19-21, 2006. Within the frames of this visit, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kuwait tackled with Armenia-Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and emphasized the indispensability of Armenia’s adherence to the UNSC decisions. The embassy of the State of Kuwait has taken an active part in all the affairs done in bilateral spheres and made every effort for further improvement of these relations. We have to stress with great pleasure that relevant organizations of Azerbaijan carry out every necessary work for regular operation of the Embassy.

On February 13-14, 2013, the meetings of the 2nd session of Intergovernmental Commission between the governments of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Kuwait were held in a friendly and understanding atmosphere. The delegations from Kuwait were led by Deputy Prime Minister, Sheikh Sabah al-Khalid al-Ahmed al-Sabah, and from Azerbaijan by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. Elmar Mammadyarov. The parties noted the importance of strengthening the friendship, fraternity and historical relations between Azerbaijan and Kuwait. The parties discussed the issues about investment and other topics of mutual interest as well as the opportunities to broaden the cooperation in various fields, as well. Meetings of the 3rd session were held in Kuwait this May.

What can you say about common features of our societies, states and nations?

We would like to inform dear readers about the State of Kuwait and its society. In Kuwait there is also a parliamentary administration and all Kuwaitis take an active part in the parliamentary elections. It should be particularly noted that the Kuwaiti women have been granted with all rights so as some of them have worked as ministers and even now there are few female members of the Parliament. It should be pointed out that, this has been the first practice in the history of the Gulf States. It is not coincidence that many international organizations consider Kuwait to be one of the most successful Arabian states in this regard. Also, we are very pleased to note all necessary conditions have been ensured for free and independent operation

of the press and mass media in the State of Kuwait. In the Kuwaiti newspapers there are criticizing opinions addressed to state bodies and various ministers and they have a great impact. This is not again coincidence that Kuwait takes a leading place among the region states in terms of providing freedom of press.

One similarity between Azerbaijan and Kuwait is that both are oil-rich states. We, as citizens of an oil country, feel honored to have come and work here where the oil was processed by industrial methods for the first time in history. The income from the oil is firstly spent on social expenditures of the citizens of the state and improvement of their living standards. The Kuwaiti citizens enjoy all kinds of social welfare in the highest level.

Oil is also one of the fields where Azerbaijan and Kuwait can closely cooperate. Kuwaiti oil and gas companies have obtained profound experience in the international economic relations and are ready to share it with their Azerbaijani counterparts. Kuwaiti oilmen can also benefit from the experiences of those of Azerbaijan. From this very point, it would be very beneficial for both sides to establish strong relations between State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic and Kuwait Oil Company.

MƏQALƏLƏR - ARTICLES – СТАТЬИ

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION TO EUROPE AND THE BALKANS

Dr. Evangelos VENETIS*

In a global environment the phenomenon of legal and illegal migration in general has increased dramatically in recent years due to economic and political (domestic and regional) circumstances. In the context of the so-called Neoclassical Model and trade liberalization developing states have pursued the benefits of globalization by liberalizing their society and economy-trade. This suggests a structural demand for unskilled immigrant labor to fill undesirable jobs that native-born citizens are not after, no matter the wage or the type of the jobs are. Hence it is plausible to have this increase in a legal framework and quite expectedly the high GDP countries' societies shaped the necessary legal framework to deal with such a development, e.g. in the EU case the treaties of Schengen, Maastricht, Amsterdam as well as the Dublin I Convention and Dublin II Regulation. Non-EU high GDP states took their own legal measures to facilitate legal migration process regarding crossing of national borders.

However what caught by surprise the high GDP societies was the fact that immigrants could pursue the prospect of becoming member of these societies in an unexpected, unforeseen and generally illegal way. Illegal immigration refers to the crossing of national borders in a way that violates the immigration laws of the destination country.

The main difference between legal and illegal migration does not lie only with the way that this phenomenon unfolds but mainly with the causes that spark its expansion. Although legal migration has prescribed economic and social causes that can be easily addressed, this is not the case regarding immigration causes such as overpopulation, climate change and geopolitical instability (regional or civil warfare) as well as deprivation of citizenship.

Illegal migration has created a number of problems including migration trafficking, slavery, prostitution and death. It has also created new "professions" such as traffickers and products sellers, affecting local societies en route and at the destination of the immigrants. For instance it is striking that in the regions where Kurds are the majority, traffickers cooperate with whole villages where dwellers offer their houses as shelter for a night to the immigrants who cross the border. As far as the methods of illegal migration are concerned, these involve mainly border-crossing as well as overstaying a visa and sham marriages.

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Additionally to the economic and political reasons of illegal migration, a new geopolitical dimension has been added, that of the use of migration as a means of non-symmetrical warfare by ISIL. Various events in the migration corridor of Libya-Italy and the expansion of the ISIL's network in the Balkans manifest this important development of combining migration and extremism in various forms.

Given the strategic location of the Balkans not only for Europe but also for the Black Sea, the Caucasus and Eurasia, this paper unfolds the latest developments regarding the emerging role of illegal migration networks and routes as possible channels of geopolitical antagonism in the Balkans.

Routes of migration - The eight paths

The Balkans is a strategic peninsula and one of the major immigration east-west corridors through a north-west channel within the peninsula. The following mapping of illegal immigration routes gives a panorama of the global routes and highlights the significance of the Balkans in this context.

The European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (Frontex) has identified the main routes used by refugees and migrants who try to reach European Union countries. These routes are as follows:

The first route extends from Senegal West Africa and Mauritania to the Canary Islands and is selected by Moroccans and Senegalese and citizens of Niger, Nigeria and Mali.

The second route includes Western Mediterranean - from North Africa to the Iberian Peninsula through the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. The route is mainly chosen from Algerians and Moroccans, with the main destinations in Spain, France and Italy.

Central Mediterranean - from Libya to Italy and Malta form the third route. The path chosen is primarily by refugees from the countries of the Horn of Africa (northeast Africa) and West Africa.

The fourth route includes Apulia and Calabria and is an option for refugees from Turkey and Egypt. It also includes refugee flows between Greece and Italy. The majority of refugees who make this route are entering the Schengen zone, passing the land border with Turkey - Greece.

As far the fifth route is concerned, there is a circular one from Albania to Greece. Migration across the borderline between Greece and Albania has caused one of the largest irregular refugee flows at the external borders of the EU.

The sixth route is located in the Western Balkans and is divided in two refugee flows. The base is one of the Western Balkan countries, among them Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Macedonia. The second is a follow other routes mentioned above, through which the EU external borders originally crossed by land or by sea from Turkey to either Bulgaria or in Greece, where after which the refugees traveled to Hungary through the Western Balkans. This path is chosen mainly by citizens of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Algeria and sub-Saharan Africa.

Eastern Mediterranean - from Turkey to Greece, Bulgaria and Cyprus forms the seventh route. The bulk of the refugees who make this route are from Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia.

The eighth route covers the land consisting of the Belarussian border, Moldova, Ukraine, Russia and countries of Eastern Europe that are EU members, such as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, Hungary, Norway, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

According to Frontex, over half a million refugees arrived at the EU border from the beginning of 2015, while 156,000 entered the EU in August. In 2014 a total of about 280,000 refugees crossed the borders of the EU. According to data of the European Statistical Office (Eurostat) in the EU countries of asylum applications amounted to 185,000 in the first quarter of 2015, while more than 210,000 reached in the second quarters of 2015.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) claims that the number of undocumented migrants who enter Europe by sea since the beginning of 2015 is estimated at 481 612. According to the agency, Greece and Italy have been most affected by the refugee crisis with 351 088 and 127 605 immigrants have reached respectively on their territory. The report also says that at least 2,872 people were killed or missing in the Mediterranean trying to make the crossing of the Mediterranean and reach Europe in 2015.

The Balkans

The global importance of the Balkan Peninsula and the geopolitical significance of Islam for the region make the topic worth of analyzing it. In this analysis there is an effort to highlight the cultural, religious and geopolitical aspects which give Islam a strategic role in the region.

Having in mind the problems that Balkan societies have faced in the last two decades, various Islamic groups from all over the world have undertaken the task of exerting their influence amongst Muslims in the Balkans. This influence is displayed through the channels of cultural diplomacy in a Muslim framework and a variety of activities in this context in order to win the hearts and minds of Balkan Muslims.

The charity organizations

By establishing Muslim charity organizations in the form of NGOs in the Balkan countries which host Muslim populations various donors aim to improve the living standards of Muslims in the region by offering them stipends in the form of a monthly income sufficient to support modestly a family with two or three children¹.

In the same fashion the charity organizations undertake the task of erecting new mosques or repairing older damaged ones². Additionally the charities are active in establishing theological schools (seminaries) for the religious education of young Muslims. From these seminaries the future generations of Muslim clerics will form the basis for the local priesthood of Islam in the region. When the young students complete their studies curriculum, they are sent to the seminaries of the donors in order to improve their knowledge further³.

The above examples are indicative of the efforts of the donors to establish, consolidate and expand a social network in various aspects of daily and personal life, aiming to influence the public opinion of the Muslim society about the importance of Islam. Each donor, depending on the variation of Islam it represents creates a special context of Islam which co-exists with the local Muslim tradition and those traditions that are also introduced by other donors.

Immigration and the ISIL

Taking into account the developments in the third route (Libya-Italy) the role of ISIL in sending, in many cases forcefully, immigrants to Italy has been growing in recent months. The same is the case in the Balkans. As shown below, the latest events are dramatic in nature and significance since they mark the beginning of a new era of geopolitical antagonism between Islam and the powers of secularism in the Balkans. Additionally Islam puts in doubt the secular progress of the intermezzo which has occurred since the fall of the Soviet Union and the defeat of Communism in the Balkans and it echoes the geopolitical gains ISIL has made in Afghanistan,

¹ "Saudi 'charity' troubling to Bosnian Muslims," The Centre for Peace in the Balkans, 28/1/2002.

² The case of the new Tirana Mosque financed by Ankara is striking, "New Mosque Plan Catches Albania Muslims Off Guard," <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/new-mosque-proposal-surprises-albanian-muslims>; <http://tiranagrandmosque.com>;

³ Extremists worry the Balkans, Europe's Muslim heartland, May 1, 2015, <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/world/article24783928.html>.

Libya, Mesopotamia and the Levant. These events include the double warnings of ISIL that it is ready to operate fully in the Balkans, the assault in Zvornik of Bosnia, the battles in Lazarati (Albania) and Koumanovo (FYROM) and the central role of Kosovo and other Balkan regions in recruiting mujahedin for the warfronts in Libya, Syria and Iraq. The importance of these events is manifested by the vivid interest of the international community and the statements of various officials.

The related developments have been increased in frequency and importance at least in the past six months. They are divided in three categories: the increasing participation of Balkan recruits to the global warfronts; the return of the first Balkan veterans to their homelands and the operational knowhow they bring back; and the communication policy of ISIL in the Balkans.

I) The increasing participation of Balkan recruits in the global warfronts

The popularity of jihad amongst the Balkan Muslims is increasing. The number of recruits from Bosnia, FYROM, Kosovo and Albania are indicative of this tendency. The news coming from the warfronts and the Balkans reflect this tendency and raise the concern about the challenges lying in the near future.

II) The return of the first Balkan veterans to their homelands and the operational knowhow they bring back

On 19/5/2015 the authorities of Bosnia-Herzegovina declared a threat to national security of a member of the extreme Islamic movement Salafi originally from FYROM and ordered his deportation from the country, as announced by the foreign affairs management service⁴. On 14/7/2015 the anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre in Bosnia, Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić decided to attend the ceremony in memory to 8,000 Bosnian Muslims were executed before 20 years by forces of the Bosnian Serbs in 1995, but was attacked with stones and other objects from the collected crowd and left hurriedly for Belgrade.

On 25/6/2015, a 31 years old member of the Albanian elite police forces and the two of his colleagues were wounded in an operation against a group of young 17 to 22 years, supporters of the ISIL. The operation was prompted by previous armed attacks against the police in the village Lazarati⁵.

On another incident nine people arrested by the FYROM authorities in a large police operation to identify and arrest individuals associated with the organization

⁴ Newspaper "Vetserni Liszt", 21/5/2015.

⁵ 25/6/2015, <http://hubii.com/article/55902fe57ec3c6047d7935dd/lazarati-policia-e-gjirokastres-zbardh-ngjarjen-ibrahim-basha-nderroi-jete-gjate-rruges-per-ne-spitalin-rajonal>

ISIL or recruit young people to fight in Iraq, Syria or other war fronts abroad⁶. The FYROM Minister of Interior Mitko Tsavkof said that raids took place in 28 locations across the country, including the mosque Tutunsuz in Skopje, and arrested nine people, according to state news agency MIA. Moreover there is an arrest warrant for another 27 people in connection with participation in foreign military or paramilitary organizations, under a new law passed recently in order to prevent young Muslims from being integrated into the structures of the ISIL in Syria or Iraq.

In Kosovo it seems that the emergence of political Islam in the region has caught the secular Kosovo administration by surprise. In an interview with Austrian news agency APA, Hashim Thaci stressed Salafi Islam as threat to stability of the region.

On July 11, 2015 the Kosovo police arrested five people accused of attempting to poison a large quantity casting the lake, which draws its water from the major part of the capital, Pristina, Gračanica and surrounding villages⁷. On July 20, 2015 the Kosovo police found two bags containing weapons and military uniforms near the Lake Bantovats or Gračanica (artificial reservoir on the river Gkratsanka), 300 meters from the area where on.

III) The ISIL communication policy in the Balkans

On 5/6/2015, the "Al Hayat Media Center", the "wing" media of the ISIL, aired documentary on the Balkans containing threats against Albania, Kosovo and FYROM. In the documentary, the Albanians considered "atheists" in the video, among others two Albanian men who fight alongside ISIL -the one from Albania and one from Kosovo. Ten days later a new ISIL video was aired calling for the establishment of a Balkan Caliphate⁸.

The scenario of erecting walls

In recent weeks many European states have been alarmed by the increasing influx of illegal immigrants to their lands. Some of them in the Balkans and central Europe have decided to boost their security measures and traffic control. The movement of Hungary to erect a fence along its borders with Serbia and Croatia may prompt a domino effect in the relations with its neighbors. Subsequently other countries have also tightened their security and check-points until a unified EU policy is shaped.

Indeed the need for an EU policy on migration is necessary in every sense, especially on humanitarian and security grounds. Given the large quota of the immigrants

⁶ Aleksandar Dimishkovski, "Macedonia arrests 9 suspected of having ties to ISIS," The New York Times, 6/8/2015.

⁷ 'Suspected ISIS Members Arrested in Kosovo,' Independent, 20/7/2015.

⁸ A professor of the Faculty of Security in Belgrade, Zoran Dragisic, said the danger of terrorist attacks in the Balkans was real, <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/new-isis-threats-to-balkan-countries>

coming into Europe is growing swiftly and hundreds of thousands are on their way to Europe, it is necessary for the EU to act realistically and reasonable in order to balance between social cohesion, security and respect of human rights both of the immigrants and the EU citizens. The time is no more than 3-4 months and is provided by the weather conditions which in winter are expected to act as a deterrent for more immigrants to move into Europe. By spring new waves of immigrants will reach the European shores and by then Europe must be well prepared to address this humanitarian crisis. If it does not, then the future is not so promising and there are various scenarios already in this regard.

One of these scenarios which come up for the first time in this paper is the prospect of closing the EU borders in central Europe and having the migrants trapped in the Balkans. If the EU fails to reach a consensus about how the existing immigrant quota can be distributed amongst the member states and the issue of borders control and external EU borders patrol, then it is likely that a large number of immigrants are trapped in the Balkans. The migration routes resemble small rivers carrying water. When somebody tries to block these rivers in their way to the sea by erecting a dam, then the water is spread near the dam flooding the area outside the dam. In the case of migration flooding the Balkan Peninsula with the large population of Muslim migrants may have geopolitical repercussions.

Given that the current Muslim population of the Balkans is more than 10% of the total population and the fact that this percentage resides in specific regions-states as majority or minority, then one can expect what will happen if tens of thousands of Muslim refugees are blocked in a country where local Muslims reside. Despite the fact that Balkan Muslims could see the immigrant Muslims as foreigners in their land, it will be easier for them to provide them with shelter and tolerant spirit because they are co-religionists. Actually such a development could absorb the majority of Muslim immigrants in countries with local Muslim population rather than in Balkan countries where there are no Muslims. In this case regions such as in Bosnia-Herzegovina, FYROM, Albania and Kosovo could see the rapid increase of their Muslim population within a relatively short period of time.

The creation of immigration hospitality centers in the Balkans could actually be the first step to absorb the immigrants in these societies and re-direct the destination of the immigrants from central and NW Europe to the Balkans. Such a re-direction could be facilitated through the existing charity networks and the emerging ISIL ones. Having in mind the aforementioned details about the influential social role of the charity networks, it is easy to imagine that a portion of these networks could be employed by ISIL for recruiting its forces in the region and elsewhere including the Black Sea and the Caucasus, as it has already been doing in recent years.

What can be done

To sum up, the EU needs to act swiftly in order to come up with a sustainable policy and plan to address the unexpected in frequency and numbers phenomenon of illegal migration. There could be three levels of EU action in this process.

The first level refers to dealing with the existing immigrant quota in Europe, in terms of identification, allocation, residence permit, employment and human rights. The EU member states need to act prudently and let aside their difference and aspirations. Using the immigration case as a means of bargaining in other fields is not a realistic option, because by acting thus there can be no immediate agreement and solution to the problem. The EU organizations need to prepare a realistic plan in order to address the aforementioned aspects of settling the immigrants in the various EU countries. What must be taken into consideration is the fact that regardless of where the allocation will take place, the will of each immigrant is the driving force behind his future choices afterwards. In other words, if someone wants to live in NW Europe and not in the South, it will be difficult for the EU administration to prevent him/her from staying in the initial EU country of allocation. If the future numbers of the immigrants are restricted, then this type of re-allocation would not pose a challenge to the EU apparatus. If the future numbers of incoming immigrants are high, then the allocation method should be combined with the second level of action.

As a second step, controlling the influx of incoming immigrants could have multiple aspects such as visa, rethinking the Schengen Treaty, patrolling the water and land borders and the like. In this context, the real challenge is to maintain human rights as such and not diminish them. It seems inevitable that at least in the beginning a restriction of freedoms might be avoided as long as the efforts to act effectively in the countries of origin of the immigrants are underway. In the mid-term however and if the efforts in the other fields of this plan are not successful, then a new treaty will be necessary, especially if the number of immigrants rise in the future.

Such a development could be avoided if the EU addresses the causes of immigration in the countries of origin combined with the first and second levels of action and bear fruitful results. The third step presupposes a long process of involvement of the EU and the international community in regions which suffer from various conditions of instability, such as wars, poverty, overpopulation, climate change. Obviously neither the does EU have the remedy for all these issues, nor can it cure some of them in the short term. Thus it is necessary to have an EU plan in the next month. If the EU fails to act swiftly then regions such as the Balkans might feel the repercussions of this inability.

CROATIA'S FOREIGN POLICY AFTER JOINING THE EU

Senada Šelo ŠABIĆ *

Abstract

Croatia entered the European Union on 1 July 2013. Two years of membership have been shaping the country's foreign policy but since the European foreign and security policy is only evolving, members retain (and usually prefer to) keep control of their foreign policy objectives and instruments. Croatia's foreign policy objectives as a new member state, thus, were learning to operate within EU structures and at the same time advancing its own particular strategic objectives. As a small country with a long coast on the Adriatic Sea in European southeast, a new EU member state, in recession, with experience of multiple transitions in the last quarter of the century and still enduring consequences of the war in the 1990s, Croatia's foreign policy reflects these realities. This article looks at three areas where the current government's foreign policy making lies – relations with neighbouring countries, economic diplomacy and development cooperation.



Introduction

Croatia covers the territory of a roughly 56.600 sq. km with a long coast on the Adriatic Sea with over 1.200 islands and inhabited by just below 4.300.000 people. It used to be a member of the socialist Yugoslav federation (and Yugoslav kingdom prior to the Second World War) for the most part of the 20th century. Since 1992 Croatia

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is an internationally recognized independent state. Its independence did not come out easily – it fought a violent war against Serbia and bore other consequences of Yugoslavia's break-up – the arms embargo, hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons, a huge influx of refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) coupled with its own disputed policies towards this neighbouring country, political repositioning with respect to subsequent independencies of Montenegro and later Kosovo, cooperation with the International Tribunal for War Crimes in the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in the Hague, to name just a few.

Looking back at Croatia's foreign policy development since 1990s, Croatian political scientist Dejan Jović¹ suggested to see it as a sequence of three single-goal tracks:

- The first goal was gaining international recognition of a newly independent state;
- After this one, the second goal was to recapture the occupied territories and reunite the country;
- The third goal, after the first two were realized, was to lead Croatia through the accession process to NATO and the EU with the final goal of full membership in these two organizations.

By the summer of 2013 Croatia realized all these goals. It gained international recognition in 1992, it ended the war in 1995 and completed territorial reintegration in January 1997, it joined NATO in 2009 and became the 28th member of the EU on 1 July 2013.

The question then became what would Croatia's foreign policy look like as an EU member state, after these three single goals were completed.

Assessing the two years of membership, it is possible to roughly group activities of the Croatian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs into the following categories:

- Active politics in the region
- Economic diplomacy
- Development cooperation

These are in line with what the Croatia's foreign minister Vesna Pusić outlined as foreign policy objectives after one year of EU membership. They also reflect clearly foreign policy priorities of the Croatian President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović who assumed office at the beginning of 2015. Pusić explains that Croatia's priorities are, first, successful positioning within the EU structures, and then positioning in the region,

¹ Dejan Jović, „Hrvatska vanjska politika pred izazovima članstva u Europskoj Uniji [Croatian Foreign Policy: The Challenges of EU Accession]“, *Politička misao*, 48(2), 2011:7-36.

cooperation with NATO allies, in particular with the US, and bilateral and multilateral cooperation². In looking back at what Croatia has been doing since it entered the EU, we see that the active participation in EU debates, consultations with partners and reaching decisions were indeed activities to which the government devoted the most of its time. After that, we see Croatia channelling its foreign policy activities into the three areas mentioned above – towards its immediate neighbourhood, for the benefit of its economy, and to prove a reliable partner in development agenda. Of course, these are not detached activities, rather they overlap, intermingle and empower each other. Yet, for the sake of analysis we group them into separate categories.

The President in Croatia is a co-creator of foreign policy. In her statement after the first 100 days in office she concurs with the foreign policy priorities explained by the Minister with one exception – she places the cooperation with Central and Eastern European countries at the top of the agenda (Adriatic-Baltic grid, for example) and then reiterates the need to support neighbouring countries in reform processes with a goal that they enter the EU and NATO, economic diplomacy including strengthening of relations with some important regional powers, and Croatian contribution to development cooperation³.

A brief inspection of these and other documents show that key foreign policy makers in the country share similar views on foreign policy objectives. Croatia cannot escape the reality of its surrounding although much progress can be made with clear determination. Being in the EU will offer more opportunities for Croatia to cooperate with EU member states – this is already a trend in political, economic (including energy) and security spheres. Cooperation with non-EU neighbouring states will, also, continue albeit with less intensity if the process of enlargement continues to be very slow.

Active politics in the region

Croatia entered the EU with the clear acknowledgement that it would support further enlargement in the Western Balkans (WB). This was a political denomination of a territory in southeast Europe encompassing countries of the former Yugoslavia minus Slovenia and plus Albania. They expressed desire to join the EU, but were taken by the EU as a group of countries in need of substantial political, economic and social reforms to make them fit for EU membership. Slovenia was excluded from this group since it was to be admitted in the group of 10 countries which joined EU in 2004. Albania, as the only country which was not previously a member in the

² The annual plan of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs for the year 2014, Foreword by the Minister, <http://www.mvep.hr/files/file/2014/140507-godisnji-plan-mvep.pdf>

³ A statement by the President on the occasion of the first 100 days in office, 30 May 2015, <http://predsjednica.hr/objava/2/3/302>

Yugoslav federation, was added due to its geographical proximity and the similarity of challenges it shared with other countries in this group – Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania. Croatia left this group when it joined the Union in 2013.

The accession process officially started for Croatia in 2004 in the framework of the Stabilization and Association Process. This has been an instrument devised by the European Commission to place the Western Balkan countries in the framework of relationship with the EU. Launched at a Thessaloniki meeting in 2003, its goal was primarily, as the name of the instrument suggests, stabilization and the association of the Western Balkan countries with the EU. It also implied strengthening of regional cooperation.

Croatia was not enthusiastic of this element as it feared that stronger connections with neighbouring countries would slow down and even impede its own progress towards the EU. Ever since its independence, Croatia, much like Slovenia, insisted on its Central European identity and links to Western Europe rather than to its southern neighbours. It projected the image of a country that historically stood on the European borders against the Ottoman Empire being Catholic and a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It desired to leave Yugoslavia in which it was a member of the federation that comprised nations with different religious and cultural identity. It emphasised its links to Germany and Austria in Europe, and to the United States globally, rather than to countries like Russia and Turkey with whom some other neighbouring countries keep close ties.

Requiring Croatia to re-establish relations with neighbouring countries was seen as unfair, to say the least. Croatia insisted on the individual accession process and defied calls of those who proposed that the enlargement of Western Balkan countries in one group would be a better approach rather than allowing the so-called regatta principle. In the end, Croatia was successful – it joined the EU on its own merits and became the 28th member state of the EU.

Once this happened, however, the task of cooperating with the countries in the Western Balkans gained a new dimension. Now as an EU member state Croatia no longer feared that stronger links with neighbours would keep it away from the EU.

The new government that came to power in late 2011, when it was most likely that Croatia would join the EU in 2013, revealed as part of its agenda, an interest to assist candidate and potential candidate countries from the Western Balkans in carrying out reforms to meet conditions to join the EU.

Volatile neighbourhood, both politically and economically, jeopardizes Croatia's own

stability and security. Entrenching European values and laws further to the east and south of Croatia feeds back its own security and stability. Croatia shares 1011 km of land border with Bosnia and Herzegovina, around 317 km with Serbia and 23 with Montenegro. These countries want to join the EU but this requires implementation of numerous painful reforms which calls for determined and committed political leadership. Implementing such broad reforms would be a difficult task for any government. It is thus very challenging for countries which grapple with a number of internal problems, have been going through multiple transitions and still need to confront the legacies of the wars in the 1990s.

Prior to the general elections in 2011, the Croatian Parliament (Sabor) adopted a Declaration on European values in which it pledged that Croatia would not only support countries in the region on their path to joining the EU, but would also not use bilateral issues from blocking their accession processes. This is an important commitment since there are a number of open issues Croatia has with each of the three immediate neighbouring states – border delineation, efforts to locate missing persons, property issues, economic and trade relations, position of national minorities, to name only a few.

One of criticisms of the enlargement process is that it is increasingly more difficult for any country to meet all the criteria and thus it is particularly hard for countries which face numerous internal challenges like all the countries in the Western Balkans currently do – delineation of borders in the case of Serbia and Kosovo, the issue of external recognition in the case of Kosovo, the nature of the state in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the inability to move on the accession path due to external blockade in the case of Macedonia which led to deteriorating of political situation in the country. Challenges of entrenching the rule of law, good economic governance and efficient administration all of them face.

To support the neighbouring countries on the accession path, Croatia thus has been very active in advocating for enlargement in enlargement-disinterested EU, and has actively worked on transferring knowledge gained through its accession process. The current foreign minister Vesna Pusić came with ambitious agenda to prop-up Croatian foreign policy and has initiated a number of activities. The Center of Excellence was established in the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs whose task is to gather and disseminate knowledge gained through the country's accession process to countries that are currently going through the same process. With this in mind, the Center organized a series of workshops, lectures, meetings, consultations and study visits for officials from countries in the Western Balkans where they could get insights in how the process was conducted in Croatia, lessons learned, examples of best practice as well as where do pitfalls lie. By engaging people who carried the process in Croatia to speak to their counterparts, the Ministry has offered a forum

for knowledge sharing in the most direct form. Reflecting the interest Croatia pays to the region, a new sector dealing with South-Eastern Europe and enlargement was established in the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs.

Croatia also builds relationship with its neighbours which are EU member states, like Hungary, Italy and Slovenia. It is the intention of the current President to strengthen cooperation with countries in Central and Eastern Europe with whom it traditionally shares cultural, and now also political and economic space. Exactly because of membership in the EU it is expected that as times pass by, Croatia will turn more and more actively towards these countries and away from the Balkans, facilitated by the fact that the enlargement process promises to be slow and cumbersome.

Economic interests

Advancing a country's economic interests through diplomatic network is one of core, sometimes almost a sole, activity of foreign ministries. In the case of Croatia, however, the focus on economic diplomacy was meagre due to the war and other priorities concerning the international positioning of the state, its defence and territorial integration. Nowadays, yet, this is the area where the current President and the government at large pays most attention and this is most likely the area where the subsequent governments will need to stay mostly engaged. Croatia is a small country with 4.3 million people. To attract investments, to develop its own industries, to advance tourism as an important national industry, to expand its energy production and transportation potential requires continuous and committed work. Without prosperity, the country will face further emigration and depopulation, which are already serious challenges for its future.

Croatia has fared badly in the economic crisis that hit the world in 2008 – it has been in recession for six years and only very recent statistics indicate mild recovery. Due to budget deficit the country has to enter the procedure of excessive budget deficit administered by the European Commission. The hope, especially for this government which will seek re-election at general elections scheduled for early 2016, is that it will be able to show that the country shows small, but yet positive economic growth.

The membership in the EU did not pay off yet in economic terms for Croatian citizens. They have not yet felt positive impacts of the membership, although analysts warn that real positive effects of membership in the EU new members begin to register after more than three or four years. Thus, there is yet more time for Croatia to feel these impacts.

Croatia has a long coast with over 1200 islands in the Adriatic Sea which makes it a very desirable destination for tourists during a summer season. Developing

further tourist potential while preserving the nature is one of key goals of the country. Growth in this industry branch stimulates growth in other branches like agriculture, retail, transportation and many more.



The city of Dubrovnik

The strategy of the current Ministry has been to strengthen activities in economic diplomacy. For this end, it overhauled the existing framework for economic diplomacy with the goal to provide more information to potential investors in Croatia and exporters from Croatia. It took a couple of years to finalize the program of the new strategy for economic diplomacy. According to this program, the Ministry aims to contribute to the economic growth of the country by advancing economic interests of Croatia in effective, transparent and sustainable manner. It aims to achieve this by focusing on the following key stakeholders:

- Support to exporters
- Protecting interests of Croatian companies abroad
- Assisting in attracting foreign investments to Croatia⁴.

For this end, the Ministry also launched an interactive website which allows interested users to contact the Ministry staff in search of information and other assistance.

The effects of this new programme cannot, however, be assessed easily. The programme has been operative since October 2013, thus it is relatively new. However, there are two other factors which may impede the capacity of this new instrument to gain more public visibility. One is that investors and exporters generally have

⁴ More can be found at the Ministry's website <http://gd.mvep.hr/hr/gospodarska-diplomacija/>

their own channels of generating information and establishing contacts in desired markets rather than relying on ministries and other government bodies. Changes in this traditional approach can come only with time.

The other impeding factor is the fact that Croatia, through the war and the transition process, has been severely deindustrialized. There is simply a limited offer of possible goods for exports. Even when there are, it is difficult to penetrate foreign markets with brands that are not widely known. Only a few Croatian brands are known to consumers beyond national borders (mostly from food industry).

Croatia's improvements in important sectors are essential for a healthy economy - stable institutions, efficient administration and the effective fight against corruption. Economic hardships encroach on people's sense of wellbeing and, when prolonged, undermine the very fundamentals of a society. There are signals that Croatia is coming out from recession and thus the hardships associated with it will be slowly overcome.

Development cooperation

The third area of foreign policy activity of the current Croatian government is the field of development cooperation, a term that replaces the previously used concepts such as development aid or development assistance. The idea behind cooperation is that the recipient country is a partner in designing and implementing assistance programmes rather than just being a passive receiver of it.

Croatia tries to position itself quite clearly with respect to this agenda. As a former recipient state and now a donor state, it believes it has good insights in how development assistance works and has ideas how it can be improved. The Foreign Minister explains that Croatia has some important contributions to make in terms of transferring knowledge gained through transition from war to peace, in protection of national and other minorities, in mine field clearance, in hosting a successful UN peacekeeping mission, in catering for war veterans, in providing assistance to civilian victims of war, in cooperating with the international tribunal for war crimes and in carrying out trials for war crimes at national courts.

This is the kind of knowledge that no EU member state possesses in such immediate form as Croatia does. It is the only member state that has had a recent experience of war and although many countries to whom such experience may be of use do not have a possibility to join the EU, Croatian experience can be of use in these different settings.

With this goal in mind, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs organized in 2012 the annual Croatia Summit in the city of Dubrovnik on the topic of "State building and

EU experience”⁵. These meetings discuss topics of national and regional importance and this one was dedicated not to EU membership itself but to discussing the process of institution building during accession of a post-war country. The organizers invited also representatives of countries from southern Mediterranean hoping that Croatia’s experience may be of use to countries which had the experience of the *Arab Spring*.

Testifying to the notion that development cooperation is a very important theme for the current Ministry is the fact that this year’s 10th meeting of Croatia Summit in July 2015 (which in the meantime was renamed into Croatia Forum) is solely dedicated to the theme of development. Entitled “New Development Policy – Towards Partnership and a Common Vision” it proposes to discuss topics like new and old donors, partnership of small and big donors, sustainable development, threat of terrorism, how European foreign and security policy contributes to development, and lessons learned⁶. Discussion of high level officials including representatives from Africa at this Forum is a contribution to the debate on development that will take place later in July 2015 in Ethiopia in the framework of the Third International Conference Financing for Development. The Croatia Forum is also announced as one of preparatory meetings for the September 2015 UN Summit to adopt the post-2015 development agenda.

In the mandate of the current European Commission under President Juncker the portfolio for International Cooperation and Development is managed by the Commissioner from Croatia, Neelie Kroes, which contributes to the importance the country ascribes to the theme of development cooperation. The fact that the EU also declared the year 2015 as the European Year for Development explains the relevance of this year’s Forum on this topic.

Yet, both these facts are only marginally affecting the shaping of Croatia’s foreign policy dedicated to development. The main creator of the Croatia’s development cooperation policy is the current foreign minister. Vesna Pusić is personally committed to this topic and sees the potential of Croatia in establishing itself as a country which uphold values such as peace, education and reconciliation and effectively contributes to their realization.

Conclusion

Croatia is the first country of the Stabilization and Association Process, adopted in Thessaloniki in 2003 and offered to the countries of the Western Balkans that managed to complete the accession in 2013. With the entry into the EU, Croatia completed its main foreign policy goals. Once in the EU, the main question became

⁵ More on this Summit can be found at <http://www.mvep.hr/hr/posebni-projekti/croatia-forum/arhiva/croatia-summit/>

⁶ More on Croatia Forum 2015 can be found at <http://www.mvep.hr/hr/posebni-projekti/croatia-forum/croatia-forum-2015/>

how Croatia would manage to position itself in the Union. This is no small challenge for a country that has limited resources and has joined the EU in the times of the deepest crisis the EU has faced since its creation. Entering on its own and not in a company of other new members meant a considerable challenge for a small country. Yet, looking back at the first two years of membership, Croatia managed its way around EU corridors just well. As EU has ambition to become a global player (and not just a payer), the challenge for all members will increase.

In addition to functioning within the EU, Croatia has steered the course of its own foreign policy making in which priority is necessarily given to issues generated by the internal conditions in the country and its surrounding. Thus, once again, we see foreign policy as reflecting the internal character of a state circumscribed obviously by what external structure permits⁷. Dire economic circumstances, for example, only make additional impetus for Croatia's government which runs along other states in a relentless global race to secure profits and improve the wellbeing of its citizens, to use every opportunity available to promote national economic interests.

Geography surely is not and should not be viewed as a curse but is a challenge for most countries in this world. This is true for Croatia – its immediate neighbourhood to the south and the east are countries which are candidates and potential candidates for EU membership. Yet, in order to become EU member states they need to fulfil strict conditions. As this is not going to be an easy task, Croatia will need to cautiously design its policies to adapt them to the evolving nature of politics in its neighbourhood and in Europe.

Value-based foreign policy may come across as a misnomer at first. Yet, development cooperation implies exactly this, circumscribed, of course, with good old concerns of the real politik. Croatia has entered this field recently, as a country which from a recipient has turned into a donor country. It sees its potential in sharing knowledge gained through the post-war reconstruction and reconciliation. It cannot offer large funds but believes that it can join rich donors in delivering assistance to countries that express the need for this particular kind of knowledge. This is a new area of operation for Croatia's foreign policy makers and for the time has been mostly associated with the current foreign minister. To which extent Croatia will be willing or able to retain this foreign policy course remains to be seen.

⁷ Writings of late Professor Kenneth Waltz explain well the nature of the international system and consequent behaviour of states.

НЕЙТРАЛИТЕТ ТУРКМЕНИСТАНА: СОЧЕТАНИЕ НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫХ ИНТЕРЕСОВ С ПРИОРИТЕТАМИ МИРОВОГО СООБЩЕСТВА

Тойли КОМЕКОВ *

Туркменистан является обладателем международно-правового статуса постоянного нейтралитета на основании Конституции страны и соответствующей специальной Резолюции Генеральной Ассамблеи ООН «О постоянном нейтралитете Туркменистана», которая была единогласно принята 12 декабря 1995 года. Таким образом, беспрецедентный международно-правовой статус государства, утвержденный впервые в истории международных отношений Генассамблей Организации Объединенных Наций, стал всеобщим признанием миролюбивой внешней политики Туркменистана, утверждением его авторитетной роли как страны, способной внести достойный вклад в мирный путь развития международных отношений, обеспечение всеобщей безопасности и стабильного прогресса.

По инициативе Президента Гурбангулы Бердымухамедова, в целях торжественного и широкого празднования 20-ой годовщины постоянного нейтралитета Туркменистана в 2015 году, Совет старейшин Туркменистана постановил объявить 2015 год Годом нейтралитета и мира. И это не случайно, ибо туркменская модель нейтралитета на практике подтвердила свою жизнеспособность и стала одним из мощных факторов обеспечения региональной безопасности и стабильности, конструктивного диалога и партнерства во имя мира и устойчивого развития стран и народов.

Сегодня мировое сообщество является свидетелем того, что под руководством туркменского лидера возросший внешнеполитический ресурс нейтралитета страны максимально задействован в качестве политико-дипломатического инструментария в целях достижения мира, безопасности и устойчивого развития. Творчески переосмысливая и применяя к нынешней ситуации традиционные основополагающие принципы туркменской внешней политики, фундаментом которой был и остается нейтралитет, Президент Туркменистана сумел вывести оптимальную формулу взаимоотношений с внешним миром, то самое «золотое сечение», в котором сходятся и сочетаются национальные и международные интересы.

Независимость и нейтралитет, олицетворяя единство и прочность государственных устоев Туркменистана, величие исторического пути и свершений туркменского народа, демонстрируют высокий авторитет и роль нашего государства на международной арене. Значимость нейтралитета Туркменского государства актуализируется его необходимостью как

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действенного инструмента налаживания и развития широкого политического диалога, где верховенствующими принципами являются равноправие, взаимное уважение и стремление к достижению договоренностей, с учетом фундаментальных задач, направленных на обеспечение мира, безопасности и устойчивого развития на планете. Более того, такая деятельность последовательно наполняется и своевременными начинаниями, иницируемыми главой Туркменистана. Открытый и миролюбивый характер туркменского нейтралитета и его нацеленность на совместный поиск и решение проблем современности существенным образом расширяют и географические пределы его позитивного восприятия, во многом благодаря крупным международным инициативам и предложениям Президента Гурбангулы Бердымухамедова, заявленным с высокой трибуны Организации Объединенных Наций.

Основным вектором внешнеполитического курса нашей страны является гармоничное сочетание национальных интересов с глобальными приоритетами современного мира. При этом нейтральный Туркменистан твердо и неуклонно следует базовым принципам международной политики и дипломатии, таким, как миролюбие и взаимное уважение, равноправное и взаимовыгодное сотрудничество, невмешательство во внутренние дела, партнерство во имя развития и процветания стран и народов планеты.

Процветающее Туркменское государство стало миротворческим центром, где находят согласие и объединяют усилия все заинтересованные стороны, тесное сотрудничество которых направлено на обеспечение мира, безопасности и стабильности на Земле. В этом отношении Туркменистан является добросовестным и верным своим обязательствам партнером, строящим свои отношения на принципах взаимоуважения, равноправия и учета позитивных интересов. Современный Туркменистан представляет собой образцовую модель динамичного роста и интеграции в передовые ряды мировой цивилизации не только для региона, но и для других молодых государств мира.

Общепризнанный международно-правовой статус постоянного нейтралитета Туркменского государства, определяя основу внешнеполитической стратегии, выступает также в качестве важнейшего фактора обеспечения экономического роста и благополучия страны, надежного фундамента счастливой жизни народа. В данном контексте геополитические интересы нейтрального Туркменистана предельно просты и столь же естественны – они сводятся к тому, чтобы со всеми государствами поддерживать дружественные отношения, развивая взаимовыгодное партнерство с ближними и дальними странами, создавать внешние условия для внутреннего роста. И обустройство нашей страны началось по двум взаимодополняющим векторам - с одной стороны,

с укрепления позиций государства в мировом экономическом и политическом пространстве, а с другой - с проведения внутренних реформ, коснувшихся самых отдаленных уголков Туркменистана.

Принципы нейтралитета являются краеугольным камнем приоритетных позиций нашей страны и в решении стратегических задач устойчивого развития. Они, отражая суть философии и этики нейтралитета, выражены в девизе «Государство – для человека!», провозглашающем высшие интересы и приоритеты государственной политики Президента Гурбангулы Бердымухамедова.

В современном Туркменистане осуществляются долгосрочные национальные программы, благодаря которым стабильно развивается и реформируется экономический сектор, неуклонно растет социальное благосостояние народа, коренным образом преобразуется облик страны, перестраивается духовный мир людей, обогащаясь новым колоритом национальной и мировой культуры.

Стремясь поставить свои огромные природные и экономические возможности, человеческий потенциал на благо всеобщего мира, Туркменское государство, сохраняя национальную самобытность, использует все самое лучшее как из мировой практики, так и из накопленного за годы независимости собственного опыта.

Говоря о культурно-исторических корнях нейтралитета, необходимо отметить, что проводимая Туркменистаном внутренняя и внешняя политика полностью отвечает многовековой традиции нашего народа жить в мире и согласии со всеми народами, она соответствует нейтральному статусу государства, позволяющему выстраивать отношения со странами мира на равноправной основе.

Год нейтралитета и мира символизирует торжество на древней туркменской земле многовековых традиций нашего народа, олицетворяющих душевную чистоту и стремление творить добро, приумножать духовные и материальные ценности. На этих же принципах, во имя мирной и счастливой жизни человечества, строится и миролюбивая политика Туркменистана.

Установление плодотворного диалога с ближайшими соседями, в том числе с Азербайджаном, с которым Туркменистан связывают многовековые узы дружбы и исторически сложившаяся общность духовно-культурных традиций, выступает одним из стратегических векторов проводимой Туркменистаном внешней политики.

Следует отметить, что Азербайджан одним из первых поддержал статус постоянного нейтралитета Туркменистана, закрепленный 12 декабря 1995 года в соответствующей Резолюции Генеральной Ассамблеи ООН.

Азербайджан выразил также активную поддержку в качестве соавтора инициированной Президентом Туркменистана Гурбангулы Бердымухамедовым Резолюции Генеральной Ассамблеи ООН «Надежный и стабильный транзит энергоносителей и его роль в обеспечении устойчивого развития и международного сотрудничества», принятой 19 декабря 2008 года всеми государствами-членами этой авторитетной международной организации.

В свою очередь, Туркменистан, в числе первых, в октябре 2011 года поддержал кандидатуру Азербайджанской Республики на Генеральной Ассамблее ООН по избранию Азербайджана непостоянным членом СБ ООН в 2012-2013 годах.

Туркменистан и Азербайджан объединяют традиционно братские отношения, опирающиеся на давние традиции дружбы и взаимной симпатии туркменского и азербайджанского народов, общность базовых ценностей, приверженность принципам миролюбия и гуманизма в международных делах. Занимая выгодное географическое расположение на стыке Европы и Азии, наши страны плодотворно сотрудничают в области политики, экономики, гуманитарной и социальной сферах.

Тесному партнерству Туркменистана и Азербайджанской Республики во многом способствует сходство или близость позиций и взглядов по различным актуальным вопросам глобального и регионального развития. И это служит надежной основой для эффективного взаимодействия в рамках таких авторитетных международных организаций, как Организация Объединенных Наций, Организация по безопасности и сотрудничеству в Европе и Содружество Независимых Государств.

Развитию плодотворного сотрудничества двух стран способствуют активные политические контакты, прежде всего на высшем уровне, являющиеся прочной платформой для плодотворного развития туркмено-азербайджанских связей.

Традиционно диалог, основанный на взаимном доверии, между лидерами Туркменистана и Азербайджанской Республики, а также регулярный обмен мнениями по актуальным проблемам мирового развития, происходящий в рамках международных встреч и форумов, служат важными факторами позитивного сотрудничества и содействуют дальнейшему укреплению партнерства. Свидетельством тому служат и состоявшиеся встречи Президента

Туркменистана Гурбангулы Бердымухамедова и Президента Азербайджана Ильхама Алиева 5 июня 2014 года в рамках IV саммита Совета сотрудничества тюркоязычных государств в Бодруме (Турция), а также в ходе рабочего визита главы Туркменского государства в Азербайджанскую Республику для участия в официальной церемонии открытия I Европейских игр «Баку-2015» 12 июня нынешнего года.

Таким образом, дипломатия Туркменского государства, основываясь на статусе постоянного нейтралитета, следует общепризнанным нормам международного права, принципам равноправия и взаимного уважения, добрососедства и сотрудничества между всеми участниками системы современных международных отношений.

САНКЦИОННЫЙ МЕХАНИЗМ МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫХ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЙ: ПОЛИТИКА ДВОЙНЫХ СТАНДАРТОВ, ПРОБЛЕМА ИСПОЛНЕНИЯ РЕШЕНИЙ И НЕОБХОДИМОСТЬ РЕФОРМЫ

Наджиба МУСТАФАЕВА*

Введение

Современные международные отношения в последние годы ознаменовались относительно новым политическим феноменом – «языком санкций», проявляющимся в международной изоляции и экономическом давлении на отдельные страны.

Попытки остракизма предпринимались и ранее, однако в свете последних событий, а именно – украинского кризиса, тема приобрела особую актуальность. Ею пестрят заголовки статей и ежедневных новостей, она звучит с трибун международных организаций и остро стоит в повестке дня международных конференций и встреч самого высокого уровня.

Объяснить повышенную заинтересованность мирового сообщества в лице западных демократий, традиционно ратующих за защиту прав человека к соблюдению норм международного права, казалось бы, проще простого. Ведь именно сегодня, в эпоху глобализации, когда происходит постепенное преобразование мирового пространства в единую зону и формируется общее для всех акторов международных отношений международно-правовое и культурно-информационное поле, нарушение территориальной целостности государств в результате агрессивной политики, влекущей за собой человеческие жертвы, становится угрозой планетарного масштаба. Воплощение же в действующих правовых нормах общечеловеческих моральных принципов и норм, идей справедливости и гуманизма, ставших главными ориентирами развития современного общества, обуславливает закономерность этого процесса.

Новый мировой правопорядок, будучи элементом общего миропорядка, есть результат воплощения в жизнь норм и принципов международного права, соблюдение которых гарантирует международный мир и безопасность. Именно возрастающая роль права в современном мире представляет собой объективную закономерность глобального миропорядка, гарантом которого должны выступать международные сообщества государств в лице международных организаций, призванных своевременно и эффективно реагировать на происходящие в мире события.

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Вполне очевидно, что санкционный механизм, с разной степенью успеха применявшийся в мировой практике как инструмент воздействия на ситуацию, политизирован и представляет собой очередное проявление политики двойных стандартов. Так, США, приравнивая сепаратистов на востоке Украины к террористам, в то же время финансируют сепаратистов Нагорного Карабаха. Страны Запада, с завидной скоростью отреагировавшие на события в Украине, целенаправленно умалчивают об агрессорской политике Армении, в результате которой 20% международно-признанных территорий Азербайджанской Республики вот уже более 20 лет находятся под армянской оккупацией.

1. Санкционный механизм международных организаций и политика двойных стандартов

В теории международных отношений санкции определяются как меры принуждения к выполнению обязательств, вытекающих из правоотношений ответственности. При этом проблема применения санкций как мер принуждения к соблюдению норм международного права является одной из наиболее сложных и обсуждаемых в теории и практике международного права последних лет.

Более того, на протяжении всей истории международного права проблема принуждения привлекала к себе значительное внимание юристов. Для этого были достаточные основания. Сила и насилие играли решающую роль в международных отношениях. Одна из главных задач международного права состояла и состоит в максимально возможном ограничении возможности применения силы¹.

Характерной чертой современного международного права является все более основательная регламентация мер принуждения. Сейчас вряд ли можно обнаружить какую-либо разновидность применения силы в межгосударственных отношениях, которая бы не выходила за пределы международного права². Допускаемой международным правом принуждение представляет собой не насилие, а одно из средств реализации права. Необходимым признаком такого принуждения является правомерность. При этом принуждение должно быть правомерным как по основанию, так и по методам и объему.

В целом принуждение – необходимый элемент децентрализованного механизма функционирования международного права (*Ubi jus, ibi remedies* –

¹ Лукашук И.И. Право международной ответственности. М., 2004. С. 306.

² Черниченко С.В. Теория международного права. Т. 1. М., 1999. С. 221.

где право, там и средства его обеспечения). Одна из главных особенностей механизма функционирования международного права состоит в отсутствии централизованного аппарата принуждения, уполномоченного принуждать субъектов международного права к соблюдению принципов и норм международного права, а также обязательств, вытекающих из положений отдельных международных документов. В связи с этим, средства принуждения сосредоточены в руках самих субъектов международного права – государств и их объединений (международных организаций), которые применяют их индивидуально или коллективно.

Необходимо отметить тот факт, что в доктрине международного права концепция применения санкций как средств принуждения нашла достаточно широкое распространение и признание. Так, Г.И. Тункин утверждал, что «нормам международного права, как правовым нормам присуща санкция...»³. Р. Монако отмечал, что « в любой правовой системе соблюдение норм обеспечивается при помощи санкций»⁴.

Доктрина современного международного права содержит еще одно весьма интересное положение, согласно которому под санкциями следует понимать лишь меры принуждения, применяемые международными организациями (вторичные субъекты международного права), наделенными государствами (первичные субъекты международного права) соответствующими правами, что в свою очередь придает им принципиальное отличие от индивидуальных действий государств.

Впервые такое положение было высказано после принятия Статута Лиги Наций, а свое дальнейшее развитие и окончательное закрепление оно получило после принятия Устава Организации Объединенных Наций (далее ООН), заложившего основы нового универсального сотрудничества государств в рамках созданной для этой цели международной площадки – ООН.

ООН не только занимает центральное место в системе межгосударственных организаций, но и играет исключительную роль в современном международно-политическом развитии. Созданная в 1945 году как универсальная международная организация, имеющая своей целью поддержание международного мира и безопасности и развитие сотрудничества между государствами, ООН объединяет в настоящее время 193 государства мира⁵.

Главная ответственность за поддержание международного мира и безопасности

³ Тункин Г.И. Теория международного права. М., 1970. С. 470.

⁴ Монако R. Course generale du droit international public // Recueil des Cours. Vol. 1968-III. P. 313

⁵ Мустафаева Н.И. Проблемы реформирования Совета Безопасности ООН // Евразийский Юридический Журнал. № 10 (77) 2014. С. 57-58.

возложена на Совет Безопасности ООН, который является главным исполнительным органом Организации, решения которого (резолюции) обладают юридически обязательной силой.

Примечателен тот факт, что ООН обеспечила такой порядок, в соответствии с которым государства, даже не являющиеся членами Организации, действовали в соответствии с принципами ее Устава в той мере, в какой это необходимо для поддержания международного мира и безопасности (п. 6. ст. 2 Устава ООН). Решающая роль в осуществлении этой нормы принадлежит Совету Безопасности ООН.

Несмотря на то, что Совет Безопасности – орган ограниченного представительства (в нем представлено менее 10% общего числа членов ООН) государства-члены согласились, что при исполнении своих обязанностей Совет «действует от их имени» (п. 1 ст. 24 Устава ООН). Иными словами, Совет Безопасности самостоятельно предпринимает действия, которые рассматриваются как действия ООН⁶.

Совет Безопасности определяет наличие любой угрозы миру, нарушения мира и акта агрессии. Наличие этой компетенции в деятельности Совета имеет юридические последствия, предоставляя угрожаемому или подвергшемуся агрессии государству право на содействие ООН в обеспечение его интересов.

Установив наличие угрозы миру и безопасности, Совет может вынести рекомендацию для заинтересованных сторон, но вправе принять и решения о мерах принуждения к правонарушителю, задействовав свой санкционный механизм, с разной степенью успеха применявшийся в практике международных отношений.

Таким образом, Устав ООН, возложив на Совет Безопасности важнейшую функцию – поддержание международного мира и безопасности, наделил его соответствующими полномочиями. В результате Совет Безопасности ООН призван играть важную роль в становлении режима коллективной реакции на нарушение норм, которые рассматриваются международным сообществом как особенно важные. Нарушение этих норм квалифицируется как угроза или нарушение международного мира и безопасности⁷.

Резолюции Совета, принятые в соответствии с гл. VII Устава ООН (Действия в отношении угрозы миру, нарушений мира и актов агрессии), содержат все правовые элементы, характерные для международной ответственности.

⁶ Лукашук И.И. Международное право. Особенная часть. М., 2005. С. 45.

⁷ См.: Gowland-Debbas V. The functions of the United Nations Security Council in the International Legal System // The Role of Law in International Politics. N.Y., 2000.

Определение в соответствии со ст. 39 наличия угрозы миру или акта агрессии означает констатацию нарушения основополагающих норм. Резолюции Совета Безопасности призывают прекратить соответствующее деяние, предоставить гарантии исключения подобных ситуаций в будущем, а также предоставить возмещение. Меры, предпринимаемые в соответствии со ст. 41 и 42, представляют собой санкции, призванные побудить правонарушителя выполнить обязанности, вытекающие из его международно-правовой ответственности.

Устав ООН наделяет Совет Безопасности правом на применение временных и принудительных мер. Временные меры направлены на предотвращение ухудшения ситуации и не должны наносить ущерба правам, притязаниям или положению заинтересованных сторон. Такие меры могут включать требование к сторонам прекратить вооруженные действия, отвести войска на определенные рубежи, а также прибегнуть к той или иной процедуре мирного урегулирования, включая вступление в непосредственные переговоры, обращение к арбитражу, использование региональных организаций и органов. Временные меры не носят принудительного характера. Они не являются юридически обязательными для сторон, но Совет Безопасности в соответствии со ст. 40 Устава ООН «должным образом учитывает невыполнение этих временных мер»⁸.

Принудительные меры подразделяются на меры, несвязанные с использованием вооруженных сил, и на действия с применением вооруженных сил (ст. 41 и 22 Устава). Применение их — исключительная компетенция Совета Безопасности, составляющая одно из важнейших его полномочий.

В соответствии со ст. 41 Устава принудительные меры, не связанные с использованием вооруженных сил, могут включать полный или частичный перерыв экономических отношений, железнодорожных, морских, воздушных, почтовых, телеграфных, радио и других средств сообщения, разрыв дипломатических отношений, а также иные меры подобного характера. Совет не раз принимал решения о применении таких мер в качестве санкций, в частности в отношении ЮАР, Южной Родезии и КНДР.

Так, 9 октября 2006 г. КНДР произвела ядерный взрыв. Совет Безопасности немедленно отреагировал на этот вызов международному миру и безопасности и 14 октября принял резолюцию, требующую от КНДР не проводить более ядерные испытания и запуски баллистических ракет. Резолюция предусматривала введение санкций в отношении Северной Кореи,

⁸ Мустафаева Н.И. Санкционный механизм Совета Безопасности ООН: проблемы исполнения резолюций и необходимость реформы. / Сборник тезисов XIV Международной научно-практической конференции молодых ученых «Традиции и инновации в системе современного российского права». Москва, 2015. С. 273-274.

в первую очередь запрет на поставки вооружений и материалов, связанных с производством оружия массового уничтожения.

В тех случаях, когда указанные выше меры становятся недостаточными или неэффективными, Совет Безопасности на основе ст. 42 Устава имеет право предпринимать вооруженными силами ООН действия, необходимые для поддержания международного мира и безопасности. Все члены ООН обязуются предоставлять в распоряжение Совета Безопасности по его требованию вооруженные силы, помощь и соответствующие средства обслуживания, включая право прохода через территорию, территориальные воды и воздушное пространство. В этих целях заключаются специальные соглашения.

Опыт применения санкций к Ираку может служить иллюстрацией возможностей Совета Безопасности. В день нападения Ирака на Кувейт (2 августа 1990 г.) Совет принимает резолюцию, которая определяет факт нарушения мира (ст. 39 Устава), а также рекомендует пути немедленного прекращения агрессии (ст. 40). В следующей резолюции Совет констатирует невыполнение Ираком предыдущей и определяет меры по восстановлению власти законного правительства Кувейта. Это уже не рекомендации, а решение. Более того, оно обращено не только к членам ООН, но и к государствам - не членам. В этом видится пример осуществления полномочий по п. 6 ст. 2 Устава.

В числе предписанных мер — прекращение всех экономических связей и отказ от признания любого оккупационного правительства. Следующая резолюция (от 25 августа) предусматривала применение вооруженных сил. С юридической точки зрения особый интерес представляет резолюция от 25 сентября. Она устанавливала, что все правовые акты Ирака, противоречащие резолюциям Совета, являются ничтожными. Сославшись на ст. 103 Устава о приоритете обязательств по Уставу, Совет обязал все государства независимо от их договоров прекратить авиационные связи с Ираком. Иными словами, обязательная резолюция Совета приравнена к обязательствам по Уставу⁹.

Резолюции также установили и условия прекращения военных действий, а также порядок возмещения ущерба. В результате они заменили не только соглашения о перемирии, но и мирный договор.

Санкции применялись Советом Безопасности и в других случаях — в отношении Ливии, Либерии, Югославии. В случае с Югославией Совет даже сыграл важную роль в разработке условий мирного урегулирования¹⁰.

⁹ Резолюция Совета Безопасности ООН по вопросу об агрессии Ирака против Кувейта // СЖМП. 1991. № 1. С. 140-150.

¹⁰ Мустафаева Н. И. Совет Безопасности ООН: «реликвия» или политика двойных стандартов // Материалы VIII Конвента Российской Ассоциации Международных Исследований (РАМИ) на тему «Метаморфозы посткризисного мира: новый регионализм и сценарии глобального управления». – М., 2014. <http://risa.ru/ru/2011-05-25-10-23-32>

Особым видом принудительных мер является приостановление осуществления прав и привилегий любого члена ООН, в отношении которого Совет Безопасности принял решение о действиях принудительного характера. Такой мерой является также исключение из членов ООН за нарушение Устава (ст. 6).

Таким образом, международное сообщество, действуя через платформу ООН, а точнее – Совета Безопасности, призванного поддерживать международный мир и безопасность, полномочно (и, как показывают вышеупомянутые прецеденты, достаточно результативно) реагировало на нарушения норм и принципов международного права, привлекая к ответственности виновных в их совершении государств.

Что ж, получается, что Совет Безопасности ООН проводит некую «дифференциацию» в выборе вопросов «наибольшей» и «наименьшей» значимости. Иначе как объяснить тот факт, что ни одна из вышерассмотренных мер санкционного механизма Совета Безопасности ООН не была применена к Армении, в результате военной агрессии которой оккупированы 20% территорий Азербайджана – Нагорный Карабах и 7 прилегающих к нему районов.

Более того, Советом Безопасности ООН было принято четыре резолюции (№822, 853, 874 и 884) по нагорно-карабахскому конфликту, в которых подтверждается суверенитет и территориальная целостность Азербайджанской Республики, нерушимость международных границ и недопустимость применения силы для приобретения территории. Резолюции требуют незамедлительного прекращения военных действий, немедленного, полного и безоговорочного вывода всех оккупационных войск с территорий Азербайджана¹¹. Несмотря на юридически обязательный характер резолюций Совета Безопасности ООН для всех государств-членов Организации, они до сих пор игнорируются Арменией. И в этом случае к армянской стороне не был задействован санкционный механизм Совета Безопасности, призванный принуждать правонарушителя к исполнению предписаний норм международного права, а также выполнению обязательств, вытекающих из соответствующих документов (резолюций) Совета.

Исполнение резолюций в одних случаях и неисполнение в других нельзя назвать ничем иным, как политикой двойных стандартов¹², господствующей сегодня в международной политике, в частности в деятельности международных организаций.

¹¹ Мустафаева Н.И. Принципы международного права и Нагорно-Карабахский конфликт // Монография. Б., 2014. С. 33.

¹² Мустафаева Н.И. Почему Армения не выполняет известные резолюции? // New Baku Post, 11.09.2013.

№ 68 (120), С. 13.

Президент Азербайджана Ильхам Алиев неоднократно в ходе своих выступлений с трибун международных организаций отмечал, что известные резолюции, принятые Советом Безопасности по нагорно-карабахскому конфликту, не находят своей реализации уже более 20 лет, в то время как другие резолюции, принятые тем же Советом, исполняются чуть ли не в течение нескольких часов¹³.

Неисполнение резолюций Совета Безопасности повлекло за собой перевод вопроса урегулирования нагорно-карабахского конфликта на площадку ОБСЕ и созданную ею Минскую группу, безрезультатно работающую уже более двух десятков лет. Неэффективность ее деятельности, так же как и Совета Безопасности ООН, заключается в недостатке международного давления на Армению как следствие отсутствия политической воли у стран-посредников, от которых, как ни странно, Армения и получает основную внешнюю поддержку¹⁴.

Схожую безразличную политику ООН и ОБСЕ в отношении нагорно-карабахского конфликта проводит и старейшая региональная международная организация на европейском континенте – Совет Европы, деятельность которой сконцентрирована на проблемах обеспечения прав человека и развития политического партнерства с новыми демократическими странами Европы. Парламентская Ассамблея Организации (далее ПАСЕ) молниеносно отреагировав на события в Украине, а именно – присоединение Крыма к России, в апреле прошлого года лишила Россию права голоса и исключила из всех своих руководящих органов. При этом Армения, более 20 лет продолжающая оккупацию азербайджанских территорий, уничтожая коренное азербайджанское население, подвергая его этнической чистке, пыткам и другим бесчеловечным и унижающим человеческое достоинство видам обращения, до сих пор остается полноправным членом Совета Европы с правом голоса в ПАСЕ. В этой связи задаешься вопросом, как данная международная организация, традиционно ратующая за повсеместное соблюдение прав человека и гордо провозгласившая эту идею в своем Уставе, закрывает глаза на грубое и массовое нарушение прав более 1 миллиона азербайджанцев, ставших беженцами и вынужденными переселенцами в результате этой оккупационной политики?

Вполне очевидно, что подобный, как уже было отмечено выше, дифференцированный подход в отношении международных конфликтов, используемый международным сообществом в лице международных организаций свидетельствует о том, что сегодня эти субъекты международного

¹³ Мустафаева Н. Обессудьте, господа судьи, или Когда заработает Ходжалинский трибунал. 30.01.2015. <http://www.1news.az/authors/oped/20150130023949730.html>

¹⁴ Мустафаева Н.И. Санкционный механизм как очередное проявление политики двойных стандартов. 04.03.2015. <http://www.1news.az/authors/oped/20150304030021482.html>

права являются инструментом продвижения национальных интересов государств-членов, а также интересов их союзов и группировок на глобальном и региональном уровнях.

На рубеже нового тысячелетия, когда перед человечеством встают новые проблемы и угрозы, от успешного решения которых и будет зависеть его дальнейшая судьба, подобный подход в работе международных организаций, призванных функционировать в качестве универсальных площадок сотрудничества государств, совершенно неприемлем.

Более того, применение санкций к одним государствам и не применение к другим, может привести к тому, что в будущем мы можем стать очевидцами возникновения новых международных конфликтов¹⁵.

2. Реформа, мониторинг и оценка деятельности санкционного механизма международных организаций

В свете последних событий – обострения существующих и возникновения новых международных конфликтов, угрозы международного терроризма в лице «Аль-Каиды» и «Исламского государства», массового и грубого нарушения прав человека в результате деятельности последних – как никогда ранее актуализируется вопрос усовершенствования деятельности международных организаций и их адаптации к серьезному изменению международно-политического ландшафта.

Перед международными организациями встают дополнительные задачи, для решения которых требуется совершенствование существующих, более того – создание новых механизмов функционирования. Возникает ряд концептуальных вопросов: Какой должна быть система приоритетов международных организаций? При каких условиях функции ООН могут быть делегированы региональным организациям (Совету Европы, ОБСЕ и др.) или коалициям государств? Каковы условия и пределы вмешательства ООН во внутренние дела суверенных государств? К каким последствиям для члена организации может привести несоблюдение решений Совета Безопасности ООН? Как добиться оптимального сочетания демократизма и оперативности в функционировании международных организаций? Как совместить принцип универсальности ООН с особым статусом постоянных членов Совета Безопасности (включая институт права вето)? Как добиться эффективности функционирования санкционного механизма международных организаций?

¹⁵ Məmmədov F. «Yaxın gələcəkdə yeni münaqişələrin şahidi ola bilərik». 18.02.2015 <http://az.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/2365724.html>

Таким образом, назрел вопрос реформирования системы международных организаций, в частности их деятельности, связанной с поддержанием международного правопорядка и как следствие – обеспечением уважения к нормам и принципам международного права.

Разговор о назревшей необходимости перемен в деятельности международных организаций ведется уже давно, но в начале нового тысячелетия эта тема стала особенно актуальна. Очевидно, что в нынешней, весьма сложной международной обстановке основной фокус внимания в этом процессе должен быть сосредоточен на реформировании санкционного механизма международных организаций (в первую очередь Совета Безопасности ООН)¹⁶, в частности его правомерного и справедливого применения ко всем правонарушителям.

Анализируя вопрос правомерного и справедливого применения санкций, необходимо подчеркнуть, что они не могут применяться произвольно, исключительно в интересах конкретных государств. Тем более что в последнее время они достаточно часто применялись под видом крайней «озабоченности» отдельных стран положением в области демократии и соблюдения прав человека в определенных государствах, что в реальности обеспечивало облегчение использования данного механизма для вмешательства во внутренние дела государств.

В этой связи актуализируется вопрос проведения мониторингов – расследований и инспекций в государствах, в отношении которых международными организациями были приняты решения, предусматривающие применение санкций. Учитывая тот факт, что подобная компетенция закреплена за Советом Безопасности ООН, можно предположить, что мониторинговую функцию должна взять на себя отдельная, подведомственная Совету, политически независимая структура, могущая обеспечить необходимое и систематическое соблюдение санкций, что также будет способствовать укреплению общего потенциала ООН и большему доверию ее деятельности.

Отметим, что схожая с озвученным выше предложением, попытка была предпринята в 2000 году, когда была учреждена неофициальная рабочая группа Совета Безопасности по общим вопросам, касающимся санкций, которая подготовила доклад под названием «Передовая практика и рекомендации относительно повышения эффективности санкций Организации Объединенных

¹⁶ Mustafayeva N.I. Need for the reforming of UNSC: improvement of the sanction mechanisms and working methods // Research Institute for European and American Studies. 07.01.2015 <http://www.rieas.gr/research-areas/2014-07-30-08-58-27/transatlantic-studies/2336-need-for-reforming-the-united-nations-security-council-improvement-of-the-sanction-mechanisms-and-working-methods>

Наций»¹⁷. В докладе отмечается, что одним из важных нововведений в работе Совета в последние годы стало создание групп независимых экспертов для наблюдения за осуществлением санкций. Такие механизмы наблюдения созданы применительно к большинству действующих санкционных режимов, а именно в отношении «Аль-Каиды»/ «Талибана», Кот-д`Ивуара, ДРК, Либерии, Сомали и Судана. Группы экспертов проводят эффективную работу по выявлению и устранению нарушений и достижению общей цели обеспечения соблюдения санкций.

Необходимо также упомянуть и об инспекциях ООН в случае с Ираком, к которым прибегло мировое сообщество, дабы убедиться, что эта страна более не обладает потенциалом для производства оружия массового уничтожения. Тот факт, что после падения режима С. Хусейна в Ираке так и не было найдено оружие массового уничтожения, как представляется, следует рассматривать как неопровержимое свидетельство эффективности ооновских инспекций¹⁸.

Показателен и тот факт, что Итоговый документ Всемирного саммита 2005 года «поставил» санкции в строгие рамки компетенции Совета Безопасности, как важного инструмента ООН, используемым Организацией по поддержанию международного мира и безопасности. В документе указывается необходимость обеспечения того, чтобы «санкции были точно направлены на поддержку достижения ясных целей, имели такой характер, который определен Советом Безопасности ООН и осуществлялись бы такими методами, которые бы обеспечили баланс между эффективностью, имеющей целью обеспечение желаемых результатов, и возможными негативными последствиями, включая социально-экономические и гуманитарные последствия, для населения и третьих государств»¹⁹.

В документе также отмечается, что санкции должны иметь четкие вехи и периодически подвергаться, включая их последствия, соответствующему обзору и наблюдению со стороны Совета Безопасности и сохраняться в течение ограниченного периода времени, который необходим для достижения целей этих санкций, и должны отменяться сразу же после того, как их цели были достигнуты. Кроме этого, Совет Безопасности должен обеспечить существование справедливых и ясных процедур включения лиц и организаций в списки тех, на кого распространяются санкции, и процедур их исключения из этих списков, а также процедур исключения по гуманитарным соображениям.

¹⁷ Передовая практика и рекомендации относительно повышения эффективности санкций Организации Объединенных Наций. Секретариат ООН, 2007 год.

¹⁸ Заемский В.Ф. Кому нужна реформа ООН: в интересах всех и каждого. Москва, 2011. С. 85.

¹⁹ Итоговый документ Всемирного саммита 2005. Документ ООН A/RES/60/1 от 15 сентября 2005 года.

Ну и наконец, оценивая эффективность санкционного механизма международных организаций, хотелось бы отметить следующие факторы: 1) сдерживающее влияние на правонарушителя, ограничивающее масштабы его противоправного поведения; 2) демонстрация позиции международного сообщества государств в отношении правонарушения, оказывающая превентивное действие в отношении потенциальных правонарушителей; 3) ограничение материальных возможностей правонарушителя. Эмбарго на вооружения затрудняет модернизацию вооруженных сил, а экономические санкции снижают экономический потенциал, что в результате приводит к ограничению размеров допустимых финансовых затрат на вооружение.

Заклучение

Подводя итоги вышеприведенному анализу современного положения санкционного механизма, приходится констатировать тот факт, что эффективность санкций международных организаций в первую очередь зависит от политики крупных мировых держав, обладающих достаточными экономическими и военными ресурсами, а также рычагами политического контроля на глобальном уровне, необходимыми для действенности санкционного механизма. Вполне очевидно, что никакие мониторинговые группы, инспекции и расследования не будут иметь эффекта, если в деятельности международных организаций, да и всей системы международных отношений, будет по-прежнему действовать политика двойных стандартов.

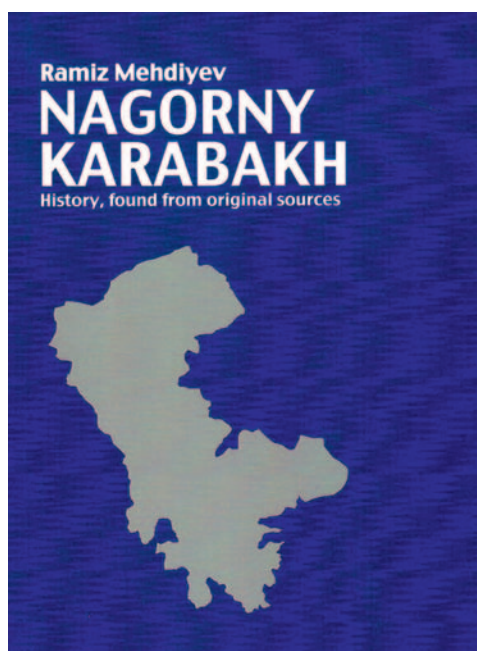
Таким образом, на современном, весьма сложном этапе международных отношений, система деятельности международных организаций, в частности их санкционного механизма, должна быть реформированы так, чтобы обладать достаточным, а не «призрачным» авторитетом и влиянием, для решения проблем разоружения, борьбы с международным терроризмом, и, конечно же, предотвращения расширения существующих и недопущения возникновения новых войн и конфликтов. Успех в этом деле может быть достигнут лишь в случае отказа от политики двойных стандартов в деятельности международных организаций и проявления политической воли у мировых держав, призванных справедливо подходить к политико-правовой оценке международных конфликтов. Именно такой подход, опирающийся на прочный фундамент международного права, может быть гарантом обеспечения устойчивого мирового развития на современном этапе международных отношений²⁰.

²⁰ Мустафаева Н. И. Кому нужна реформа ООН? // «Движение за возрождение отечественной науки». 30.03.2015. http://www.za-nauku.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=9482&Itemid=35

YENİ NƏŞRLƏR – NEW PUBLICATIONS – НОВЫЕ ИЗДАНИЯ

“NAGORNO – KARABAKH: THE HISTORY READ FROM SOURCES”

Ramiz MEHDIYEV



The book written by Academician Ramiz Mehdiyev, the Full Member of the National Academy of Science of Azerbaijan, covers the historical roots of the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict. Using a variety of historical sources of ancient times, the Medieval period and modern time, the author displays the origins of the conflict, justifies territorial belonging of Nagorno–Karabakh to Azerbaijani states, demonstrates changes in demography, and covers armed struggle for Nagorno–Karabakh, contemporary OSCE Minsk Group-mediated negotiation process, and international organizations’ attitudes to the situation in the region as expressed in their resolutions and statements.

The book helps an uninitiated reader to go deeply into the problem and get clear understanding of the causes and effects of the armed conflict around Nagorno – Karabakh; it also provides an unbiased starting point on the topic referred to by modern political science and history as the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict in the Nagorno–Karabakh region of Azerbaijan.

This book can be offered to a wide circle of readers: historians, political scientists, international lawyers, conflictologists, anthropologists, and sociologists.

YENİ NƏŞRLƏR – NEW PUBLICATIONS – НОВЫЕ ИЗДАНИЯ

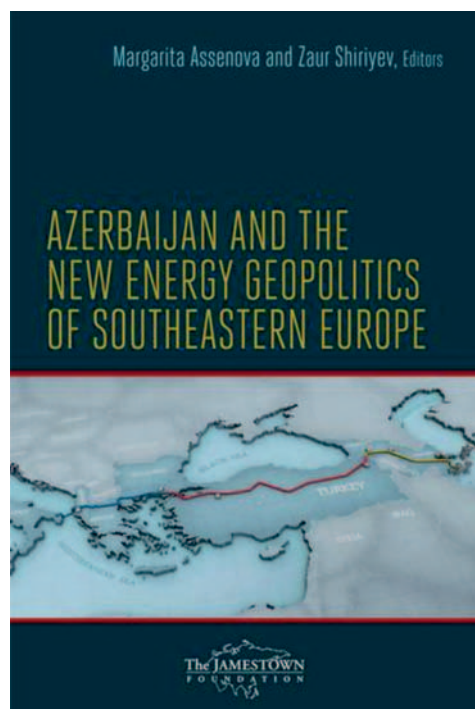
“AZERBAIJAN AND THE NEW ENERGY GEOPOLITICS OF SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE”

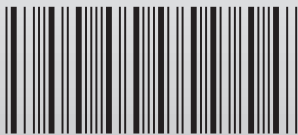
Edited by Margarita ASSENOVA and Zaur SHIRIYEV

The Jamestown Foundation announces the release of the new book *Azerbaijan and the New Energy Geopolitics of Southeastern Europe*, published in cooperation with the Center for Strategic Studies in Baku. The book, edited by Margarita Assenova and Zaur Shiryev, enhances our understanding of Southeastern Europe’s energy security and the potential impact of the Southern Gas Corridor.

Structured as an edited volume of ten essays, this book comes at a critical time when European concerns about Russian gas supplies are growing in the midst of the Russia-Ukraine war. The Southern Gas Corridor, which will deliver Caspian gas from Azerbaijan to Europe, will challenge for the first time Russia’s gas monopoly in Southeastern Europe, thus changing the region’s geopolitical landscape.

The book focuses attention on Azerbaijan’s aspiring role as an energy supplier and contributor to energy security in Southeastern Europe, its evolving relations with countries in the region—from Greece to Croatia—and consequently Baku’s expanding relations with the European Union and the United States. As Greece’s financial troubles threaten to impose new challenges to the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline, which is a part of the Southern Gas Corridor, we can expect further developments pertaining to energy security in the region.





ISSN 1818-4898