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MÜNDƏRİCAT - CONTENTS - СОДЕРЖАНИЕ

RƏSMİ XRONİKA - OFFICIAL CHRONICLE - ОФИЦИАЛЬНАЯ ХРОНИКА

Diplomatic activity of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr. I.Aliyev in April – December of 2017	5
Activity of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. E.Mammadyarov in April – December of 2017	67
The official visit of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Republic of Azerbaijan, April 3, 2017	149
President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev attended the 4 th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, May 5, 2017	153
President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev attended the official reception on the occasion of Azerbaijan’s Republic Day, May 26, 2017	161
President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev attended the 24 th International Caspian Oil & Gas Exhibition and Conference, May 31, 2017	169
The official visit of the President of the Republic of Moldova to the Republic of Azerbaijan, June 22, 2017	175
The official visit of the President of Turkmenistan to the Republic of Azerbaijan, August 8, 2017	177
President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev attended the signing ceremony of new agreement on Azeri - Chirag - Gunashli oil fields, September 14, 2017	182

The official visit of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria to the Republic of Azerbaijan, October 13, 2017	188
President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev attended the opening ceremony of Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway, October 30, 2017	190
The official visit of the President of the Republic of Turkey to the Republic of Azerbaijan, October 31, 2017	194
President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev attended the solemn ceremony celebrating two billion tons of oil production in Azerbaijan, November 8, 2017	197
The official visit of the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the Republic of Azerbaijan, December 1, 2017	206
President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev attended the “Heart of Asia” – Istanbul Process 7th Ministerial Conference under the motto “Security and Economic Connectivity Towards a Strengthened Heart of Asia Region”, December 1, 2017	209
Seventh Ministerial Conference of the Heart of Asia - Istanbul Process Baku Declaration, December 1, 2017	213

ВӘҲҲАТЛАР – STATEMENTS – ЗАЯВЛЕНИЯ

Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, April 1, 2017	224
Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, May 8, 2017	226
Joint Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, July 26, 2017	228

TARİXİ SƏNƏDLƏR – HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS – ИСТОРИЧЕСКИЕ ДОКУМЕНТЫ

Kurekchay Treaty, May 14, 1805 230

Кюрекчайский договор, 14 мая 1805 г. 233

MƏQALƏLƏR - ARTICLES – СТАТЬИ

Adiş Məmmədov

Etnik münaqişə tərəflərinin hüquqlarının
beynəlxalq hüquq normaları kontekstində tənzimlənməsi 237

Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan

Azerbaijan's Persistence to Resolve Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict:
Probable Scenarios and Suggestions 251

Bai Lianlei

India as the Newcomer in Shanghai Cooperation Organization 276

Victor Juc and Ruslana Grosu

The Republic of Moldova's Relations with the Republic of Azerbaijan
in the Context of Geopolitical Evolutions 284

YENİ TƏYİNATLAR – NEW APPOINTMENTS –

НОВЫЕ НАЗНАЧЕНИЯ 293

YENİ NƏŞRLƏR – NEW PUBLICATIONS – НОВЫЕ ИЗДАНИЯ

Гюнтер Леви

«Армянский вопрос в Османской империи: мифы и реальность» 297

RƏSMİ XRONİKA – OFFICIAL CHRONICLE
– ОФИЦИАЛ ХРОНИКА



**DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY OF THE
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC
OF AZERBAIJAN,
H.E. Mr. ILHAM ALIYEV
IN APRIL – DECEMBER OF 2017**

**FOREIGN VISITS OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN
H.E. MR. ILHAM ALIYEV IN APRIL – DECEMBER OF 2017**

WORKING VISIT TO THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

21 May 2017

List of meetings held during the working visit:

- Meeting with the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and deputy Supreme Commander of the United Arab Emirates Armed Forces Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Saudi Arabia

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV
ATTENDED THE ARAB ISLAMIC AMERICAN SUMMIT**

21 May 2017, Riyadh

The Arab Islamic American Summit was held in Riyadh, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev attended the event.

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King of Saudi Arabia Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud welcomed Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev and other heads of state and government at the King Abdulaziz International Conference Centre. Then King of Saudi Arabia Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud hosted a dinner party for the Summit participants.



The heads of state and government posed together for photographs. The Summit started with the recitation of ayahs from the Quran. King of Saudi Arabia Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud opened the event. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia welcomed US President Donald Trump and leaders from across the Islamic world for this historic meeting. United under a single vision –

Together We Prevail – this highly anticipated event, the first of its kind in history, renewed the mutual commitment to global security and further strengthened already deep business, cultural and political ties.

OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND

27 – 28 June 2017

List of meetings held during the official visit:

- Meeting with President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda
- Meeting with Marshal of the Senate of the Republic of Poland Stanisław Karzewski
- Meeting with Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland Beata Szydło

List of documents signed during the official visit:

- Joint Declaration on the Road Map for Strategic Partnership and Economic Cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Poland
- Protocol between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Poland on Amendments to the Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Defense between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Poland signed in the city of Warsaw on 30 March, 2005
- Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Energy between the Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Poland
- Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Transport and Transport Infrastructure between the Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Construction and the Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation of the Republic of Poland

- Memorandum of Understanding between the Baku Higher Oil School of the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic and AGH University of Science and Technology
- Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Cooperation in the Field of Railway between Azerbaijan Railways Closed Joint Stock Company and Polish State Railways Joint Stock Company

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



Thank you very much, dear Mr. President.

First of all, I want to express my gratitude for the invitation to visit Poland and for the hospitality extended to me and the delegation. I am very glad to be in the land of friendly Poland again.

Upon arrival at this palace, I remembered my friend, the friend of Azerbaijan, President Kaczynski. His tragic death shocked his friends. He still lives in the hearts of his friends. You, as his companion-in-arms, are heading friendly Poland today.

Today we are once again giving an impetus to the development of Polish-Azerbaijani relations. During the time of President Kaczynski, numerous visits were paid: mine to Poland and his to Azerbaijan. During these visits, we strengthened our friendship, talked about joint projects and launched some projects. We are embarking on a new stage of Polish-Azerbaijani relations today. In essence, this is a logical continuation of the era of President Kaczynski.

Today we held a sincere exchange of views on many issues. We once again became convinced that Poland and Azerbaijan are two friendly countries. We will continue to strengthen our friendship and make joint efforts to develop our ties.

As Mr. President has noted, many important documents were signed today. They will determine the prospects for our cooperation. Among them, of course, I would like to note the joint declaration on strategic partnership and economic cooperation signed by the Presidents. This is a very serious political document. This declaration covers practically all areas of our relations, including political, economic, energy and transport issues. It also dwells upon

the Armenia-Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and states that this conflict should be resolved on the basis of sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of the borders of countries and resolutions of the UN Security Council. I want to express my gratitude to you, Mr. President, for this fair position. I want to add that the Azerbaijani state and people have been suffering from Armenian occupation for more than 20 years, as a result of which 20 per cent of our lands have been seized. More than a million Azerbaijanis found themselves in the position of refugees and IDPs in their native land. This conflict should be resolved only on the basis of norms and principles of international law and within the territorial integrity of countries. These theses are reflected in the Joint Declaration.

Today we also talked about our joint activities in international organizations. Taking this opportunity, I would like to once again congratulate Poland on the great victory. The absolute majority of the world community, about 200 countries, chose Poland as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. This is a great support for your country and your policies. You have achieved this support by your activities and policies.

Poland is developing rapidly. It has very strong positions in the international arena. Poland acts in a principled and dignified manner in the international arena. I believe that this has also factored into such active support. I am glad Azerbaijan was among nearly 200 countries. Today we agreed that we would continue to support each other within the framework of international organizations.

Mutual relations, of course, cover the economic sphere. We agreed that the current level of trade is not up to the standard. I do hope that the forthcoming business forum and its results will serve the development of trade relations. We already had a conversation on several specific issues today.

Transport and energy. I believe that they should become the main spheres related to the economic bloc. The energy sector. Azerbaijani oil reaches Polish markets. Today Azerbaijan together with partner countries is successfully implementing a giant project – the Southern Gas Corridor. This project will take Azerbaijani gas to Europe. The total cost of the project is \$40 billion and its implementation is well under way. I do hope that the first stage of this project will be completed next year, while the second and last in 2020. Thus, Azerbaijan will assert itself as a very reliable partner of Europe. The energy resources of Azerbaijan will also make a valuable contribution to the energy security of Europe. Of course, there are good prospects in other areas of the energy sector. I am confident that we will take advantage of them.

As for the transport sector, as President Duda said, transport corridors East-West and North-South pass through the territory of Azerbaijan. All modern infrastructures have already been created in our country. Seaports, railways, airports, highways have been built. There is already a format of regional cooperation. Now our task is to deepen this cooperation and attract European countries to it. The recent meeting of railway leaders held in Baku suggests that a format for broad international cooperation is already being created. I am glad that Poland is also participating in this format. This opens up great prospects for us. I am sure that the forthcoming coordination and joint efforts will give a good result in the near future, which will benefit all participating countries.

In conclusion, I would like to address the humanitarian aspect of our relations. We know the Poles and Poland very well. The Azerbaijani people pay tribute to the memory of famous Polish architects, engineers and public figures who worked in Azerbaijan at different times and served our country. In 1918, the Poles were also represented in the leadership of the first democratic republic in the Muslim East. In other words, these pages of our history have laid the foundation for the present friendship. There are good prospects in the humanitarian sphere, in the field of culture and tourism. My visit today confirms our friendship once again.

As Mr. President has noted, I invited Mr. Duda to pay an official visit to Azerbaijan. I am sure that he will accept the invitation and we will continue our successful cooperation.

Thank you again

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV
ATTENDED AZERBAIJAN-POLAND BUSINESS FORUM**

27 June 2017, Warsaw

Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

Dear Mr President,
Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

First of all, once again I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. President for invitation to visit Poland, and for hospitality shown to me and our delegation. Today we are entering a new stage of development of our cooperation. My visit to Poland is very successful. We signed many documents. Among them I would especially underline the Joint Declaration on strategic partnership and economic cooperation. Actually, this elaborates a new road map in development of our political and economic relations. The name of the declaration demonstrates how much importance we pay to economic cooperation. Today's business forum is another indicator of that because business communities are very sensitive and they clearly understand that today the high level of political relations between Poland and Azerbaijan opens new opportunities for them. And as far as I know today at the business forum several agreements will be signed between our companies.

Of course, the current level of our trade turnover cannot satisfy us. Today with Mr. President and with delegations we discussed the ways how to increase trade turnover. There is a good opportunity to stimulate our economic ties, and also to have a very clear picture of our export potential, what we can export to each other and what kind of joint business projects we can implement.

I would like to congratulate our Polish friends and partners on very rapid economic development. Poland today demonstrates probably one of the highest rates of economic growth, political stability, economic stability. Development today creates very good opportunities for your country to strengthen your path to progress.

As far as Azerbaijan is concerned, our country is relatively young. Independence was restored only 25 years ago. We celebrated it last year. And these years were the years of transformation - political, social and, of course, economic. Today Azerbaijan demonstrates also very good economic performance. Since 2004, our economy has grown more than three times, and we managed also to reduce unemployment and poverty down to the level of five-six per cent. Now, the private sector is more than 70 per cent of our GDP and our financial reserves are

four-five times bigger than our foreign debt. So, economically and politically Azerbaijan is a stable country, a country, which has attracted more than 200 billion of investment during the last 20 years. Approximately, half of them are foreign investments. A good investment climate and a very friendly environment for foreign investors create good opportunities for companies to work in Azerbaijan.



We want to work with polish companies as partners in different projects in Azerbaijan, in Poland. We want to enter into projects related to investment. We invite companies from Poland to be our partners in projects, which are being implemented in Azerbaijan – energy, transportation, construction projects. We invite them as contractors. We invite

companies to invest in the areas where there is a potential for market in Azerbaijan and in the neighborhood. I think that having such good political relations and a clear vision for economic cooperation we can, in a very short period of time, achieve good success, increase turnover, I think, several times, and create a very solid foundation for business communities.

Azerbaijan is implementing important energy and transportation projects, which go far beyond our borders. On transportation, as Mr. President mentioned, we already entered joint activity in creation of corridors. Azerbaijan has been working on the transportation corridors for many years. Now all the necessary infrastructure, transportation infrastructure is already created. We have railroad connections with all our neighbors to the north, to the south, and to the west. We have six international airports, which can receive all types of aircrafts. Our cargo fleet is one of the leading cargo fleets in the world, which works globally. Our country is connected with the neighborhood with a chain of brand new highways, and we increase the volume of transportation through the newly-built port, the biggest in the Caspian Sea. Its first stage already is in operation, and next year the completion of the port will allow us to handle at least 15 million tons of cargo and one million containers. Already testing container trains from China to Europe are crossing through Azerbaijan. So, East-West transportation corridor is almost implemented. Azerbaijan invested not only inside the country, but also provided a financial support of more than 700 million dollars to construct a railroad in Georgia. At this stage we are in the final stage of negotiations with our Iranian neighbors on providing financial support for construction of a railroad in Iran, which will connect Iranian railroads with our railroads. Thus, we will create a multiple corridor format North-South, which will stretch from northern Europe to India through Azerbaijan, and East-West from China to Western Europe.

Another corridor, which are working on now together with our Polish friends is the South-West corridor, which Mr. President also mentioned. And I'm glad that Poland is our partner. The time of delivery of cargos through North-South and East-West corridors through Azerbaijan will be at least two times shorter than traditional routes. It will create a lot of activity, generate a lot of wealth, and bring new areas of cooperation.

Another important project, which we are implementing and which is also highly supported in Europe, is the Southern Gas Corridor project, which today is the only new source of gas delivery to Europe. The Southern Gas Corridor is a project, which was initiated by Azerbaijan several years ago. It's a project worth 40 billion dollars and it's almost implemented. We need two-three years in order to complete this project hundred percent. Now the implementation of different segments of that project is from 40 to 95 per cent. This will be another source of natural gas to Europe. This will mean energy diversification, energy security, and sustainable delivery of natural gas to European markets. And we discussed with Mr. President the future prospects of cooperation in this area. Azerbaijan is already a reliable partner in oil delivery to European markets. Our cooperation with Poland also is very successful. So, these major driving forces of our cooperation are important as global projects of energy and transportation security, but at the same time, they open big opportunities for private companies to be part of these projects. And I invite once again the companies from Poland to be our partners. We want to establish closer economic and business contacts. Poland for us is a very friendly country, and a country, which has a great potential not only in Europe, but globally and has very good international positions.

I today congratulated my colleague President Duda on tremendous success in election as a non-permanent member of the Security Council of United Nations with the support of almost 200 countries. This is a sign of international respect for your country and appreciation of what you are doing. And you can be sure that in the area of South Caucasus and Caspian you have also a reliable friend and partner, a capable friend, a friend, which keeps its word and wants to strengthen our cooperation. Therefore, I am sure that business communities of our countries will elaborate broadly on the opportunities. I'm sure today you will discuss different projects in the area of agriculture, industry, tourism, pharmaceuticals and other areas of cooperation where we have huge potential. We already discussed it with President Duda, and I'm sure that your discussions and your interaction will bring good results. So, once again, I would like to welcome you, express my gratitude for being at the forum and wish you success.

Thank you very much.

WORKING VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

9 – 10 July 2017

List of meetings held during the working visit:

- Meeting with President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan
- Meeting with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV
ATTENDED PRESIDENTIAL CEREMONY AT 22ND WORLD PETROLEUM
CONGRESS**

10 July 2017, Istanbul

Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

My dear brother, distinguished President Recep Tayyip Erdogan!

Dear ladies and gentlemen.

I am very glad to be on brotherly Turkish soil again. Taking this opportunity, I wish the brotherly Turkish people peace, prosperity and progress.

I want to thank President Erdogan for inviting me to this congress. I am also grateful for the hospitality extended to me.

Turkey today is a great force on a global scale. Turkey has the key say on many issues on the world agenda. All these successes have been achieved under the leadership of my brother President Erdogan. Turkey today is successfully and rapidly developing. Under the leadership of President Erdogan, Turkey has covered a long and glorious road. This forum is evidence of that. As Turkey grows stronger, we, too, become stronger and rejoice in this. I would like to take this opportunity to convey cordial greetings from all Azerbaijani brothers and sisters to the brotherly Turkish people.

Turkey and Azerbaijan stand by each other in all matters. Our cooperation is multifaceted and covers all issues. The Turkish-Azerbaijani cooperation and interaction in the energy sector has made it possible to implement many important strategic projects. Among them, I would like to highlight the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline and the TANAP project. These projects have redrawn the energy map not only of our region, but also of the whole world.



Azerbaijan is an ancient oil region. In fact, we believe that Azerbaijan is the birthplace of oil because it was in Azerbaijan that oil was industrially extracted for the first time in 1846. A hundred years later, in the middle of the 20th century, oil was first produced offshore also by Azerbaijani oil workers in the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea. However, Azerbaijan was not an independent republic at that time and we could not fully use our natural resources. Only in the years of independence did the Azerbaijani people become masters of their own destiny and natural resources. In the years of independence, these natural resources began to serve the development of our country, improving the welfare of our people. In the early years of independence, in 1994, Azerbaijan opened its hydrocarbon deposits in the Caspian Sea to foreign investors.

Since 1994, major investments started to be made in Azerbaijan's oil industry. At the same time, 1994 is a significant year because it was in that year that the Contract of the Century was signed. This contract plays a major role in filling the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline with oil. After that, a rich gas field of Shah Deniz was discovered in Azerbaijan. The volume of gas reserves in this field amounts to 1.2 trillion cubic meters. This is one of the world's largest gas fields. It forms much of the resource base of the Southern Gas Corridor today.

Thus, at the present stage Azerbaijan has become a producer and exporter of oil and gas. To access world markets, it was necessary for our country to build oil and gas pipelines, because we do not have direct access to world markets. With this aim, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline was commissioned in 2006 and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline in 2007. A few years earlier, the Baku-Supsa oil pipeline connecting the Caspian Sea with the Black Sea was built as well. Thus, a fairly extensive network was created to deliver Azerbaijan's natural resources to world markets. In 2006, together with my brother President Erdogan, we attended the opening of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and already thought about further plans and exchanged opinions. From that day to the present, all our plans have been successfully implemented. Today we are working on such a megaproject as the Southern Gas Corridor. Its foundation was also laid in Turkey, in this beautiful city of Istanbul. In 2012, my brother President Erdogan and I signed a contract on TANAP project, which forms the basis of the Southern Gas Corridor. It was after this that work began in all other directions. Today the Southern Gas Corridor project is being successfully implemented. It consists of four

parts. The first part is the Shah Deniz gas field. The implementation of Shah Deniz-2 project is already 93 per cent through and it will be fully completed in the coming months. The second part is the South Caucasus gas pipeline connecting Azerbaijan with Georgia. There, too, work is 87 per cent through. The third and the key part is the TANAP gas pipeline. The level of completion here is 77 per cent, and we will celebrate the implementation of this project next year. Finally, the fourth part is TAP, the Trans Adriatic Pipeline. Here the implementation is at the level of 44 per cent. All these four important projects form the Southern Gas Corridor. To implement this project, investment amounting to \$40 billion is required, a significant part of which has already been made.

Azerbaijan's confirmed gas reserves constitute 2.6 trillion cubic meters. In the coming decades, Azerbaijani gas will address the needs of countries both in our region and in Europe.

The implementation of the Southern Gas Corridor project involves seven countries: Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey, Bulgaria, Greece, Albania, and Italy. Three more Balkan countries may join the Southern Gas Corridor later. Relevant work in this direction is also under way. So we are expanding and we can further expand the geography of this project in the future, because this is an initiative that benefits all countries. The implementation of this project indicates that all participating countries and companies are receiving revenues. We have created such a wonderful format of cooperation where producers, i.e. Azerbaijan, transit countries and consumers work on the basis of common interests. It was this balance of interests that has led to the successful implementation of this major project, because there are quite many technical, financial, economic and political issues involved. It is already possible to say that the Southern Gas Corridor project will be successfully implemented and Azerbaijan will provide natural gas to countries both in the region and in Europe for many years.

Today, the gas factor is the key condition of energy security in the world. From this point of view, Azerbaijan contributes to energy security. At the same time, Azerbaijani gas is the only new source of gas that will be transported to Europe, because all other sources are already engaged. A new source has already been identified. These gas resources will be supplied to European markets through a new line. So our advantage lies in the fact that there both factors are present. This is a very serious step in the field of energy diversification.

Azerbaijan is aware of its responsibility. We fully understand that the projects being implemented with partner countries will ensure the energy balance and energy security of many countries, will help them. I do hope that by taking on this responsibility, we will show good results.

The focus of this Congress, of course, is on oil and gas. Concluding my speech, I want to touch upon another issue. Usually, countries not rich in oil think: it would be good if we had oil and used it. I can say that oil can be useful, but it can also create problems and headaches. It depends on how you use it. We in Azerbaijan have tried and, I believe, succeeded in turning “black gold” into human capital. The income we receive from oil is transparently stored in the first place. The State Oil Fund of Azerbaijan is one of the most transparent funds among those existing in the world. It has been awarded a prize from the United Nations. So this is the main condition – full transparency. The public is regularly informed about the savings in our Oil Fund.

The second issue relates to the proper use of oil revenues. We have channeled the revenues from oil primarily in infrastructure projects. Today we export not only oil and gas, but also the energy generated by dozens of power plants we have built in recent years. We have invested heavily in social infrastructure projects – in the construction of schools and hospitals. There is a very serious fight against poverty. In fact, it is impossible to create too many jobs in the oil sector. Despite this, by channeling revenues from oil into other sectors, we managed to reduce the level of poverty and unemployment, which is at about 5-6 per cent now. So the right policies and the right steps can enable you to benefit from oil, but this wealth can also create problems for countries.

I consider the experience of Azerbaijan to be successful. Major foreign investment is also made in our country. We, in turn, also invest in foreign countries. Brotherly Turkey is in the first place. To date, investments worth \$10 billion have been made in the energy sector of Turkey. In the coming years, this figure will double.

In other words, dear friends, when we talk about energy security today, of course, it is the realized projects that come to mind. I want to return to the beginning of my speech. Turkish-Azerbaijani unity, friendship and brotherhood determine the interests and the successful future not only of our two countries. They have a huge impact on the region. This brings stability and prosperity to the region, serves to create new jobs, strengthens security and opens the door for broad cooperation.

My dear brother, I want to express my gratitude for the invitation and the hospitality extended to me once again. I wish the Congress success.

Thank you!

OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA

16 – 18 July 2017

List of meetings held during the official visit:

- Meeting with President of the Republic of Latvia Raimonds Vejonis
- Meeting with Prime Minister of the Republic of Latvia Māris Kučinskis
- Meeting with Speaker of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia Inara Murniece

List of documents signed during the official visit:

- The Joint Declaration on the Establishment of Strategic Partnership between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Latvia
- The Memorandum of Understanding on International Combined Freight Transport between the Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Latvia
- The Agreement on Cooperation between the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Latvia in the Field of State Control over Construction Safety
- The Agreement on Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Latvia in the Field of Education

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

Thank you very much, Mr. President!

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to you for the hospitality extended to me and the delegation. I am very glad to be visiting Latvia again. Today, both during the one-on-one meeting and at the meeting between delegations, we discussed various aspects of Latvian-Azerbaijani relations. These discussions have been very constructive. I am sure that the results of this visit will also be very positive and Latvian-Azerbaijani relations will rise to a new level.

As you noted as well, the documents signed today are very important. Among them, I want to highlight the Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership between Latvia and Azerbaijan. This is a very serious and fundamental document covering practically all areas of our relations.

You also noted that Latvia supports the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. I can say that

the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan is supported by the whole world. The declaration reflects very important issues related to the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. It emphasizes that this issue should be resolved on the basis of relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council, the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan, and the inviolability of its borders. This is a fair position, and I am grateful to you for this position.

Today, of course, we touched upon regional problems. Security issues have also been discussed. Now as strategic partners, of course, we are discussing all issues very openly and frankly.

Particular attention has been paid to the economic sphere. Of course, I am sure that the discussions to be held within the framework of the business forum will produce good results. As we have been informed, several business contracts will be signed within the framework of the business forum. This will have a positive impact on the turnover between our countries, which is not very high.

We have specific proposals on what products we can export to Latvia and what we can import from here. Our climatic conditions are such that the two economies do not compete with each other. So we can export many goods to Latvia and the other way round. Therefore, there are excellent opportunities for the development of mutual trade ties. In particular, we have touched upon cooperation in the field of tourism and reached the decision that there should be regular flights from Riga to Baku. Relevant instructions have already been given.

I would like to note the work of the joint intergovernmental commission. In a short time, the commission has done a great job. Significant documents have been signed today. The Commission has played a major part in the development of cooperation in political, economic and other spheres. I would like to wish the Commission further success in its future work.

Of course, cooperation in the field of education and the humanitarian sphere is of great importance as well. According to the data available, 150 representatives of Azerbaijani youth study in Latvian universities today. I would like this number to be higher.

There are encouraging opportunities for cooperation in the field of transport. Currently, Azerbaijan is actively engaged in the creation of the North-South transport corridor and has allocated very major financial resources for this purpose. Latvia as one of the countries along this corridor, of course, works on a par with us. We have decided that relevant bodies should



already begin consultations among themselves at the next stage.

As Mr. President has noted, the relations between the European Union and Azerbaijan are also developing successfully. Earlier this year, I paid a very successful visit to the European Commission. A day after the visit, work began on a new agreement between

the European Commission and Azerbaijan. Of course, I believe that the Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership signed today lays an excellent basis for the document to be signed between the European Union and Azerbaijan. I should also note that Azerbaijan has already signed documents on strategic partnership with 11 member-countries of the European Union. This essentially reflects our strategic cooperation.

Of course, energy issues are in the foreground in the relations between the European Union and Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan as a reliable partner plays and will continue to play a role in ensuring the energy security of Europe. Azerbaijani gas is the only new source, a new route for gas supplies to Europe. This is our advantage.

The Southern Gas Corridor being implemented at the initiative of Azerbaijan is well under way. This corridor requires a total of \$40 billion. A considerable part of this has already been invested. Azerbaijan has already invested and continues to invest resources to billions of dollars, so that this corridor project could be implemented as soon as possible. I am sure that the first stage will be completed next year and the second and last stages in 2020. Thus, our strategic ties with Europe will rise to an even higher level.

Latvia plays a very important role in the development of these ties. We have always felt the support of Latvia in the successful development of the relations between Azerbaijan and NATO. Today, the relations between NATO and Azerbaijan, and our activities in the Republic of Afghanistan, the logistical transport corridor and all these issues in general, of course, strengthen our ties with NATO member-states.

Mr. President, I would like to thank you for the invitation and hospitality once again. For my part, I am inviting you to pay an official visit to Azerbaijan at your convenience.

Thank you!

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV
ATTENDED LATVIA – AZERBAIJAN BUSINESS FORUM**

17 July 2017, Riga

Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

Mr. President,

Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to once again express my gratitude to Mr. President of Latvia for invitation to visit your beautiful country. My visit is a very important step in the development of our bilateral relations. Starting from today Latvia and Azerbaijan are considered to be strategic partners. Today we signed a Joint Declaration on strategic partnership between our countries. This is a very high level of cooperation, and the Declaration covers many areas, including economic and trade cooperation.

Part of our discussions with the President, Prime Minister and the Speaker of the Parliament was devoted to our trade and economic cooperation. There is a big potential. Mr. President already mentioned the areas of great importance where we can easily increase our trade turnover. I think that for the coming years the increase of the trade turnover will be one of the priorities.



I know that during the business forum several business contracts will be signed. These contracts will actually reflect what we discussed with Mr President this morning. Taking into account that our climatic conditions are different, our economies are not competing economies. They are actually economies, which can provide each other with different kinds of goods. We have

good opportunities to increase our export to Latvia and to increase import from Latvia. We import mainly what you produce and export, and you import what we produce and export. It's a matter of business groups coordinated by the intergovernmental commission to work on concrete projects in order to increase the trade turnover.

Another important area of our economic cooperation could be mutual investments. Here we come to a very important point. There is a need to have more information because in order to have a good investment portfolio we have all the basic prerequisites, which are strong political ties. Business is very sensitive. Businessmen usually invest in a friendly environment. Therefore, strong political and friendly ties between our countries make this very attractive for investments. Now we need to identify the areas of potential investments and to coordinate the plans of business groups with the local demands. I think it will be easy to be done, taking into account this big audience. I am sure that today many new business contacts will be established.

Of course, I would like once again to invite Latvian companies to come to work in Azerbaijan as contractors. There have been several Latvian companies who implemented different projects in Azerbaijan. These were very successful projects implemented on a high level. Therefore, your companies have good expertise, reputation and professional level. We in Azerbaijan implement many important infrastructure projects, which can be interesting for your companies. In general, investment climate in Azerbaijan is very positive. During the last twenty years more than 200 billion dollars have been invested in Azerbaijan. Our economy is competitive. According to Davos World Economic Forum, Azerbaijan's economy is number 37 with respect to competitiveness index. The country is politically, economically stable. A lot of infrastructure projects are being implemented and many companies from Europe and other parts of the world are our partners in implementation of these projects. Azerbaijan's economic agenda is now aimed at diversification of economy in order to reduce the dependence on energy factor. And it is already happening. Now, the biggest part of GDP is created in non-energy sector. We managed to increase this year our non-energy export more than 27 percent, and reduce import 50 percent.

We have substantial financial resources, which makes economy very stable and predictable, and financial resources are bigger than the foreign debt five times. Therefore, our country is friendly to Latvia, to Europe with a lot of business connections with European countries. Today this declaration on strategic partnership is actually the 11th of this kind. With 11 member countries of EU Azerbaijan has a format of cooperation of strategic partnership. We today largely discussed opportunities, which will be created by implementation of the mega project, which is North-South transportation network. It will not only generate jobs during the implementation of the construction, but also will largely increase the volume of cargos going from South to North and North to South and crossing our territories. We will earn a lot of benefits from becoming more important countries for transit. Of course, it creates big opportunities for business companies. Another important project, which

Azerbaijan implements now and which is directly aimed at the European interests and also, of course, our interests, is a project of energy diversification, Southern Gas Corridor. This is now probably the biggest infrastructure project, which is being implemented in Europe. The total cost of the project is 40 billion dollars, which will bring Azerbaijani gas to the market of European Union with the new route, with the new source. This is real diversification because diversification of energy is not only routes, it's mainly sources. This is a case in our project. Energy security, as we all know, is vital for every country. Therefore, a lot of projects, which we implement in Azerbaijan, go beyond the boundaries of our country.

With Latvia we have such a strong format of cooperation that it will be natural to engage in a broader partnership. We also discussed today a very important issue for business, for tourists, for people-to-people contacts. It is a year-round direct flight connection between Riga and Baku. Now we have seasonal flight, and we want to have it permanent. That, of course, will create additional opportunities. If representatives of business communities fly often to visit each other that will make this route also commercially very attractive. So, it will not only open by the decision of the leadership, but it will be also commercially justified.

The last point, which I would also like to draw your attention to, is tourism. Our climate and the climatic and weather conditions also are different, which, I think, is an advantage because our people probably would prefer to cool a little bit themselves in hot summer and Latvians would probably prefer to have more sun in winter and other seasons. Therefore, for tourism it's a huge opportunity to invest and for tourist companies to consider our destinations as very attractive. But for that, of course, we need to have more contacts, we need to know each other better, to have more presentations, more forums like that. That will strengthen our relations. All that we are doing is aimed at strengthening relations between Latvia and Azerbaijan. My today's visit is an important contribution to that.

Thank you very much.

**OFFICIAL DINNER RECEPTION HOSTED ON BEHALF OF THE PRESIDENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV**

17 July 2017, Riga

Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

Dear Mr. President,

Ladies and gentlemen!

First of all, Mr. President, I want to express my gratitude to you for the hospitality extended to me and the delegation.

I am very glad to be back to your friendly country, which has a rich history and culture. I have pleasant recollections of our meeting and exchange of views held within the framework of the Fifth Global Baku Forum in March this year.

There are many similar moments in the history of our countries. In 1919, the delegations of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic and Latvia addressed the appeal to the Paris Peace Conference for de jure recognition of their newly-created states. A year later, the Azerbaijani parliament decided to open a representative office in Latvia.

Next year, our states, having restored their independence at the same time, will celebrate the 100th anniversary of state building. After the restoration of state independence, a new page opened in the history of our bilateral relations. Over these years, our countries have made great strides, while our peoples have lived peacefully in the conditions of stability and security.



Today, there are good opportunities for cooperation between our countries in the fields of energy, transport, agriculture, education and other areas. I am sure that the negotiations we have held, the business forum we have attended, the agreements reached and the documents signed, in particular the Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the

Republic of Latvia, will give an important impetus to the development of our relations.

Our humanitarian ties also have a rich history. At the beginning of the 20th century, a Latvian Society functioned in Baku. In 2013, it resumed its activities. Famous Latvian writers Ernest Birznieks-Upitis, Janis Vainovskis, August Berze, artist and writer Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš, conductor of the Baku Opera House and composer Jāzeps Mediņš, architect Ervins Paumbats and others lived and worked in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan and the European Union have close partnership relations in political, economic, humanitarian, energy and other spheres. After my visit to Brussels earlier this year, we started work on a new partnership agreement.

Azerbaijan pays special attention to the implementation of the North-South and East-West transport corridors, which offer ample opportunities for the expansion of economic, trade and transport ties. At the same time, Azerbaijan has initiated and participates in a number of large-scale international projects. The Southern Gas Corridor, one of the largest energy projects in the world, plays an important role both in the energy security of Europe and in cooperation with European states in a bilateral and multilateral format.

Azerbaijan makes an important contribution to security, stability, development and cooperation in the region. However, the most painful problem of the region, the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, is still unresolved. As a result of Armenia's military aggression, 20 per cent of the territory of Azerbaijan has been occupied – Nagorno-Karabakh, which is our historical land, and seven districts adjacent to it. Ethnic cleansing has been carried out on these territories and more than 1 million Azerbaijanis have become refugees and internally displaced persons. International organizations have expressed their position on the conflict. Four resolutions of the UN Security Council require immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. At the same time, there are also relevant resolutions of the OSCE, the European Parliament, PACE, NATO, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and other international organizations. This conflict should be resolved only within the framework of territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and in accordance with the norms of international law. The Joint Declaration signed today also states that this conflict must be resolved on the basis of norms and principles of international law, relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council, sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the borders of Azerbaijan. I am grateful to you for this fair position.

Dear Mr. President, I would like to reaffirm my satisfaction with the visit to Latvia once again. I am sure that the friendship and cooperation between Azerbaijan and Latvia will successfully develop.

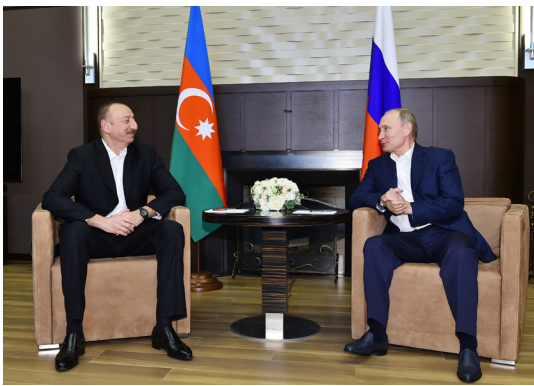
WORKING VISIT TO THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

21 July 2017

List of meetings held during the working visit:

- Meeting with President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin

On July 21, 2017 President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev met with President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin in Sochi.



Greeting President Ilham Aliyev, Russian President Vladimir Putin said:

- Dear Ilham Heydarovich, I am very pleased to see you in Sochi. I have just met with children from our new “Sirius” Educational Center. I am very happy with the development of this project, and I will tell you about this with great pleasure.

I am glad to have this opportunity to discuss both our bilateral relations and the situation in the region. The situation in the region is complex. I hope that our meeting today will allow us to find ways of solving all difficult problems, and, of course, we will also talk about how the bilateral relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation are developing. We have a great deal of works and joint projects for the future. I am glad to have this opportunity to meet and talk with you on all these issues.

President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev said:

- Thank you, dear Vladimir Vladimirovich. I am also very glad to meet with you. We meet on a regular basis. These meetings give a good impetus to the development of our bilateral relations, which successfully continue. We are satisfied with the level, high level of our relations. We enjoy active cooperation in political, trade and economic, humanitarian areas. There are good prospects in the fields of transport and energy. Our relations are multifaceted, and cover almost all areas of our life. Of course, we need to regularly conduct consultations on important issues – regional affairs, global politics, bilateral relations and the strengthening of security in our region.

Therefore, I am glad to see you again. I am confident that our meeting will give a good impetus to the development of our friendly relations.

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The presidents once again emphasized the existence of the relations of strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and Russia. They pointed out successful development of the bilateral relations in political, economic, humanitarian and other areas. The heads of state discussed the issues relating to settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

They also exchanged views over international and regional problems. Both presidents expressed their confidence that relations of friendship and strategic partnership between Russia and Azerbaijan will continue to develop successfully.

WORKING VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

9 – 10 September 2017

List of meetings held during the working visit:

- Meeting with President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Hassan Rouhani
- Meeting with Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina Bakir Izetbegovic

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV
ATTENDED THE FIRST SUMMIT ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF THE
ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION**

10 September 2017, Astana

Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

In the name of Allah, the Gracious and the Merciful.

Dear friends!

I am very glad to be back in Kazakhstan. I think very highly of the first Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on science and technology.



Azerbaijan is an active member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Over the past few years, about 10 meetings of the ministers of foreign affairs, culture, tourism, education, labor and other ministers of the OIC member-countries have been held in Azerbaijan. We actively cooperate with member-countries of the organization both in the bilateral format and within the framework

of international organizations. Azerbaijan always supports Muslim countries in international organizations it is a member of. The OIC, for its part, also provides Azerbaijan with great support and appreciates the policy pursued by our country. The OIC has always demonstrated a fair position on the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict within the framework of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the borders of Azerbaijan, and has adopted numerous resolutions reflecting Azerbaijan's fair position.

The Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation held last year established a Contact Group in connection with Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan. We appreciate this decision and express our gratitude to the OIC and its members for this fair position.

The UN Security Council has adopted four resolutions in connection with the conflict. These resolutions require an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian armed forces from the occupied territories. Armenia does not comply with these resolutions, but no sanctions are applied against it. These are double standards. Armenia has occupied Nagorno-Karabakh, native and historical Azerbaijani land, and another seven of our districts for more than 25 years. As a result of this aggression, 20 per cent of our land is under occupation and more than a million Azerbaijanis live in the situation of refugees and displaced persons in their native land. The Armenians have carried out a policy of ethnic cleansing against our people. Armenia has committed war crimes.

In 1992, Armenia committed the Khojaly genocide. As a result of this war crime, 613 peaceful Azerbaijanis were brutally murdered by Armenian fascists, including 106 women and 63 children. Thousands of people went missing and were injured. More than 10 countries have officially recognized the Khojaly genocide.

Armenian atrocities continue today. In July of this year, a two-year-old Azerbaijani child was killed together with his grandmother as a result of a projectile dropped by the Armenians. This is atrocity. This is another bloody crime of the part of Armenian fascism. At the direction of the Armenian leadership, all mosques in our occupied lands have been destroyed. Photos of the ruined mosques of Shusha, Agdam and other cities are documentary evidence of Armenian vandalism.

Islamophobia in Armenia has reached its peak. Armenia is trying very hard to expand ties with various Muslim countries. It would be wrong to believe their hypocritical and deceitful words. Armenia, which has destroyed sacred mosques in Azerbaijan, can't be a friend of any Muslim country.

In April of last year, the heroic Azerbaijani army liberated a part of our lands from Armenian occupation. We have built a new settlement there. A school, a medical center and a mosque have been built in the village of Jojug Marjanli, which consists of 150 houses. In the village of Jojug Marjanli liberated from occupation, we have built a replica of the Shusha mosque destroyed by the Armenians. This once again demonstrates the indestructible spirit of the Azerbaijani people and our attachment to our religious values. The Armenians have destroyed

our mosques. But these mosques rise in our hearts and no-one can ever destroy them.

Azerbaijan is making a great contribution to the cause of Islamic solidarity. We are vehemently fighting against Islamophobia, which seems to be raising its head in various regions around the world. We strongly condemn the crimes committed against Muslims, in particular, the facts of genocide and mass violence perpetrated against the Muslim Rohingya in Myanmar recently. We call on international organizations, the world community, political and religious leaders to take the steps necessary to stop the events taking place in Myanmar. In fact, I would like to inform you that on 8 September, Azerbaijan sent humanitarian aid to Rohingya refugees – 100 tons of food.

2017 has been declared a Year of Islamic Solidarity in Azerbaijan. At the same time, the Fourth Games of Islamic Solidarity were held in Azerbaijan this year. More than 50 Muslim countries took part in this magnificent celebration of friendship and brotherhood. I am sure that about 3,000 athletes and thousands of guests left Baku with the most pleasant impressions.

Azerbaijan is a rapidly developing country. Over the past 14 years, the gross domestic product of our country has more than tripled. A total of 1.6 million jobs have been created. The poverty level has decreased to 5 per cent. Literacy is close to 100 per cent. Scientific and modern technologies are successfully developing in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan is one of the few members of the space faring club.

In conclusion of my speech, I would like to note that Azerbaijan, as an active member of the OIC, will continue to contribute to the strengthening of Islamic solidarity.

Thank you.

WORKING VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

17 – 20 September 2017

List of meetings held during the working visit:

- Meeting with Chairman of the US-based Foundation for Ethnic Understanding Rabbi Marc Schneier and a group of evangelical Christian religious figures
- Meeting with representatives of the American Jewish organizations, including heads of the American Jewish Organization, World Jewish Congress, Bnai Brith International, National Coalition Supporting Eurasian Jewry, Jewish Federations of North America, Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, and Vaad L'Hatzolas Nidchei Yisroel organization
- Meeting with United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV
ATTENDED THE 72ND SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

20 September 2017, New York

Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

Mr. President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

For more than 25 years Armenia occupies 20% of the territory of Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh and 7 other regions of our country.



Nagorno-Karabakh is an ancient and historical part of Azerbaijan. As a result of Armenian aggression almost 20% of the internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan is under Armenian occupation. More than one million of Azerbaijanis became refugees and internally displaced persons. Armenia conducted the policy of ethnic cleansing against Azerbaijanis in Armenia, in Nagorno-Karabakh and 7 other regions of Azerbaijan. Armenia committed genocide against Azerbaijanis in Khojaly. Khojaly genocide is already officially recognized by more than 10 countries. On February 26, 1992 Armenia committed war crime killing 613 peaceful residents of Khojaly, among them 106 women and 63 children. One of those war criminals who committed that terrible crime against humanity is current Armenian President.

Leading international organizations adopted resolutions demanding withdrawal of Armenian troops from the territory of Azerbaijan. In 1993, United Nations Security Council adopted 4 resolutions demanding immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian troops from the territory of Azerbaijan.

Other international organizations, such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Non-Alignment Movement, OSCE, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and European Parliament adopted similar decisions and resolutions. Armenia doesn't implement them. Armenia for 24 years ignores UN Security Council resolutions and unfortunately is not punished for that. In some cases, UN Security Council resolutions are implemented within days. In our case it's 24 years that resolutions are not implemented. This is a double standards approach. This approach is unacceptable. International sanctions must be imposed on Armenia. One of the important reforms of the United Nations must be the creation of the mechanism of implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council.

Armenia does everything to keep status-quo unchanged, blocks substantive negotiations. Co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group –France, Russia, USA – on several occasions stated that status-quo is unacceptable.

The question is how can this corrupt, failed state ruled by despotic, medieval regime afford to violate international law for so many years and ignore the resolutions of UN Security Council and statements of the leading countries of the world? And the answer is double standards. There is no international pressure on aggressor, no international sanctions imposed on Armenian dictatorship. This policy must be stopped.

Such policy towards aggressor is not only demonstration of injustice, it also creates an illusion that Armenian dictatorship can continue their policy of terror.

Last April Armenia committed another war crime on the line of contact attacking our cities and villages. As a result of this attack, 6 Azerbaijani civilians were killed, among them one child and 26 civilians were wounded. Hundreds of our houses were destroyed.

Azerbaijan had to defend its citizens. As a result of successful counter-attack, Azerbaijan liberated some territories in the 3 occupied regions - Agdere, Fuzuli and Jabrayil and installed its national flag on the liberated territories. Armenian leadership should not forget this lesson. Otherwise, the result of the next Armenian provocation will be more painful for them.

Losing on the battlefield Armenia uses its mean policy of attacking our cities and villages. On July 4, 2017 a targeted attack on Alkhanli village in Fuzuli district by Armenia with 82 and 120 mm mortars and grenade launchers killed 2 civilians – 2 years old Zahra Guliyeva and her grandmother. On August 7, 2017, a 13 years old boy in Tovuz region bordering with Armenia was wounded by Armenian soldiers. International community must stop Armenian fascism and terror. Azerbaijan is committed to peaceful resolution of the conflict but at the same time will defend its citizens in line with UN charter if Armenian military provocations continue and if necessary will punish once again the aggressor as it was done in April, 2016.

Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict must be resolved on the basis of international law, relevant UN Security Council resolutions. Territorial integrity of Azerbaijan must be completely restored. Despite the enormous difficulties caused by Armenian occupation Azerbaijan develops rapidly and successfully.

Azerbaijan is an active member of the United Nations.

In 2011, Azerbaijan was elected as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. 155 countries voted for Azerbaijan. Absolute majority of the member states demonstrated their support to Azerbaijan and its policy. For the country which at that time was only 20 years old, that was a great success. Azerbaijan is a stable, modern, democratic country. Development of democracy, human rights protection are among top priorities of our government. All fundamental freedoms are fully provided in Azerbaijan, including freedom of expression, media freedom, freedom of assembly, religious freedom.

Azerbaijan is one of the world's recognized centers of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is a state policy in Azerbaijan. Representatives of all ethnic groups and religions live in Azerbaijan in peace and harmony. 2016 was declared the year of multiculturalism and 2017 the year of Islamic Solidarity in Azerbaijan.

Unlike Armenia where there are almost no national minorities, which is a mono ethnic country and where xenophobia is a state policy, Azerbaijan is a multiethnic country, cultural, ethnic and religious diversity of our society is our big asset. Armenia, where Islamophobia reached its peak, committed many acts of vandalism destroying all our mosques on the occupied territories.

Azerbaijan had hosted numerous international events aiming at strengthening interreligious dialogue. Among them are 7th Global Forum of the UN Alliance of Civilizations, World's Religious Leaders Forum, 4 times international forum on Intercultural Dialogue, 5 times Baku International Humanitarian Forum and other important events.

Being a member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Council of Europe, Azerbaijan in 2008 launched the Baku Process which is supported by the United Nations. Main goal of the Baku Process is to strengthen dialogue, partnership and cooperation between the Muslim world and Europe.

In 2015, Azerbaijan hosted the First European Games. 6000 athletes from 50 countries participated at these Games. In 2017, Azerbaijan hosted 4th Islamic Solidarity Games with almost 3000 athletes from 54 countries.

In two years in our capital Baku European and Islamic Games took place. This was also a great contribution to the promotion of multiculturalism. Azerbaijani team took the second place at the First

European Games, and the first place at the Islamic Solidarity Games. This shows that Azerbaijan is one of the leading sporting countries of the world. Another proof of our sporting achievement is that Azerbaijan was number 14 at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games with respect to the number of medals. In total, Azerbaijan won 18 medals.

Azerbaijan achieved big progress in social and economic development.

Since 2004, Azerbaijan's economy grew more than 3 times. More than 1 million 600 thousand jobs were created in our country. Level of unemployment is one of the lowest in the world – 5%. One of our priorities was reduction of poverty. In 2004, level of poverty was more than 40%, now it is 5-6%. Hard currency reserves are equal to the country's GDP. Foreign state debt is less than 20% of GDP.

Azerbaijan was assessed as “leading reformer of the world” in 2009 by the World Bank's Doing Business report. Based on Davos World Economic Forum “Global Competitiveness Report for 2016-2017” Azerbaijan is ranked №37 among 138 countries.

In 2015, Azerbaijan received the 2015 South-South Award in recognition of its outstanding achievements in implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and since 2010 has been classified into the category of countries with high human development.

Rapid development of Azerbaijan's space industry, 2 telecommunication and field observation satellites “Azerspace” and “Azersky” and a third one “Azerspace-2” to be launched soon – made it possible for our country to become a member of the world's space club.

Today Azerbaijan exports not only its industrial and agricultural but also intellectual products. “State Agency for Services and Social Innovations to the Citizens” - ASAN Service is a modern model of public relations and services.

251 services under one roof, absolute transparency, zero tolerance to corruption and bribery made “ASAN Service” attractive to many countries.

Being purely Azerbaijani brand during 5 years of its foundation ASAN Service provided over 1 million 600 thousand services to 5 million people. The total number of applications is 17 million. The rate of public appreciation of “ASAN Service” is 98 %.

In 2015, in recognition of its contribution to excellence, creativity and considerable simplification of the delivery of public services, ASAN received the United Nations Public Service Award.

Main goal of our policy is to make the life of our citizens better. Since 2004 salaries grew in our country 5.6 times, pensions 8.2 times.

Without any foreign financial support, we built almost 100 new settlements and towns for refugees and IDPs suffering from Armenian occupation. Until today, the living conditions of more than 250 thousand people were improved and they were provided with new houses and flats. 152 schools, 59 medical centers, 60 kindergartens were built in these towns and settlements.

In general, since 2004 more than 3000 schools, more than 600 hospitals and medical centers were newly built and renovated. Level of literacy in Azerbaijan is close to 100%. Every year more than 5 million people – half of the country’s population – get their medical check-up totally financed by the state budget.

Azerbaijan plays an important role on the global energy market. Being a reliable supplier of oil and gas to the international markets - Azerbaijan is providing energy security for many countries of the world. Today, Azerbaijan together with its international partners is very close to the completion of the “Southern Gas Corridor” project. This project of 40 billion USD of investments is one of the largest infrastructure projects of the world.

Another important priority is transportation. Situated between Europe and Asia, Azerbaijan is wisely using its geographical location to become one of the leading transportation hubs in Eurasia.

Relatively recently Azerbaijan built 6 international airports, 11,000 kilometers of modern highways and roads. Azerbaijan has the biggest trade fleet in the Caspian Sea with 270 vessels.

Modern shipbuilding yard of Azerbaijan is capable to build all types and sizes of ships.

Azerbaijan is modernizing its railroad infrastructure. Absolute majority of our territory is covered by railroads. Next year we will inaugurate the international trade sea port which will be the biggest in the Caspian region.

Azerbaijan is largely investing in East-West and North-South transportation corridors. Both routes crossing our country will be the shortest routes from East to West and from North to the South.

In conclusion, I would like to say that last year we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the restoration of our independence. Successful development of Azerbaijan once again shows that only when you are free and independent, when the destiny of the country is in the hands of its people you can achieve success. The biggest happiness of the people of Azerbaijan is that we live in the independent country which conducts independent policy, policy which is based on the national interests of its people.

Thank you.

WORKING VISIT TO THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

11 October 2017

On October 11, 2017 a limited format session of the Council of CIS Heads of State held in Sochi, Russian Federation.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev attended the session. President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin welcomed Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev.

Then a session of the Council of CIS Heads of State started. President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin said that the agenda of the session is rich enough, adding that it will feature discussions on the ways of strengthening mutual relations within the CIS in the years to come, and on how to improve the efficiency of cooperation between the CIS countries.



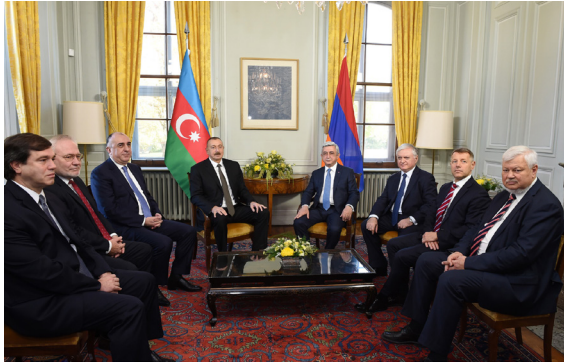
The Russian President emphasized that the meeting will mainly focus on the development of relations in a number of areas, including in economic, trade, investment, and humanitarian spheres. President Vladimir Putin underlined the existence of all opportunities for implementing new large-scale projects based on mutual interests and expressed his confidence that the meeting will give impetus

to the expansion of exchange of experience in the field of culture, education, science and tourism.

In his remarks, Chairman of the Executive Committee and Executive Secretary of CIS Sergey Lebedev noted that the agenda of the meeting includes 16 issues. “The submitted draft documents have been examined by experts and coordinated with representatives of the countries. Economic documents have been approved by the CIS Economic Council.”

WORKING VISIT TO THE SWISS CONFEDERATION

16 October 2017



On October 16, 2017 President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev arrived at a meeting of the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia organized by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs in Geneva.

The meeting was held between President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan.

The OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs and the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office's Personal Representative attended the meeting.

WORKING VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

19 – 20 October 2017

List of meetings held during the working visit:

- Meeting with First Vice President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Eshaq Jahangiri

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV
ATTENDED THE SUMMIT OF D-8 ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC
COOPERATION AS A SPECIAL GUEST**

20 October 2017, Istanbul

Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

Dear President Recep Tayyip Erdogan,
Dear Secretary General,
Ladies and Gentlemen!

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to my dear brother, President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan for the invitation to the Ninth D-8 Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization and for the hospitality extended to us.

Although Azerbaijan is not a member of D-8, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has invited Azerbaijan to this event. I express my deep gratitude to my brother for that.

A G-20 Summit was held in the Turkish city of Antalya in November 2015. Turkey could invite only one non-member country of the group as a special guest, and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan invited Azerbaijan. This is yet another clear example of the Azerbaijani-Turkish brotherhood and friendship.

Dear participants of the meeting, I want to draw your attention to the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Armenia has occupied the historical lands of Azerbaijan for over 25 years – Nagorno-Karabakh and seven districts adjacent to it. A policy of ethnic cleansing has been carried out on these territories, more than a million of our compatriots have found themselves in the position of refugees and internally displaced persons. In 1992, Armenia committed the Khojaly genocide. As a result of this war crime, 613 peaceful Azerbaijanis were killed, 106 of them were women and 63 children. Thousands of people went missing and were injured. The UN Security Council has adopted four resolutions in connection with the conflict. These resolutions demand an immediate and unconditional withdrawal

of Armenian armed forces from Azerbaijani lands. Similar decisions and resolutions have also been adopted by the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the OSCE and other organizations. However, the occupying state of Armenia flouts these decisions and continues war crimes against the civilian Azerbaijani population.

In April of last year, as a result of an armed attack on the part of Armenia, civilians and servicemen died on the contact line. Hundreds of houses were destroyed. Azerbaijan resolutely stopped this Armenian provocation as our army liberated some of our lands from Armenian occupiers. After that, the completely destroyed village of Jojug Marjanli was completely rebuilt. A school, a medical center and a mosque were built in this village of 150 houses. This mosque is reminiscent of the Shusha mosque destroyed by the Armenians.

Nagorno-Karabakh is historical land of Azerbaijan. The Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict should be resolved on the basis of the resolutions of the UN Security Council within the framework of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijani state and people will never allow the creation of a second contrived Armenian state on our ancestral lands. The territorial integrity of our country is not and never will be the subject of negotiations.



Dear participants of the meeting, Azerbaijan attaches special importance to Islamic solidarity and makes its contribution to it. Year 2017 has been declared in Azerbaijan as a Year of Islamic Solidarity. At the same time, the Fourth Games of Islamic Solidarity were held in Azerbaijan this year. They were joined by some 3,000 athletes from 54 Muslim countries. We are actively fighting

Islamophobia, which is one of the most serious threats in the world. Trying to disguise itself as a friend of Muslim countries, Armenia has destroyed mosques and religious monuments in Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent districts. A country destroying mosques can never be a friend of Muslim countries.

Two days ago, Azerbaijan marked the 26th anniversary of the restoration of its independence. In this short period of time, our country has covered a successful road of development. Since 2004, our economy has more than tripled. About two million jobs have been created. Poverty has dropped to 5 per cent. Literacy is at about 100 per cent. Our foreign exchange reserves are equal to the country's gross domestic product. The external public debt accounts for less than 20 per cent of the gross domestic product. These successes of Azerbaijan are also

recognized by international organizations. A report of the Davos Economic Forum ranks Azerbaijan in 35th place globally in terms of economic competitiveness this year.

Azerbaijan is the initiator and an active participant of international projects. Today, together with our partners, we are implementing the Southern Gas Corridor project. This is one of the largest infrastructure projects in the world. The agreement on the TANAP gas pipeline, which is the main component of the Southern Gas Corridor, was signed between Azerbaijan and Turkey in Istanbul in 2012. This pipeline will be commissioned next year.

The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway, the official opening of which will take place soon, will be the shortest connection between Europe and Asia. Azerbaijan invests a lot in the creation of East-West and North-South transport corridors. These transport corridors will open new opportunities for the economic development of Eurasia.

Thank you for your attention.

WORKING VISIT TO THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

1 November 2017

List of meetings held during the working visit:

- Meeting with President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Hassan Rouhani
- Meeting with President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin
- Meeting with Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran Sayyid Ali Khamenei

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV
ATTENDED THE TRILATERAL SUMMIT OF HEADS OF STATE OF
AZERBAIJAN, IRAN AND RUSSIA**

1 November 2017, Tehran

Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

Distinguished Presidents,
Dear Summit participants!

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mr. Hassan Rouhani, for the hospitality extended. Today's summit is of great importance. This meeting is an important step towards strengthening the trilateral high-level cooperation format established last year.

In August last year, the first summit of the presidents of Iran, Russia and Azerbaijan was held in Baku. The excellent results of the meeting served to deepen trilateral cooperation. I am convinced that today's meeting will also play a role in addressing many important issues.

Azerbaijan is the only country in the world to border on Iran and Russia. The geographical location of our countries is an important factor in our cooperation. The historical ties among our peoples form a solid basis for partnership between our three countries.

Azerbaijan successfully cooperates with Iran and Russia within the framework of international organizations. I would like to point to our joint activities with Iran within the framework of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Organization for Economic Cooperation (ECO), and with Russia within the CIS, the OSCE, and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization. We also actively cooperate within the framework of the UN.

The establishment of norms of international law in the world today is one of the most important issues on the agenda. Unfortunately, in many cases these norms do not work and

are grossly violated. A good example of this is the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. For more than 20 years, Armenia has been keeping Nagorno-Karabakh and seven surrounding districts under occupation. These are our ancestral lands, an inalienable part of Azerbaijan. The population of Azerbaijan was subjected to a policy of ethnic cleansing on the occupied lands, one million of our compatriots found themselves in the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons.



It should be noted that influential international organizations have adopted relevant resolutions in connection with this conflict. These include the resolutions of the leading body of the world, the UN Security Council, demanding an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian armed forces from our occupied lands. Similar resolutions have been adopted by the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the

OSCE and other organizations. However, Armenia flouts them. It does not comply with the resolutions of the UN Security Council and continues its aggressive policy. It is necessary to put an end to Armenian occupation as soon as possible. The territorial integrity of Azerbaijan must be restored.

In some cases, UN Security Council resolutions are executed immediately. The resolutions adopted in connection with the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict have been on paper for more than 20 years. This is an indicator of double standards. Today's status quo is unacceptable and must be changed. Our refugees and IDPs must return to their ancestral lands and the territorial integrity of our country must be restored.

Dear summit participants, this trilateral format has created ample opportunities for raising our economic cooperation to a higher level. Increased trade and mutual investment are the most important issues on the agenda. It should be noted that in January-September 2017, Azerbaijan's turnover with Russia and Iran significantly increased in comparison with the corresponding period of 2016. In the future, we need to maintain and increase this positive momentum. The volume of Iranian and Russian investments in the Azerbaijani economy is growing. After last year's summit, Iranian companies invested heavily in the construction of automobile and pharmaceutical production plants in Azerbaijan. A Russian company is investing heavily in the construction of another pharmaceutical factory. Azerbaijan, in turn, has also increased investment in both countries. These investment projects are a manifestation of mutual friendship and trust. As a result of the successful development of ties between our

three countries, business circles have started to invest more. I do hope that today's summit will further enhance the enthusiasm of the business people of our countries and increase mutual investment.

Our countries successfully cooperate in the oil and gas sector. For more than 20 years, Iranian and Russian companies have been involved in the development of oil and gas fields in the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea.

Cooperation in the field of power engineering is developing. Azerbaijan has joined its energy system with those of Iran and Russia. The energy systems of Azerbaijan and Russia operate in a parallel mode. The power systems of the two countries are connected by power lines "Khachmaz-Derbend" and "Yalama". The energy systems of Iran and Azerbaijan are connected by power lines "Imishli-Parsabad". The agreement on the construction of the Ordubad and Marazad hydroelectric power stations on the Araz River has come into force and is being implemented. The construction of the Ordubad hydroelectric power plant is proceeding successfully.

The trilateral cooperation in the transport sector is giving good results. This year Azerbaijan built its railway to the border with Iran. At the same time, we have built and commissioned a 82-km railway bridge over the Astara River. In addition, the Azerbaijani side has taken a 1.4km road on the territory of Iran and a land plot of 35 hectares for the construction of terminals on a long-term lease.

This year, tariffs for railway transportation have been agreed among the three countries. Thus, the railway from the Azerbaijani-Russian border to the border with Iran is fully operational. This road is an important part of the North-South transport corridor. At the same time, Azerbaijan is ready to participate in financing the construction of the Astara-Resht railway in Iran. Negotiations with the Iranian side have been successfully concluded on a \$500 million loan agreement for the construction of the Astara-Resht railway.

A modern Baku-Iranian border highway will be commissioned next year. The construction of the last section of the Baku-Russian border highway will also be completed at the highest level next year.

Therefore, the process of creating the Azerbaijani section of the North-South transport corridor has entered the final stage. The North-South transport corridor is of great importance for many countries.

Dear colleagues, the Caspian Sea connecting us is our common heritage. The Caspian Sea

is a sea of peace, friendship and cooperation. Reliable cooperation in the issue of border protection is carried out in the Caspian Sea.

Recently, within the framework of “International Army Games-2017” initiated by the Russian Ministry of Defense, the international competitions “Sea Cup-2017” were organized in Baku. In addition, the ships of our naval forces carry out mutual friendly visits. Good results have been achieved by security measures in the Caspian Sea, joint struggle against drug trafficking and smuggling. Cooperation in these areas is of great importance.

Azerbaijan also contributes to the strengthening of the dialogue between civilizations and religions. The “Baku process” launched on our initiative in 2008 unites more than 100 Muslim and Christian countries. It receives the support and appreciation of the UN.

The First European games and the Fourth Games of Islamic Solidarity held in 2015 and 2017 with the participation of more than 100 countries were not only sporting competitions, but also our contribution to intercultural dialogue.

In conclusion of my speech, I would like to note that the Iranian-Russian-Azerbaijani trilateral cooperation serves security, stability and economic development of the region. This cooperation clearly shows how relations between neighbors should be built. We are showing an example of friendship and good-neighborliness.

Our relations are based on the principles of mutual respect, mutual understanding, goodwill and friendship. I am confident that our trilateral cooperation will be successfully continued in the future.

Thank you!

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

Distinguished President Rouhani,
Distinguished President Putin,
Dear ladies and gentlemen!

First of all, I want to express my gratitude to President Rouhani for the invitation and hospitality extended. I am very glad to be visiting your fraternal country again.

Today we held meetings with President Rouhani and President Putin related to the further development of Azerbaijani-Iranian and Azerbaijani-Russian relations. We have been convinced again that our relations are developing very successfully, rapidly and are at a high level.



As for the trilateral format of cooperation, as you know, the first Summit was held at the initiative of Azerbaijan in Baku last August. Today's Summit shows that this format is very important and has a great future. Our tripartite cooperation is quite natural, because our nations are united by a common history, as

well as geography. From time immemorial, our peoples have lived in close bondage with each other. The trilateral format of cooperation is of great importance for regional security. I believe that our successful cooperation plays a very important role in the stability and security in the region. Of course, we are united by many economic infrastructure projects, which President Rouhani mentioned in his speech. Azerbaijan is the only country in the world that has a land border with both Russia and Iran, and this geographical location, of course, urges us to cooperate very successfully in all spheres.

In the time since the last Summit, very important events have taken place. Although a little more than a year has passed, the agreements reached last year are being implemented now. In particular, I should note cooperation in the economic sphere. Today, during the Summit, some figures were voiced. This year our trade with Russia has increased by more than 60 per cent and with Iran by more than 30 per cent. Last year, the trade between Iran and Azerbaijan grew by 70 per cent. This, first of all, shows that there are very sincere friendly relations among our three countries. Naturally, the economic sector and the business community see

and take advantage of this. At the same time, the growing trade shows that our economy is developing successfully, and the sharp drop in oil prices in the world has not had a serious impact on our economy.

At the same time, in the period since last Summit Azerbaijan has improved its railway infrastructure and built the remainder of it to the Iranian border. There is also a bridge over the Astarachay River, and the first train crossed the Azerbaijani-Iranian border in March of this year. At present, the Azerbaijani part of the North-South transport corridor is fully operational. At the same time – I said this also during the Summit, so the press should know that – agreements have been reached between Iran and Azerbaijan on financing the Astara-Rasht railway. The document has been initialed and now – after the completion of internal procedures, after these procedures have been completed – this issue will also be resolved.

Our cooperation in the oil and gas industry has a history of its own. This cooperation is also natural because our three countries are contributing to the energy security of the world. At the same time, our countries have played a very important role in stabilizing the oil price. Today we see that OPEC and non-OPEC countries sincerely cooperate with each other. As a result of this cooperation, oil prices have now risen to an acceptable level.

We have connected our electricity systems both with Iran and Russia, and this also creates an excellent basis for regional cooperation. In a word, many issues have been resolved over the course of one year, and I am sure that as a result of the agreements reached today and the implementation of the Tehran Declaration, we will inform the public about even better results before the next Summit.

I want to say again that our cooperation is natural and sincere, that it rests on a foundation of friendship and mutual respect, and that this cooperation is very important for our peoples, our countries. It is very important for the region.

I would like to express my gratitude to President Rouhani again for organizing this summit at such a high level.

Thank you.

WORKING VISIT TO THE KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

23 – 24 November 2017

List of meetings held during the working visit:

- Meeting with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg
- Meeting with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko

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

Thank you very much Mr. Secretary General,

First of all, thank you for your invitation. I am very glad to visit again NATO's headquarters and have an opportunity to discuss important issues of our cooperation.



Our cooperation has already good history. Azerbaijan participated in many NATO operations: in KFOR, in ISAF, and now Azerbaijan is contributing to Resolute Support Mission. 94 Azerbaijani servicemen serve shoulder to shoulder with NATO servicemen in order to provide security and peace of Afghanistan. Azerbaijan also provides a multi-modal transit and over-flight clearances for coalition forces.

Azerbaijan contributed to Afghan army's National Trust Fund, and as Mr. Secretary General said, we will increase the number of our servicemen in order to contribute even more to peace, stability and security of Afghanistan.

Azerbaijan joined individual partnership action plan since 2004 and completed four cycles. The fifth cycle is being conducted now and it's also a very important element of our cooperation.

As Mr. Secretary General said we discussed today the issues related to regional security, and the biggest threat to regional security is unresolved conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. For many years, our territories are under Armenian occupation. More than one million Azerbaijanis became refugees and internally displaced persons. Ethnic cleansing policy was conducted against Azerbaijanis and situation is not changing unfortunately. Armenia wants to keep status quo as long as possible despite the statements of OSCE Minsk group

presidents that status quo is unacceptable and must be changed. United Nations Security Council adopted four resolutions demanding immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian troops from the occupied territories, and Armenia for more than twenty years does not implement them. The resolution of the conflict must be based on relevant resolutions of Security Council of United Nations and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Territorial integrity of Azerbaijan is recognized by the whole world.

Today also we discussed the issues related to transportation security. I informed Mr. Secretary General that Azerbaijan together with its neighbors successfully completed the construction of Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad, which will be the shortest route between Asia and Europe, and also supply to Afghanistan will be easier and more efficient through this route. Our cooperation with NATO has a great potential, the history of cooperation demonstrates that. My visit today to the headquarters is the sixth visit. It demonstrates that our cooperation is very strong. And we will continue our partnership in order to provide peace and security and stability in our region.

Thank you very much.

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV
ATTENDED THE MEETING OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL OF NATO**

23 November 2017, Brussels

On November 23, 2017 President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev attended a meeting of the North Atlantic Council of NATO in Brussels.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg made a speech. He then gave the floor to President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev.

The head of state noted that Azerbaijan and NATO maintain successful cooperation in various areas. Stressing Azerbaijan's active involvement in different missions and operations of NATO, President Ilham Aliyev hailed the alliance's contribution to mine clearance operations in Azerbaijan. The head of state said Azerbaijan is expanding its peacekeeping activities in Afghanistan and is cooperating with this country at the bilateral level in economic and other areas.

President Ilham Aliyev touched upon Azerbaijan-European Union relations, saying the cooperation covers many areas and is successfully developing.

Highlighting democratic development issues, President Ilham Aliyev said the free internet, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and other freedoms are ensured in Azerbaijan. Speaking of economic progress and large-scale reforms conducted in the country, the head of state said that since 2004 Azerbaijan's economy has grown three times, the level of poverty has been reduced from 49 per cent to 5 per cent, the level of unemployment has been reduced to five per cent, while the ratio of the country's external debt to the gross domestic product is below than 20 per cent.

President Ilham Aliyev said Azerbaijan has become one of the centers of multiculturalism in the world, adding that multiculturalism and tolerance are ensured and many relevant events have been organized in the country. The head of state pointed out the development of the non-oil sector. President Ilham Aliyev said the Davos World Economic Forum improved Azerbaijan's ranking from 37th to 35th place among world countries in terms of economic competitiveness. The head of state underlined achievements in education, infrastructure, transport and other areas. President Ilham Aliyev emphasized Azerbaijan's role in ensuring Europe's energy security, spoke of the "Southern Gas Corridor" project, noted successful implementation of TANAP and TAP projects and said Azerbaijan will turn into Europe's reliable gas partner in the years to come. Highlighting the importance of Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad, the head of state said this is the shortest route between Asia and Europe. President



Ilham Aliyev stressed that Azerbaijan has become a key transit hub between North-South and East-West.

President Ilham Aliyev touched upon the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The head of state said Armenia occupied 20 per cent of Azerbaijani territories, including Nagorno-Karabakh and seven surrounding districts. The

President provided an insight into Armenians' military crimes in those territories, Khojaly genocide, massacre and ethnic cleansing of innocent people. The head of state noted that the OSCE fact-finding missions recorded destructions in the occupied districts. President Ilham Aliyev said the UN Security Council's four resolutions demanding withdrawal of Armenian occupier forces from Azerbaijani territories are not implemented and Armenia intends to keep the status quo. President Ilham Aliyev said NATO supports Azerbaijan's territorial integrity.

Then ambassadors of a number of countries made speeches to hail Azerbaijan's active role in NATO's missions, the country's assistance to Afghanistan and participation in the missions there. They applauded Azerbaijan's contributions to the European energy security. The speakers also touched upon the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh, and noted the necessity of resolving the dispute.

Then the head of state answered to questions from the ambassadors to NATO.

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV
ATTENDED THE EU EASTERN PARTNERSHIP SUMMIT**

24 November 2017, Brussels



On November 24, 2017 President Ilham Aliyev attended the European Union's Eastern Partnership Summit in Brussels at the invitation of President of the European Council Donald Tusk. The head of state arrived at the EU headquarters to attend a plenary session of the Eastern Partnership Summit. President of the European Council

Donald Tusk, President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker and Prime Minister of Estonia, which holds the presidency of the Council of the EU, Juri Ratas greeted President Ilham Aliyev.

Then the plenary session of the Eastern Partnership Summit was held.

President Ilham Aliyev addressed the plenary session.

The Eastern Partnership is an initiative of Poland and Sweden aimed at improving relations with the CIS countries as part of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The Eastern Partnership covers six neighboring countries of the European Union. At this Summit, the EU member states discussed future cooperation with heads of state and government of six Eastern Partnership countries.

WORKING VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

12 – 13 December 2017

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV
ATTENDED THE EXTRAORDINARY SUMMIT
OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION (OIC)
ON THE ISSUE OF JERUSALEM**

13 December 2017, Istanbul

Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, most Merciful.

Dear President of the Republic of Turkey, my dear brother Recep Tayyip Erdogan,

Dear Secretary General,

Your Excellencies,

Participants of the Summit!

First of all, I would like to thank President Erdogan for organizing the extraordinary Islamic Summit. The Summit, being held on the initiative of President Erdogan, is yet another embodiment of the contribution Turkey is making to the cause of Islamic solidarity.

The decision of the President of the United States of America to recognize the city of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and to transfer the US embassy to this city runs counter to international law and UN Security Council resolutions and is of great concern to us. This decision can have an adverse impact on the cause of a just and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and have dangerous repercussions in the Middle East. We believe that the United States of America should reconsider this decision.

Azerbaijan consistently supports the peaceful settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the basis of the principle of two states with East Jerusalem being the capital of the State of Palestine. A few years ago, with the aim of helping the State of Palestine, Azerbaijan hosted a constituent conference of the Islamic Financial Safety Network and a donor conference in support of the development of the city of Jerusalem. In July 2017, an international conference on the issue of Jerusalem was held in Azerbaijan with the participation of the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the United Nations Coordination Office for Humanitarian Affairs, the OIC, and various non-governmental and civil society organizations. The conference adopted a statement condemning the occupation of East Jerusalem and the restrictions imposed on believers performing their prayers in the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Today, as always, we stand by the Palestinian people.



Azerbaijan is making a tremendous contribution to the cause of Islamic solidarity. We are an active member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. At the initiative of Azerbaijan, the OIC Youth Forum, the OIC Labor Center and the Association of Journalists of OIC member-states have been established. Year 2017 was declared a Year of Islamic

Solidarity in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan is at the forefront of countries that are actively fighting Islamophobia. In 2017, Azerbaijan hosted the Fourth Games of Islamic Solidarity. This grand celebration of sport, friendship and brotherhood has once again demonstrated to the whole world that Islam is the religion of peace, mercy and equality.

Another possibility for strengthening cooperation and mutual support will be the forthcoming international conference due to be held in Baku this month. It will mark the fact that this year has been a Year of Islamic Solidarity.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the OIC, its member-states and Muslim communities in the world for their fair support of Azerbaijan in the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. For more than 20 years, Armenia has been holding 20 per cent of the lands of the Republic of Azerbaijan under occupation, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region and seven adjacent districts. Nagorno-Karabakh is native and historical part of Azerbaijan. As a result of Armenia's aggression, more than a million Azerbaijanis have found themselves in the position of refugees and internally displaced persons. The occupied territories were exposed to complete ethnic cleansing and looted. Armenia has destroyed all cultural monuments there, including mosques and Islamic monuments.

Along with this, Armenia wants to build friendly relations with various Muslim countries. This is the greatest hypocrisy ever. Muslims of the world should know that Armenia, which has destroyed our sacred mosques, cannot be a friend of Muslim countries.

In 1993, the UN Security Council adopted four resolutions calling for an immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from Azerbaijani lands. However, Armenia refuses to fulfill them. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation and other international organizations have adopted similar decisions and resolutions. Azerbaijan will never put up itself with Armenian occupation. The conflict must be resolved exclusively within the framework of internationally recognized borders and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

Thank you.

WORKING VISIT TO THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

26 December 2017

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV
ATTENDED THE INFORMAL MEETING OF THE CIS HEADS OF STATE**

26 December 2017, Moscow

On December 26, 2017 President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev attended the informal meeting of the CIS heads of state.

President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin greeted President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev.

The CIS heads of state posed together for photographs.

Speakers at the event included President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin, President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbaev, President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko, President of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan Sooronbai Jeenbekov, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, President of Moldova Igor Dodon, President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon.

Addressing the meeting, President Ilham Aliyev said:

- Dear Vladimir Vladimirovich, first of all, I would like to thank you for the invitation. It is always a great pleasure to be in Russia, in Moscow. I would like to congratulate you on the successful completion of the chairmanship in the CIS.

As you mentioned, a lot has been done this year to facilitate integration processes in the CIS, and the growing volume of trade is an indicator not only of the economic recovery and stabilization of the economic situation, but also of the need for a further strengthening of friendly trade and economic relations. Business always responds very clearly to the processes taking place, and mutual investments and growth in trade largely depend on relations between countries. The positive trends we are observing in the CIS have certainly contributed to the fact that we are seeing activity in the trade and economic sphere. Russia plays a unifying role in the CIS. Under your leadership, Russia has achieved great successes in terms of social and economic development. Russia has a very high authority in the international arena and today plays one of the leading roles in international affairs. Stability has been ensured



under your leadership. It is underpinned by civil accord. I think that no-one in Azerbaijan has any doubts that the Russian people will make the right choice in the upcoming presidential election. We know very well that the successful development of bilateral Russian-Azerbaijani relations is associated with your name. Today, these relations have reached a level of strategic partnership – as both sides characterize them – and have very positive dynamics towards growth.

It is impossible to achieve success without public and political stability. In recent years, we have seen enough of bloody events, clashes, dislike, inter-religious strife, inter-confessional contradictions, and ethnic conflicts. Therefore, the existing international panorama once again shows the correctness of the course you are implementing. Russia is a stabilization factor today. Of course, I want to say once again that as a close neighbor, friend and partner, we are naturally very interested in the processes taking place in Russia. Unfortunately, in many cases the norms of international law are not observed. They are sometimes flagrantly violated, thereby undermining the world order, the world order that was created after the Second World War. Your personal commitment to the norms of international law gives great hope to all countries that have suffered from violations of international law that justice will be restored.

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

- 04.04.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Serbia to the country Nebojsa Rodic
- 05.04.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received President of the Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation (ISSF) and President of Saudi Arabia's National Olympic Committee Prince Abdullah bin Mosaad bin Abdulaziz al Saud
- 05.04.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Public Administration of the Republic of Estonia, head of the Azerbaijani-Estonian Intergovernmental Commission Mihhail Korb
- 06.04.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Governor of Stavropol Province of the Russian Federation Vladimir Vladimirov
- 10.04.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation Nikolai Patrushev
- 11.04.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by former President of the Republic of Turkey Abdullah Gul
- 13.04.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received head of Kyiv City State Administration Vitali Klitschko
- 18.04.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received former President of the Republic of Bulgaria Rosen Plevneliyev
- 19.04.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia Herbert Salber
- 21.04.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received President of the International Chess Federation (FIDE) Kirsan Ilyumzhinov
- 22.04.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received former President of the Republic of Austria Heinz Fischer

- 25.04.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received credentials of newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan Teruyuki Katori
- 26.04.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Khalid Abdulaziz Al-Falih
- 29.04.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received former Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the State of Qatar Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber Al Thani
- 02.05.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received President of the International Gymnastics Federation Morinari Watanabe and Secretary General André Gueisbuhler
- 02.05.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Djibouti Mohamed Ali Houmed
- 03.05.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Yousef Al-Othaimeen
- 03.05.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received credentials of newly appointed ambassador of the Republic of Mali Tiefing Konate
- 04.05.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received NATO Assistant Secretary General for Public Diplomacy Tacan Ildem
- 04.05.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser
- 04.05.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Chairman of the US-based Foundation for Ethnic Understanding Marc Schneier
- 04.05.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri
- 06.05.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey Nabi Avci

- 10.05.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Speaker of the House of Representatives of the parliament of Jordan Atef Yousef Saleh Al-Tarawneh
- 11.05.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister of State for Gulf Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Thamer Al-Sabhan
- 16.05.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Executive Vice Chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations Malcolm Hoenlein
- 17.05.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received former President of the Senate of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, chairman of the Dutch Friends of Azerbaijan Group Rene van der Linden
- 22.05.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by new chair of the European Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee, German member of the European People's Party David McAllister
- 22.05.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan
- 30.05.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Executive Vice-President of Development and Production International at Statoil Lars Christian Bacher
- 30.05.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister of State for Arabian Gulf Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Thamer bin Ali Sabhan Al Sabhan
- 31.05.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received US Deputy Assistant Secretary for Energy Diplomacy in the Department of State's Bureau of Energy Resources Robin Dunnigan
- 31.05.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a group of participants of the Baku-hosted Subregional Workshop on Data and Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for High-Level Official Statisticians and the 57th meeting of the Council of Heads of Statistical Services of CIS member countries

- 13.06.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received co-rapporteurs of the PACE Monitoring Committee Cezar Florin Preda and Stefan Schennach
- 13.06.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Prosecutor General of the Republic of Bulgaria Sotir Tsatsarov
- 13.06.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia Giorgi Gakharia
- 13.06.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received heads of Customs Services of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Chairman of the Executive Committee - Executive Secretary of CIS Sergei Lebedev
- 15.06.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of American company John Deere Samuel Allen
- 15.06.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Martin Chungong
- 16.06.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by EU Commissioner for the European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn
- 16.06.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Colombia María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar
- 19.06.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Democratic Republic of Lao Saleumxay Kommasith
- 19.06.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs Stephane Visconti, Igor Popov, Richard Hoagland, as well as Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Andrzej Kasprzyk
- 21.06.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received former Prime Minister of France, President of Villepin International Dominique de Villepin
- 23.06.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister of Foreign Affairs the Republic of Costa Rica Manuel González Sanz

- 23.06.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Science and Education of Georgia Aleksandre Jejelava
- 24.06.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received former member of the National Assembly of the French Republic, President of the Association of Friends of Azerbaijan in France Jean-Francois Mancel
- 25.06.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received editor-in-chief of the Russian “Zavtra” newspaper, writer Alexander Prokhanov
- 25.06.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Chairman and Chief Executive of Formula One Chase Carey, Formula One Managing Director of Motorsports Ross Brawn and Formula One Managing Director for Commercial Operations Sean Bratches
- 25.06.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Dmitry Kozak
- 25.06.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received President and Chairman of the Management Board of VTB Bank Andrey Kostin
- 11.07.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received chairman of the Committee on Religious Affairs under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan Artukbek Yusupov and chairman of Uzbekistan Muslims Board, mufti Usmonhon Alimov
- 13.07.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received credentials of newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Turkmenistan Mekan Ishanguliyev
- 18.07.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Austrian Federal Minister of Families and Youth Sophie Karmasin
- 18.07.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan Rashid Meredov
- 31.07.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received credentials of newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Burkina Faso Amadou Dico

- 31.07.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Speaker of the House of Representatives of the US State of Arizona Javan Mesnard
- 09.08.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received chairman of the State Border Committee of the Republic of Belarus Anatoly Lappo
- 21.08.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received co-chair of Nizami Ganjavi International Center Ismail Serageldin, former President of Latvia Valdis Zatlers, former presidents of the Republic of Bulgaria Rosen Plevneliyev and Petar Stoyanov, former President of Croatia Ivo Josipovic, former President of Israel Dalia Itzik, former Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina Zlatko Lagumdzija, and former Foreign Minister of Turkey Hikmet Cetin
- 24.08.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received credentials of newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Italy Augusto Massari
- 05.09.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a group of participants of the Baku-hosted 17th session of the Council of Heads of Supreme Audit Institutions of the Commonwealth of Independent States
- 05.09.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Foreign Minister of Georgia Mikheil Janelidze
- 05.09.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey Mevlut Cavusoglu
- 07.09.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development Suma Chakrabarti
- 07.09.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation Valery Gerasimov
- 08.09.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received president of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Christine Muttonen

- 11.09.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee (CPVCC), Politburo member and Head of the CPVCC's Mass Mobilization Commission Truong Thi Mai
- 12.09.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received credentials of newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Tajikistan Rustam Soliev
- 12.09.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received credentials of newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Hungary Viktor Szederkenyi
- 12.09.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received credentials of head of the EU Delegation to Azerbaijan Kestutis Jankauskas
- 13.09.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Director of the International Monetary Fund's Middle East and Central Asia Department Jihad Azour
- 14.09.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Executive Vice President for Development & Production International at Statoil Lars Christian Bacher
- 14.09.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received co-rapporteurs of the PACE Monitoring Committee Cezar Florin Preda and Stefan Schennach
- 15.09.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of State attached to the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of the French Republic Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne
- 27.09.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received State Secretary of the Security Council of the Republic of Belarus Stanislav Zas
- 28.09.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Vice-President of the Centrist Democrat International Mario David and General Coordinator for Asia Pacific and Latin America Cesar Rossello

- 28.09.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of National Defense of the Republic of Turkey Nurettin Canikli
- 30.09.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation Nikolai Patrushev
- 03.10.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Pavlo Klimkin
- 04.10.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation of the Political and Security Committee of the Council of the European Union, including the EU's accredited ambassadors based in Brussels
- 04.10.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Chief Executive Officer of the Italian Leonardo company Alessandro Profumo
- 07.10.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs Stephane Visconti of France, Igor Popov of Russia, Andrew Schofer of US, as well as Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Andrzej Kasprzyk
- 17.10.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received credentials of newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Hellenic Republic Nikolaos Kanellos
- 18.10.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Secretary General of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf Abdul Latif Bin Rashid Al Zayani
- 18.10.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Witold Waszczykowski
- 18.10.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received participants of the 78th session of the CIS Council of Commanders of Border Troops to be held in Baku
- 19.10.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received First Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine Stepan Kubiv

- 27.10.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received credentials of newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Guatemala Lars Henrik Pira Perez
- 27.10.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received credentials of newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Commonwealth of Australia Marc Innes-Brown
- 27.10.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Iranian Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, new co-chairman of the Azerbaijan-Iran Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation Masoud Karbasian
- 02.11.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro Srdjan Darmanovic
- 02.11.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Deputy Chairman of the Council of the Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, chair of the bilateral commission Ilyas Umakhanov and chairman of the People's Assembly of the Republic of Dagestan Khizri Shikhsaidov
- 02.11.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Vice President of the Italian Senate Linda Lanzillotta
- 07.11.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation of the European Union Eastern Partnership ambassadors-at-large
- 07.11.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Finance of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Eklil Ahmad Hakimi
- 16.11.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received first deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan Askar Mamin
- 17.11.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan Alisher Sultanov
- 19.11.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov

- 20.11.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received FIFA President Gianni Infantino and Secretary General Fatma Samoura
- 29.11.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts of the Republic of Croatia, co-chair of the Azerbaijan-Croatia Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation Martina Dalic
- 29.11.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister of Foreign Affairs and Religion of the Republic of Costa Rica Manuel González Sanz
- 29.11.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Vice-President for global innovations at CISCO Company Guy Diedrich
- 30.11.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey Mevlut Cavusoglu
- 30.11.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Khawaja Mohammad Asif
- 30.11.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of State for External Affairs of the Republic of India Mobashar Jawed Akbar
- 01.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran Mohammad Javad Zarif
- 01.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia Sven Mikser
- 04.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by the newly appointed EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia Toivo Klaar
- 05.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister of Telecom and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation Nikolay Nikiforov
- 05.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communications of the Republic of Turkey Ahmet Arslan

- 05.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister of Information and Communications Technology of the Islamic Republic of Iran Mohammad-Javad Azari Jahromi
- 05.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Secretary General of the International Telecommunication Union Houlin Zhao
- 08.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received credentials of newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Sudan Abbas Mustafa Ahmad Abdullah
- 11.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Chairman of the Committee on CIS Affairs, Eurasian Integration and Relations with Compatriots at the State Duma of the Russian Federation Leonid Kalashnikov
- 14.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of State for Trade and Export Promotion of the United Kingdom, co-chair of Joint Intergovernmental Commission Baroness Rona Fairhead
- 18.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Executive Vice President and Chief Executive Officer of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency of the World Bank Group Keiko Honda
- 19.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Governor of Astrakhan region of the Russian Federation Alexander Zhilkin
- 19.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran Mohammad Javad Zarif
- 20.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey Mevlut Cavusoglu
- 20.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Executive Vice Chairman/CEO of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations Malcolm Hoenlein

- 20.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Senior Vice President of IBM Global Markets Erich Clementi
- 20.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received President of the US-based Foundation for Ethnic Understanding Rabbi Marc Schneier
- 21.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Head of the Presidential Office of the Islamic Republic of Iran Mahmoud Vaezi
- 21.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received President of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Turkey Ali Erbas
- 21.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Deputy Minister of Islamic Affairs, Dawah and Guidance of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Tawfiq bin Abdulaziz Al-Sudairi
- 21.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Grand Mufti of Egypt Shawki Ibrahim Allam
- 21.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received State Advisor to President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Rustam Kamilov
- 21.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Abdulaziz Othman Altwajjri
- 22.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a group of Muslim religious figures of the North Caucasus republics of the Russian Federation
- 22.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister of Finance of Georgia Mamuka Bakhtadze
- 23.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia Giorgi Gakharia
- 25.12.2017 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Economic Development of the Russian Federation Maxim Oreshkin



**ACTIVITY OF THE MINISTER
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN,
Mr. ELMAR MAMMADYAROV
IN APRIL – DECEMBER OF 2017**

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

- 05.04.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Teruyuki Katori, newly appointed Ambassador of Japan to Azerbaijan
- 06.04.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with a delegation headed by Mihhail Korb, Minister of Public Administration of the Republic of Estonia and co-chair of Azerbaijan-Estonia Intergovernmental Commission
- 11.04.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Witold Waszczykowski, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland
- 11.04.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Marek Kuchciński, Head of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland
- 11.04.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Marek Gróbarczyk, Minister of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation and Andrzej Adamczyk, Minister of Infrastructure and Construction of Poland
- 12.04.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Sven Mikser, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia
- 12.04.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Krzysztof Szczerski, Secretary of State, Chief of the Cabinet of the President of Poland

- 12.04.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Davor Ivo Stier, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Croatia
- 13.04.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Péter Szijjártó, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Hungary
- 14.04.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Dusen Kaseinov, Secretary General of TURKSOY
- 18.04.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Joseph Muscat, Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta
- 18.04.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Angelo Farrugia, the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malta
- 18.04.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with George Vella, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Malta
- 19.04.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of the Republic of Malta
- 20.04.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Carlo Calenda, Minister of Economic Development of Italy
- 20.04.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Angelino Alfano, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Italian Republic
- 24.04.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Gediminas Kirkilas, deputy chairman of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania
- 24.04.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Linas Linkevičius, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania
- 25.04.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Saulius Skvernelis, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania
- 26.04.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Luc Devigne, Director for Russia, Eastern Partnership, Central Asia and OSCE of the European External Action Service

- 26.04.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received a delegation led by Florans Manjen, Director of Continental Europe Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development of the French Republic
- 02.05.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative for the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ghulam Isaczai
- 03.05.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Ambassadors of member states to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Executive Board accredited in Azerbaijan
- 03.05.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Dr. Yousef A. Al-Othaimeen
- 04.05.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the delegation headed by Muhammad Ali Hummed, President of National Assembly (Parliament) of the Republic of Djibouti
- 05.05.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the Cabinet Secretary of Kenya for Sports, Culture and the Arts Dr.Hassan Wario Arero
- 05.05.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Mario Lubetkin, head of cabinet of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)
- 05.05.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Assistant Secretary General of NATO for Public Diplomacy, Tacan Ildem
- 05.05.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Mark Shnayer, President of Ethnic Understanding Fund on the sidelines of the 4th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue
- 05.05.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Director-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON), Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde
- 05.05.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the Permanent Representatives of various countries to UNESCO attending the 4th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue

- 11.05.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the delegation led by Atef Yousef Saleh al-Tarawneh, Speaker of Jordan's House of Representatives
- 17.05.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations
- 22.05.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the delegation led by David McAllister, chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament
- 25.05.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with António Guterres, the Secretary General of the UN
- 27.05.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with religious community leaders and Jews Organizations of the USA
- 31.05.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Juan Juan Manuel Santos Calderón the President of the Republic of Colombia
- 31.05.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the Foreign Minister of Colombia, Madame Maria Angela Holguin
- 01.06.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the first vice-president of the National Congress of Colombia Madame Daira de Jesús Gálvis Méndez
- 03.06.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with President of the Republic of Costa Rica, Mr. Luis Guillermo Solis
- 12.06.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Minister for International Development and the Pacific of the Commonwealth of Australia
- 12.06.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Sven Mikser, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia
- 14.06.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Luc Devigne, Director for Russia, Eastern Partnership, Central Asia and OSCE of the European External Action Service

- 16.06.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received a delegation led by the EU Commissioner for European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes Hahn
- 16.06.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Martin Chungong, the Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
- 19.06.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the OSCE Minsk Group Co-chairs, Stéphane Visconti, Igor Popov, Richard Hoagland and OSCE's Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office, Andrzej Kasprzyk
- 23.06.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Republic of Costa Rica, Manuel A. González Sanz
- 05.07.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Mekan Ishanguliyev, the newly appointed Ambassador of Turkmenistan to the Republic of Azerbaijan
- 06.07.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the Head of Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Azerbaijan, Malena Mard upon the termination of her diplomatic tenure
- 06.07.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Giampaolo Cutillo, the Ambassador of the Republic of Italy to the Republic of Azerbaijan upon the termination of his diplomatic tenure
- 07.07.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Aycigit Buranov, the Ambassador of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan to the Republic of Azerbaijan upon the termination of his diplomatic tenure
- 19.07.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan, Rashid Meredov
- 19.07.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Foreign Minister of Turkey Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu
- 20.07.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Zohir Saidov, the Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan to the Republic of Azerbaijan upon the termination of his diplomatic tenure

- 20.07.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Miroslav Jenča
- 20.07.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Samir Bakr, OIC Assistant Secretary General for Palestine and Al-Quds Affairs and Akshin Mehdiyev, Permanent Representative of OIC to the UN
- 21.07.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Imre Laslotski, the Ambassador of Hungary to the Republic of Azerbaijan upon the termination of his diplomatic tenure
- 24.07.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, Péter Szijjártó
- 24.07.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the vice speaker of National Assembly of Hungary Janos Latorcai and the head of Committee on Foreign Affairs Zsolt Nemeth
- 27.07.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Javan Mesnard, Speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives of the United States of America
- 28.07.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Luis Chanq Boldrini, the newly appointed Charge d’Affaires of the Embassy of the Republic of Peru to the Republic of Azerbaijan
- 28.07.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Dimitrios Tsoungas, the Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic to the Republic of Azerbaijan upon the termination of his diplomatic tenure
- 16.08.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the former Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon
- 17.08.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Poland Jan Dziejczak
- 22.08.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Augusto Massari, newly appointed Ambassador of Italy to Azerbaijan

- 23.08.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Mohamed Elias Mohamed al-Haq, Ambassador of the Republic of Sudan to the Republic of Azerbaijan upon the termination of his diplomatic tenure
- 29.08.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Soli Rustam, the newly appointed Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan to the Republic of Azerbaijan
- 06.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Georgia Mikheil Janelidze
- 06.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Foreign Minister of Turkey Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu
- 07.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Dragana Filipovic, the head of the Council of Europe's Office in Baku upon the termination of her diplomatic tenure
- 07.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Viktor Szederkeny, the newly appointed ambassador of Hungary to the Republic of Azerbaijan
- 08.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Kristin Muttunen, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
- 11.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Ignacio Sánchez Taboada, the newly appointed Charge d'Affaires of the Embassy of the Kingdom of Spain to the Republic of Azerbaijan
- 11.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Kestutis Jankauskas newly appointed head of Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Azerbaijan
- 13.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Tran Tuan Anh, the Minister of Trade and Industry of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, co-chair of the Intergovernmental Commission between Azerbaijan and Viet Nam
- 13.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam Fam Binh Minh

- 13.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Tran Quoc Vuong, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Viet Nam and member of the Permanent Secretariat
- 14.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
- 14.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Uong Chu Luu, deputy Chairman of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
- 15.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Bounnhang Vorachith, President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic
- 15.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic Saleumxay Kommasith
- 15.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Bounpone Bouttanavong, Vice-President of the National Assembly of Lao People's Democratic Republic
- 23.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and External Trade of the Republic of Vanuatu Bruno Leingkone
- 23.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the Foreign and European Affairs Minister of Belgium Didier Reynders
- 23.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia Dato' Sri Anifah Aman
- 23.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group (Igor Popov of the Russian Federation, Stephane Visconti of France, and Andrew Schofer of the United States of America)
- 23.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Riyad Al-Maliki, Foreign Minister of Palestine
- 23.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Thomas Greminger, the Secretary General of the OSCE

- 25.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bahrain Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Bin Mohamed Al Khalifa
- 25.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Khawaja Asif
- 25.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Adel al-Jubeir, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- 25.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Ayman Safadi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- 25.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Pierre Krähenbühl, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees
- 25.09.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov with participation of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group (Igor Popov of the Russian Federation, Stephane Visconti of France, and Andrew Schofer of the United States of America), the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk met with the Foreign Minister of Armenia Edward Nalbandian
- 02.10.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Helmut Manzenreiter and Andreas Königsberger, the newly appointed Honorary Consuls of Azerbaijan to Austria
- 02.10.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Nikolaos Kanellos, the newly appointed Ambassador of Hellenic Republic to Republic of Azerbaijan
- 03.10.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Pavlo Klimkin, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine
- 04.10.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Ambassador Zoltan Hernyes, the newly appointed representative of Council of Europe to Azerbaijan
- 04.10.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received a delegation of the Political and Security Committee of the European Union Council

- 10.10.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received an EU delegation led by Jean-Christophe Belliard, deputy Secretary General, political director at the European External Action Service
- 18.10.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Witold Waszczykowski, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland
- 19.10.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the delegation headed by Secretary General of Gulf Cooperation Council Abdul Latif Bin Rashid Al Zayani
- 24.10.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Leoluca Orlando, Mayor of Palermo city of Sicilia
- 25.10.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Angelino Alfano, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Italian Republic
- 27.10.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Tarig Hamza Zain El Abdein, Honorary Consul of Azerbaijan to the Republic of Sudan
- 02.11.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Srdjan Darmanovic, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro
- 02.11.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received members of France-Azerbaijan Friendship Group in National Assembly of France led by Pyer Alan Rafan
- 02.11.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received a delegation headed by Linda Lanzilotta, vice-president of Italian Senate
- 07.11.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Ewa Thalen Finne, the first deputy speaker of the Riksdag of the Kingdom of Sweden
- 07.11.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Margot Wallström, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Sweden
- 08.11.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Mats Andersson, Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sweden

- 09.11.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Mulatu Teshome, President of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
- 09.11.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) Abdalla Hamdok
- 10.11.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission Moussa Faki Mahamat
- 10.11.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security Smail Chergui
- 10.11.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the African Union Commissioner for Social Affairs Amira El Fadil and Commissioner for Economic Affairs Victor Harrison
- 10.11.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Workneh Gebeyehu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
- 13.11.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Maya Hristova, the Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria to the Republic of Azerbaijan upon the termination of her diplomatic tenure
- 14.11.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Abbas Mustafa Ahmad Abdulla, the newly appointed ambassador of the Republic of Sudan to the Republic of Azerbaijan
- 14.11.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received a delegation led by Vice President of the International Relations Department of the Central Committee of Communist Party of the People's Republic of China Mr. Li Jun
- 14.11.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received a delegation led by Khaled Fouda Muhammed, Governor of South Sinai, mayor of Sharm El Sheikh of the Arab Republic of Egypt
- 15.11.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Aloysio Nunes Ferreira, Minister of External Affairs of Federative Republic of Brazil

- 20.11.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov
- 21.11.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the delegation led by the Special Representative for Counter Terrorism and Security Matters of the People's Republic of China Cheng Guoping
- 29.11.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Republic of Costa Rica, Manuel González Sanz
- 29.11.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov recieved Roland Kobia, European Union Special Envoy for Afghanistan
- 30.11.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Mevlut Cavusoglu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey
- 30.11.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Khawaja Mohammad Asif
- 30.11.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Minister of State for External Affairs of the Republic of India Mobashar Jawed Akbar
- 02.12.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Islamic Republic of Iran Javad Zarif
- 02.12.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Cornelius Zimmerman, NATO Senior Civilian Representative for Afghanistan
- 07.12.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with European Union Special Representative for the South Caucasus Toivo Klaar
- 08.12.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Péter Szijjártó, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary
- 08.12.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the Foreign Minister of Finland, Timo Soini

- 18.12.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Azerbaijan Vladimir Dorokhin upon the termination of his diplomatic tenure
- 18.12.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Yan Zahradil, a member of European Parliament, President of Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe
- 18.12.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Yan Zahradil, a member of European Parliament, President of Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe
- 27.12.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Republic of Azerbaijan Beibit İssabayev
- 29.12.2017 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Turkic Speaking Countries Altynbek Mamaiusupov

**STATEMENT BY MR. ELMAR MAMMADYAROV, MINISTER OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, AT THE MEETING OF
MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF VISEGRAD (V4) GROUP
AND EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES**

12 April 2017, Warsaw

Dear Minister Waszczykowski,
Commissioner Hahn,
Distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to extend our gratitude to the Polish Presidency of the Visegrad Group for hosting annual Ministerial dialogue of V4 and Eastern Partnership. This traditional format is an excellent opportunity to review state of play on our cooperation, as well as to deliberate on ways and means for further synergy.

Azerbaijan has been a reliable EU partner and has demonstrated a strong political will to develop relationship with EU based on mutual respect, equal partnership and common interests.

We welcome the EU's commitment in the Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy, adopted in 2016, that "the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of states, the inviolability of borders and peaceful settlement of disputes are key elements of the European security order and these principles apply to all states, both within and beyond the EU's borders".

Recent visit of President of Azerbaijan to Brussels in February opened a new chapter in bilateral ties with official launching of negotiations process on a new bilateral document.

Azerbaijan is entering into negotiation process with strong belief that the new and ambitious agreement will upgrade our ties to a level of strategic partnership and would meet the needs and the priorities of the parties in the changing political and security environment.

As it was also reflected in the "food-for-thought" paper of the Polish Presidency, sectoral cooperation with specific focus on connectivity issues indeed plays an important role in developing our bilateral and multilateral cooperation agenda based on our mutual interests. Strategic partnership in the field of energy remains the cornerstone of our cooperation. The

Southern Gas Corridor (SGC) is a unique project of energy security and diversification with right balance of interests between producers, transit countries and consumers. Strong political support for timely implementation of SGC has been once again expressed during the 3rd Meeting of SGC Advisory Council, recently hosted by Azerbaijan and attended by high level dignitaries from SGC countries, partner states and European Commission.

We are willing to enhance our dialogue in other areas of common interest, inter alia, connectivity, environment, education, tourism, culture and mobility, as well as people-to-people contact, support for small and medium enterprises.

Due to its strategic role of a natural bridge between Asia and Europe, Azerbaijan has always been an active participant and key enabler of regional and trans-regional connectivity initiatives. Today Azerbaijan has involved in implementation of three major projects to promote East-West and North-South corridors, so called geographical crossroad.

Launch of the strategic Baku – Tbilisi – Kars project (BTK), railroad connection between Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey will facilitate regional trade and uninterrupted railway access between East and West. We expect that the project will be completed this year. With improving cost and time performance of shipments between Asia and Europe BTK will be a strong alternative to current routes.

In 2016 we launched the first container train starting from China crossing Central Asia, Caspian Sea further to Azerbaijan and Georgia with destination to Europe. This test train proved that this route can reduce the transit period from 30-35 to 15 days.

Azerbaijan is also embarking on another remarkable project - construction of a new Baku International Sea Trade Port (Alat) – the biggest and multi-purpose port in the Caspian Sea with potential capacity of handling 25 million tons of cargo annually. Standing at the intersection of railroad connections to Europe, Russia and Iran, and in close proximity to Baku airport the Alyat Port will allow seamless connection to regional hinterland and air cargo, as well as cost effective rail ferry access to other Caspian Sea ports.

Ministerial Declaration on “Developing the external dimension of the TEN-T” adopted last summer in Rotterdam provides solid platform to enhance our transport dialogue. We welcome the inclusion of the Azerbaijani part of the East-West corridor, both road and rail, into TEN-T core networks, as well as inclusion of the North-South corridor into TEN-T comprehensive networks.

For regional projects like Trans-Caspian International Transit Route, connecting China with Europe, broader participation, including Central Asian states and Turkey should be considered. This will also be in line with EU's connectivity agenda aiming to expand trans-European networks further to the East.

Distinguished colleagues,

Future of EaP strongly depends on lasting security, peace and stability in the Region suffered from conflicts. We believe that timely and active role to be played by the EU is important for stability and development in our region.

Azerbaijan is interested in a negotiated settlement of the conflict and roadmap based on principles of international law. Particularly, as it is enshrined in the Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy-2016.

However, the country keeps all rights to restore its violated territorial integrity by all possible means in its disposal if already decades-old negotiations do not yield any results.

As has repeatedly been stated, the Government of Azerbaijan is ready to provide all guarantees to the both (Armenian and Azerbaijani) communities of the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Contrary to Azerbaijan's attempts to find a solution to the conflict, Armenia is continuously conducting a purposeful policy of changing the demographic nature of the occupied territories, as well as fabricating illegal "elections" or "referendums" in the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh. The most recent illegal "referendum" in the occupied territories proved to be yet another provocative attempt against the constitutional order of the Republic of Azerbaijan. This illegal action has been rejected by the international community.

The April events of 2016 and the most recent provocation taken place in the Line of Contact on February 25, 2017 proved the fragility of the situation of "no war, no peace".

Dear colleagues,

Despite above-mentioned concerns and against the backdrop of geopolitical and security changes and challenges in the EU neighbourhood, strengthening dialogue with the EU is among our priorities. Over the recent years bilateral and multilateral tracks of the EaP proved to be useful instruments in sharing experience and exchange of best practices with European partners.

At the end of April we are embarking on negotiations with EU on a new bilateral Agreement. It is a must for Azerbaijan that the new Agreement clearly reflects EU`s support for and respect to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and inviolability of the internationally recognized borders of Azerbaijan.

The respect to the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, as well as to other countries of EaP, is not only the issue for us; it is also the matter for the EU, and crucial for development of the region.

Thank you.

INTERVIEW BY FOREIGN MINISTER ELMAR MAMMADYAROV TO TREND NEWS AGENCY

26 April 2017, Baku

Question: *Since the St. Petersburg meeting of Presidents, Armenia runs away from meetings and pursues destructive policy. In Hamburg and Munich, Armenian Foreign Minister avoided participation in the meetings. What can be said about the current conflict settlement process?*

Elmar Mammadyarov: Substantial discussions were held for settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict during the St. Petersburg meeting of the Presidents, held at invitation and initiative of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Early this year we had a meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Moscow. The OSCE Minsk Group's co-chairs visited the region and had the opinions of the parties. As discussed at the St. Petersburg meeting, the steps to be taken to achieve progress in the conflict resolution and the plan to be implemented are very well known to everyone.

The presence of the armed forces of Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and the fact of military occupation are the main obstacles to the settlement of conflict. Therefore, the fact of occupation should be ended. We can continue talks for ensuring sustainable peace in an entirely new environment – under the changed status quo that would emerge once the occupation ends.

Armenia is trying to maintain the current status quo and not to fulfill its obligations by avoiding the participation in meetings.

Meanwhile, Armenia continues a policy whereby it deliberately aggravates the situation and evades the essence of the state of affairs by putting forward technical issues. Armenia no longer has room to maneuver to make up pretexts.

Question: *Then what are the expectations from the Moscow meeting?*

Elmar Mammadyarov: We hope the Moscow meeting will be a continuation of substantial negotiations held at the St. Petersburg presidential meeting. It is time to move from words to actions. Azerbaijan stands ready for substantial negotiations as we have repeatedly stated.

**REMARKS BY MR. ELMAR MAMMADYAROV, MINISTER OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN,
AT THE 4TH WORLD FORUM ON INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE
PLENARY SESSION 1: PROMOTING DIALOGUE AND BUILDING BRIDGES
AS A TOOL TO PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM**

5 May 2017, Baku

Dear Mr. President
Distinguished guests,
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. In this regard, I would like to particular highlight the important role the UN Alliance of Civilizations plays in fostering a global dialogue and cooperation for the promotion of tolerance, peace and better understanding across countries, cultures and civilizations.

We, in Azerbaijan, attach primary importance to the promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue at all levels. Multiculturalism and tolerance is a longstanding tradition in my country that strengthens and consolidates our society. We deem that the cultural diversity and multiculturalism are a strength and wealth that give an ample opportunity to contribute to the promotion of dialogue, encourage ethnic and religious pluralism, and thus to effectively prevent potential rise of violent extremism. It is not a coincidence that in Azerbaijan the year 2016 was proclaimed as “The Year of Multiculturalism” by a decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Government of Azerbaijan continues to pursue a consistent policy towards protection of the rights of all ethnic and religious minorities. More than one thousand mosques, eleven churches, six synagogues and other religious temples are functioning in Azerbaijan without any obstacles. A year ago, here in Baku, we hosted the 7th Global Forum of the UN Alliance of Civilizations entitled “Living together in inclusive societies”. This important event was attended by more than 4,000 delegates from 147 countries, including Heads of states and governments, ministers, government officials, representatives of international organizations and mass media. The Forum’s themes reflected the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which incorporates the promotion of inclusive societies as pivotal component for sustainable development. The Baku Declaration adopted therein strongly condemned any advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence and urged all Member States to

unite against violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations. We do believe that Baku Declaration should serve as guidelines for states and international organizations in promotion of intercultural dialogue and multiculturalism as a way to counter violence, extremism and xenophobia. Recognising the special role of youth in the establishment and development of inclusive societies, the UN Alliance of Civilizations Youth Event was also held on the sidelines of the Forum with the participation of more than 150 young representatives of international community.

Dear friends,

In the past, Azerbaijan has experienced the horrors of terrorism and knows first hand how important is to fight this ugly phenomenon and eradicate its root causes. Terrorism is the act of vandalism and barbarity and poses direct threat to peace, security, stability and enjoyment of human rights. Azerbaijan condemns terrorism and violent extremism in all their forms and manifestations and has been actively collaborating with various international partners in the global fight against terrorism. We believe that in order to successfully counter this threat the consolidated efforts of all international community are needed. In this regard the role of the UN, in particular the Counter Terrorism Implementation Task Force in developing relevant cooperative programs aimed at enhancing political consensus and practical cooperation among Member States must be fully supported.

At the same time, I would like to particular emphasize the war on terrorism cannot and must not be used to target any religion or culture. Azerbaijan is alarmed by increased cases of religious intolerance, in particular Islamophobia, Anti-Semitism, xenophobia and attempts to associate religion with terrorism and violent extremism. We strongly condemn all attacks against Islam and reject any attempt to justify them under the pretext of freedom of expression. Further consolidation of the international efforts is required to stop the cultivation of hatred and false prejudices towards Islam and Muslims. It is also vitally important not to wait until the terrorist act has happened and respond post-factum, but to prevent violent actions from occurring. Countering terrorism should contain preventive approach to increase the resilience of population. To this end, it is crucial to identify the conditions that are conducive to violent extremism. These conditions may differ and range from social marginalisation, unemployment, lack of education to religious radicalisation, polarisation and misconception. Various projects and initiatives on youth, education, sport, tourism, people-to-people contacts and media are very important in terms that they can, to a certain degree, help inoculate societies against extremism. To be short, but maybe in a simplified way, if a young man is well-educated, socially protected, has a job and perspectives

in his life, he will be more resistant to various extremist recruitment narratives and radical ideologies. Thus, we fully support the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda which strives to overcome the poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and social exclusion. Counter extremism narratives should be developed through the coordination and collaboration of governments, international organisations and civil societies, including religious communities and women organisations. Launching a global communications campaign by the one of the well-known international organizations aimed at promoting counter-narratives could be a useful step to that end.

Another important point which I would like to highlight is that prolonged and unresolved conflicts also form fertile grounds for violent extremism because such conflicts allow violent extremist groups to exploit the situations in order to seize territory, resources and control populations, as rightly mentioned in the UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism presented by the UN Secretary General in December 2015. Resolving these conflicts will seriously undermine the basis of violent extremism and disarm its “spiritual” leaders and fellows. We are particularly concerned about the growing nexus between violent extremism and separatism. Violence and extremism fuelled by separatist ideologies manifest themselves especially in conflict and post-conflict situations create good conditions for terrorist organizations to recruit and win support. We also acknowledge that promoting intercultural dialogue, tolerance and countering violent extremism have gained increased importance in the context of large movement of refugees and migrants. Azerbaijan has deep understanding of this problem given the fact that we have one million refugees and IDPs ethnically cleansed out of their homes. Enabling safe and dignified return of refugees and IDPs must be at the center of international efforts.

Dear friends,

I hope that our discussions will produce concrete results and streamline the required measures aimed at overcoming the stereotypes and misconceptions, hostility and hatred, on the one hand, and fostering peace, dialogue and mutual respect among peoples of different cultures and religions, on the other.

Thank you.

**JOINT PRESS RELEASE BY FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF
AZERBAIJAN, ELMAR MAMMADYAROV AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF THE UNITED ARAB
EMIRATES, SHEIKH ABDULLAH BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN**

22 May 2017, Baku

During his official visit to Azerbaijan Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Arab Emirates was received by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev and the First Vice-President, H.E. Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva.

Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan visited the Alley of Honors to laid a wreath at the tomb of National Leader Heydar Aliyev. Visiting Alley of Martyrs Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan paid tribute to the memory of martyrs and laid a wreath at the “Eternal Fire” Memorial.

Within the visit Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan had an extended meeting with the participation of delegations. Ministers expressed their satisfaction with the development of political dialogue between the countries and reiterated their mutual respect and support to each other’s territorial integrity, sovereignty and inviolability of internationally recognized borders. Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan stated that UAE supports the settlement Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict based on the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan according to relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.

Sides emphasized that strong foundation of the relations between Azerbaijan and the UAE was established during the historic meeting between National Leader of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev and Founding Father of UAE Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, on the sidelines of Organization of Islamic Cooperation Casablanca Summit in 1994. Furthermore, they underlined that the relations between our countries strengthened and deepened through the joint efforts of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, H.E Mr. Ilham Aliyev and the President of the United Arab Emirates, H.H. Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

Ministers noted that the Joint Intergovernmental Commission, which was established in 2009, plays an important role in advancing of cooperation in the fields of economy, energy, tourism, agriculture, healthcare, logistics, investments, petrochemical industry, banking and finance.

Sides commended cooperation and exchange of experience between Dubai Jebel Ali Port and Baku International Sea Trade Port.

At the meeting Minister Elmar Mammadyarov stated that visa facilitation regime applied for UAE citizens enabled 30 times increase in the flow of tourists from the UAE to Azerbaijan in 2016 comparing 2015 and this tendency continues to grow. Noting the quantity of weekly flights, which reached to 30 and planned new additional flights connecting the cities of Azerbaijan and the UAE, Minister Elmar Mammadyarov added that these steps would also contribute for further increase of people-to-people and business contacts. They agreed further to intensify contacts between the business communities of two countries.

Minister Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan congratulated Azerbaijan on successfully hosting IV Islamic Solidarity Games. He expressed his conviction that Islamic Solidarity Games would contribute to strengthening of solidarity within the Islamic Ummah. Minister Elmar Mammadyarov shared conviction of his counterpart and praised active participation of UAE's athletes in the Islamic Solidarity Games.

Ministers also exchanged congratulatory letters on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between two countries.

At the meeting Ministers signed the "Memorandum of Understanding between the State Committee for Standardization, Meterology and Patent of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Emirates Authority of the United Arab Emirates for mutual recognition of conformity certificates and conformity marks"

**OPENING STATEMENT BY FOREIGN MINISTER ELMAR MAMMADYAROV,
AT A RECEPTION ON THE OCCASION OF THE REPUBLIC DAY
AND THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF AZERBAIJAN'S MEMBERSHIP IN THE
UNITED NATIONS**

25 May 2017, New York

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear friends and colleagues,

I would like to thank you for joining us today in celebrating two remarkable dates in the history of Azerbaijan – the National Holiday – Republic Day – and the twenty-fifth anniversary of Azerbaijan's membership in the United Nations.

Since its admission to the United Nations, despite economic hardships and continuing aggression against my country and its devastating consequences, Azerbaijan has transformed into an economically and politically dynamic modern State and has proved itself as reliable partner. We highly appreciate the support of the United Nations to Azerbaijan during that period.

Azerbaijan has consistently demonstrated its strong commitment to the principles and purposes of the UN Charter and international law, and has staunchly supported the Organization and has actively contributed to its activities.

During this short period, Azerbaijan has been elected to the two principal organs of the United Nations, namely, the Security Council (2012-2013) and the Economic and Social Council (2003-2005, and since 2017 for the following three years term), as well as has been a member of the Commission on Human Rights (2005-2006), the Human Rights Council (2006-2009) and the Organization's other elected bodies and agencies.

Azerbaijan is the main author of a series of resolutions adopted within the United Nations on humanitarian, human rights, economic and cultural issues.

My country is fully committed to maintaining international peace, security and stability and is making sustained efforts towards that end.

Having a clear-eyed understanding of the particular challenges the world and our region are facing nowadays, Azerbaijan will continue contributing to the establishment of lasting peace

and stability in the South Caucasus and beyond on the basis of the generally accepted norms and principles of international law and the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

As the Secretary-General pointed out in his address to the Security Council earlier this year, “challenges to national sovereignty and territorial integrity are reminders that we must collectively work to preserve and strengthen a rules-based international order so as to maintain peace and security, in accordance with the Charter”.

Azerbaijan is committed to the political settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the basis of the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of international borders. That is what international law requires and the Security Council and the General Assembly unambiguously demand in their relevant resolutions on the conflict. As a country suffering from the occupation of its territories and the forcible displacement of hundreds of thousands of its citizens, Azerbaijan is the most interested party in the earliest resolution of the conflict, which would ensure peace, stability and development in the region.

Azerbaijan fully complies with obligations arising from the relevant international instruments on disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as has consistently contributed to international counter-terrorism efforts.

Notwithstanding global economic crisis and other challenges, we have maintained the country’s gradual economic growth and continue to undertake efforts towards developing inclusive and diversified economy. On 6 October 2016, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, issued an Executive Order on the Establishment of the National Coordination Council on Sustainable Development, instructing it to identify national priorities and their indicators until 2030, in line with the global development goals and targets, adapt the relevant State programs and strategies to the SDGs and prepare annual national SDG progress reports.

Azerbaijan has also paid particular attention to addressing the needs of the developing and least developed countries, as well as those recovering from natural disasters. Over the years, we have provided humanitarian and other assistance to a number of countries from different regions.

Azerbaijan attaches primary importance to the promotion of intercultural and interreligious

dialogue at the national and international levels. We declared 2016 the Year of Multiculturalism and 2017 the Year of Islamic Solidarity in Azerbaijan.

In recent years, my country has organized a number of high level international events, such as the 7th Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in April 2016, with the theme “Living together in inclusive societies: a challenge and a goal”.

Azerbaijan’s role as a natural bridge between cultures and civilizations has also manifested in hosting the first European Games in 2015 and, most recently, the Islamic Solidarity Games, as well as in organizing other important international cultural and sports events.

Azerbaijan has been and will remain an active and strong partner genuinely contributing to joint efforts towards peace, security and sustainable development.

In concluding, I would like once again to thank all of you for being with us today and to wish you all the best and enjoyable evening.

Thank you.

**JOINT PRESS STATEMENT BY FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC
OF AZERBAIJAN, ELMAR MAMMADYAROV AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS AND WORSHIP OF THE REPUBLIC OF COSTA RICA,
MANUEL A. GONZÁLEZ SANZ**

2 June 2017, San José

In the framework of the official visit to the Republic of Costa Rica, 1-2 June 2017, the Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov had an audience of H.E. Mr. Luis Guillermo Solís, the President of the Republic of Costa Rica.

Elmar Mammadyarov conveyed greetings and the best wishes of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, H.E Mr. Ilham Aliyev to President Luis Guillermo Solís. In his turn, President Luis Guillermo asked to deliver his most sincere wishes to President Ilham Aliyev.

Within the visit Foreign Ministers Manuel A. González Sanz and Elmar Mammadyarov had a meeting in an extended format and conducted political consultations in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding on Establishment of Mechanism of Political Consultations between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Republic of Costa Rica signed in New-York on September 16, 2002.

During the political consultations the Ministers reviewed the current status of bilateral relations and noting the 20th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between Costa-Rica and Azerbaijan, expressed their satisfaction with the positive development of political dialogue and mutual understanding over two decades. The Ministers noted the importance of mutual visits to foster the ties of friendship and cooperation between Costa Rica and Azerbaijan and in this regard, gladly recalled the official visit of Manuel A. González Sanz to the Republic of Azerbaijan on October 20, 2015.

Minister Elmar Mammadyarov welcomed the decision of Costa Rica to establish an Embassy in Baku, Azerbaijan. The Ministers recognized that exchanging of diplomatic missions in both countries surely brings an additional boost to strengthening of mutual cooperation.

Ministers reiterated their mutual respect and support to each other's territorial integrity, sovereignty and inviolability of internationally recognized borders. They also emphasized inadmissibility of attempts to change the internationally recognized borders of states by use of force.

Manuel A. González Sanz stated that Costa Rica firmly supports the settlement Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict based on the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.

The Ministers emphasized the wide range of opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation in the economic-trade, tourism, energy, logistics, ports and maritime, investment and humanitarian spheres. Cooperation between Diplomatic Academies, exchange of students and scholars through various disciplines was particularly highlighted.

The sides mentioned that the current trade turnover does not reflect the potential of two countries. In order to boost trade relations the Ministers agreed to encourage the direct contacts between the business communities of two countries. Furthermore, they touched upon the role of public diplomacy and cultural events to raise wider public awareness about Azerbaijan and Costa Rica in their respective societies. The conviction was shared that such efforts will also contribute to stimulating flow of tourists. They also noted an effective role of parliamentary diplomacy in advancing bilateral cooperation and to this end agreed to initiate exchange of parliamentary delegations.

The sides also discussed the issues on the international agenda and welcomed commonality of vision of Azerbaijan and Costa Rica towards the global issues and commitment of both countries to strengthening a rules-based international order to maintain regional and global peace and security in accordance with the norms and principles of international law. Recalling also their meetings on the sidelines of major international events, the Ministers commended the cooperation and consistent practice of mutual support within the international organizations.

The Ministers signed an Agreement on visa exemption of diplomatic, service and official passport holders. They also agreed to continue their efforts towards further strengthening the legal base between the two countries, particularly in economic and humanitarian spheres.

The Ministers agreed that the next round of political consultations to be held in Baku, Azerbaijan.

JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE OF FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, ELMAR MAMMADYAROV AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA, SVEN MIKSER

12 June 2017, Baku

Elmar Mammadyarov: Ladies and gentlemen! Welcome to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As you may know, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Estonia, Mr. Sven Mikser is on an official visit to Azerbaijan. We had one-by-one and extended meeting with participation of delegations.

Firstly, we exchanged congratulatory letters on the 25th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between our countries. There is a political dialogue between Azerbaijan and Estonia on a regular basis. In April of 2017, the 3rd Meeting of the Joint Intergovernmental Commission on economic cooperation was held in Baku, more than 10 Estonian companies are actively being operated in the fields of construction, trade, services and IT technologies. I would particularly emphasize that cooperation in the field of IT technologies plays special role in Azerbaijan-Estonia relations.

Meanwhile, I informed my colleague about the current status of negotiation process on resolution of Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. Estonia's stance, which supports the settlement of the conflict in accordance with the relevant resolutions of UN Security Council, is highly appreciated. Regrettably, UN Security Council's resolutions, which were adopted in 1993 and demand unconditional, immediate and full withdrawal of the military forces of Armenia from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and to respect territorial integrity, sovereignty and inviolability of internationally recognized borders of Azerbaijan, have still not implemented. It is a very essential element. We shared opinion that abidance to the norms and principles of international law is a must for the UN Member States.

Furthermore, we had a discussion on cooperation between Azerbaijan and the European Union. Just for information, today and tomorrow next round of meetings will be held with participation of representatives of the EU Commission and our officials. Also on June 15, 2017 EU Commissioner Johannes Hahn's visit to Baku is expected. At our meeting planned to be held on June 16, we will discuss the assessments and preparation to the Eastern Partnership Summit to be held in Brussels on November 24, 2017. As my counterpart has already briefed, Estonia has an ambitious plans and vision regarding the EU Council Presidency starting from July. It is highly appreciated that various institutions and Ministries of Azerbaijan are involved to those plans and I would like to thank Mr. Mikser for that.

I believe and rather hope that we are on the right track with expediting the Partnership Agreement negotiation process with the EU. Cooperation with the EU is one of foreign policy priorities of Azerbaijan. I think that the speed of the negotiation process is on the pretty good level and as soon as we achieve some progress on that, media and journalist will be informed.

Q&A session

Question: *Aytan Ahmadova, ATV. Mister Minister, the visit of Minsk Group Co-chairs to the region has already started. My question is about your expectations from the visit. Is it expected the new document to be presented during the visit?*

Elmar Mammadyarov: Minsk Group Co-chairs are in the region. The meetings were already held in Yerevan and most probably, they will also pay a visit to our occupied territories. Minsk Group Co-chairs arrive to Baku on June 19, 2017 and firstly they will be received by the President of Azerbaijan, H.E Mr. Ilham Aliyev, then we will have a meeting. Negotiations are being continued on the current document, that document was also discussed by the Presidents at Saint Petersburg meeting. We had a very intense discussion on this document at Moscow meeting on April 29, 2017 with participation of foreign ministers of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia. I think that Minsk Group Co-chairs will have statement in this regard during the visit, till then we have to wait for the message brought from Yerevan. Azerbaijan's position on status-quo remains the same. Inadmissibility of status quo was also stressed by the Presidents of Minsk Group Co-chairs states. The consequences of maintaining status quo is crystal clear.

Thank you!

JOINT PRESS STATEMENT BY FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, ELMAR MAMMADYAROV AND FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA, MARIA ANGELA HOLGUIN

16 June 2017, Baku

In the framework of the working visit to Azerbaijan Minister Holguin of Colombia, was received by the President of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr. İlham Aliyev.

Minister Holguin conveyed greetings and the best wishes of the President of Colombia, H.E. Mr. Juan Manuel Santos to President İlham Aliyev. In his turn, President İlham Aliyev asked to deliver his most sincere wishes to President Juan Manuel Santos.

Within the visit, the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Colombia had a meeting and reviewed the current status of the bilateral relation and expressed their satisfaction with the positive developments in their political dialogue.

The Ministers noted the importance of mutual visits to foster the ties of friendship and cooperation between Colombia and Azerbaijan and in this regard, gladly recalled the official visit of Minister Holguin to Azerbaijan on 8 July, 2013 and the recent official visit of Minister Mammadyarov to Colombia on 29-30 May, 2017. In this regard, the Ministers emphasized that exchange of permanent diplomatic presence in both countries has provided additional impetus to furthering bilateral cooperation.

The Ministers reiterated their mutual respect and support to each other's territorial integrity, sovereignty and inviolability of internationally recognized borders. They also emphasized the inadmissibility of the use of force for the acquisition of territory.

Minister Mammadyarov congratulated the people of Colombia for the peaceful settlement of long-lasting conflict in the country and hoped that the Peace Agreement would bring opportunity for a sustainable reconciliation and development in Colombia.

Minister Holguin expressed the importance to abide by the purposes, principles and provisions of the UN Charter, the rules of international law and the UN resolutions adopted both at the Security Council and at the General Assembly, all aimed at a peaceful and negotiated resolution regarding the situation of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

The Ministers emphasized the wide range of opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation

in the economic, trade, education, tourism, agriculture, energy, logistics, investment and humanitarian sectors. In education, the exchange of students and scholars was particularly highlighted. Regarding the cooperation between the diplomatic training and education institutions of the two states, the Ministers mentioned the importance of Spanish language courses organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia for the diplomats of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan.

The Ministers mentioned that the current trade turnover does not reflect the potential of the two countries and shared a common position on boosting trade relations with the encouragement of direct contacts between the business communities of the two countries. Minister Holguin's visit to the regions of Azerbaijan, Hagigabul, Kurdamir, Goychay, Zagatala, had the purpose of strengthening bilateral cooperation to produce hazelnut and pomegranates, considering its future contribution as a productive project, important for Colombia's peace building.

The Ministers expressed assurance that "Agreement on cooperation in the field of culture between the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Colombia" signed during the visit of Mammadyarov to Colombia on May this year will boost cooperation in the field of culture and tourism. They also exchanged the views on further expansion of the legal base between the countries.

The Ministers mentioned the special role of parliamentary diplomacy in advancing bilateral cooperation and in this respect the activities of Azerbaijan-Colombia Parliamentary Friendship Groups were commended. Minister Mammadyarov expressed his appreciation for the documents adopted by the Senate of Colombia, namely the resolution on "Illegal occupation of the territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan" and document on the 25th anniversary of Khojaly Genocide.

The Ministers also discussed issues on the international agenda and expressed their commitment to respect the norms and principles of international law at the base of an international order with peace and security.

**JOINT PRESS STATEMENT BY FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC
OF AZERBAIJAN, ELMAR MAMMADYAROV AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC, SALEUMXAY
KOMMASITH**

19 June 2017, Baku

On June 18-20, 2017 Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Saleumxay Kommasith is on official visit to Azerbaijan. During his official visit to Azerbaijan Minister Saleumxay Kommasith was received by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev and met with the Prime Minister, Artur Rasi-zade and Speaker of the Milli Majlis, Ogtay Asadov.

Minister Saleumxay Kommasith visited the Alley of Honors to lay a wreath at the tomb of National Leader Heydar Aliyev. Visiting Alley of Martyrs Minister Saleumxay Kommasith paid tribute to the memory of martyrs and laid a wreath at the "Eternal Fire" Memorial.

During the visit Foreign Ministers Elmar Mammadyarov and Saleumxay Kommasith had a tete-a-tete and extended meeting with the participation of delegations.

Ministers emphasized the importance of renewal and further development of cooperation in all spheres. In this context, they noted the significance of exchange of high level visits in order to promote bilateral relations and cooperation. In this regard, Elmar Mammadyarov pointed out that the visit paid by Saleumxay Kommasith is the first ever official visit between Azerbaijan and Laos and expressed his assurance that the visit would contribute to the development of bilateral relations in all spheres.

They also noted the significant role of parliamentary diplomacy in advancing bilateral relations and talked about the establishment of Friendship Group in legislative bodies.

Furthermore, both sides had a comprehensive discussion on perspective areas of bilateral relations and said that there are wide ranges of cooperation opportunities in the field of economy. They shared thoughts about the establishment of direct contacts between business communities and holding business Forums for defining those opportunities. Ministers also exchanged views on development of bilateral legal-treaty base.

They also stressed the importance of enhancement of successful cooperation in human resource development, particularly in the field of education and continuation of exchange of

students and researchers based on the traditions since the Soviet times.

Ministers also exchanged views on regional and international issues as well as touched upon the importance of cooperation between two countries in framework of international institutions, including the UN and NAM.

Minister Elmar Mammadyarov informed his counterpart about Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and its consequences. Ministers stated support to peaceful settlement of conflict in accordance with the norms and principles of international law and relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, based on the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of recognized borders.

During the visit, both sides have concluded an Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic on Exemption from visa requirement for holders of diplomatic passports.

**INTERVIEW BY FOREIGN MINISTER ELMAR MAMMADYAROV TO
TREND NEWS AGENCY**

20 June 2017, Baku

Question: *What can you say about the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs' visit to Azerbaijan, particularly, about the call to continue substantive negotiations based on good intentions and political will of the parties, indicated in the statement issued June 19?*

Elmar Mammadyarov: During the visit of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs to Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan's constructive position on the conflict settlement process was again conveyed and a wide exchange of views was held on intensification of the negotiation process. They can give a positive result in case of holding negotiations based on good intentions.

Thus, we support the call of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs to continue substantive negotiations based on good intentions and political will. The Azerbaijani side has repeatedly stated that it is ready for substantive negotiations on the conflict's settlement.

The time has come to take serious steps to resolve the conflict. The status quo based on the occupation must be changed. Therefore, Armenia must put an end to lies and various stipulations, and take part in the negotiations with good intentions and political will.

JOINT STATEMENT ON THE OUTCOMES OF FOURTH TRILATERAL MEETING OF THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, REPUBLIC OF TURKEY AND TURKMENISTAN

19 July 2017, Baku



At the invitation of H.E. Mr. Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and with participation of H.E. Mr. MevlütÇavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, and H.E. Mr. Rashid Meredov, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan (hereinafter referred to as

the “Parties”) the Fourth Trilateral Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs was held on 19 July 2017 in Baku, the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The Parties,

Affirmed their adherence to the joint statements adopted in the Trilateral Meetings of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs on 26 May 2014 in Baku, on 29 January 2015 in Ashgabat and on 28 August 2015 in Antalya, and underlined the importance of joint efforts for implementation of the “Framework Program of Azerbaijan-Turkmenistan-Turkey cooperation for 2015-2017”.

Reaffirmed their mutual respect and firm support for sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized borders of States.

In this context, stressed the necessity for earliest resolution of the conflicts, on the basis of adherence to the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized borders;

Noted the importance of cooperative partnership between the Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Turkey and Turkmenistan within the United Nations, Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, International Organization of Turkic Culture (TÜRKSÖY) and other relevant regional and international organizations as well as fora, such as Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process.

Underlined the importance of further strengthening of cooperation in the fight against terrorism, separatism, extremism and discrimination in all their forms and manifestations, transnational organized crime and illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and their precursors, and arms, human trafficking, crimes against cultural and historical heritage, cybercrimes and illegal migration.

Especially noted utmost importance of the trilateral meeting of the Presidents of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Turkey and Turkmenistan during the Fourth Summit of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States in Bodrum on 5 June 2014, and underlined the importance of the forthcoming Trilateral Summit of the Heads of States in Turkmenistan.

Noted the importance of strengthening trilateral economic cooperation, as well as the legal basis for economic partnership among the States.

Agreed to support the further development of cooperation through strengthening of the trade-economic cooperation, using existing potential for promotion of investment and trade as well as carrying out joint projects and programmes in the field of customs, energy, transport, telecommunications, industry, agriculture, science, education, culture, tourism, and environment.

Agreed to consider the opportunities for organizing Azerbaijan-Turkey-Turkmenistan Business Forum during the forthcoming Trilateral Summit of the Heads of States in Turkmenistan.

Noted the importance of continuation of the existing cooperation between small and medium sized enterprises of all three countries.

Underscored the necessity of further strengthening the cooperation for realization of new projects on development of transport infrastructure and increasing the transit potential.

In this context, noted the significance of the first trilateral meeting of the Ministers of Transport held on 1 September 2016 in the city of Ashgabat, where wide range of issues on transport - transit corridors connecting three countries were discussed.

Exchanged views on the prospects of development of the East-West International transport corridor, linking Turkmenistan with the Republic of Azerbaijan across the Caspian Sea and accessing Europe through Turkey (Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway) and underlined that this corridor

will contribute to the efforts of the States aimed at restoration of the Great Silk Road.

Noted that Baku International Sea Trade Port and Turkmenbashi International Sea Port in the Caspian Sea located on the East–West international transport corridor, will become an important transport logistic hub, as well as becoming a part of wide international logistic net connecting Europe and Asia, and therefore will tremendously contribute to the revival of the Great Silk Road.

Noting importance of Afghanistan - Turkmenistan - Azerbaijan - Georgia - Turkey transport corridor project, declared that this route will continue to receive necessary support.

Highly appreciating importance of Trans Caspian part of the Trans - Eurasian Information Super Highway (TASIM) project aimed at strengthening of sustainable cooperation by creation of information (internet) infrastructure for establishment of regional digital information society, as well as serving to diversification and modernization of telecommunication transits between the Europe and Asia, the Parties agreed to support the project by encouraging the participation of public and private sectors.

Taking into account the significance of cooperation in the field of energy, noted the utmost importance of delivery of Turkmen and Azerbaijani natural gas to European and other international markets through Azerbaijan and Turkey.

Emphasized the necessity to develop further cooperation in education, science, culture and other humanitarian fields based on common cultural, linguistic and historical heritage of Azerbaijani, Turkish and Turkmen peoples.

Underscored the importance of summits of heads of Turkic speaking states and bilateral as well as multilateral contacts in order to increase effectiveness of cooperation among them.

Noted the importance of cooperation within the Economic Cooperation Organization and emphasized the mutual support on the matters of common interest.

Noted that the year of 2017 is announced the Year of Islamic Solidarity in Republic of Azerbaijan and in this context, underlined importance of the 4th Islamic Solidarity Games, held in Baku, organised on high level that significantly contributed to promotion of Islamic culture and moral values over the World.

Expressed their further support for successfully holding of the 5th Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games to be organized in Ashgabat in September 2017.

Noted the progress on the drafts of trilateral documents in the field of energy, transport, economy, trade, customs, science, education and culture which are considered to be signed during the upcoming Summit to be held in Turkmenistan.

Underscored the importance of holding regular trilateral meetings with a view to continue cooperation and coordination on political dialogue, regional and global issues.

Agreed to hold the next meeting in Turkmenistan. The date of the meeting will be agreed through diplomatic channels.

**JOINT PRESS STATEMENT BY FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF
AZERBAIJAN, ELMAR MAMMADYAROV AND THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF THE PLURINATIONAL STATE OF BOLIVIA, FERNANDO
HUANACUNI MAMANI**

18 August 2017, Baku

In the framework of Official Visit to Azerbaijan H.E Mr. Fernando Huanacuni Mamani was received by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr. Artur Rasi-zade. During the meeting Fernando Huanacuni Mamani presented a letter of invitation by H.E Evo Morales Ayma, the President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia addressed to H.E Mr. Ilham Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan to attend the Fourth Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) Gas Summit to be held in Bolivia on November 20-24, 2017.

Fernando Huanacuni Mamani visited the Alley of Honors and laid a wreath at the tomb of National Leader Heydar Aliyev. Visiting Alley of Martyrs he paid tribute to the memory of martyrs and laid a wreath at the “Eternal Fire” Memorial.

Within the visit Foreign Ministers Elmar Mammadyarov and Fernando Huanacuni Mamani had a tête-à-tête and extended meetings.

The Ministers noted importance of mutual visits to foster the friendship bonds and cooperation between Azerbaijan and Bolivia and in this regard, stressed the significance of the first Official Visit by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bolivia Fernando Huanacuni Mamani to Azerbaijan. At the meeting the Ministers reviewed the current status of bilateral relationship and noted that there are vast opportunities for cooperation in the energy, economy, commerce, agriculture, mining, education and other spheres between the countries. In the humanitarian sphere exchange of students and scholars was particularly highlighted.

The Ministers commended the cooperation between the two countries within the international organizations and reiterated their appreciation for Bolivian support to Azerbaijan’s nomination to the United Nations Economic and Social Council for the term of 2017-2019 and Azerbaijan’s support to Bolivian nomination to the United Nations Human Rights Council for the term of 2015-2017. The Ministers recalled the fruitful cooperation of two countries within the Non-Aligned Movement and expressed conviction that hosting by Azerbaijan the XVIII Summit of the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement in 2019 and Azerbaijan’s NAM Chairmanship in 2019-2022 will contribute to promoting the noble

goals and objectives of NAM.

Ministers reiterated their mutual respect and support to each other's political independence, territorial integrity, and sovereignty. Both authorities emphasized inadmissibility of interfering in internal affairs of states and expressed their strong condemnation of aggressive separatism and all forms and manifestation of terrorism.

During the meeting the Ministers exchanged views on further expansion of legal base between the countries and agreed on to encourage parliamentary cooperation.

Ministers signed an Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of Plurinational State of Bolivia on the exemption of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic and official/service passports.

INTERVIEW BY FOREIGN MINISTER ELMAR MAMMADYAROV TO AZERTAC

25 August 2017, Baku

Question: *The statement by the United States co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, Richard Hoagland, has caused serious concern and panic in Armenia's political leadership. There are statements that are contradictory at different levels and one deny another one. Armenian officials state that these principles are not new. In general, what would you say about R. Hoagland's statement and negotiation process?*

Elmar Mammadyarov: The L'Aquila, Muskoka and Los Cabos statements by the Presidents of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries reflected the key elements of a step-by-step settlement of the conflict on the basis of the Helsinki Final Act. These elements also constitute the fundamental basis of the updated Madrid principles. The same principles have been also emphasized by the United States co-chair, Richard Hoagland. The very first step in the sequence of principles, which are complementary to one another, is the withdrawal of Armenia's troops from the occupied territories around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. With the elimination of the fact of occupation, return of internally displaced persons to their native lands and implementation of necessary security measures should be ensured. It should also be noted that Armenia does not implement the demands of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions on the conflict.

If the Armenian side admits that these principles are not new and they are accepting them, then substantive negotiations should be started to discuss the details. The Armenian people will be able to benefit from the cooperation opportunities that conflict resolution would create.

The Azerbaijani side has repeatedly stated that it is ready for serious negotiations to change the current status quo, which is considered as unacceptable by the Heads of State of Minsk Group Co-chair countries and to ensure the soonest settlement of the conflict and the lasting peace in the region.

**STATEMENT BY FOREIGN MINISTER ELMAR MAMMADYAROV,
AT THE MEETING OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE VISEGRAD
GROUP (V4) AND THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES**

31 August 2017, Budapest

Dear Minister Szijjarto,
Comissioner Hahn,
Distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to extend our gratitude to the Hungarian Presidency of the Visegrad Group for hosting regular Ministerial dialogue of V4 and Eastern Partnership. This traditional format provides good opportunity to deliberate on ways and means for further synergy, which is particularly important today in the light of upcoming EaP Summit in November in Brussels.

Azerbaijan has been a reliable EU partner and growing number of strategic partners among the EU member states and V4 Group inspires us to advance dialogue with the EU under the same conditions. We are interested in progressing our bilateral track through speedy negotiations on a new strategic agreement with the EU. Since official launch of the negotiations back in February we have engaged in a productive and constructive dialogue within different blocks of the agreement.

Azerbaijan is also interested in building its relations with EU based on mutually agreed priorities. Priority-driven cooperation tailored to the economic potential and specific goals of each country would be more efficient in realization of the principles of differentiation, flexibility, focus and greater ownership. The EU-Azerbaijan Partnership Priorities will translate these goals into concrete areas of cooperation.

First, Azerbaijan is a key enabler of the 45-50 bln. US dollar Southern Gas Corridor (SGC)– largest infrastructure and energy project in Europe with the aim of bringing alternative gas to the European markets. SGC with potential of meeting up to 20% of EU’s gas demand in the future is unique project of energy diversification, as we will observe diversification of routes and sources. Moreover located on the strategic crossroads of East and West Azerbaijan is open to potential initiatives on expansion of inter-regional energy connectivity and bringing Central Asia closer to European energy architecture.

Second, unique participatory framework of the SGC - involving diverse stakeholders from

EaP region, as well as EU member states and candidate countries may be deployed in other areas of common interest, particularly transport, via exploring synergies for establishment of new transport-transit routes connecting Europe and Asia, Europe – South and North – South. Today Azerbaijan has involved in implementation of several major transport projects to promote East-West and North-South corridors. This week Azerbaijan along with 4 other countries signed an agreement in Kabul on Lapis Lazuli Corridor – new transit route projected to transport goods to European markets.

For regional projects like Trans-Caspian International Transit Route, connecting China with Europe, broader participation, including Central Asian states should be considered. This will also be in line with EU's connectivity agenda aiming to expand trans-European networks further to the East.

In July EU and Azerbaijan also resumed negotiations on Common Aviation Area Agreement and tentatively agreed on the overall structure of the document.

Third, promotion of the mobility and people-to-people contacts is an important dimension of EU-Azerbaijan interaction. We do believe that the successful implementation of readmission and visa facilitation agreements should pave the way for launching the dialogue on visa liberalization between EU and Azerbaijan.

Fourth, the revised ENP has put forward the stabilization as the most urgent challenge in many parts of the European Neighbourhood. True stabilization is unimaginable without the settlement of protracted military conflicts which threaten the stability and cooperation in the EaP geography.

Today the sovereignty and territorial integrity of four out of six EaP countries continue to be undermined due to the existing conflicts. Failure to eliminate consequences of the ongoing violation of the principles of international law, as well as misinterpretation and selective application of these principles in the context of the conflict resolution undermines rules-based European order.

It is already third decade that Armenia – a member of the EaP has been using force against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of another member of the EAP and continues to keep the one-fifth of Azerbaijan's internationally recognized territories under military occupation. Armenia carried out notorious ethnic cleansing on all seized lands of Azerbaijan which totally contradicts to the code of conduct adopted in Europe and the world. The unlawful

presence of the armed forces of Armenia in the territories of Azerbaijan remains the main cause of violence in the conflict zone and is the major impediment to political settlement of the conflict.

Dear colleagues,

EAP Summit in November is an important event and we believe that the negotiations on the text of the Summit Declaration should be started at the earliest convenience. We expect upcoming Brussels Summit Declaration to capture united and coherent approach to the settlement of conflicts, as well as reflecting on negative impacts of existing conflicts for full-scale implementation of EaP objectives.

It is an absolute necessity that the key principles enshrined in the Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy, particularly those pertaining to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the inviolability of borders of states are equally respected by all participating states. Only living up to the principles identified as the key elements of the European security order will determine the EU's credibility and influence it for the years ahead.

Thank you!

BAKU STATEMENT ON THE OUTCOMES OF SIXTH TRILATERAL MEETING OF THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, GEORGIA AND THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

6 September 2017, Baku



At the invitation of H.E. Mr. Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and with participation of H.E. Mr. Mikheil Janelidze, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia and H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, the Sixth Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the three countries was held in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 6 September 2017.

Ministers,

Emphasized their commitment to the Trabzon Declaration, the Batumi Joint Communiqué, the Ganja, Kars and Tbilisi Statements adopted in the previous Trilateral Meetings of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, as an important platform for both political dialogue and implementation of specific trilateral projects;

Expressed their satisfaction with the growing bilateral and trilateral cooperation among their countries and reaffirmed their strong commitment for further enhancing their cooperation based on the strategic partnership, good neighbourliness, mutual respect and trust;

Reconfirmed their mutual respect and strong support for sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized borders of states;

Stressed that the existing conflicts in the region undermine peace, stability and economic development and require peaceful resolutions based on the mentioned principles of international law;

Reiterated the utmost importance of the earliest peaceful settlement of the conflict in and around Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the conflict in Georgia on the basis of principles and norms of international law, particularly, sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the internationally recognized borders of states, as well as in

accordance with relevant resolutions, declarations and decisions of the UN, the OSCE and the CoE;

Underlined the firm determination of their states to explore new ways to expand trilateral cooperation particularly in the areas that would ensure prosperity for the people of the three countries through economic growth and sustainable development;

Decided to intensify all efforts to improve their economic and commercial cooperation so as to meet actual potentials to promote investments and trade; and to further strengthen cooperation in the field of energy, transport, agriculture, telecommunications, industry, environment, education, science, culture, tourism and sports through joint projects and programs;

Emphasized the significance of the Fifth Meeting of Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey Business Forum (TAGIF) with the participation of relevant ministers of three countries held in Istanbul on 17 February 2017;

Underlined the importance of cooperation within the context of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) in line with the spirit of the 25th Anniversary Summit Declaration, which was adopted on 22 May 2017, in Istanbul;

Highlighted the strategic partnership in the field of energy, reaffirmed their full political support for Trans Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP), other important components of the Southern Gas Corridor (SGC), as well as for energy projects aimed at transporting hydrocarbon from the Caspian basin to Europe and enabling role of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey in assuring successful completion and functioning of those projects. Emphasized the readiness to continue the energy dialogue and importance of diversification of energy resources for enhancing security of supply, including security of energy transportation routes within the region and beyond;

Highlighted the importance of trilateral cooperation along the Great Silk Road route in order to revive and conserve the Road, and underlined further enhancing cooperation in the fields of transport, energy, trade, culture and tourism, and people-to-people contacts across the Silk Road route;

In this context stressed the importance of the high level participation at the “Tbilisi Belt and Road Forum” to be held on November 28-29, 2017 in Tbilisi;

By expressing confidence that large-scale transport projects of strategic importance

will favour the economic development of the three countries and facilitate competitive transportation between Asia and Europe, reiterated in this regard the utmost importance of the earliest start of operation of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway;

Reaffirmed the importance attached to the full realization of the East-West/Middle Transport Corridor crossing the territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Republic of Turkey in order to create more favourable conditions for trade and economic development as well as to ensure increase in the volume of international passenger and cargo transportation. In this context agreed to encourage all international and regional financial institutions to contribute to financing the development of relevant transport corridors and routes;

Emphasized that the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route has great development potential, which aimed to facilitate cargo transportation from China to Europe through Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey and enhance transport connectivity between Asia and Europe;

Stressed the importance of strengthened and continued cooperation among three countries to build and run information infrastructures in order to bridge the digital divide in the region and in this regard reiterate their commitment to contribute to earliest realization of the Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway Project, including the development the Trans-Caspian route of the Highway;

Underscored the necessity to improve further intermodal transport services in Caspian Region with effective integration of sustainable modes of transport such as rail and sea in order to achieve sustainable development goals concerning improved traffic safety, enhanced performance for the environment, energy efficiency and safer transport activities;

Underlined the importance of strengthening communication and exchange of information and experience in the fields of environmental protection, forestry, land use and management of water resources to maintain ecological balance in the region;

Underscored the importance of trilateral cooperation in the defense sphere, highlighting trilateral trainings, exercises and high level meetings already conducted in the past years and expressed their readiness to continue active cooperation in the future;

Reiterated their firm commitment to strengthen their cooperation in the fight against terrorism, violent extremism and separatism in all their forms and manifestations, transnational organized crime, narcotic drugs and their precursors, illicit trade in arms, human trafficking, crimes against cultural and historical heritage, cybercrime

and migrant smuggling;

Azerbaijan and Georgia once again condemned the action of the perpetrators of foiled coup attempt of 15th of July 2016 in Turkey, and both countries reiterated their strong cooperation with Turkey and also reaffirmed their resolute support to Turkey's democratically elected President and Government;

Condemning all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on ethnicity, race, religion and belief and underlining the importance of nurturing tolerance, respect, dialogue and cooperation among different cultures, civilizations and peoples, emphasized the significance of the 7th Global Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations of the United Nations held in Baku, Azerbaijan on 25-27 April 2016;

Underlined the importance of the adoption of Trilateral Sectoral Cooperation Action Plan for 2017-2019 and encouraged relevant Ministries and Agencies to make efforts towards the implementation of the provisions of the Action Plan;

Underscored the importance of cooperation in the humanitarian sphere, including culture, education, health care, youth exchange, tourism and sports, which will further expand people-to-people contacts between their countries and expressed their readiness to initiate and promote joint projects and events in these spheres;

Reconfirmed their determination to further intensify trilateral dialogue on regional and global issues of common interest, as well as enhance coordination within the frames of the international organizations;

Agreed to hold their next trilateral meeting in Turkey.

Attachment: The Trilateral Sectoral Cooperation Action Plan for 2017-2019.

H.E. Mr. Elmar Mammadyarov
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan

H.E. Mr. Mikheil Janelidze
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey

**SPEECH BY FOREIGN MINISTER ELMAR MAMMADYAROV,
AT THE CONFERENCE TITLED “25 YEARS OF VIETNAM-AZERBAIJAN
RELATIONS: ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES”**

13 September 2017, Hanoi

Honourable H. E. Mr Bui Thanh Son, Member of the Party Central Committee, first deputy minister of foreign affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam!

Excellencies!

Ladies and Gentlemen!

On September 23, 2017 we will celebrate 25th Anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Socialist Republic of Vietnam. It makes me proud to call our relations historical as the collaboration and friendship between our Nations started long before restoration of Azerbaijan’s independence. National leader of Azerbaijani people Heydar Aliyev and President Ho Chi Minh are founders of these strong relations. The visit of the first President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Ho Chi Minh to Azerbaijan in 1959, and the visit of the National leader and founder of the modern Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev to Vietnam in 1983 laid the foundation of friendly relations between our two people.

During his visit in 1959 President Ho Chi Minh asked Azerbaijan to help Vietnam in setting up oil production, provide education and create training opportunities for potential Vietnamese specialists. Azerbaijan responded to this appeal by sending thousands of Azerbaijani specialists to Vietnam where they participated in the reconstruction and development of post-war Vietnam. Thousands Vietnamese students were admitted to different schools and Universities in Azerbaijan. Those days symbolized beginning of warm, sincerely and friendly relations between our nations that later on strengthened and were transformed into friendly and partnership cooperation in many areas. Thus, the historical linkage between our countries as well as essential role played by Vietnam in South-East Asia, made Vietnam a very important partner for Azerbaijan.

The establishment of the Embassy of Azerbaijan in Hanoi in 2013 was a clear indication of our intention to develop bilateral relations with Vietnam. Azerbaijan strongly hopes that Vietnam will consider opening its Embassy in Baku as we believe in effectiveness of joint diplomatic efforts in bringing our bilateral relations to a new high. Thus, the establishment of the Embassy of Vietnam in Baku will play important role from the point of view of the fast development of cooperation across the whole spectrum of relations..

It is with great pleasure I would like to acknowledge that relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam have been expanding and deepening in recent years with more dynamism in mutually beneficial way. It should be especially underlined the importance of mutual visits of the Presidents of the two countries, including the state visit of H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Vietnam on 18-19 May 2014, as well as official visit H.E. Mr. Truong Tang Sang, former President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to Azerbaijan on 13-15 of May 2015. Undoubtedly, these visits gave a strong impetus to the accelerated development of the mutually beneficial cooperation and identified areas for future expansion of these relations in various fields. Mutual contacts established within the framework of these visits, as well as various events in Baku and Hanoi, including meeting of H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev with the Vietnamese students who graduated from different Azerbaijani Universities, as well as

business forums enabled our leaders and the business communities of both countries get to know each other even closer.

In addition, it should be mentioned that close cooperation between the ruling parties of our two states, the New Azerbaijan Party and the Communist Party of Vietnam, had a great importance in advancing our relations. In April 2013, Memorandum of Cooperation between two parties was signed. The exchange of visits that were carried by the representatives of the parties each year is obvious manifestation of the active ongoing cooperation between the ruling parties and the importance given by them to the rapid development of mutual relations. There is no doubt that this cooperation is an additional contribution to the development of mutually beneficial relations between two countries.

Active inter-parliamentary cooperation between our countries also contribute to further strengthening of bilateral relations. In 2013, direct inter-parliamentary links between Parliaments of two countries and our parliamentarians were set when Friendship groups in the Parliaments of both countries were established. Surely, these Friendship groups play an important role in the expansion of inter-parliamentary relations.

It should be especially noted that there is a full mutual understanding on political issues among our countries, and thus political relations are at a high level. Mutually beneficial cooperation is being expanded in this direction. Unfortunately, the level of cooperation in the economic sphere does not meet the big potential of our countries. In this regard, both parties have the intention to activate the economic cooperation. It should be underlined the creation of the Intergovernmental Commission on Economic, Trade, Scientific and Technical

Cooperation. Establishment of Commission is an important step aimed at the development of bilateral relations and of course its first successful meeting in

January 16, 2017 opened new opportunities for further enhancing bilateral cooperation.

At the same time relations in humanitarian fields are being developed. In this regard the establishment in Hanoi of Azerbaijan-Vietnam Friendship Association, as well as Center for Azerbaijani Culture and History Studies plays an important role in cultural exchange and people-to-people contacts. Underlining the importance of the developing of relations in humanitarian sphere I would like to emphasize the importance of the forthcoming II Friendship Forum in Vung Tau (September 21-23, 2017). The fact that Friendship Forum was established by the initiative of H. E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan is a clear indication of importance which pays the leadership of Azerbaijan to developing cooperation with Vietnamese partners in humanitarian sphere.

I would like to take this opportunity to announce that for the services rendered to the development of friendship and cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, by the decree of the President of Azerbaijan Mr. Ilham Aliyev dated September 11, 2017 Mrs. Nguyen Vu Ha Le, Director General of Department for External Affairs of the Office of the President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and Mr. Nghiem Vu Khai, Chairman of Vietnam – Azerbaijan Friendship Association, Member of National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam have been awarded with a medal of “Taraggi” (“Progress Medal”). Congratulations Mrs. Nguyen Vu Ha Le and Mr. Nghiem Vu Khai, thank you for hard work on bringing our nations closer.

Since the restoration of independence, the Republic of Azerbaijan has achieved numerous successes in different fields such as energy and industry, information

technologies, agriculture, healthcare, education, culture etc. Huge energy, transport and infrastructure projects have been implemented. As a result of successful foreign and domestic policy pursued under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev, the Republic of Azerbaijan has become a leader state of the South Caucasus region.

The major problem that Azerbaijan has been facing since the independence is ongoing occupation of 20% of its territories by the neighboring Armenia. As a result of this occupation more than one million Azerbaijanis became refugees and internally displaced persons.

Unfortunately, no substantive progress has been achieved in the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. Armenia continues illegal occupation of the internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan, in the most brutal violation of international law, UN Charter and United Nations Security Council resolutions 822, 853, 874 and 884 adopted in 1993 which condemn Armenia for the occupation of Azerbaijani territories and demand immediate withdrawal from the occupied Azerbaijani territories. Armenia's engagement in the conflict settlement process is nothing but imitation. Nevertheless, Azerbaijan continues its efforts for the peaceful resolution of the conflict on the basis of the principles of the international law, such as territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized borders and believes that authoritative international organisations, such as the UN, OSCE, European Union, Council of Europe, OIC as well as the whole international community, will enhance their efforts towards restraining the aggressor and finding fair settlement of the conflict.

The Republic of Azerbaijan is confident that the consistent measures taken at the national level, as well as the existing international legal framework, will

serve to bring to justice those responsible for the grave crimes committed in the course of Armenia's aggression against Azerbaijan.

The Republic of Azerbaijan urges the international community to condemn Armenia for blatant violation of international law and insists on the implementation of the aforementioned UN Security Council resolutions. The conflict can only be resolved on the basis of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders. The Republic of Azerbaijan will spare no effort towards achieving the political settlement of the conflict and ensuring peace and justice in the region.

Despite on existing conflict and more than 1 million refugees and internally displaced persons Azerbaijan keeping going forward, developing the economy, building new infrastructure, strengthening its army, increasing its role in international affairs.

I am very pleased to notice that friendly relationship between the two countries have been constantly consolidating, developing and offering numerous opportunities to expand cooperation within the framework of the international organizations, including United Nations and Non-Aligned Movement. As it is known in accordance with the Final Document of the 17th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement held in the Island of Margarita, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on 13 - 18 September 2016, XVIII Summit of the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement will be

held in Baku, Azerbaijan in 2019. Thus with 2019 XVIII Summit, Azerbaijan will bring back Non-Aligned Movement to Europe after 30 years since Belgrade Summit of 1989.

Honourable H. E. Mr Bui Thanh Son, Member of the Party Central Committee, first deputy minister of foreign affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam!

Your Excellencies!

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Relying on a strong foundation and rich history of existing relations between our states I believe that the effective implementation of the achieved results will create a strong momentum to further development based on the national interests of two states.

Let me wish the conference success and express my firm belief that this event will leave an important imprint in the history of bilateral relations.

Thank you for kind attention!

**STATEMENT BY FOREIGN MINISTER ELMAR MAMMADYAROV,
AT THE MEETING OF THE MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE OF THE NON-
ALIGNED MOVEMENT ON PALESTINE**

19 September 2017, New York

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,

It is a great pleasure for me to participate in this meeting on behalf of my country to reaffirm our solidarity with the Palestinian people and our persistent support for the just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine.

We would like to thank the Government of Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for its initiative on convening a Meeting of the Ministerial Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement on Palestine.

Azerbaijan as any other member of international community is deeply concerned over wars and armed conflicts in various parts of the world, which lead to political instability in some regions, large-scale displacement and unprecedented humanitarian crisis. The lack of settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict poses threat not only to this region, but also to the international security.

Azerbaijan supports peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and stands beside the Palestinian people. Azerbaijan stands for the two-state solution of the Palestinian conflict with East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine. In this regard, I would like to reaffirm Azerbaijan's full support to the brotherly people of Palestine in their struggle for achieving peace, stability and sustainable development. As the future chairman of the NAM, Azerbaijan will seek to use this function to contribute to the peaceful resolution of the conflict based on international law, and the solid position of our Movement.

I am pleased to inform that we enjoy close political dialogue and hold regular consultations with Palestine at different levels. Azerbaijan's unwavering support to the government and people of Palestine has been repeated at various levels and my country continues to support the government of Palestine. A high level delegation from Azerbaijan paid an official visit to Ramallah in May 2016 and bilateral agreements were signed aimed at further intensification of practical cooperation. It was reciprocated by a high-level delegation representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Palestine visiting Baku in February 2017.

Emanating from shared values and culture, Palestine and Azerbaijan historically cooperated and supported each other in all international forums and organisations. The spirit of this solidarity has been proved in different instances. Azerbaijan has hosted two successful conferences, namely, “The donor’s conference to finance the strategic plan for the development of the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif” and “The establishment of Islamic financial safety net in support of the state of Palestine” in 2013 and made significant donations for the development and maintenance of the holy city’s infrastructure. This year Azerbaijan hosted the International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem under auspices of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People with the support of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation. The Conference provided up-to-date information on the current situation in East Jerusalem under occupation, examined the latest developments, and explored practical ways.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict underscores the urgency of acting collectively, immediately and determinedly to end this five decade conflict in accordance with international law, including humanitarian and human rights law. It requires international intervention and political will to address the root causes of the conflict in achieving a just, lasting solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects based on international law and relevant UN resolutions.

Having this opportunity, we once again support the Palestinian government in their efforts to realize their inalienable rights and legitimate national aspirations for peace, freedom and justice.

Thank you.

**STATEMENT BY FOREIGN MINISTER ELMAR MAMMADYAROV,
AT THE SECOND MEETING OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC
COOPERATION (OIC) CONTACT GROUP ON THE AGGRESSION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA AGAINST THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN**

19 September 2017, New York

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

I would like to thank the Secretary General, Mr. Yousef Ahmed Al-Othaimen for having organized and chairing the second meeting of the OIC Contact Group on the aggression of the Republic of Armenia against the Republic of Azerbaijan. Let me also warmly welcome the members of the Group and express my gratitude to each of them for participating at the second meeting of the Contact Group.

Dear Colleagues,

It is with deep regret I have to inform you that since the last meeting of the Contact Group, the situation around the settlement of the conflict in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan not only remains unchanged, it has even been deteriorated with intensified escalations at the line of confrontation and deliberate killing of the Azerbaijani civilians living at the vicinity of the front line.

As it is well-known the continuing aggression by Armenia against Azerbaijan has led to the seizure of a significant part of Azerbaijan's territory, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region, the seven adjacent districts and some exclaves, claimed the lives of tens of thousands of people, and resulted in the forcible expulsion of more than 1 million Azerbaijanis from their homes and properties, while thousands of people went missing in connection with the conflict.

Serious violations of international humanitarian law amounting to war crimes, crimes against humanity and acts of genocide were committed in the course of the aggression. This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the atrocities crime committed by the Armenian forces against the civilians of the town of Khojaly, situated in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. As a result of the attack and capture of Khojaly in February 1992, hundreds of Azerbaijanis, including women, children and the elderly, were killed, wounded or taken hostage, while the town was erased to the ground.

Using this opportunity I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all Members of the OIC for supporting the resolution “On Solidarity with the Victims of the Khojaly Massacre of 1992” adopted during the 44th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers in Abidjan. I invite the OIC Member States to exert due efforts for recognition of the crimes perpetrated in the town of Khojaly and other occupied territories of Azerbaijan as war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide at the national and international levels.

The United Nations Security Council resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993) adopted in 1993 unambiguously recognize the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and demand unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces from all the occupied territories. In other words, in response to Armenia’s territorial claims and forcible actions, the Security Council reconfirmed that the Nagorno-Karabakh region is an integral part of Azerbaijan.

Unfortunately, the Security Council’s key demands have still not been implemented, and the mediation efforts conducted for more than 20 years within the framework of the OSCE have yet to yield results. Despite the establishment of a ceasefire, attacks on the towns and villages in Azerbaijan situated along the front line of the armed forces of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the border between the two States, have become more frequent and violent in recent times, resulting in the killing and wounding of Azerbaijani servicemen and civilians.

Recently, on July 4, 2017, a targeted attack on Alkhanli village of Fuzuli district, by armed forces of Armenia killed 2 civilians, including two-years-old girl and heavily wounded 1 civilian. Another provocation committed by the armed forces of Armenia on August 7 along Armenia-Azerbaijan border left 13-years-old resident of Tovuz district wounded. These all confirm the rude and the systematic violation by Armenia of its commitments undertaken in the framework of the Geneva Conventions.

Here I would like to remind the demands of the relevant OIC resolutions on the aggression of the Republic of Armenia against the Republic of Azerbaijan, which urges all Member States to refrain from providing any supplies of arms and military equipments to Armenia and not to allow the use of their territories for transit of such supplies, in order to deprive the aggressor of any opportunity to escalate the conflict and to continue the occupation of the Azerbaijani territories.

Let me also refer to peremptory call of these resolutions to the Member States to use such effective political and economic measures, as required in order to put an end to Armenian aggression, including inter alia, through refraining from economic activities in and

investment to the Republic of Armenia as well as through limiting overall cooperation with Armenia.

Dear Friends,

As a country suffering from the occupation of its territories and the forcible displacement of hundreds of thousands of its citizens, Azerbaijan is the most interested party in the earliest political settlement of the conflict, which would ensure peace, justice and full development of the entire region. At the same time, Azerbaijan will never compromise its territorial integrity and the rights and freedoms of its citizens. Armenia must realize that the military occupation of the territories of a sovereign State and the policy of ethnic cleansing do not represent a solution and will never produce a political outcome desired by it.

The achievement of peace, security and stability will be possible only if the consequences of Armenia's occupation are removed, thereby ensuring that its armed forces are immediately, unconditionally and completely withdrawn from the Nagorno-Karabakh region and other occupied territories of Azerbaijan, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country are restored, and the right of internally displaced Azerbaijanis to return to their homes is guaranteed.

Distinguished Colleagues,

The Republic of Azerbaijan relies on the continued solidarity of Islamic Ummah with its just cause and the principled position of the OIC on condemnation of the illegal use of force against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and occupation of its territories.

We believe that the deliberations of this Contact Group would contribute to the implementation of the OIC documents on condemnation of aggression of the Republic of Armenia against the Republic of Azerbaijan and will help to harmonize the individual and joint efforts of the OIC Member States to this end.

Thank you.

**STATEMENT BY FOREIGN MINISTER ELMAR MAMMADYAROV,
AT A MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT ON
“PROMULGATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF UNILATERAL COERCIVE
MEASURES, IN VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW AND THE HUMAN
RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLES SUBJECTED TO THEM”**

20 September 2017, New York

At the outset, I would like to express our deep appreciation to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for today’s meeting which would allow us to address this important topic.

Being the second largest group of states after the United Nations, NAM is playing a crucial role in maintaining the international peace and security, and addressing a wide range of issues from regional security to social and economic development.

NAM is a true defender of justice and the rule of law in international relations. Being a viable and dynamic platform for the representations of diverse ideologies, NAM addresses the issues plaguing the world and matters of international concern.

Unilateral coercive measures used against developing countries are contrary to international law, the Charter of UN and the norms and principles governing peaceful relations among States and affect the spirit of dialogue and political understanding among nations. It represents a breach of international peace and security and violates the principle of non-interference in internal affairs of sovereign States.

Unilateral coercive measures prevent the economic and social development of the population of the affected country and have a negative impact on the human rights of people, in particular the rights of everyone to a standard of living adequate for their health and well-being, including food and medical care, housing and the necessary social services.

It will be impossible for a state targeted to successfully embark upon the path towards sustainable development envisaged in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, for which all Member States have pledged support. In both economic and human development terms, unilateral coercive measures constrain and undermine the capacity of a State to mobilize resources for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. Taking this in mind, Azerbaijan applied to hold Expo-2025 in Baku. We are very much looking forward for the support by the NAM member states to the candidature of Azerbaijan, the only NAM candidate at the elections in Bureau for International Exhibitions.

Azerbaijan supports the importance of dialogue to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes and, in this regard, supports to engaging in constructive dialogue between parties to the conflict. We believe that the key to solving the problem lies in the countries' goodwill and readiness to seek mutually acceptable compromises.

Azerbaijan attaches a special importance to NAM's principles and purposes. By carrying out independent foreign policy and not being a party to any military alliance, Azerbaijan makes consistent efforts to preserve international norms and principles and advance democratization, the respect for human rights and social justice on national and international level.

As a strong supporter of NAM goals and principles, I have the honour to invite NAM member states to Azerbaijan for the Ministerial Meeting. We propose April of 2018 and circulate an appropriate note verbale in this regard. I hope that with your unanimous support we will meet again at the level of Foreign Ministers in Baku next year.

In this connection, we would like to reiterate our commitment to the principles, purposes and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in internal affairs of states. It is the duty and responsibility of every Member State to comply strictly with these principles which do not permit the use of unilateral coercive measures and which are in violation of international law.

Thank you.

**SPEECH BY FOREIGN MINISTER ELMAR MAMMADYAROV,
AT THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION ANNUAL
COORDINATION MEETING**

22 September 2017, New York

Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Secretary General,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the OIC Secretary General for organizing this meeting. I also use this opportunity to express our gratitude to the State of Cote d'Ivoire for successful hosting of the 44th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers and for the excellent leadership of the Annual Coordination Meeting on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

This Year has been a successful year for us in regard of the reinforcing of the Islamic solidarity. 2017 was declared as Year of Islamic Solidarity by the decree of the President of Azerbaijan H.E Mr. Ilham Aliyev. We were very glad to host OIC Secretary General and other high representatives of member states in the 4th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue and 4th Islamic Solidarity Games in Baku.

We were honored and hoping that all our efforts will help to reinforce the bonds of unity, amity and fraternity between Muslims.

Dear Friends,

Azerbaijan is deeply concerned over wars and armed conflicts in a number of the OIC Member States, which have contributed to greater security challenges, political instability in some regions, large-scale displacement and unprecedented humanitarian crisis.

First of all I would like to point that, according to the order of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev 100 tons of humanitarian aid has been sent to help Rohingya Muslims of Myanmar who are suffering at the result of ongoing mass violence. The current situation regarding misunderstanding of Islam in some parts of World confirms vital necessity to strengthen our joint actions to counter Islamophobia.

We are pleased to see the growing international support for the State of Palestine. I would

like to reaffirm Azerbaijan's full support to the brotherly people of Palestine in their struggle for achieving peace, stability and sustainable development. Azerbaijan consistently stands for the two-state solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine.

20-21 July 2017 we hosted International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem in Baku, with the participation of Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestine People, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and representatives of other non-governmental and civil society organizations which has been concluded with the introduction of a communiqué on behalf of its organizers condemning the recent closure of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and restrictions on worshippers therein .

Distinguished Colleagues and Dear Brothers,

On behalf of my Government and people of Azerbaijan I would like to express profound gratitude to our noble Organization and its member states for full support to the just position of my country with regard to the aggression of the Republic of Armenia against Republic of Azerbaijan, which resulted with 20% of Azerbaijani lands under occupation with notorious ethnic cleansing of 1 million Azerbaijanis from the places of their origin.

The Republic of Azerbaijan once again underlines that it shall never reconcile with the occupation of its territories. The resolution of the conflict is possible only on the basis of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders.

In this regards, we also welcome the report of the meeting of the OIC Contact Group on the aggression of the Republic of Armenia against Republic of Azerbaijan, which was held here in the UN headquarters on September 19, 2017.

The statements and warmongering rhetoric of political-military leadership of Armenia and the attempts to boycott and precondition the substantive negotiations indicate the apparent unwillingness of the Armenia to engage constructively for the settlement of conflict.

Dear friends and brothers,

As you know, this year we marked the 25th anniversary of Khojaly Genocide with a heavy

heart. Over the night of the 25 to 26 February 1992, following massive artillery bombardment of Khojaly, the assault on the town began from various directions. As a result of which, the armed forces of Armenia, with the help of the infantry guards regiment No.366 of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), implemented the seizure of Khojaly. Invaders destroyed Khojaly and with the particular brutality implemented carnage over its peaceful population. As a result, 613 civilians were killed, including 106 women, 63 children and 70 elderly. Another 1000 people were wounded and 1275 taken hostage. To this day, 150 people from Khojaly remain missing.

Taking the opportunity I would like once again to express my gratitude to the Secretary General of OIC Mr. Yusef bin Ahmad Al-Othaimeen and the member states for the fair position and support in the adoption of the resolutions entitled “The aggression of the Republic of Armenia against the Republic of Azerbaijan”, “On the solidarity with the victims of the Khojaly massacre of 1992”, “Destruction of monuments belonging to Islamic history and culture in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan as a result of Armenia’s aggression against Azerbaijan” and other documents within the 44th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of OIC passed on July 10-11, 2017 in Abidjan.

Mr. Chairman,

Azerbaijan is solo candidate from OIC and NAM countries for Expo2025. I have circulated letter asking for kind support from distinguished countries to the candidature of Azerbaijan.

Thank you.

Assalami alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh!

**STATEMENT BY FOREIGN MINISTER ELMAR MAMMADYAROV,
AT THE UN ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS (UNAOC) GROUP OF FRIENDS
MINISTERIAL MEETING
22 September 2017, New York**

Azerbaijan attaches primary importance to the promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue at all levels. Multiculturalism and tolerance is a longstanding tradition in my country that strengthens and consolidates our society. For ages, people of different nationalities and religions have been living in peace and dignity in Azerbaijan. The year of 2016 has been declared a “Year of Multiculturalism in Azerbaijan” by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Consequently, a special Plan of Actions has been developed that implies measures to safeguard and disseminate the humanistic ideals of multiculturalism both at national and international levels.

As a country which believes that peace and security is achievable through education, science, culture and dialogue, in particular among youth, Azerbaijan has transformed into the hub of events fostering dialogue of cultures and civilizations such as the First Global Forum on Youth Policies in Baku on 28-30 October 2014, which was co-organized by the United Nations Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, UNDP, UNESCO and the Council of Europe. 700 participants of the forum had an opportunity to discuss the various aspects of youth policies of state and examine the ways and strategies on how to shape more adequate policies that will properly address the needs of youth in the post-2015 development era.

On 25-27 April 2016, Azerbaijan hosted the 7th Global Forum of the UN Alliance of Civilizations entitled “Living together in inclusive societies”. This important event was attended by more than 4,000 delegates from 147 countries, including Heads of states and governments, ministers, government officials, representatives of international organizations and media. The Forum’s themes reflected the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which incorporates the promotion of inclusive societies as pivotal component for sustainable development. Taking this opportunity, I would like to sincerely thank all those who organized and participated in that Forum.

A major outcome of the Forum was the Baku Declaration. It strongly condemned any advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence and urged all Member States to unite against violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations.

The Baku Declaration should serve as guidelines for states and international organizations in promotion of intercultural dialogue and multiculturalism as a way to counter violence, extremism and xenophobia. Recognizing the special role of youth in the establishment and development of inclusive societies, the UN Alliance of Civilizations Youth Event was also held on the sidelines of the Forum with the participation of more than 150 youngsters.

Besides, this year we hosted IV World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue which included panels on a wide range of global issues in the interest of all humanity with the participation of renowned guests, among which were heads of governments, ministers, and heads of various international organizations. One of the main sessions of the event was devoted to “Empowering youth to prevent violent extremism through education”.

Thank you!

**FOREIGN MINISTER ELMAR MAMMADYAROV
DELIVERED A SPEECH AT THE MEETING OF GUAM MEMBER STATES
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

9 October 2017, Tbilisi

On October 9, 2017 Minister of Foreign Affairs Elmar Mammadyarov delivered a speech at the Meeting of GUAM Member States Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs taking place in Tbilisi on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of GUAM. Noting that Azerbaijan, as an active Member State of GUAM, made a major contribution to the development of the Organization and deepening of cooperation between Member States, Elmar Mammadyarov added that successful activity within the framework of the organization was established on the basis mutual trust and support.

Mentioning that GUAM was established 20 years ago with a view of promoting the peace, security and stability in the region and also enhancing economic development and interconnectivity among the Member States Elmar Mammadyarov noted that GUAM provides a unique regional platform to strengthen a wide range of cooperation among Member States and their Partners. Touching upon protracted conflicts in the territories of GUAM Member States, Elmar Mammadyarov emphasized that these conflicts must be resolved on the basis of the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized borders of states.

Noting that strategic level relations within the GUAM promotes strengthening of economic partnerships and development of cooperation in the spheres of trade and transport, Elmar Mammadyarov added that Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway will play a transit-bridge role for the countries within the GUAM region and beyond. In this regard, the Minister drew attention to the importance of promotion of GUAM Transport Corridor which connects Europe and Asia.

Elmar Mammadyarov emphasized that Azerbaijan is satisfied with cooperation in different spheres within the GUAM and stated the importance of increasing common efforts to develop economic-trade relations among the Member States.

The Minister noted that during the last 20 years GUAM Member States has achieved to establish a close cooperation based on partnership and mutual trust, and the strengthening of trust and solidarity will make the work of Organization more successful.

**ADDRESS BY FOREIGN MINISTER ELMAR MAMMADYAROV,
AT THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT ENTITLED “ADVANCING
MEDITERRANEAN SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN AN AGE OF LARGE
MOVEMENTS OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES” HELD IN THE FRAMEWORK
OF 2017 OSCE MEDITERRANEAN CONFERENCE**

24 October 2017, Palermo

Excellences,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank our Italian friends, particularly Minister Alfano, for hosting 2017 OSCE Mediterranean Conference.

The topic of this year’s conference is high on the agenda of the international community as one of the most urgent and complicated issues. We share the view that this phenomenon is truly a multi-dimensional, cross-cutting challenge that will affect security not only of Mediterranean but also throughout the OSCE for the foreseeable future. As stated by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres at the 72nd Session of the General Assembly, “refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants are not the problem; the problem lies in conflict, persecution and hopeless poverty”. Indeed, while the number of people fleeing their homes has reached the unprecedented level of 65.6 million persons, we see no solutions in sight for the too many unresolved conflicts that continue to produce displacement and human sufferings.

While the plight of refugees and migrants makes the headlines, the international community must also keep in mind the millions of internally displaced men, women and children made extremely vulnerable by conflicts and who still find themselves in protracted situations in different corners of the globe.

UNHCR reported the total number of IDPs has reached 41 million all over the world, the highest figure on record. Azerbaijan fully supports all efforts to raise the visibility to the sufferings of IDPs. The references to IDPs in the 2030 Agenda, the goal set by the Agenda for Humanity to reduce internal displacement by at least 50 per cent by 2030 as well as the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which notes the need for reflection on effective strategies to ensure adequate protection and assistance for IDPs and to prevent and reduce such displacement, certainly, are right steps, but clearly not sufficient. The grave situation of millions of IDPs requires strong attention, the rethinking of approaches to prevention,

addressing the root causes as well as concerted action at all levels. We believe that the OSCE should be also used as a platform for elaborating a comprehensive OSCE response addressing the protection of the rights of internally displaced persons.

Azerbaijan's sensitivities to IDP's cause are understandable. Displacement in my country is a consequence of the ongoing military aggression and occupation of the Nagorno-Karabakh and seven other surrounding regions of Azerbaijan by Armenia in blatant violation of international law and the UN Security Council relevant resolutions. By impudently violating humanitarian law, Armenia carried out ethnic cleansing policy against almost one million Azerbaijani civilians in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and in Armenia itself. It left Azerbaijan with one of the largest internally displaced population per capita in the world. Currently, the number of IDPs and refugees exceeds 1.2 million as a result of the increase of the displaced population. The only solution to their displacement is the return to their homes in security and dignity and it is the first priority of my Government.

Until the ultimate solution to the IDPs' displacement is accomplished, my Government continues to improve living conditions of IDPs. During last twenty years about 6 billion USD was invested, which has resulted in significant decrease of poverty and unemployment among IDPs. Till now, more than 250,000 IDPs were provided with new houses and flats. However, the above-mentioned measures are not viewed as a permanent local integration, since the voluntary return to places of origin in security and dignity is regarded by IDPs themselves as the only preferable option.

In that regard, the Government of Azerbaijan has developed a comprehensive repatriation program called the "Great Return" to enable the IDPs to exercise their right to return to their homes voluntarily, in security and dignity and to access their properties, as soon as Armenia withdraws its troops from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Another element of concern for Azerbaijan is that in searching effective ways out of the migration crisis currently faced by the international community, it is of utmost importance to pay careful attention to the attempts of some political leaders to misuse suffering migrants in their own malicious interests. Policy pursued by Armenia aimed at resettling Armenians from Syria on the occupied lands of Azerbaijan in a grave breach of international humanitarian law, in particular the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention and Additional Protocols is a vivid example to these attempts of misuse of human suffering for illegal purposes.

These policies and practices implemented by Armenia in the occupied territories, including attempts to change the economic, cultural and demographic character at the occupied territories, demonstrate its intention to prevent the expelled Azerbaijani population from returning to their homes and to further continue the annexation of Azerbaijani territories. It is worth mentioning that the European Court of Human Rights in its judgment on the case of Chiragov and others v. Armenia affirmed the right of displaced persons to return to their homes and called for respecting international humanitarian law and human rights law provisions relating to property rights issues. The court stressed the ongoing negotiations within the OSCE Minsk Group do not provide a legal justification for the interference with the rights of the Azerbaijani IDPs and recalled Armenia's obligations towards Azerbaijanis who had to flee during the conflict. Consequently, the court's ruling highlights the unlawfulness of any purported transfer of property in the occupied territories. Strong international and public condemnation of the illegal activities in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan can seriously undermine intentions of Armenia's leadership to consolidate existing status-quo and enrich perspectives for the peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Thank you.

**BAKU STATEMENT ON THE OUTCOMES OF FIRST TRILATERAL MEETING
OF THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF
AZERBAIJAN, THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN, THE REPUBLIC OF
TURKEY**

30 November 2017, Baku



At the invitation of H.E. Mr. Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and with participation of H.E. Mr. Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, the First Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign

Affairs of the three countries was held in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 30 November 2017.

Ministers,

Expressed their satisfaction with the existing bilateral cooperation among their countries based on the strategic partnership, mutual respect and trust;

Emphasized significant and strategic role of Azerbaijan, Pakistan and Turkey in their respective regions and bearing in mind the historical ties among the three countries, stressed the existence of common basis and enormous potential for mutually beneficial cooperation, and expressed their strong interest in developing trilateral partnership for advancing stability, security and prosperity in the region;

Reconfirmed their mutual respect and strong support for independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of international borders of states, and stressed that their territories shall not be used for activities against each other;

Deplored continuation of the conflicts in their respective regions, condemned the sufferings of innocent civilians and use of force against territorial integrity, and stressed that these conflicts undermine peace, stability and economic development and demand peaceful resolutions based on the above mentioned principles of international law and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council;

Underlined the firm determination of their states to explore the ways to develop trilateral cooperation particularly in the areas that would ensure prosperity for the people of the three countries through economic growth and sustainable development;

Decided to intensify all efforts to improve their economic and commercial cooperation so as to meet actual potentials to promote investments and trade; and to further strengthen cooperation in the field of energy, transport, customs, agriculture, telecommunications, industry, environment, education, science, culture, tourism, sports and other areas through joint projects and programs;

Emphasized the importance of trilateral energy dialogue to enhance energy supply security, explore ways of cooperation in renewable energy and energy efficiency and encourage private sector investments and trade among three countries in the field of energy;

Expressing confidence that large-scale transport projects of strategic importance will favour the economic development of the three countries and facilitate competitive transportation between Asia and Europe, highlighted the importance of trilateral cooperation to enhance rail, road and air connectivity;

Underscored the importance of the defence and security spheres, and expressed their readiness to develop active cooperation in these fields;

Reiterated their firm commitment to strengthen their cooperation on the basis of the relevant international instruments in the fight against terrorism, violent extremism and separatism in all their forms and manifestations, transnational organized crime, illicit production and trafficking of drugs, narcotics and their precursors; illicit trade in arms; trafficking in human beings; migrant smuggling and irregular migration; crimes against cultural and historical heritage; money laundering; cybercrime; and other transnational security threats;

Underscored the importance of cooperation in the social and humanitarian spheres, including culture, education, strengthening of health systems and health tourism, youth exchange, tourism, sports, and other relevant areas which will further expand people-to-people contacts between their countries and expressed their readiness to initiate and promote joint projects and events in these spheres;

Underlined their interest and readiness to continue close consultations among the three brotherly countries on regional and global issues of common interest, as well as to enhance

cooperation within the international organizations;

Highlighting the ongoing regional processes aimed at developing regional consensus for peace, stability and development, welcomed the progress achieved so far in the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process and reiterated their strong commitment to the Process as a regional political dialogue platform and the development of confidence building measures within its framework, and reaffirmed support for an Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan;

Agreed to regularly hold their trilateral meetings on annual basis in alphabetical order;

Agreed to hold their next trilateral meeting in Islamabad on mutually agreed dates in 2018.

H.E. Mr. Elmar Mammadyarov
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan

H.E. Mr. Khawaja Muhammad Asif
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey

**REMARKS BY FOREIGN MINISTER ELMAR MAMMADYAROV,
AT THE “HEART OF ASIA” – ISTANBUL PROCESS
7TH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE**

1 December 2017, Baku

Dear Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,

I welcome you all at the Heart of Asia – Istanbul Process 7th Ministerial Conference, in Baku.

Since its inception in 2011, the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process has proved itself to be an effective multilateral platform for all parties involved, be it participating countries or supporting countries and organizations, to consolidate their efforts for settlement in Afghanistan and in the region. This platform introduces a unique opportunity to achieve peace, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan and broader region, through dialogue and cooperation among regional countries and beyond.

Today, we are completing our duty as the co-chair of the Istanbul Process. Nevertheless, Azerbaijan remains committed to supporting the stabilization, peaceful reconstruction and development in the Heart of Asia, through bilateral efforts as well as various multilateral platforms. Through its co-chairmanship, Azerbaijan, I believe so made all possible contributions to advance the objectives of the Process. In 2017, we hosted Senior Officials Meetings in Baku and New York, and expert meetings of the Confidence Building Measures on Combating Narcotics and Regional Infrastructure.

We believe that a secure, self-reliant and self-sufficient Afghanistan has much to offer for the region's better future. Hence, Azerbaijan has been continuously supporting Afghanistan's efforts to build a sustainable statehood, providing substantial military, civil service, law enforcement, mine action, medical and rehabilitation trainings for Afghan officials, as well as sharing its experience on e-governance and public service deliveries. Today, our troops serve at the Resolute Support Mission and we continue our assistance to the Afghanistan National Army.

Azerbaijan's contributions to the regional connectivity unlock opportunities for Afghanistan and wider region to be integrated into new regional markets and international trade networks. The recent inauguration of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad and the Lapis-Lazuli agreement of

5 nations, which are represented here today, will facilitate smooth movement of goods and passengers throughout the region. A wide region stretching from Georgia-Azerbaijan to the Central Asia, across the Caspian, constitutes an emerging competitive trade and transit artery in transcontinental trade routes connecting the World's largest supply and demand markets. In this regard, we believe, the Lapis Lazuli agreement will have a significant role not only in bringing Afghanistan closer to European markets, but also in boosting international trade throughout the region.

Azerbaijan, as a country which knows the problems of the conflict from the first hand as we have long been suffering from military aggression of the neighboring Armenia, deeply comprehends the value of peace, security and stability. We believe that only respect for norms and principles of international law, particularly those pertaining to sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of international borders of states can be a warranty for a lasting peace, security and stability in the region.

Today's Conference on "Security and Economic Connectivity towards a Strengthened Heart of Asia Region" reflects the vision that only secure and economically connected region can withstand challenges and threats of any scale in future. We hope that the Baku Declaration that we are expecting to adopt at the end of the Conference will be a milestone document in addressing the challenges and threats that the region faces today.

Before concluding my remarks, I'd love to wish all the success to brotherly Turkey as the new co-chair of the "Heart of Asia" – Istanbul Process for the year 2018.

I thank you all and wish you productive discussions.

**STATEMENT BY FOREIGN MINISTER ELMAR MAMMADYAROV,
AT THE 24TH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL OF THE OSCE**

7 December 2017, Vienna

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate H.E. Mr. Sebastian Kurz, the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE for excellent organization of the 24th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council. I also wish every success to our distinguished colleague H.E. Mr. Angelino Alfano of Italy as the incoming OSCE Chairperson-in-Office.

Dear Colleagues,

Yesterday, I and Foreign Minister of Armenia had all together with the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs hours of talks on Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution.

This reinvigoration of substantive, result-oriented talks is a reason for cautious optimism. The summit of the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia, held in Geneva, on 16 October 2017, was the step in right direction. The meeting proved that attempts to precondition the resumption of substantive talks are doomed to failure. Following the Summit meeting, Azerbaijan and Co-Chairs are focusing on substantial issues with a view to finding the ways of bringing positions of Armenia and Azerbaijan closer towards the settlement.

However, it remains to be source of serious concern that certain forces in the region are not interested in taking necessary political steps to move beyond the unsustainable and unacceptable status-quo. Yerevan continues its unlawful practice of altering the demographic, cultural and physical character in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan demonstrates its systematic policy aimed at consolidating the occupation and imposing a fait accompli. Opening of a church in the occupied Jabrayil district, which was solely populated by ethnic Azerbaijanis before its occupation in 1993, is yet another manifestation of Armenia's gross disrespect for international humanitarian law. In parallel of its provocative actions on the ground, Armenia rejects our initiative to dispatch needs-assessment mission to the occupied territories comprising of relevant international institutions.

Such steps by Armenia, including armed provocations along the Line of Contact, as well as the recent illegal military exercises held by Armenia in the occupied territories undermine the peace efforts, and shall be comprehensively addressed by the OSCE Minsk Group and

its Co-Chairmen. OSCE participating States should implement their commitments under international humanitarian law and human rights instruments to prevent and reverse illegal economic and other activities of their natural and legal persons, wherever located.

Mr. Chairman,

Relevant UN Security Council resolutions, principles of the Helsinki Final Act and decisions and documents of OSCE form the basis for conflict resolution and for mandate of the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Conference. The UNSC resolutions of 1993 demanded immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of occupying forces from all the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and, as a reciprocal step called for opening up communications and transportation links and urged assisting the return of internally displaced persons to their homes. The underlying concept of this approach is based on removing consequences of the conflict, while deferring remaining political issues for future negotiations within the Minsk Conference.

If Armenia is genuinely interested in seeking a political solution to the conflict, then it must engage constructively in the conflict settlement process.

The months ahead will demonstrate if Armenia is a serious partner for peace, genuinely interested in engaging constructively in substantive negotiations to reach a breakthrough and resolve the conflict or we will continue down the road of further instability and conflict. Azerbaijan retains its right act under the Chapter 7 of the UN Charter.

In conclusion, as it was stated today by a number of speakers, in OSCE area in addition to blatant violation of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, sovereignty and internationally recognized borders, we observe also similar situation in Ukraine, Georgia and Republic of Moldova. Azerbaijan believes that lasting solutions to the conflicts mentioned above can only be assured through respect for the norms and principles of international law, particularly those pertaining to sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized borders of Member States of OSCE.

Thank you.

**INTERVIEW BY FOREIGN MINISTER ELMAR MAMMADYAROV TO NEWS.
AZNEWS.AZ**

13 December 2017, Baku

Question: *Foreign Minister of Armenia claims that as if Azerbaijan did not join to the statement of OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs in Vienna meeting. How would you comment on this?*

Elmar Mammadyarov: It sounds very strange. As I, Foreign Minister of Armenia tried to add some edits to the statement of OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs but then he also refused to join to the statement of Co-Chairs. In fact, it is Armenian side which first started to make comments contradictory to the spirit and essence of the ongoing talks and the proposals on the negotiation table after Geneva meeting of Presidents in October this year.

As a result of Vienna meeting it was agreed to continue intense, concrete and substantive talks at the level of Foreign Ministers in mid-January next year. In one month later we will see how seriously Armenia is engaged in the negotiations and then, it will be more clear to which direction we are moving forward. The whole international community is very well aware that the armed forces of Armenia must be withdrawn from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan as it is demanded by the relevant resolutions of UN Security Council.

**BAKU STATEMENT ON THE OUTCOMES OF FIFTH TRILATERAL MEETING
OF THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF
AZERBAIJAN, THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN AND THE REPUBLIC OF
TURKEY**

20 December 2017, Baku



At the invitation of H.E. Mr. Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan and with participation of H.E. Mr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran and H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, the Fifth Trilateral Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs was held on 20 December 2017 in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan.

The Ministers,

Emphasized their commitment to the Urumieh, Nakhchivan, Van and Ramsar Statements adopted in the previous Trilateral Meetings of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs;

Reaffirmed commitment to further enhance solidarity and cooperation among the peoples of the three countries based on deep-rooted historical, religious and cultural commonalities and shared values that will serve to strengthen peace, stability, prosperity and cooperation in the region;

Underlined their commitment to further expand cooperation particularly in the areas that would contribute to economic progress and sustainable development;

Emphasized their common interest to strengthen peace and stability in the region and stressed in this context their commitment to principles of international law, including in particular, respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of internationally recognized borders and peaceful settlement of all disputes;

Reiterated, in this regard, the importance of the earliest resolution of Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the basis of the above-mentioned principles;

Agreed to continue close consultations on regional and global issues of common interest at different levels and platforms and within the framework of international and regional organizations such as the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, and the Economic Cooperation Organization, with a view to enhancing regional and international peace, security and stability;

Welcomed the declaration and final communiqué adopted at the OIC Extraordinary Summit on 13 December 2017 in Istanbul, with regard to Al-Quds Al-Sharif;

Agreed to strengthen economic-trade cooperation, to use the existing potential for promotion of investments and trade, as well as to support promotion of cooperation by implementing of the joint projects and programs in the field of energy, transport, banking, telecommunication, industry, agriculture, tourism and environment;

Underlining the significant steps taken to increase the transit potential of the three countries situated on international transit corridors and geographically favourably located as well as to integrate to the international transit system, stressed upon the importance of further enhancement of cooperation for implementation of the new projects for development of transport infrastructure and increase of transit potential;

Underlining the significance of participation of the three countries in large-scale international transport projects, which are strategically important for increase of the quantity and quality of the competitive transit transportation between the Asia and Europe, for socio-economic development, welcomed the launching of Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway which creates favourable conditions to use the transit potential of the three countries on “East-West”, “South-West”, “North-South” routes, stressed the importance to take necessary steps for earliest completion of Rasht-Astara railway;

Underlined the importance of strengthening cooperation in the field of civil aviation to reach the high potential as well as to further benefit from the geographical advantages of the three countries;

Expressed their willingness to enhance commercial collaborations in the petroleum, gas and petrochemical fields;

Agreed to develop and enhance relations among the banking networks of the three countries

and to share experience and information on international banking procedures as well as on combating money-laundering and financing terrorism;

Stressed the importance of continued cooperation among three countries to build and run information infrastructures in order to bridge the digital divide in the region;

Underlined the importance to cooperate within the framework of global and regional economic organizations, to attract the attention of these organizations to the priority spheres, such as trade, transport, tourism, agriculture, communication and energy, as well as to promote and support implementation of the projects in the common interest of the three countries by these institutions;

Emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation to mitigate and prevent environmental degradation, with a view to attaining the relevant goals of 2030 sustainable development agenda adopted by the United Nations in September 2015;

Agreed to positively evaluate the candidatures of three countries in the international or regional organizations and in this vein, welcomed the candidature of Baku for hosting World EXPO-2025 in the Republic of Azerbaijan;

Condemning all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on ethnicity, race, religion and belief and underlining the importance of nurturing tolerance, respect, dialogue and cooperation among different cultures, civilizations and peoples and emphasized the significance of the 7th Global Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations of the United Nations held in Baku, Azerbaijan on 25-27 April 2016”;

Underlined the importance to further strengthen cooperation in the fight against terrorism, separatism and violent extremism in all their forms and manifestations, transnational organized crime and illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and their precursors, and arms, human trafficking, crimes against cultural and historical heritage, cybercrimes and illegal migration; took note of the UN GA Resolution A/RES/68/127 entitled “A World against Violence and Violent Extremism (WAVE)” initiated by the Islamic Republic of Iran;

Stressed their determination not to allow their territories to be used by any people or group of individuals, under any circumstances, for any threat and activity against each other; strongly condemned foreign support to separatism;

Emphasized their commitment to promote and protect human rights at the national and international level, and declared that the promotion and protection of the rights of all human beings in the world can better be achieved through cooperation and dialogue;

Underscored the significance of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) which reflects the success of the multilateral negotiations and diplomacy; acknowledged that the successful implementation of JCPOA requires the complete fulfilment of the stipulated obligations by all the parties for allowing them to fully enjoy benefits provided in JCPOA; taking into account the Islamic Republic of Iran's adherence to its obligations under JCPOA as confirmed by the International Atomic Energy Agency which is a part of the Resolution 2231 (2015) of the UN Security Council, recalled the commitments of all the UN members to contribute to the implementation of JCPOA;

Underlined the significant importance of promoting Islamic solidarity to confront challenges facing the Islamic World and stressed intention for more active and effective cooperation to strengthen Islamic fraternity, understanding and tolerance. In this respect noted the significance of the 4th Islamic Solidarity Games for promotion of Islamic culture and moral values around the world held in high level in Baku on 12-22 May 2017;

Stressed on importance to follow up of the decisions taken during the previous Meetings as well as the Trilateral Sectoral Cooperation Action Plan for 2016-2018;

Reiterated the importance of holding regular meetings in the trilateral format to continue coordination and cooperation on regional and global issues;

Agreed to hold the next meeting in Turkey.

H.E. Mr. Elmar Mammadyarov
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan

H.E. Mr. Mohammad Javad Zarif
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran

H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey

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

3 April 2017, Baku

List of documents signed during the official visit:

- Joint Declaration of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev
- Agreement on strategic cooperation between Azerbaijan Railways CJSC and Kazakhstan Railways National Company in the field of logistics and rolling stock engineering
- Protocol on supplements and amendments to the Agreement on double taxation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan
- Agreement on international road transportation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan
- Cooperation Program for 2017-2018 between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan
- Agreement on cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the field of plant quarantine and conservation

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

Dear Nursultan Abishevich,
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen!

Nursultan Abishevich, let me welcome you to Azerbaijan from the bottom of my heart again. You are Welcome. You are our dear friend. The people of Azerbaijan love and respect you very much, and your visit is a great event in our bilateral relations.

The bilateral relations between our countries have a solid foundation. This year we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our states, although the history of interaction between our peoples dates centuries back. This history has always been a history of friendship, cooperation and mutual support. Today, as two

actively developing and independent states, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan are strengthening the bilateral format of cooperation. Today's visit of Nursultan Abishevich, the talks that we have held and the documents we have signed testify to very strong ties between our countries.



We are actively developing political interaction. We often meet both within the framework of official visits and on the sidelines of international events. We always find time to talk, discuss and outline ways for the development of our relations. We actively cooperate in international organizations. We always support each other.

This is also a good indicator of the sincerity of our relations. I would like to take this opportunity to once again congratulate President Nursultan Nazarbayev and all fraternal Kazakhstan on your election to the UN Security Council, the highest organization of world politics. This is an indicator of the attitude of the world community towards Kazakhstan, a recognition of Kazakhstan's successes, as well as its role in international and global affairs. I am confident that Kazakhstan's activities as a member of the UN Security Council will be aimed at strengthening peace and security. I am confident that this mission will be very successful. I would also like to express my gratitude to you for supporting Azerbaijan in the international organizations Azerbaijan is not represented on.

Today we also discussed issues related to the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. I informed Nursultan Abishevich about the current situation in the settlement. Our position is also reflected in the Joint Declaration we have just signed. I am grateful to you for this position. The conflict must be resolved within the framework of norms and principles of international law, the decisions and resolutions of international organizations, primarily the UN Security Council which has adopted four resolutions demanding an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian forces from the occupied territories. The decision must be taken within the framework of the sovereignty, internationally recognized borders and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, and these main points of settlement are reflected in the Declaration signed today. This is yet another sign of Kazakhstan's principled position on the settlement of conflicts, which must be resolved on the basis of norms and principles of international law, as well as a sign of your attitude towards our country.

We also discussed issues of trade and economic development according to the lists and outlined the positions in which we can quickly increase the turnover. Although we have an increased turnover, it does not reflect our potential and intentions. Therefore, we decided to hold a regular meeting of the intergovernmental commission next month and, taking into account the instructions of the presidents, specifically on the points we discussed regarding export positions of our countries, prepare and adopt documents that would increase the turnover in a short time, in particular mutual exports. There are all the possibilities for that. I am also very glad that Azerbaijan has begun to actively invest in Kazakhstan. The opening of a logistical center in Aktau and the construction of an energy plant in Aktau are direct Azerbaijani investments aimed at strengthening our trade and economic cooperation. For us, the Kazakhstan market is of great interest. And I want to say once again that we have specifically discussed the positions on which we can export and import to and from Kazakhstan.

We have also discussed major projects related to the acquisition of modern equipment. We are buying modern vehicles, diesel locomotives and electric locomotives from Kazakhstan.

I have also informed Nursultan Abishevich about the potential of the Baku shipyard, which produces all types of vessels, tankers and ferries. We place orders ourselves and also invite Kazakh companies to take advantage of the opportunities of this modern enterprise. Issues related to transit were discussed very extensively today widely both within a narrow format and with the participation of heads of transport departments of our countries. We have huge potential, and it will be fully utilized in the near future. We look forward to the commissioning of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway this year. It will significantly reduce the time spent on transportation from Asia to Europe and from Europe to Asia through our territories. Both Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan have created the necessary infrastructure.

It was also noted with satisfaction that the first cargo was dispatched to Azerbaijan from the new port of Kuryk, and this is also an indicator of our potential. To some extent, this was a test cargo. I am sure that from an economic point of view this will be very effective. We also noted that over the past year, the transit of goods of our neighboring countries through Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan has increased significantly, on some positions even eight times. For this, of course, infrastructure alone is not enough, although it is impossible to do without it. We work hard on reducing tariffs and unifying rate for all the states located on the East-West route. We have already achieved certain results. The instructions we gave today will make this way not only the shortest, but also the most viable from an economic point of view.

Cooperation in the sphere of oil operations and transit has also been discussed. We also have a clear understanding of how we will move forward. In other words, the entire block of trade, economic, transit, transport and energy issues has been discussed very broadly, constructively and substantively, and we expect good results in the near future.

Of course, cooperation in the humanitarian sphere was also discussed. We have outlined specific steps to strengthen this cooperation, especially by involving the younger generation and organizing various events for Kazakhstani and Azerbaijani youngsters, so that the younger generation could get to know each other well, make friends, strengthen fraternal relations between our peoples, and conduct the same policy pursued by the leaders of Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan today.

I want to thank Nursultan Abishevich for having found the time to pay an official visit to Azerbaijan. I wish all the best and look forward to new meetings. You are welcome again!

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV
ATTENDED THE 4TH WORLD FORUM ON INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE**

5 May 2017, Baku

Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear guests,



First of all, I would like to thank our guests for participating in the 4th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue. We put forward this initiative six years ago and the first World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue was held in Baku. Since that time this forum has turned into a global international event addressing one of the most important issues on the world agenda – intercultural dialogue. Every

international event, every forum, its importance is judged not only by the topics of discussions, but also by the list of its participants. We are very happy that more than 800 guests representing more than 120 countries participate today at the forum and more than 50 international organizations sent their high representatives to Baku.

This, first of all, demonstrates the importance of the forum, and at the same time the importance of the discussions, which we will have today and tomorrow. We are proud that the number of partners and organizers of the forum is also growing. The government of Azerbaijan is organizing this forum in partnership with UNESCO, United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, ISESCO, Council of Europe, World Tourism Organization, and Food and Agriculture Organization.

I am sure that the discussions and exchange of views during the forum will contribute to promotion of intercultural dialogue. Azerbaijan for centuries has been a place where civilizations and cultures met. Our geography, our history and development in Azerbaijan demonstrate that intercultural dialogue is one of the most important issues in the history and also today because without that the world would be much more in danger.

Our history, our traditions, our geography actually dictated that Azerbaijan could be

and should be an area where civilizations meet. And for centuries, people who inhabited Azerbaijan, have always lived in a diverse environment. Multiculturalism, ethnic and religious diversity is our history and is today's reality. And we are proud of that.

Today Azerbaijan is a multi-ethnic, multi-confessional country, where representatives of all the ethnic groups and religions live in peace and harmony. Our historical monuments also clearly demonstrate the cultural diversity of Azerbaijan and its ancient history. We are proud that one of the oldest mosques in the world, Juma Mosque built in 743, is situated in one of the ancient cities of Azerbaijan, Shamakhi. One of the world's oldest churches, the church of the ancient state of Caucasian Albania is also situated in another ancient Azerbaijani city of Shaki.

In Baku, the Fire Temple, which belongs to the religion of Zoroastrism, also demonstrates our cultural and religious diversity. Today, mosques, churches, synagogues, which exist in Azerbaijan, are protected by our state. Many of them were built with the state financing, which demonstrates our history, and also demonstrates our policy.

Multiculturalism is a state policy in Azerbaijan, and at the same time, it's our lifestyle. Though the word multiculturalism is relatively new and sometimes very difficult to pronounce, but the ideas of multiculturalism always existed in our country. Regardless of the time of history, regardless of the political system in Azerbaijan, our people always were active defenders and promoters of multiculturalism inside Azerbaijan and beyond our borders.

Actually the decision to organize, for the first time in 2011, a forum, which will address intercultural dialogue, was motivated by our history, by our reality and also by our wish to create a broad format to address these issues. Today we need to do it maybe more than ever before because unfortunately now some concerning tendencies in the world lead sometimes not to cultural, intercultural dialogue, but to alienation. We see it regularly that in different parts of the world the conflicts, confrontations, civil wars are generated by lack of understanding between representatives of different religions, different ethnic groups. Our policy of multiculturalism is fully supported by our people. 2016 was announced the Year of Multiculturalism in Azerbaijan. This year is announced the Year of Islamic Solidarity. The combination of these two very important elements of Azerbaijan's day to day life, first of all, demonstrates the status of our society, our state policy and also leads to greater understanding in the region.

We held several important international events addressing particularly this issue. Five

times Azerbaijan organized International Humanitarian Forum. We organized the World Religious Leaders Summit several years ago. Last year the 7th Global Forum of Alliance of Civilizations was very successfully held in Baku. And of course, for the fourth time we gathered to address the issues of intercultural dialogue.

All this helps us to find the ways how to reduce tensions, how to reduce risks, how to create better understanding between peoples and religions. And I think that the history of Azerbaijan, and its today's development is a good example that it is possible to achieve success.

There are different views about multiculturalism. We sometimes hear from different public figures, politicians, leaders of countries different skeptical views about that. I think that if we unite our efforts – and today the representatives of the absolute majority of the international community are here – we can demonstrate and prove that multiculturalism is alive and there is no alternative to that. Alternative is xenophobia, alternative is Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, racism, discrimination. Multiculturalism is not only a trend, it is the only way how to make the world safer.

I think that your presence at this forum and the topics of discussions clearly demonstrate our common will and our policy, and our approach to promoting these values.

In 2008, Azerbaijan initiated a very important process, which later was called Baku Process, and which is now highly appreciated by the international community. That initiative also was generated by these factors, which I already described, and also the fact that Azerbaijan is one of the very few countries, which is a member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Council of Europe at the same time.

In 2008, when we organized a meeting of ministers of member states of the Council of Europe we invited ministers from countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. That was the first time when representatives of more than 100 countries came together for such a big gathering to address important issues of intercultural relations. In 2009, Azerbaijan as a member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation was hosting the meeting of the ministers, and invited the ministers of the Council of Europe countries. This initiative and this format later was called Baku Process. We are proud of that. First of all, because it was our initiative, second, because I think Baku, Azerbaijan deserves to be the center of intercultural dialogue.

Next year we will celebrate the 10th anniversary of Baku Process. The government of

Azerbaijan and United Nations Alliance of Civilizations launched an initiative to create an award, Baku Process award for leadership in intercultural dialogue, which will be presented to those who play a very active role in promotion of dialogue of cultures and dialogue of civilizations.

Another important initiative launched by Azerbaijan was to organize European Games in Baku. Unlike other continental games, European Games were never held before. And when European Olympic Committee decided to organize these Games there were not many bidders and frankly speaking Azerbaijan was the only country, which made a proposal to organize these Games in Baku. Probably, if not for that, these games could have never been organized.

2015 was the year of inaugural European Games held in Baku with participation of more than 5,000 European athletes. These Games were, of course, a sporting event. At the same time, I think it was symbolic that the first European Games were organized in a Muslim country. That was demonstration of multiculturalism. That was demonstration of religious tolerance. The Games were organized at the high level and the athletes and guests were very satisfied and happy with the organization and also with the reception from the people of Azerbaijan who showed their traditional hospitality to our European guests.

This year, just in one week, we will start the fourth Islamic Solidarity Games with participation of all the Muslim countries and more than 3,000 athletes. So, in two years` time, in one city, European Games and Islamic Games are held – this is demonstration of our policy and our intentions. The Games are not only a sporting event. Though, of course, I am sure there will be a very strong competition. It is an event, which unites people. We need unity, first of all, in the Muslim world.

Unfortunately, it is the Muslim countries that suffer most of all from terrorism. Azerbaijan plays a very important role in promotion of Islamic values. We organize different international events in European capitals – presentations, exhibitions to demonstrate the ancient Islamic culture. We are one of the most active countries to fight against Islamophobia and attempts to connect Islam with terror. So, we need unity in the Muslim world in order to make our region safer. And, at the same time, we need active communication between the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Council of Europe, and other international organizations to reduce tensions.

Therefore, when we are talking about intercultural dialogue, we clearly understand that the impact of success of this dialogue can be seen in every area – in political life, in the areas

related to security, in economic cooperation because without predictable partnership and the relations based on mutual respect today it will be very difficult to achieve the goals every country puts in front of itself.

Therefore, these initiatives and the success story of Azerbaijan as one of the international centers of multiculturalism – and by the way we created the international center of multiculturalism – demonstrate that we are not only on the right track, but we are moving successfully. And today's forum, which embraces the whole world, is a clear demonstration of our intentions.

Azerbaijan is a relatively young, independent country, though the country with a great history, traditions, and culture. But as an independent country we are only 25 years old. Last year we celebrated the 25th anniversary of restoration of our independence and these years clearly demonstrate that when the fate of your country is in your hands you can achieve great success. Azerbaijan for centuries was part of different countries, empires. Today 25 years of independence clearly demonstrate that only being free we can achieve success. Never in the history of our nation Azerbaijan was as strong as it is today.

We made significant achievements in social, economic, political life. Today Azerbaijan is a rapidly developing, dynamic, modern country, which is very close to its roots, traditional roots, but at the same time, open to the world, modern.

The biggest problem we are facing is Armenian occupation. Unfortunately, our restoration of independence was accompanied by Armenian aggression, which resulted in occupation of 20 per cent of our internationally recognized territory – Nagorno-Karabakh and seven other districts – which are occupied by Armenia. As a result of this occupation more than one million Azerbaijanis became refugees and internally displaced persons. Our people were a subject of ethnic cleansing. And today on the occupied territories all our historical monuments, buildings are demolished by Armenia. Our mosques are destroyed.

Here, in the center of Baku, we renovated an Armenian church, but on the occupied territories Armenia demolished all our historical and religious heritage. The pictures of that can be obtained through the internet. At the same time, OSCE sent two times fact-finding missions to the occupied territories and in its reports clearly reflected the devastation of the occupied territories. United Nations Security Council, the highest international body, four times adopted resolutions, four resolutions, which demand immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian troops from the occupied territories. For more than 20 years

these resolutions have not been implemented. Armenia ignores them and violates brutally international law and decisions of Security Council and there is no mechanism to force the aggressor to comply with the resolutions. And this is a very important issue, which is of big concern to our people that sometimes decisions of Security Council of the United Nations are implemented within days, if not hours, but in our case it's more than 20 years. This is demonstration of double standards, first of all, and this is also demonstration, to certain degree, of inefficiency of mechanisms of implementation of resolutions.

The resolution of the conflict must be based on international law norms, United Nations Charter, Helsinki Final Act and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. The whole world recognizes the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Nagorno-Karabakh is a historical and legal part of our country.

Despite this tragedy and very heavy economic burden – because of more than a million refugees especially in the beginning of 1990s when we were very poor – there was a very serious economic problem and social problem for us. We managed to mobilize our efforts and build a strong country. Today Azerbaijan is a politically, economically stable country. Azerbaijan is a very respected member of the international community. I can name many facts to demonstrate it. Only one, I think, will be enough.

Several years ago, 155 countries voted for Azerbaijan to elect it as a non-permanent member of United Nations Security Council. So, this support of the absolute majority of countries of the world demonstrates that Azerbaijan has a very good international reputation. We are a very active member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. At the same time, with nine member countries of the European Union Azerbaijan signed or adopted documents on strategic partnership.

This is a role we are playing in the region. And we managed to transform our geographical location into important infrastructure facilities. Today, transportation projects, which we initiated, connecting by railroad Asia with Europe, already generate a lot of profit, at the same time, create very important links between countries.

At the same time, Azerbaijan is the initiator of huge energy projects. One of them, which is being implemented now, is the biggest infrastructure project in Europe worth 40 billion US dollars of investment – Southern Gas Corridor – that will connect seven countries at the first stage and will provide energy diversification and energy security for many countries of our region, of Central Europe and Southern Europe. So, this is a project of energy security,

energy diversification, and cooperation because all the countries involved in our energy and transportation projects are becoming natural partners and will be mutually interdependent. And interdependency is one of the important factors for economic cooperation and for mutual respect.

So, transportation and energy projects, which were initiated by Azerbaijan, of course, serve the cause of development and prosperity. At the same time, it is our investment in international cooperation and intercultural dialogue.

Our economic performance also was very impressive. For the last 13 years our economy, GDP grew more than three times. We managed to reduce unemployment down to five per cent, poverty is less than six per cent. We have a very low level of foreign debt, only 20 per cent of our GDP. Our reserves are five times bigger than our foreign debt. So, it is really a very impressive economic performance, which, by the way, is highly appreciated by international institutions. Davos World Economic Forum ranks Azerbaijan's economy number 37 with respect to competitiveness. In another assessment of Davos Economic Forum with respect to the development of developing countries, Azerbaijan is sharing the first and second places.

All this is a big asset, which was created in the years of independence. We invest largely in education. Today the level of literacy in Azerbaijan is close to 100 per cent. More than 3,000 schools were built in our country during the last decade. Investments in education, as we all know very well, is investments in the future. At the same time, it is investment in stability and security because radicalism, extremism, fundamentalism are generated mainly by illiteracy, lack of education when young generation is brainwashed and is directed to commit terrible acts of terror. Illiteracy, poverty, social inequality and injustice these are the main sources of radicalism. Therefore, in order to eradicate radicalism, we need to address these fundamental reasons. At the same time, we need to promote the values of interculturalism so that people clearly see the benefits of peaceful coexistence of living side by side.

Here we also come to a very important issue of responsibility. Responsibility of politicians, who sometimes in order to gain more votes from radicals are changing their program to be more nationalistic. Responsibility of non-governmental organizations. Some of them deliberately provoke tensions based on religious and ethnic roots. And responsibility of media because what we mainly see in international media is migrant crisis, wars, devastations, clashes, religious and ethnic conflicts.

But there are a lot of positive examples. We need also to demonstrate them. I think one of the

goals and importance of this forum is that we are addressing this issue, we are uniting our efforts. All the delegates and participants of the forum, I'm sure, came here with one agenda – how to strengthen and promote the values of intercultural dialogue.

I'm sure that results of the forum will be successful and we will implement all the decisions of the forum. Once again I would like to thank you for being with us, and wish the forum success. Thank you.

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV
ATTENDED THE OFFICIAL RECEPTION ON THE OCCASION OF
AZERBAIJAN'S REPUBLIC DAY**

26 May 2017, Baku

Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

Dear ladies and gentlemen!

I sincerely congratulate you and all the Azerbaijani people on the upcoming Day of the Republic. I wish all the people of Azerbaijan continued success and victories.



Ninety-nine years ago, a democratic republic was created for the first time in the Muslim world. The people of Azerbaijan are justifiably proud that this republic was created by our people. This is a historic event, a historic event for our people and on a global scale. The people of Azerbaijan gained independence. The world's first Muslim democratic republic was established in

Azerbaijan. This in itself showed again how progressive and talented our people are.

The Azerbaijani state and people have great respect for the activity of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic and for the memory of its founding fathers. A monument has been erected in the center of Baku in honor of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. I have recently signed an Order on conducting the 100th anniversary of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic.

Unfortunately, the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic did not last long. Two years later, our independence was taken away from us. If Azerbaijan had managed to maintain its state independence, I am sure that Azerbaijan would be one of the most developed and richest countries in the world today. However, as a result of foreign intervention, the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic fell.

After that, the people of Azerbaijan lived in the Soviet Union for 70 years. Although we were not independent, the Azerbaijani people developed. Azerbaijan developed particularly

rapidly under the leadership of great leader Heydar Aliyev in the 1970s-1980s, when we achieved great success both in economic and social spheres.

In 1991, following a collapse of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan gained independence for the second time in the 20th century. But history seemed to be repeating itself, and two years later our independence was faced with major threats yet again. In essence, the first two years of independence were of formal in nature because Azerbaijan could not carry out fully independent policies. In addition, the political, economic and military crisis our country was experiencing, the occupation of our lands and the start of a civil war by the then authorities put our young state on the edge of an abyss, of course. In 1993, Azerbaijan was faced with a great threat again. The wisdom of the Azerbaijani people saved our country and state from this disaster.

The Azerbaijani people showed wisdom and invited great leader Heydar Aliyev to take power. A period of development began in Azerbaijan in 1993, and it continues to this day. An end was put to all the negative phenomena and civil war. Illegal armed groups were disarmed. The foundations of statehood were laid, the Constitution of the independent Azerbaijan was adopted and the influx of major foreign investment began. Azerbaijan managed to overcome international isolation and break through the information blockade. In a word, from 1993 to the present day Azerbaijan has been on a path of development. The present-day Azerbaijan confirms my words again: if we had not lost out independence in 1920, Azerbaijan could be one of the most advanced countries today.

The history of our independence shows that this is the case. Look at the level of development Azerbaijan has achieved in just 23 years since 1993, how much stronger it has grown and what solid positions Azerbaijan enjoys in the world. Azerbaijan has made great strides in the economic, social and all other spheres, and the whole world knows and accepts this today. Azerbaijan is an example for many countries.

I would like to say about the challenges ahead of us. We must preserve and, I am sure, we will preserve the positive momentum in the coming years. As for the domestic policy, first of all, security must be ensured in Azerbaijan. I can say that there are no internal sources of risk in Azerbaijan. Possible risks are formed abroad. Under such circumstances, we must continue to protect our country from external risks, both from a physical perspective and by implementing the right policy. We have sufficiently strengthened the protection of borders, and additional steps will be taken in this direction. At the same time, Azerbaijan does not get involved in any unfavorable international actions and adventures that are unprofitable for us

although various parties have regularly tried to involve us in such actions. Such attempts are being made even today. Azerbaijan does not join and will not join any unprofitable actions and initiatives.

First of all, we think about our interests, our security, development and well-being. If any international proposal or initiative coincides with our interests, then, of course, we can treat it positively. First of all, the national interests, the interests of Azerbaijan, issues of tranquility, the well-being of our people and the security of our country are in the foreground, especially in the present conditions. We have been pursuing this policy for many years. This is exactly why pressure is sometimes exerted on Azerbaijan from various places. Campaigns are conducted against us. However, the current conditions, the present international situation show once again that this is the only correct policy because risks and threats are expanding in the region and the world. Unfortunately, there is stability in our region. On the contrary, the situation exacerbates with every passing year. Therefore, security issues should be in the forefront.

Along with this, all freedoms will be continue to be guaranteed in Azerbaijan, and there should not be any contradictions between these two approaches. Azerbaijan is a free state, a democratic state, we have many achievements in the field of democratic development, and this process must be continued. All fundamental freedoms will continue to be provided in Azerbaijan and our people will live in freedom.

Inter-ethnic and interreligious relations in Azerbaijan will continue to be resolved at the highest level. We are an example for many countries today. This is no secret to anyone. Not only the international events held in our country, but also the situation in Azerbaijan serve as an example for many countries. My colleagues and foreign guests I speak to have repeatedly asked me questions in an effort to understand the secret of this. The secret is very simple. It is just necessary to pursue the right policy. There should be development, literacy must be increased, ethnic and religious policies should be carried out correctly. Representatives of all the peoples living in Azerbaijan and religions should feel comfortable. Such a situation is a reality today. Representatives of all peoples line in Azerbaijan like one family, in the conditions of friendship, peace and mutual understanding. This is our great asset and strength. We protect and should protect it. I am glad that our policy, the steps being taken in this direction are fully supported by the people. Therefore, Azerbaijan is considered the center of multiculturalism in the world.

At the same time, we are committed to our national and spiritual values. It is no coincidence

that last year was declared a Year of Multiculturalism in Azerbaijan, while this year is a Year of Islamic Solidarity. This shows again that the people and state are attached to their roots and will always pursue the right policy. A people with strong national values will always succeed and develop. I believe that the Azerbaijani model, including the successes we have achieved in this direction, are very attractive for many countries. Our traditions, history, culture and religion are sacred to us. At the same time, we are open to the world. We are modern and try to establish good relations with all countries.

Of course, taking into account all these factors, stability in Azerbaijan will be maintained in the future too. It is already a reality that there can be no development in the absence of stability. No-one will invest in unstable countries. No-one will come as a tourist or try to establish good relations with an unstable country. Therefore, stability is the main factor for any country – the main factor behind development. However, it is impossible to achieve stability by administrative means alone. It will only be temporary. Certain countries are taking special security measures and applying a special regime these days. This is an administrative path. However, the actual essence of stability is that the people should support public policies, be satisfied with the situation and take pride in development. We have created just such stability, and these factors form the basis for stability in Azerbaijan: the unity between the people and the government, our policies and the successes achieved. The best means of propaganda is real life. Azerbaijan is comprehensively developing today and has achieved great success in all directions.

As for domestic policy issues, we will continue to pay special attention to the social sphere, of course. this is a priority for us. I have repeatedly said that our policy is centered on citizens of Azerbaijan. We are doing all this work for our people to live even better. Many social initiatives have been put forward in Azerbaijan. Social infrastructure projects have gained momentum. At the same time, Azerbaijan is putting forward initiatives that are innovative for the world. Among them, I would like to specifically mention the medical screening program. This program has been under way for several years. Its implementation primarily required reforms and a modern health infrastructure. Such opportunities are already available to us thanks to the construction and repairs of more than 600 hospitals. All the agencies involved in the medical screening program have obtained the following results: more than 5 million Azerbaijani citizens underwent free medical checkup this year. This is our policy. Our policy is manifested in the construction of more than 3,000 schools, higher salaries and pensions. Social expenses will, of course, remain a priority in our state budget, and further steps should be taken in this direction.

Azerbaijan has made great strides in the foreign political sphere. The Azerbaijani public already knows this. We will continue to defend our national interests in the international arena. We are known all over the world as a country enjoying great respect. The number of countries interested in cooperating with us is growing. We have no problem in a bilateral format with any country except for Armenia. We have put forward a number of trilateral formats of cooperation.

Today we have excellent relations with international organizations, and we play an active role in them. First of all, I would like to mention the Organization of Islamic Cooperation among them. Azerbaijan is an active member of this organization. Last year, this organization established a Contact Group in connection with the Armenian aggression. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation has condemned the Armenian aggression and their provocations committed in April last year. The Azerbaijani state and the position of Azerbaijan in connection with the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict receive constant support.

At the same time, Azerbaijan is expanding bilateral relations within the framework of this organization. I want to specifically note the Arab-Islamic-American summit held in Saudi Arabia recently. Azerbaijan participated in this Summit at a high level. I believe that this Summit has a great meaning. First and foremost, the Muslim world has demonstrated solidarity, and it is worthy of approval that the President of the United States, Mr. Trump, has paid his first official visit to a Muslim country. We in Azerbaijan appreciate this. I consider this as a sign of great respect shown by the President of America for the entire Muslim world. So this visit and the organization of the Summit are already an important event, and the thoughts voiced by the President of America there certainly deserve a very high assessment. In particular, he said that the United States of America will no longer interfere in the internal affairs of Muslim countries, will not teach or lecture them. This is a very serious statement, and I can say that almost all the Summit participants, including Azerbaijan, highly appreciated these statements. After all, we all know quite well that Azerbaijan is one of the countries that comes under intense shelling as a result of external interference.

I do hope that this serious signal reaches all relevant organizations, including European institutions, and attempts to interfere in our affairs will cease. There have already been changes in the American leadership this year, and we see that the manifestation of such interventions is being gradually removed. We welcome this and hope that this continues, because this policy is the only right one. I said this before and I want to say it today: if countries do not interfere in each other's affairs, there will be no wars or conflicts. There will be only peace and cooperation.

Azerbaijan has never interfered in the affairs of any country and has never allowed and will not allow anyone to interfere in our affairs, teach us or looked down on us. Azerbaijan is a dignified state. We have kept and will continue to keep our pride.

The main direction of our foreign policy is the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. There are no changes to in our principled position in this regard. Nagorno-Karabakh is the native land of Azerbaijan. This is the case today and so it will be tomorrow. The conflict must be resolved in accordance with the norms and principles of international law within the territorial integrity of countries, in accordance with the decisions of the Helsinki Final Act. Azerbaijan will never allow the creation of a second contrived Armenian state on our historical lands. Even the existing Armenian state was created on our lands. We are well aware that Erivan was presented to Armenia in 1918. Therefore, it is impossible to create a second contrived Armenian state on our lands. The resolutions of the UN Security Council must be implemented and the occupying forces must unconditionally withdraw from our lands.

We are satisfied with the Resolutions and resolutions of international organizations. This is the legal basis for resolving the conflict. At the same time, the recent statements and steps deserve a high assessment. In particular, the Minsk Group co-chair countries, the European Union and other bodies unequivocally state that the status quo is unacceptable and should be changed. True, no steps were taken after these statements. We are waiting for this step to be taken and pressure will be exerted on the occupier. We are waiting for sanctions to be applied to them. They must be applied. If no sanctions are applied to Armenia for its aggressive policy, this will be another sign of double standards. Despite this, I believe that such statements are a positive step.

At the same time, there was a very harsh reaction to the far-fetched “referendum” held in Nagorno-Karabakh by neighboring countries, the Minsk Group, the European Union and other countries. No-one accepted this notorious assembly, this disgrace. On the contrary, everyone has condemned it. They have once again proved and demonstrated that Nagorno-Karabakh is an inalienable part of Azerbaijan, an integral part of our country. We will continue our policy. Our principled position at the talks is absolutely justified, and we will not deviate from this policy by an inch.

Our policy related to the internally displaced persons is obvious. About 100 IDP settlements have been built in recent years. New settlements are currently under construction. At the same time, we are starting to build new buildings for the IDPs living in emergency buildings

in Baku and Sumgayit. This will also be a very extensive program. In the near future, several thousand IDP families will move to new beautiful houses and apartments.

Our army building policy has fully justified itself. The Azerbaijani army today is among the strongest armies in the world. This is evidenced by international ratings. The material and technical equipment, the fighting capacity of our army and the patriotic spirit are at a high level. We are acquiring and will continue to acquire equipment and weaponry possessing the most advanced technologies. We will allocate as much as necessary for our army. Unlike Armenia, we provide our army at our own expense and live as an independent country. They have chosen a different path – the path of a colony. This is their choice.

The Azerbaijani army is ready and capable of fulfilling any task today. This was shown by the fighting of April last year. The April fighting demonstrated the strength of our people and army. They showed yet again that Azerbaijan will never tolerate armed provocations of Armenia and will never reconcile with the current situation.

Of course, to implement all our plans we must have a strong economy. Great steps are also being taken in this direction. The Azerbaijani economy is ranked in 37th place in the world in terms of competitiveness although the international financial crisis has also affected us and the fall in oil prices, of course, had a negative impact on our revenues. The economy of Azerbaijan has already adapted to the current situation, our national currency has stabilized and non-oil exports have increased. The economic indicators of the four months are very positive. Our foreign exchange reserves and turnover have increased. The positive balance in the turnover has reached \$1.2 billion. The turnover has risen by 11 per cent, exports by 41 per cent, non-oil exports by 22 per cent and agricultural exports by 44 per cent.

The current financial and economic situation in Azerbaijan is sustainable. All budget forecasts are being fulfilled. I do not foresee any problems for the country's economy this or next year, especially if we take into account that our foreign exchange reserves are increasing. They have grown this year too. Our foreign exchange reserves exceed the external debt four to five times. Therefore, any country may wish such a situation for itself.

Of course, one of the key issues before us today is the completion of the Southern Gas Corridor. Azerbaijan has also made progress with partners in this direction. The Southern Gas Corridor project is being successfully implemented. To justify my words I can share some figures. As you know, the Southern Gas Corridor consists of four projects. The implementation of the Shah Deniz-2 project has reached 93 per cent. The second project is the South Caucasus

Pipeline. The level of implementation there is 85 per cent. The third project is the Trans-Anatolian pipeline, TANAP. It is 72 per cent through. The fourth project is the Trans Adriatic Pipeline, TAP. The level of implementation is 42 per cent there. I would also like to note that according to the plan, the level of implementation of TAP should be 45 per cent. So it is close to this level. I want to make special mention of this, because the people of Azerbaijan are well aware that great efforts are being made to hamper the TAP project. Groups are being set up and environmental issues are being put forward as a pretext. According to the data available to us, there is a lot of money involved in this. In other words, these groups are being organized artificially, without any grounds. But it is understandable what their goal is: to stop the project or delay its implementation. Despite this, the implementation of the TAP project is only 3 per cent behind schedule. So I am sure that there will be no problems with the implementation of this project.

As you know, we are working on major transport projects today. The responsibilities Azerbaijan has in connection with the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars and North-South projects are fully met. Of course, partner countries are accelerating this work today. In the future, we can also participate in this. Under such circumstances, the priority among major transport projects is the completion of the construction of the Alat international seaport. The necessary funds have been allocated. I am sure that within a year, i.e. by the summer of next year, the Alat international seaport will be put into operation. It will become the largest port on the Caspian Sea and significantly increase our transport capabilities.

Of course, the tasks ahead are more ambitious than those I have noted. There are many more of them. I have simply shared our future activities in the main areas. I am sure that we will continue to develop rapidly in all areas. Our success, of course, is underpinned by a careful policy and the fact that the Azerbaijani people live in independence today. The values of independence are also manifested in real life. Independence is the greatest asset and the greatest benefit for us. We are cherishing and will continue to cherish our independence.

Thank you.

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV
ATTENDED THE 24TH INTERNATIONAL CASPIAN OIL & GAS
EXHIBITION AND CONFERENCE**

31 May 2017, Baku

Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

Dear ladies and gentlemen!

Dear friends!



My warm greetings to all of you! I congratulate you on the opening of the “Caspian Oil and Gas” exhibition. The fact that this exhibition is held in Azerbaijan is a very significant event. Our country is hosting the 24th exhibition, which is an indicator in itself. This shows that Azerbaijan is recognized in the world as a reliable partner producing and exporting oil and gas to world markets. Interest in this exhibition

does not decrease. In fact, it is still growing. It was noted that about 300 companies are taking part in the exhibition. I am absolutely sure that this exhibition will also be successful.

Of course, the holding of the first exhibition played a special role in popularizing our country in the world. Azerbaijan was not known at that time – it was a newly-independent state. There were quite a few problems in our country, and the exhibition played an invaluable role in unlocking the oil and gas potential of Azerbaijan to the world. I want to express my gratitude to organizers of the exhibition. They have been cooperating with Azerbaijan for 24 years, making a great contribution to the development of our country.

The first exhibition was of particular importance in introducing Azerbaijan to the world as a country with great potential. Since that time, Azerbaijan has been able to establish successful cooperation with foreign investors in the oil and gas sector. This cooperation is based on mutual interests. Both countries and investors are making profit, thus, there is an excellent format of cooperation with foreign investors in Azerbaijan. This format is now present in other sectors. As you know, our main priority at present is to develop the non-oil sector. We are trying to apply the experience we have gained in the oil sector, in particular, the experience of cooperation with foreign investors, to the non-oil sector, and have been able to achieve success in this.

Azerbaijan is the home of oil. It was in Azerbaijan that oil was industrially produced for the first time in 1846. New historical documents have been discovered this year. Some time ago, I issued the instruction to review the documents stored in various libraries and museums around the world in order to obtain more accurate information. New historical documents have been found on this issue. They testify to the fact that oil was extracted from the world's first well drilled in an industrial way in Azerbaijan, on the territory of Bibiheybat in Baku, in 1846. To celebrate this significant event, we have erected a monument to that oldest oil well this year, and I am sure that this site will be of great interest to visitors to Baku.

In addition, oil was extracted offshore, in the Caspian Sea, for the first time in the world in the middle of the last century also in Azerbaijan. Here too, it is possible to say that Azerbaijan, the Caspian Sea, is the homes of offshore oil production.

The oil industry in Azerbaijan developed during the Soviet era as well. The contribution of Azerbaijani oil workers to victory over fascism in World War II is irreplaceable. A total of 70-80 per cent of fuel was provided by Azerbaijani oil workers. Otherwise, the result of the war could have been different.

In the 1970s, the development of the oil industry in Azerbaijan gained even more momentum under the leadership of Heydar Aliyev. Many important projects were implemented. They still serve the development of the independent Azerbaijan. Unfortunately, on the eve and in the first years of independence the oil industry in Azerbaijan was in decline. Oil and gas production fell sharply. Azerbaijan had practically lost its dynamic development momentum. At the same time, as a result of production that did not meet any environmental standards, the vast territories of Baku and the Absheron Peninsula were contaminated with oil. Currently, we are cleaning these contaminated sites. Very large environmental projects are being implemented. The territory of the famous Bibiheybat has become a green area now.

Approaching its independence in such a state, Azerbaijan had lost its appeal to the world, of course. If we add to this the crisis experienced in the early years of independence – chaos, anarchy, illegal armed formations, civil war, and Armenian occupation – all these factors, of course, turned Azerbaijan into a very risky country dangerous for foreign investors. Under such circumstances, the only development option was to attract foreign investments. Fortunately, the Azerbaijani people once again showed wisdom in 1993 by inviting great leader Heydar Aliyev to take power and electing him President. After that Azerbaijan embarked on a path of development.

Starting from 1993, very important steps have been taken in Azerbaijan to achieve stability.

Within a few years stability was completely restored and Azerbaijan secured a worthy place in the world. However, the economy was practically in ruins. Inflation exceeded 1,000 per cent. Industrial production had almost collapsed and there were no great prospects for economic development. It is clear that a country without the economy will never be able to achieve real independence. Today our independence is measured not only by state attributes. We have an independent foreign policy and an independent domestic policy. We have a powerful economy and financial resources. We live at our own expense, so we can speak from any platforms and defend our position as an independent country. At that time, Azerbaijan was to a certain extent in a dependent position. We did not have money, the treasury was empty and the economy was in a paralyzed state. Therefore, the great importance of Heydar Aliyev's oil strategy comes to life once again because the situation changed completely with the signing of the Contract of the Century, and Azerbaijan was able to attract major foreign investments.

The Contract of the Century signed in 1994 is a historic project. If the Contract of the Century had not been signed at the time, no-one would invest in the oil and gas industry of Azerbaijan and the Shah Deniz field. If oil and gas pipelines had not been built, the Southern Gas Corridor could not be realized. If transport projects had not been implemented – the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars transport corridor is being realized today – no-one would ever invest in this project, especially if we consider that Azerbaijan has invested almost 1 billion in this project. If we had no money, no-one would invest in this project, of course. Therefore, the Contract of the Century has an exclusive place in the development of the Azerbaijani state. The successful implementation of this contract allowed us the opportunity to channel funds from oil into human capital, the non-oil sector and infrastructure projects, and to develop our country. The present-day Azerbaijan, our regions, thriving cities and Baku, one of the most beautiful cities in the world, are graphic examples of our work. This work is evident. We have done it thanks to a thoughtful policy. Of course, by strengthening the economic potential, we have significantly advanced our country.

The implementation of the Contract of the Century also goes on successfully. Today we are thinking about the future of the giant Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli oil field, and I hope that we will come to an agreement with foreign investors on the extension of this project in the near future because the Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli field has huge potential and a lot of oil to be produced. So we are in the final stages of negotiations with foreign partners to maintain a long-term sustainable level of production.

The investment made in Azerbaijan is protected in a transparent manner. The most important projects for our country are to be implemented by the State Oil Fund. The first of these is the solution of the problems of internally displaced persons. In recent years, about 100 IDP

settlements have been built using the resources of the Oil Fund. These funds, of course, are generated from oil revenues, and we have managed to present ourselves to the world as a modern and dynamically developing country today.

Speaking about the significance of the exhibition, we must certainly mention the Shah Deniz project. Many people have probably forgotten that the Shah Deniz contract was signed at the oil and gas exhibition in 1996. At that time, Azerbaijan was known only as an oil country. The realization of the Shah Deniz project has turned Azerbaijan into a country that extracts and exports both oil and gas. Today we can't imagine regional cooperation without the Shah Deniz project because Shah Deniz is a project addressing the issues of energy security in particular. Energy security issues today are issues of national security of the country. Everything depends on energy. Natural gas - of course, except for renewable energy – is the cheapest and most environmentally friendly source of energy. The economic progress of developed countries is also directly related to energy sources. Fortunately, Azerbaijan possesses quite large oil and gas resources. Our confirmed gas reserves are estimated at 2.6 trillion cubic meters. Thus, by fully ensuring its energy security, Azerbaijan plays a role in resolving energy security issues of its friends and partners.

The development of the Shah Deniz field has been under way for many years. Over these years, we have also managed to create a diversified oil and gas transportation network. A special place in it, of course, is occupied by the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Baku-Supsa oil pipelines. The Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline has been in operation for 10 years. All these are historic projects. If we did not have them, if investment had not been made in these projects, we would not be able to export our energy resources anywhere. We live in a landlocked area and do not have access to the open seas and oceans. Therefore, oil and gas pipelines supply our energy resources to foreign markets. The economic side alone is not enough – regional cooperation is also necessary. Together with our partners we have created and are strengthening this cooperation. Azerbaijan's oil and gas projects are at the same time a guarantor of security, stability and development in the region, as tens of thousands of people have been employed in these projects. The countries implementing these projects together with us are experiencing rapid development in this area. Of course, this has a very positive impact on relations between countries. The oil and gas pipelines Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum and Baku-Supsa are our great assets.

The second phase in the development of the Shah Deniz project is also proceeding successfully. As you know, we are implementing the Southern Gas Corridor today. This is a unique project on a global scale and the first infrastructure project in Europe. There are plans to invest \$40 billion in this project. A considerable part of that has already been

invested. Work is ongoing successfully in four segments of the Southern Gas Corridor. I have recently announced these figures. I want to cite them again so that people attending the exhibition could also know. The Shah Deniz-2 project is 93 per cent through. We will soon celebrate the Shah Deniz platform topside sail away. The South Caucasus Pipeline is 85 per cent through. This pipeline links Azerbaijan to Georgia. The TANAP project, the contract for which was signed in 2012, is being successfully implemented. The TANAP project is 72 per cent through. We expect to mark the commissioning of the TANAP project next year. The fourth project is TAP. The level of execution there is 42 per cent. So these figures are an indicator in themselves. They show that all work is going according to plan and we are approaching the completion of the Southern Gas Corridor project.

The third meeting of the Southern Gas Corridor Advisory Council was held in Baku this year. The adopted resolution shows again that Azerbaijan is the leader in this project. The Advisory Council meeting was attended by high-level representatives of the seven partner countries of this project. Also, representatives of our potential partners from the Balkan countries, high-ranking representatives from the United States of America, Great Britain, and the Vice-President of the European Commission were also present. So it was a major forum. I want to reiterate that the resolution adopted at the end of this meeting noted the leading role of Azerbaijan in this sphere.

I also want to emphasize that meetings of the Southern Gas Corridor Advisory Council are held on the initiative of Azerbaijan for the third time and are of great importance because these meetings analyze all the work done and, most importantly, we prepare a joint program of further activities and implement it. I am confident that we will talk of new successes at the forthcoming fourth meeting of the Council at the beginning of next year.

Issues of energy security, as I have already noted, are issues of national security, and Azerbaijan plays an important role in this area both in the region and in Europe. The steps we are taking in the field of energy diversification are bearing fruit. This is also very important. The advantage of the projects Azerbaijan is implementing lies in the fact that both routes and sources are being diversified. After all, the main market for us today is Europe, and new sources are also of great importance for Europe. Of course, the routes are also important, but when we talk about energy security and energy diversification, first of all we mean new sources. The only new source for European countries is Azerbaijan because all other sources have been supplying Europe with natural gas for many years. The only new source is Azerbaijan. This is a great source located nearby.

Most importantly, the Azerbaijani state has a strong political will and financial resources to

implement the Southern Gas Corridor together with partners. I should also note that if the Azerbaijani state had not invested in the implementation of these four projects, I am sure that no-one else would have invested in them either. Various projects on the supply of Azerbaijani gas to Europe were the topic of discussion for at least 10 years. These discussions were unsuccessful because no-one wanted to take the first step and invest. Everyone expected this step from someone else. Seeing that these discussions remain unsuccessful every year, we started the TANAP project with the Turkish side in 2012. After that, the Shah Deniz-2 project was launched. Following this, the TAP project was chosen and we started to work. Therefore, Azerbaijan shows political will and also makes economic and financial contribution, so that the South Gas Corridor project could be implemented. This project is of historic importance for us because the Southern Gas Corridor will strengthen our long-term development and will bring us additional revenues.

The implementation of the Southern Gas Corridor project kicked off new projects. Next in line is the launch of the Greater Absheron project. In fact, work has already begun. In two to three years, we expect first gas from the Absheron project – estimated reserves there are about 350 billion cubic meters. In addition, Umid-Babek and Shallow Water projects are being implemented in parallel. In the coming years, these projects are expected to start functioning, i.e. production will begin. So we are strengthening our oil and gas potential. We plan to export even more natural gas and oil. In parallel, we have become an important partner as a transit country. Oil and oil products are delivered from the east coast of the Caspian Sea through Azerbaijan to world markets. Our role is increasing. Our transport infrastructure is expanding. Everything is available – the Caspian Shipping Company, the Baku Port, railways and terminals. We have done everything. I am sure that oil and gas industry projects will bring even greater benefit to Azerbaijan from now on. We will increase both our economic profits and our role in the region and the world.

We are doing all this for our country to become even stronger, for our positions to become even stronger, for Azerbaijan to enjoy even greater authority in the world and, most importantly, for the Azerbaijani people to live even better. Therefore, we invest our oil revenues in other sectors and see excellent results. In four months of this year, Azerbaijani exports have increased by 41 per cent. In particular, non-oil exports have increased by 22 per cent. Agricultural exports have increased by 44 per cent. Our rich oil and gas fields will ensure the development of the country for many years to come. Azerbaijan will continue to develop comprehensively.

My warm greetings to all the guests again! I wish the exhibition and conference success.
Thank you.

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

22 June 2017, Baku

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

Dear Mr. President,
Distinguished guests, dear friends!

I would like to sincerely welcome the Moldovan delegation to Azerbaijan. The President's visit is a very important event in the bilateral relations between our countries. I am confident that the visit will give a good impetus to the dynamic development of Moldovan-Azerbaijani relations.



Today we discussed a wide range of issues of mutual interest and have already outlined ways for further joint activities. We will continue to strengthen political ties and actively work together in international organizations. The visit of the President is an indicator of mutual respect and mutual interest we have for each other. I would also like to note that the official visit of President of Moldova Mr. Dodon to Azerbaijan is one of his first official visits. And we regard the fact that he has come to our country as a sign of great respect for Azerbaijan.

We have also extensively discussed issues related to trade and economic cooperation. There is good potential. Relevant instructions have already been given for our bodies to speed up the process of increasing our turnover. For this, of course, we expect that a joint intergovernmental commission will meet in the near future. It has not gathered for a long time, and this session will discuss important issues on how to increase mutual trade, what investment opportunities there are, what infrastructure projects there are and where our companies could work together. So this block of questions is also of great importance because we can't be pleased with the present level of trade and economic relations, of course. We know that there is much more potential. Also, cooperation in the field of energy and transport has great prospects. We in Azerbaijan implement many transport and energy projects that have long crossed the borders

of our country. It would be interesting to cooperate with Moldovan partners in this direction.

Today we also discussed issues of interregional relations and have already outlined concrete steps to structure or formalize inter-regional relations between different regions of our countries. And, of course, we have reviewed issues related to humanitarian cooperation. The President of Moldova has told me that he met with representatives of the Moldovan community in Azerbaijan yesterday. Also, the Azerbaijani Diaspora in Moldova is very active, and I am grateful to the President for the attention shown to them. This is also an important factor in bilateral relations.

I am sure that today's visit will be an important milestone in the development of our relations, will give necessary dynamism to our relations and help address many important issues, thereby bringing our countries and peoples closer together.

I would like to thank Mr. President for visiting us and wish you, the esteemed Mr. President, and the friendly people of Moldova further success and prosperity.

Thank you.

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

8 August 2017, Baku

List of documents signed during the official visit:

- The Declaration on Strategic Partnership between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan
- The Agreement on the Organization of Freight Transportation, Usage and Registration of Freight Trains and Containers, and on Costings for their Usage in International Direct Railway-Ferry Communication via Baku (the Republic of Azerbaijan) and Turkmenbashi (Turkmenistan) Ports
- The Memorandum on Cooperation between the Ministry of Taxes of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Finance of Turkmenistan in the Field of the Activities of Tax Authorities
- The Agreement on Cooperation between the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the State Committee for Tourism of Turkmenistan in the Field of Tourism
- The Agreement on Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of Turkmenistan in the Field of Maritime Trade
- The Agreement on Cooperation between the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Turkmenistan
- The Agreement on Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of Turkmenistan in the Field of Veterinary Medicine
- The Agreement on Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of Turkmenistan in the Field of Plant Quarantine
- The Agreement on Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of Turkmenistan in the Field of Copyright and Protection of Related Rights
- The Agreement on Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of Turkmenistan in the Field of Protection of Industrial Property
- The Agreement on Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of Turkmenistan in the Field of Civil Defense, Prevention and Elimination of Emergency Situations
- The Agreement on Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of Turkmenistan in the Field of Environmental Protection
- The Agreement on Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of

Azerbaijan and the Government of Turkmenistan in the Field of Culture

- The Memorandum of Understanding on the Future Development of Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of Turkmenistan in the Field of Energy

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

Dear Gurbanguly Malikguluyevich,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen!

Dear Mr. President, let me sincerely welcome you to Azerbaijan once again. Welcome to our country.



Your visit is very important for the development of Turkmen-Azerbaijani relations. The negotiations we have conducted and the signed documents today show once again that Turkmen-Azerbaijani relations are at the highest level. These ties are underpinned by unity, friendship and brotherhood of our peoples. For centuries, the Turkmen and Azerbaijani peoples have lived

together, cooperated and been friends. Our interstate relations are built on this solid foundation. This year we are celebrating the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Over these 25 years, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan have covered a great and successful road.

Mr. President, I would like to talk about the successes that have been achieved in Turkmenistan, especially under your leadership. Under your leadership, your country is rapidly developing, social and economic issues are being successfully resolved, and the well-being of your citizens is improving. Turkmenistan plays a major role in the international arena. Your neutral policy is supported by the world community. The United Nations adopted a resolution two years ago in connection with the neutrality of Turkmenistan. Azerbaijan was also a co-author of that resolution.

The Joint Declaration holds a special place among the documents signed today. It is a Declaration on Strategic Partnership. In other words, it is the highest level of communication. Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan are already strategic partners. This Declaration identifies

practically all areas of our future joint activities. It reflects political, economic, humanitarian, cultural, transport, energy and security issues. Both parties have reaffirmed their strong support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and the inviolability of each other's borders in the Declaration.

Our ties are developing successfully. We will intensify our activities in many areas. Today we successfully cooperate within the framework of international organizations – we support each other within the framework of the UN, the OSCE and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. There are good achievements in trade, in the field of economy. Our turnover increased last year.

Today, a major part of the talks was devoted to transport issues. Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan are building and will soon commission new sea ports. This will lead to an increase in the volume of cargo transportation. At the same time, one of the topics discussed today has been the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway. This road will significantly enhance the transit capacities of both Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan.

There are good opportunities for cooperation in the field of energy. The Memorandum signed today creates a good basis for further action. We successfully cooperate in all areas and, of course, in the humanitarian sphere. The public can also see that we don't even need an interpreter. During the conversation with Mr. President, we noted that if our citizens visit each other for one month, there will be no unfamiliar phrases left at all. This similarity is a great asset for us. We have common historical, cultural and ethnic roots, and we are building our activities on this solid foundation.

Turkmenistan is a close, friendly and fraternal country for us. The Turkmen people are a brotherly people for us. We highly appreciate this. I would like to highlight the activities of President Berdymukhamedov again because the historic event marking our successful cooperation took place in 2008. In May of that year, the President of Turkmenistan paid his first visit to Azerbaijan, while I visited Turkmenistan a few months later, in November 2008. Those visits became a watershed. Those visits created a format for broad cooperation, and today we are seeing its excellent results.

Mr. President, I would like to express my gratitude to you once again for accepting my invitation to visit Azerbaijan. I want to express my confidence that your visit will have excellent results. Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan will become even closer to each other. Thank you.

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV HOSTED
AN OFFICIAL RECEPTION IN HONOR OF PRESIDENT OF TURKMENISTAN
GURBANGULY BERDIMUHAMEDOW**

8 August 2017, Baku

Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

Dear Gurbanguly Malikguluyevich,
Dear friends!

First of all, let me welcome you and the delegation you are leading to Azerbaijan again – you are welcome!

Our peoples share deep historical roots, spiritual and cultural values. The traditional relations of friendship and brotherhood between Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan rely on such a strong foundation.

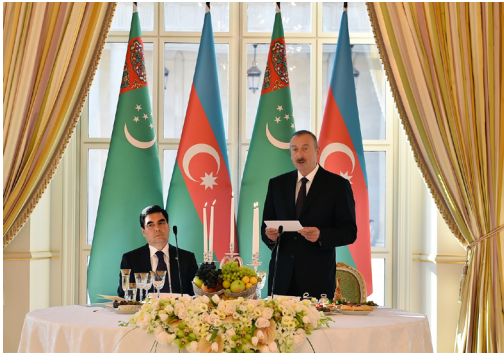
In recent years, Turkmenistan has passed a successful path of development under your leadership, and earned a high reputation in the international arena. The successes your dynamically developing country has achieved cover the spheres of state building, social, economic, humanitarian and other areas. We are inspired by these successes of fraternal Turkmenistan.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our countries. I am pleased to note that during these years our cooperation, covering various spheres, served the interests of our countries and the well-being of our peoples.

Today, there are good opportunities for raising Azerbaijani-Turkmen relations of mutual confidence in the economic, trade, transport, humanitarian and other spheres to a qualitatively new level. I am sure that our meetings, discussions, the documents signed and the Declaration on Strategic Partnership will contribute to the development and expansion of our cooperation.

Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan effectively cooperate in a multilateral format. This is evidenced by mutual support for the initiatives being put forward within the framework of international organizations.

I should also note that Azerbaijan was a co-author of the resolution on “Permanent neutrality



of Turkmenistan” unanimously adopted at the June plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly.

I would like to emphasize our cooperation in the energy sector. We intend to further deepen our work in this area, and there are all the possibilities for that.

The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway, which is to be commissioned in the near future as the shortest, safe and economically efficient link between Europe and Asia, creates new transit opportunities for our countries.

Today, new sea ports are under construction both in Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. This will further expand our transport capabilities in the future.

We consider the Caspian Sea to be a sea of friendship, peace, security and cooperation. Azerbaijan is paying special attention to the development of bilateral relations with Caspian littoral countries on the basis of mutual respect and trust.

Azerbaijan is in favor of speeding up the alignment of the basic principles of the Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea by way of discussions and consultations both in multilateral and bilateral formats.

Taking into account the historical and cultural ties between Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, the strengthening of our cooperation in the fields of culture, art, science, education, youth and sports is of great importance.

Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan successfully cooperate within the framework of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. 2017 was declared a “Year of Islamic Solidarity” in Azerbaijan. At the same time, the Fourth Games of Islamic solidarity were held in Baku in May of this year. They were joined by more than 50 countries. This is our contribution to Islamic solidarity.

In September 2017, the city of Ashgabat will host the Fifth Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games. I am sure that the Asian Games will serve to further strengthen the ties between the peoples living in this geographical area and give an impetus to the further development of cultural cooperation. Congratulations on this occasion! I am confident that these Games will be held at the highest level.

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV
ATTENDED THE SIGNING CEREMONY OF NEW AGREEMENT ON
AZERI-CHIRAG-GUNASHLI OIL FIELDS**

14 September 2017, Baku

Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

Dear ladies and gentlemen!

Distinguished guests!

It is a very significant and historic day in the life of our country today. A new period in the development of the giant Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli oil field begins. I sincerely welcome all the guests who have come from abroad to participate in this historic ceremony together with us. Their participation in this event once again reflects the significance of today's event.



The contract being signed today is of great importance for our country. The development of the Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli oil field is being extended until 2050. The new contract is more profitable for Azerbaijan even though the contract signed in 1994 also fully provided for our interests. This time, the contract is being

signed on better terms. I want to bring some of its main parameters to your attention: after the signing of the contract, foreign investors will pay our country a bonus of \$3.6 billion; SOCAR "AzACG" will take part in the implementation of the contract as a contractor; the share of SOCAR will increase from 11.6 to 25 per cent, and the share of Azerbaijan's profit oil will be 75 per cent. These are the key conditions. Of course, the contract contains many provisions. The main provisions already show that this contract is very important for the future development of Azerbaijan and for the enhancement of our financial capabilities.

In addition, I should note a very successful implementation of the contract for 23 years. During these years, 436 million tons of oil were produced from Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli. I remember very well that when the contract was signed in 1994, the estimated oil reserves were determined at 511 million tons. However, today's data – I am convinced that this is not the last data and the reserves will further increase – show that there are still approximately 500 million tons of undeveloped oil reserves in the Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli fields. I want to

note again that these are preliminary estimates. I am sure that this figure will further increase during the implementation of the contract.

Twenty-three years ago, a very significant event in the history of our country occurred. The signing ceremony of the Contract of the Century took place at Gulistan Palace in Baku under the chairmanship of great leader Heydar Aliyev. This gave a strong impetus to the successful development of our country. I remember that day very well. That day stands out quite vividly in my memory. Indeed, Azerbaijan took one of the important steps in its history. The signing of the Contract of the Century is connected with the name of great leader Heydar Aliyev. After gaining independence in 1991 Azerbaijan faced very serious problems. In particular, as a result of the negligent activities of the PFFA-Musavat tandem, which illegally seized power after a coup in 1992, our country found itself on the verge of an abyss. There was an economic recession, the industrial potential was shrinking, the inflation was reaching thousands of per cent, there were practically no economic prospects for our country, and there was a deep political, military and economic crisis, anarchy and chaos. In order to preserve their shaky administration, the then illegal government resorted to arms. A civil war broke out in Azerbaijan and fraternal blood was shed. The PFFA-Musavat government bombed the second largest city of our country Ganja. Azerbaijan was faced with a huge tragedy.

In parallel, Armenia pursued an aggressive policy against our country, as a result of which a large portion of our lands was occupied. We have more than a million refugees and internally displaced persons. In such a difficult situation, the people made the only right choice, turned to Heydar Aliyev and invited him to take power. In 1993, after his election as president, the situation gradually began to stabilize. Economic and political reforms began, all illegal armed groups were disarmed, our country embarked on a path of democracy and Azerbaijan was able to break through international isolation.

Of course, the successful development of our country required investment. The treasury was empty and there were no opportunities for development. To convince major foreign oil companies in this situation and attract them to Azerbaijan certainly required great wisdom, abilities, competence and political experience. Heydar Aliyev successfully implemented this historic mission. Azerbaijan was considered a very risky place at the time, and the signing of the Contract of the Century in such a situation in 1994 and the attraction of major investments to our country is a truly historic achievement.

Twenty-three years have passed since that day. Over these years, Azerbaijan has rapidly developed. Azerbaijan is known in the world as a country firmly standing on its feet. Our

international relations are very broad. Azerbaijan is a country with a very good and positive reputation in the international arena. It is no coincidence that a few years ago, 155 countries elected Azerbaijan as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. This is a sign of sympathy, respect and support on the part of the international community.

Azerbaijan today is among countries living at their own expense. We have fairly large foreign exchange reserves. The economy is developing dynamically. Very important steps have been taken to diversify the economy, reduce our dependence on the oil and gas factor, and there are no political, economic or any other obstacles or problems in the way of future development of our country. Azerbaijan will continue to develop successfully. Our country has great potential. In recent years, we have built up this potential, and the Contract of the Century plays a special role in the development of this potential. It is difficult to imagine what situation we would be facing now if the Contract of the Century had not been signed in 1994. We are among countries that pursue an independent policy. It is also underpinned by our strong political will and economic independence. We do not depend on anyone and our destiny is in our own hands. Our ability to conduct an independent policy is primarily based on our economic opportunities. And these opportunities have been created for us by the Contract of the Century.

Since that time, the oil strategy of Heydar Aliyev has been successfully realized and enriched. new important steps are being taken and investments made. If we look at the chronology in the oil and gas sector since 1994, we can see that this is a chronology of success.

In 1994, a contract was signed for the Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli oil field. In 1996, a contract was signed for Shah Deniz, which is one of the largest gas fields in the world. In 1997, first oil was produced from the Chirag platform. This is one of the unique events in the world oil history. The contract was signed in 1994 and first oil was produced three years later. In 1998, this oil began to be exported to the Black Sea via the restored Baku-Novorossiysk oil pipeline. In 1999, an oil pipeline from Baku to another Black Sea port, Supsa, was built and commissioned, and Azerbaijani oil began to reach world markets in two directions. In 2002, with the personal participation of Heydar Aliyev, the foundation of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline was laid. In 2006, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline was put into operation in the Turkish port of Ceyhan. In 2007, the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline was commissioned, and exports of gas to Turkey began as part of the first stage of Shah Deniz.

In 2012, Azerbaijan and Turkey signed the TANAP project in Turkey, and it is being successfully implemented today. There is little time left for its completion. In 2013, the TAP

project was selected as the gas pipeline, and work in this direction is under way. So such is the chronology of events.

In addition, the world's largest Sangachal oil and gas terminal was built. A shipbuilding plant capable of building any type of vessel was launched in Azerbaijan. One of the largest drilling rigs in the world, a drilling rig bearing the name of Heydar Aliyev, was commissioned. Platforms are built in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijani specialists make up the majority in the implementation of foreign oil and gas projects. So these are the benefits brought to Azerbaijan by the Contract of the Century.

We have very large financial resources. The Azerbaijan State Oil Fund, which started operating in 1999, is a very important factor for us. We are increasing our currency reserves. Even some of the difficulties that have arisen in connection with the fall in oil prices have not been able to turn us off this path. We have increased our foreign exchange reserves. Even in these years, and we will increase them in the future too. Of course, as a result of the extension of the Contract of the Century, the implementation of the Shah Deniz project and the Southern Gas Corridor, our material capacities will further increase.

At this ceremony today, I want to highlight the contribution of Azerbaijani oil workers. Azerbaijan is a country where oil was industrially produced for the first time in the world in 1846. The first oil rig is now guarded as a historical monument and is located in the center of our city.

Azerbaijan also produced the world's oil offshore - from Oil Rocks in the middle of the 20th century. In other words, we have very large and rich traditions. Azerbaijani oil workers have earned great respect in society with their dedication and professionalism. The profession of an oil worker is very respected in Azerbaijan. All of our successes are to a large extent underpinned by the great work of Azerbaijani oil workers. As someone who worked in the State Oil Company for nine years, I consider myself also an oil worker to some extent. If we take into account the fact that today's ceremony is being held on the eve of the day of oil workers, I sincerely congratulate the oil workers of Azerbaijan and express my gratitude to them.

Today I want to highlight the activities of our main partner BP. The cooperation between us and BP also has a 23-year history. In other words, BP acts as the main partner and investor in all our major projects – Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan project, the Shah Deniz project, the Southern Gas Corridor project. So this strategic partnership has already

passed a great test. The excellent business relations, the mutual trust between us, between SOCAR and BP, have made today's ceremony possible. It is no secret, as I said earlier, that the Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli field has huge potential. I want to note again that according to today's estimates there are 1 billion tons of oil reserves out there. The agreement signed today is even more ambitious than the agreement signed in 1994.

The Contract of the Century is already coming to an end. Of course, at the end of the contract Azerbaijan could have signed a new contract with any other partner, and we had such opportunities. However, the mutual trust, the business relations between BP and SOCAR have, of course, predetermined today's choice. I am very happy about it. I am sure that BP and SOCAR will ensure the successful development of Azerbaijan's oil and gas fields for many years to come.

At the same time, I would also like to highlight all the partners of Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli. I want to express my gratitude to them too. They have invested heavily in Azerbaijan. Every partner company has contributed to today's decision. If it wasn't for their decision, there would be no ceremony today.

In short, Azerbaijan has created a very successful format based on mutual interests and cooperation with leading foreign oil and energy companies. This has brought us great benefits. Of course, foreign partners have also made a big profit from this project. This is one of the cases when all sides win.

The Contract of the Century has allowed us the opportunity to channel the revenues from oil into the non-oil sector. I believe that in this sphere too, unlike many oil-producing countries, Azerbaijan was able to turn oil into human capital. Oil can bring benefits and problems. We know that both in previous periods and now there is struggle for oil in the world. Conflicts flare up and blood is shed. Oil production does not mean that countries will thrive and there will be development. The situation observed in many oil-rich countries today actually suggests the opposite. Therefore, our main task was to turn oil revenues into human capital, so that every citizen of Azerbaijan could see this positive change.

Today we have well-developed regions and a developing country. The city of Baku is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Over 3,000 schools, more than 600 hospitals, over 50 Olympic centers have been built in the regions. Over 11,000 kilometers of roads have been laid, there is energy infrastructure, economic development and economic diversification – and at the core of all this is our ability to effectively use the revenues derived from oil.

Over the years, we have allocated substantial funds from the State Oil Fund to improve the living standards of the internally displaced persons and provided 250,000 IDPs with beautiful homes and apartments in about 100 new settlements. This process continues. In addition, we store our incomes from oil in the State Oil Fund in a very transparent manner. Data on its activities, incomes and expenditures are regularly communicated to the public. Any expenses from the State Oil Fund are possible only after approval of the parliament. When our budget is approved, the Milli Mejlis determines the amount of transfers at the government's suggestion. In other words, maximum transparency has allowed the opportunity to effectively use these resources. Today, Azerbaijan belongs to countries that deserve a very high international assessment for transparency.

At the beginning of my speech, I noted that the Contract of the Century is one of the exceptional contributions of great leader Heydar Aliyev to the Azerbaijani people. Today all the Azerbaijani people see the excellent results of this contract in their daily lives. I think that the holding of today's ceremony in the Center bearing the name of great leader Heydar Aliyev, is also quite symbolic. On 20 September 1994, great leader Heydar Aliyev underlined the importance of the contract in his speech at Gulistan Palace. He stressed that this contract would bring us huge benefits. Twenty-three years on, we see vivid evidence of that. Twenty-three years on, the signing ceremony is taking place in this majestic building, one of the most beautiful architectural monuments on a global scale bearing the name of great leader Heydar Aliyev. And it is on the Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli field again. This also shows that the policy of Heydar Aliyev lives on and will continue to live in Azerbaijan.

Thank you.

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

13 October 2017, Baku

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

Dear Mr President.

Dear guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Dear Mr President, once again I sincerely greet you in Azerbaijan. Welcome to Azerbaijan.



I am very glad that you accepted my invitation to pay an official visit to Azerbaijan. The visit is of crucial importance, and I am sure that it will yield good results.

Today, we have had broad discussions on different aspects of Bulgaria-Azerbaijan bilateral relations both in our limited format meeting and other meetings with the participation of our delegations. We reiterated that Bulgaria and Azerbaijan are friendly and partner countries and that our partnership is of pivotal importance. Two years ago we signed the Joint Declaration on strategic partnership and indeed the name of this Declaration itself is an indicator.

Bulgaria and Azerbaijan are strategic partners. Our political relations are at a high level, and today's discussions focused on cooperation in economy, transport, energy, tourism and other fields. There may be big prospects in this field. Of course, we cannot be satisfied with the volume of mutual trade. At today's meeting instructions were given to appropriate authorities to submit concrete proposals to increase trade.

Today I have informed the President that on the eve of his visit to Azerbaijan instructions were given to AZAL, Azerbaijan Airlines, to launch direct flights from Baku to Sofia. Preparatory work is underway in this regard. I am sure that all negotiations will be successful and flights from Baku to Sofia and from Sofia to Baku will be launched soon. I consider this as an excellent result of the visit.

Of course, today we exchanged views on energy cooperation. We are strategic partners in this area too. Bulgaria is a member of the Southern Gas Corridor. Bulgaria has always been excellently represented at the Meeting of Southern Gas Corridor Advisory Council, which Baku has hosted for several times. The execution of the Southern Gas Corridor will bring our countries even closer to each other. This is a huge transnational project. By uniting seven countries this project envisages investment of \$40 billion. Gas from Azerbaijan's giant Shah Deniz field will be delivered to European countries, to the countries in the region, including Bulgaria. I am confident that the Azerbaijani gas will play its role in addressing the energy security issues of Bulgaria.

Today we also exchanged views on the future plans of cooperation in the energy sector, including in the field of gas.

As the Azerbaijani gas will be delivered to the Bulgarian market in a few years, of course, very good opportunities will be opened for future cooperation.

I informed the President that Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway will be launched soon. This is also a historic project, and I am sure that Bulgaria will be actively involved in this project. The project will open new opportunities for all countries, including those located along the railway.

Of course, we also talked about the humanitarian cooperation. This sphere is of vital importance both to Bulgaria and Azerbaijan. People-to-people relations, and cooperation in humanitarian and educational fields, of course, will further strengthen the solid foundation of our bilateral ties.

In short, the issues I have mentioned clearly show that our cooperation is multifaceted and is very successful. The President's visit once again confirms my words.

Mr. President, once again I greet you and express my best wishes to you.

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV
ATTENDED THE OPENING CEREMONY OF BAKU-TBILISI-KARS RAILWAY**

30 October 2017, Baku

Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

Dear ladies and gentlemen,
Distinguished guests!

My warm greetings to all of you! I sincerely congratulate you on the opening of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway. Guests from fraternal and friendly countries are attending this official ceremony. I would like to specifically welcome the President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Prime Ministers of Georgia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, the Ministers of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, and express my deep gratitude for participating in this ceremony.



Dear guests, your participation in today's ceremony once again demonstrates the importance of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway. Baku-Tbilisi-Kars is a historic project, a project of strategic importance. The length of this road is 850 kilometers, of which 504 kilometers lie on the territory of Azerbaijan. The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway is the shortest and most reliable route connecting Europe

with Asia. At the initial stage, this road is to transport 5 million tons, at the next stage another 17 million tons of cargo, and then even more. In a word, the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway is becoming an important part of the Eurasian transport map. Thanks to this road, the trade and mutual investment between the countries involved will increase. The cooperation among all the countries using this road will deepen further. This road will serve stability and security. I am convinced that this road will also trigger the development of tourism and the number of tourists will increase. Of course, the successful operation of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway will enhance the geopolitical significance of our countries and create additional opportunities for us.

The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway is of great importance for the development of business and mutually beneficial cooperation. The agreement on the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway was signed in Georgia. Then a groundbreaking ceremony took place in Turkey

and finally we are celebrating the opening of this railway in Alat, in Azerbaijan, today. The construction of this railway is the result of friendship and brotherhood between Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. The three countries successfully cooperate in all spheres, support each other, implement projects important for our countries, peoples and the whole world. Baku-Tbilisi-Kars is a project that has taken a rightful place among these projects.

Before that, we celebrated the opening of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, which is of great historic importance. I remember the ceremony in Ceyhan. In 2006, we opened this pipeline together with my dear brother President Erdogan. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline is a major infrastructure project linking the Caspian and Mediterranean seas. Today it transports oil from the eastern part of the Caspian. So our countries have also provided transit opportunities to other states. A year later, in 2007, also thanks to the cooperation between Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey, the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum pipeline was built. This project also provides energy security for Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey, and has been successfully operating for 10 years. In addition, three countries have joined their power lines. Cooperation in this area is also developing successfully. Of course, the Southern Gas Corridor, one of the largest infrastructure projects of Europe on a global scale, is also being created precisely thanks to the joint efforts of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey and other countries. The implementation of this project is well under way. As you know, the Southern Gas Corridor consists of four parts. The Shah Deniz-2 project is 98 per cent through. The South Caucasus Pipeline is a gas line connecting Azerbaijan with Georgia. The level of implementation there is 99 per cent. The implementation of the TANAP project, the key part of the Southern Gas Corridor, is at 84 per cent. The implementation of the TAP project is close to 60 per cent. So the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway was also created on the basis of previously implemented projects. Of course, if we had not implemented such giant and large-scale projects in the energy, oil and gas spheres in previous periods, we could only talk about Baku-Tbilisi-Kars today.

I should also note that many, especially some outside circles, did not believe in the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway. They believed that it was impossible to realize it and that there is no technical capacity and financial resources for its implementation. But the three countries involved have shown and proved that it is possible. Where there is strong will, mutual support and confidence in each other, anything can be done. The construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway is a vivid example of that. I am sure that the countries making the biggest contribution to regional cooperation – Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey – will always be together and support each other. Such giant projects as the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway further strengthen our unity and friendship.

Countries of Central Asia, including Kazakhstan, are showing great interest in this railway project. This is clearly illustrated by the participation of delegations and high-ranking officials from these countries at this ceremony. We are sure that there will be additional opportunities in cargo transportation, and our traditional friendship with countries of Central Asia will strengthen further thanks to this railway. This railway is of great importance for Europe. Azerbaijan has already held talks with several European countries. European states are also very interested in this railway.

I should also note that Azerbaijan is also taking important steps towards creating the North-South transport corridor. All work related to the North-South project on the territory of Azerbaijan have been completed. So the entire infrastructure is ready. At the same time, Azerbaijan offers its technical and financial capabilities in the creation of infrastructure in other countries. At present, we are working to integrate the North-South and Baku-Tbilisi-Kars transport corridors, and I think that it is possible. I am sure that the North-West and South-West transport routes will be put into operation in the future. These two giant projects will link many large countries.

Baku-Tbilisi-Kars means a restoration of a part of the historic Silk Road. This will benefit China, Kazakhstan, Central Asia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey and European countries. The North-South transport corridor will connect India, Pakistan, Iran, Azerbaijan, Russia and European countries. Azerbaijan is an active participant in both projects and offers its financial resources.

In general, I can say that Azerbaijan attaches great importance to the transport sector. Large investments are made in this sphere in Azerbaijan. Since 2004 to the present, 11,000 kilometers of highways have been built in Azerbaijan. Six international airports have been commissioned. Today Azerbaijan has a large fleet of cargo planes. There are about 20 large cargo planes operating in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan possesses the largest naval fleet on the Caspian Sea – a fleet of 270 vessels. We play a special role in the organization of cargo transportation in the Caspian. Several years ago, a large shipyard was built in Azerbaijan. It produces vessels of all types. Given the expected increase in cargo transportation in the Caspian, this plant will operate to even greater capacity. Of course, an important part of our transport infrastructure is the Alat International Trade Seaport where we are gathered today. The construction of the port is proceeding successfully and it is already functioning. However, the commissioning of the first phase of the port is scheduled for the middle of next year. After that, 15 million tons of cargo and 100,000 containers will pass through this port every year. The completion of the second phase will increase the capacity of the Alat port to

25 million tons of cargo and 1 million containers. So the investment made in the transport sector in Azerbaijan in recent years has already led to the creation of strong infrastructure. This infrastructure is of great importance for our countries, for the region and for the whole world.

I want to note again that Baku-Tbilisi-Kars is a historic and global project. This project will further bring our countries closer together. It will play a role in the stability and security of our region. This project will enhance our economic opportunities and we will receive large funds. Of course, I want to say again that the realization of this project has been possible only thanks to the joint efforts of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. We did not receive any outside help or loans, built this railway using our own capabilities and are putting it into operation together.

Dear friends, I want to once again congratulate you on this wonderful historic event. I am sure that the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars road will always be open.

Thank you.

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

31 October 2017, Baku

List of documents signed during the official visit:

- The Minutes of the sixth meeting of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey
- The Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Council of Higher Education of the Republic of Turkey in the field of higher education
- The Agreement on Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Turkey in the field of education
- The Memorandum of Understanding on the signing of the preferential trade agreement between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Turkey
- The Agreement on Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Turkey in the field of defense industry
- The Agreement on cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Turkey in the field of production and certification of forage plant seeds

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

Dear Mr. President, my dear brother,
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen!

My dear brother, I sincerely welcome you to Azerbaijan again – welcome to Azerbaijan! Your visit is of great importance. Yesterday we took part in the opening of the historic Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway, while today we held a regular meeting of the Turkey-Azerbaijan high-level cooperation council. The issues discussed at the meeting cover practically all key spheres of our life. Both in the one-on-one meeting and in the expanded meeting at the level of delegations, we were further convinced that Turkish-Azerbaijani relations are at the highest level. There are no two other countries in the world that would be so close to each other and support each other so much. The Turkish-Azerbaijani friendship, brotherhood and unity are at the highest peak today. Naturally, we concur on all the issues discussed. All issues

are being addressed. The issues discussed are being implemented. Of course, we discussed further development of our political ties. They are developing quite successfully. High-level mutual visits are carried out. I have visited Turkey twice this year. The President of Turkey is on a visit to Azerbaijan now. Ministers and other officials meet often as well. At the same time, we, as always, support each other within the framework of international organizations. Turkey and Azerbaijan are always next to each other in all international organizations.



Today, we also discussed one of the most painful problems for the region – the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. I informed President Erdogan of the latest situation in connection with the talks. Unfortunately, this conflict remains unresolved. Nagorno-Karabakh and seven other districts, the historical lands of Azerbaijan, are still under occupation. As a result of this occupation, more than a million Azerbaijanis have been displaced in their native land. International organizations, in particular the United Nations Security Council, adopted four resolutions on the conflict. These resolutions state that the Armenian armed forces must immediately and unconditionally withdraw from the occupied lands. Unfortunately, these resolutions remain on paper, Armenia ignores them and the conflict remains unresolved. This is a policy of double standards against us. In some cases, UN Security Council resolutions are carried out in a matter of a few days. When it comes to us, these resolutions have remained unfulfilled for more than 20 years. The Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict must be resolved on the basis of international law and within the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. There is no other option. The Azerbaijani people and state will never tolerate the creation of a second Armenian state on our historical lands. I have once again expressed my gratitude to President Erdogan for Turkey's support of in this matter. Turkey as a true friend and brother has always supported the just cause of Azerbaijan in all international organizations.

We have broadly discussed cooperation in the military sphere. This is one of the issues on our agenda. This year Azerbaijan has hosted joint military exercises three times – twice in Baku and once in Nakhchivan. This is a factor that strengthens our cooperation in the military sphere. At the same time, joint activities in the military-technical sphere continue. The constantly developing military-industrial complex of Turkey is of great interest to us. We are purchasing and will continue to purchase military products from Turkey.

The document in the economic sphere signed today is of great importance. The preferential trade agreement makes is of great importance. I am sure that after this agreement enters into force, the trade between us will also significantly increase. The heads of relevant organizations also reported on mutual investment here. To date, Azerbaijan has invested a total of \$10 billion in Turkey and Turkey \$11 billion in Azerbaijan. The volume of this investment will increase, and Azerbaijan's investment in Turkey should reach \$20 billion. Turkish companies have been successfully operating in Azerbaijan for many years. To date, Turkish companies have carried out work worth \$11 billion and financed from the state budget of Azerbaijan. We are very pleased. They have done a very good job. This strengthens the friendship and cooperation among business people.

Of course, today's meeting traditionally discussed issues of the energy and transport agenda. All our goals in this area have also been met. We are confidently moving towards these goals. I am confident that the TANAP project will soon be completed. There are no problems with its implementation. The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway project was commissioned yesterday. We celebrated this historic day together with my brother, our brothers and sisters from Turkey. This is a great success and a great victory for us. This once again shows that all the projects initiated and implemented by Turkey and Azerbaijan are implemented. These include the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum, TANAP and Baku-Tbilisi-Kars projects, which are major transnational projects of continental scale. All has been become possible thanks to our unity and friendship.

The Turkish-Azerbaijani friendship, brotherhood and unity are an important factor for the region and play a stabilizing role in the region. A strengthening Turkey increases our power, and we are also inspired by your successes. Thanks to the leadership of my dear brother, Turkey has become a major powerhouse on a world scale today. Friends rejoice in that and enemies are indignant. Let our friends always be happy. I am sure that we will continue to go only along the path of development, progress and victories. The Turkish-Azerbaijani unity and brotherhood will be eternal.

Thank you.

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV
ATTENDED THE SOLEMN CEREMONY CELEBRATING TWO BILLION TONS
OF OIL PRODUCTION IN AZERBAIJAN**

8 November 2017, Baku

Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

Dear oil workers,
Ladies and gentlemen!

It is a very significant day in the life of our country today. Azerbaijan has produced two billion tons of oil to date. I congratulate Azerbaijani oil workers and the entire Azerbaijani people on this occasion.

This is a historic event. Azerbaijani oil workers have served their people at all times. In the years of independence, it was thanks to their hard work that Azerbaijan managed to create a great economic potential. An oil worker is an honorable and respected profession in Azerbaijan. This has always been the case and it is the case today. I appreciate the role of Azerbaijani oil workers in the overall development of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan is the motherland of oil. Everyone in our country knows this. The world community also knows that the world's first oil was industrially produced in Azerbaijan in 1846. At that time, Azerbaijan provided most of the world's oil. The world's first offshore oil was also produced by Azerbaijani oil workers in the middle of the 20th century, and this is also a historic event. During the Soviet period, Azerbaijani oil workers played a major role in the discovery of all Caspian oil and gas fields. Their role in the discovery of new oil fields in the Russian Federation is also great. It is no coincidence that there are places called "Second Baku", "Third Baku", which are associated with the names of Azerbaijani oil workers. Our oil workers have served in foreign countries. They were sent to work there. Of course, this is evidence of the professionalism and dedication of the people working in Azerbaijan's oil industry.

Azerbaijan is known worldwide as an oil country. Today we are also known as a gas country. Very important steps have been taken in this direction in the years of independence. During the Soviet era, Azerbaijani oil workers made a huge contribution to the overall development of the Soviet Union. At that time, Azerbaijan was the second republic of all union republics known as a donor. In other words, we transferred more funds into the all-Union budget than we received from it. Of course, the contribution of Azerbaijani oil workers to that was great.



In 1971, with the participation of great leader Heydar Aliyev, a ceremony marking the extraction of one billion tons of oil in Azerbaijan was held. In the 1970s and 1980s Heydar Aliyev made an immense contribution to the overall development of the Republic of Azerbaijan. This includes major steps taken to develop the oil industry. At that time, the increase of oil production, the commissioning of new facilities, the

construction of a deep-water jackets factory in Azerbaijan, the reconstruction of an oil refinery and other important events significantly strengthened the oil potential of Azerbaijan. The potential created in those years, in particular, the operation of the deep-water jackets factory, strengthens our oil potential even today. If this factory had not been built in Azerbaijan but elsewhere, then our work with foreign partners could go slowly during the independence period. The deep-water jackets factory plays a special role in the implementation of our oil strategy.

After Heydar Aliyev's departure from Azerbaijan, a recession began to gradually manifest itself in the oil and gas industry, and indeed all other areas. On the eve of the 1990s, there were already problems related to oil production. In the early years of independence, these problems exacerbated further. The first years of independence were very difficult for us – the country was in an uncontrollable state. The people running the country failed to realize their responsibility. Incompetent and often even illiterate people were put forward. The country was engulfed with chaos and anarchy. Illegal armed groups dictated their terms in Baku and other cities. As a result, all these negative events led to civil war. Heydar Aliyev fulfilled his historic mission again. He saved Azerbaijan from these terrible woes and brought stability to the country. Azerbaijan embarked on a path of development. It is from 1993 onwards that Azerbaijan has been following the path of development.

However, the blows dealt to Azerbaijan's economy and industry, including the oil industry, were quite severe. This ceremony today brings together well-known oil workers of Azerbaijan, veterans and people who remember those years too well. They are well aware of the state of Azerbaijan's oil industry in the early 1990s. We had to look for and find a way out of that situation, and Heydar Aliyev's oil strategy was the only way out. The signing of the "Contract of the Century" in 1994 created a watershed in this sphere. The signing of the "Contract of

the Century” is a historic event. At that time, Azerbaijan was a newly independent state and, as I have already said, was left face to face with very difficult challenges. The economy was in complete ruins, industrial production was paralyzed, inflation amounted to thousands of per cent, there was pervasive unemployment, and level of poverty was surging. Under such circumstances, to attract foreign investment to Azerbaijan required great wisdom and foresight. Heydar Aliyev’s oil strategy provided a response to these challenges. The “Contract of the Century” signed with foreign partners in 1994 was a way out for us. It gave us strength, breathed life into us and brought investment. Azerbaijan became known all over the world. The interest of large companies in Azerbaijan, especially the oil and gas sector of our country, increased, and this interest led to practical business.

I remember those years quite well. In 1994, a group of executives from the State Oil Company was sent to the American city of Houston for negotiations. The negotiations lasted for more than a month. Khoshbakht was actively involved in those negotiations. As a result of those talks, a contract was signed in September. The contract was signed on the most acceptable and profitable conditions for the time. We said this back then as well – in 1994. At that time, we had practically no specialists capable of analyzing the terms of the contract. But we knew that Azerbaijan’s interests would be secured to the maximum extent, and today’s realities show that.

This contract is in force today. Thanks to the contract, investments worth billions of dollars have been made in Azerbaijan. As a result of the execution of the contract, thousands, tens of thousands of Azerbaijani specialists have been trained and received education, and today the absolute majority of consortium employees are Azerbaijani citizens. Thanks to the contract, major infrastructure projects have been implemented in Azerbaijan. Large-scale construction work has been carried out. The country’s economy has received revenues amounting to billions, tens of billions of dollars.

Year 1994 was a turning point for Azerbaijan’s oil industry. The historical significance of the “Contract of the Century” has already been confirmed. It has also opened the way for us. The contract has shown that Azerbaijan as a young and independent state can work with foreign partners properly and protect its national interests. Thus, interest in us has increased, and so have investments in our country. Numerous contracts were signed, among which the Shah Deniz contract deserves a special mention. The contract signed in 1996 plays an exceptional role in the energy security of Azerbaijan and Europe today.

Oil workers will know very well that there was not much interest in gas fields in the world

at that time. It was considered a low-profit industry and no-one talked about energy security at all at the time. Whilst analyzing various parameters of the Shah Deniz field, a number of specialists sometimes concluded that this project was not economically viable. But life has showed that this project is economically very attractive. It has played a very positive role in strengthening the economic and political potential of our country.

Today, Azerbaijan is known in the world as an oil and gas producing country. Our role and power in the world are growing, and this is underpinned by the oil strategy of Heydar Aliyev. The 1990s saw many historical events related to the oil industry. In particular, I should note the commissioning of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline. Great leader Heydar Aliyev laid the foundation of this pipeline with his own hands, and we put it into operation in 2006. The Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline began operating in 2007. It is the main infrastructure project for our gas exports today. It is on the basis of this project that the “Southern Gas Corridor” project is being implemented. In the 1990s, the Baku-Novorossiysk oil pipeline was refurbished and the Baku-Supsa oil pipeline built. So the foundation of our oil infrastructure was laid then. This process was continued in the 2000s.

Currently, the most advanced drilling rigs and platforms are built in Baku. All construction work for the Shah Deniz-2 project was carried out in Azerbaijan. Thousands and perhaps tens of thousands of Azerbaijani citizens were involved in this work. The world’s biggest Sangachal oil and gas terminal is also our greatest asset. To conduct oil operations, our shipyard produces vessels of all types. One of them – we have called this giant vessel Khankendi – was launched only recently.

In other words, the results of the “Contract of the Century” today are measured not only by the revenue flowing into the Oil Fund. It has had a very wide and huge impact. We have managed to convert the “black gold” into human capital. We have used our oil revenues very rationally, and this is specifically noted in the world today. Many countries have rich oil fields, but live in abject poverty. Stability in these countries is disturbed and oil brings them disaster. In Azerbaijan, oil has brought prosperity, development, stability and strength. The oil and gas factor has contributed a lot to Azerbaijan living as an independent country and having a strong economic potential. Everyone should know this.

At the same time, Azerbaijan demonstrates how the state and foreign investors should work together and what principles this work should be based on. Azerbaijan shows an example also in this, as we have established cooperation with our partners, in particular the main strategic investor BP, on a very sound basis, on a foundation of mutual support, mutual trust

and mutual interests. The investors, the consortia investing billions of dollars in Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijani state have received major profits. Both sides benefit from this, and this forms the basis of our successful cooperation.

I would like to emphasize the activities of BP in Azerbaijan today. BP has been our partner for the past 23 years, playing a very active role in leading projects together with us. I want to point out that that of 2 billion tons of oil we have extracted about 700 million tons were produced in the years of independence, of which 460 million tons were produced by the consortium. So our people should know what a great role foreign partners, especially BP, have played in the development of Azerbaijan and the strengthening of its economic potential. I want to reiterate that underlying all this is the cooperation between the state and foreign partners.

The cooperation between BP and SOCAR serves as an example for many countries today. The “Contract of the Century”, as well as the contract signed and being implemented for the Shah Deniz field, have together turned the State Oil Company into a major international company. Several years ago, I set the goal of turning SOCAR into a large international oil company. To this end, we have expanded the activities of SOCAR. Many enterprises were transferred to it. Today, the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan works actively both in the country and abroad. Our investments abroad amount to billions of dollars. Almost \$20 billion is to be invested in projects in Turkey alone, of which half has already been invested. SOCAR is doing a lot of work, has investments in other countries – European states and neighboring countries. The Azerbaijani state supports the activities of SOCAR. This enhances our economic power. In the future, this will also secure a large inflow of currency from new sources. I would like to note two projects being implemented in the country now – the construction of SOCAR’s polymer and carbamide plants of SOCAR. These two projects are of great importance for the development of the country’s non-oil sector. Both projects are being implemented on schedule, and I am sure that they will be put into operation next year.

Thus, the oil strategy of Heydar Aliyev has been enriched with new directions today. This strategy provides tremendous support for the overall development of Azerbaijan. We are currently working on new projects. As you know, the Southern Gas Corridor is well under way. This is also a giant project on a global scale. Investments in it amount to \$40 billion, and all work is on schedule. Shah Deniz-2 and the South Caucasus Pipeline have been implemented by almost 100 per cent and TANAP by more than 80 per cent. Thus, we are successfully implementing the Southern Gas Corridor project as well, and I am sure we will fully implement it.

A new agreement related to the extension of the “Contract of the Century” was signed this year. This is also a historic event. A contract has been signed on more favorable terms until 2050. As a result of the implementation of this contract, Azerbaijan will receive \$3.6 billion as a bonus alone. The share of the State Oil Company has been increased from 11 to 25 per cent. At the same time, SOCAR will act as the operator, and Azerbaijan will retain 75 per cent of the profit oil until 2050, i.e. for the entire duration of the contract.

This shows once again that we have ample natural resources. I remember quite well that when we were building the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, there were forces trying to obstruct our work. Campaigns of slander were conducted against us. The environmental theme was artificially put forward, as if there would be an environmental impact. Just look at the once polluted parts of Baku where we have established parks. We have created a paradise there. Look at what the Bibiheybat field, our oldest field, looked like before and what it looks like now. The previous appearance was a disaster. Today it is one of the most beautiful parks in Baku. So we are investing a lot in improving the environmental situation. At that time, they tried to interfere with our work under this pretext.

The second topic was related to oil reserves. It was said that there is no oil in Azerbaijan, that it was not necessary to build the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline as it would never justify itself. We have been producing oil together with the consortium since 1997, for 20 years. As I have already mentioned, the consortium has produced 460 million tons of oil from Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli alone. But there are still great confirmed reserves. The extension of the contract until 2050 indicates that we have enough oil – no-one should be worried. They wanted to raise the same topic in connection with gas. Once again the ill-wishers, those who do not like us started to spread rumors that there is no gas in Azerbaijan. Today, the Shah Deniz-2 project is a reality. I should note that our confirmed and corrected oil reserves constitute 1.5 billion tons, and according to forecasts up to 2 billion tons. Confirmed gas reserves are 2.6 trillion cubic meters, and the forecast is approximately 3-4 trillion cubic meters. The development of the Azeri-Chirag field demonstrates that we always put forward very conservative figures. I remember quite well that when the contract was being signed in 1994, the reserves of the Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli field were estimated at 511 million tons. As a young worker of the State Oil Company back then, I wondered how it was possible to calculate with such accuracy – 511 million tons. Why not 510 or 512 million, but 511? Of course, this was a conventional figure. Today’s calculations suggest that actual reserves of the fields are at least twice as large because of those conditional 511 million tons, 462 million have already been extracted. Look at how much oil there will be until 2050.

Therefore, I am sure that our forecasts will be confirmed because we assess the available resources very conservatively. The Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli field will operate at least until 2050. I am sure that the Shah Deniz field will operate for at least 100 years. In the near future, we expect gas production from the Absheron field. There are great prospects in the fields Umid and Babek. Starting from next year, the State Oil Company will be working very actively in these fields. Some work is already being done but even more work remains in the offing.

Our financial situation is very stable and positive. We have no problems. Ill-wishers are trying to discredit us in this too, claiming that our financial situation is allegedly not good. Our financial situation can serve as an example for many countries. In 10 months of this year, we have increased our foreign exchange reserves by \$4.5 billion. Before the end of the year they will increase further. Our external debt accounts for 18 per cent of the gross domestic product. This is a figure desired for many countries – it sounds like a miracle. Our economic success is recognized by Davos, the world’s leading economic forum. We are in 35th place on a global scale. We do not have any financial problems or difficulties. A large amount of money will be allocated to the oil industry next year. Of course, the State Oil Company earns money itself, but the state always supports and should support this company, because it is our strategic asset.

Azerbaijan has fully provided for its energy security. We used to receive gas from abroad, but now we are selling it abroad. We used to receive electricity, but now we are selling it. We sell oil and oil products. We will sell large volumes of gas, and the country will receive more money. We use these funds very rationally and transparently. As you know, the revenues from oil are transparent stored in the State Oil Fund. This is one of the world’s most transparent oil funds which have undergone international audit. We allocate these funds to important national projects. We increase the reserves and spend these funds on the most important social and infrastructure projects – of course, after the Milli Majlis of Azerbaijan approves these expenses. These include the solution of IDP problems – about 100 IDP settlements have been built, as well as schools, infrastructure projects, of course, projects related to the development of the oil industry. In particular, the construction of a giant drilling rig was also financed by the State Oil Fund. It was from this source that the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway was financed as well.

We have recently celebrated the opening of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway. This is a great historic achievement. The commissioning of this railway is a historic achievement for the Azerbaijani people and state. We know this already, and everyone will see and feel it even

more. What is the financial source of this? The State Oil Fund! How did the funds reach the State Oil Fund? Thanks to the hard work of oil workers. If we hadn't built the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum pipelines, if this corridor had not been opened, if we had no money, how could we build it? I can say that right after I was elected president, I began to deal with this project. I saw that there were great difficulties in it. First of all, there were financial difficulties and technical issues, as it was necessary to reach many agreements among the countries involved. At that time, we resolved this. There were political obstacles hampering this project. If we had no financial resources, how could we build Baku-Tbilisi-Kars? After all, a significant part of this road, 504 kilometers, passes through the territory of Azerbaijan. More than 200 kilometers pass through the territory of Georgia. Azerbaijan resolved financial and technical issues there too.

The length of the road is about 850 kilometers. So we have achieved this only as a result of effective work, using the funds stored in our transparent Oil Fund, and thanks to the hard work of oil workers.

Azerbaijan is a prosperous state today. Wherever you look, everything pleases the eye. Baku is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. All our cities are improving. All the problems that have troubled people for centuries are being addressed. Gasification, drinking water, electricity, roads – how are we doing all this? Using our revenues! What is the main source of income? It is the oil produced by Azerbaijani oil workers. The people of Azerbaijan should always know this. Today we justifiably talk about the non-oil sector, and a lot is being done in this area.

In order to achieve sustainable development, the non-oil sector should develop as it serves to diversify the country's economy. And there are great strides in this area. I have repeatedly said that the non-oil sector is a priority. Why? Because I believe that all the results achieved in the oil and gas sector are in line with the program. We have achieved everything we wanted. There is not a single outstanding or delayed project. Therefore, of course, the non-oil sector is a priority. But the oil industry, the oil and gas sector will always play a decisive role for the country's economy and its further development.

We have secured our economic independence today. Economic independence forms the basis of political independence. If we depend on anyone, we will never be able to pursue an independent policy, we will never be able to express our principled position the way we do now. Economic independence has led to political independence, and today Azerbaijan is one of a handful of countries on a global scale pursuing an independent policy. Economic

independence, in turn, is achieved thanks to the hard work of oil workers. Therefore, everyone should know that the country's oil and gas sector will be our main pillar for many years to come. Therefore, the Azerbaijani state and oil workers should continue to make every effort to develop this sector.

In 1971, an official ceremony chaired by Heydar Aliyev was held at the Opera and Ballet Theater marking a billion tons of oil. Today, we are celebrating the extraction of two billion tons of oil by the independent Azerbaijan in this magnificent center bearing the name of the great leader. Independence is our greatest asset. Only in the years of independence has Azerbaijan achieved high peaks. Only in the years of independence have the people of Azerbaijan become the masters of their natural resources. The fact that today's ceremony is being held at the Center bearing the name of the great leader is both natural – because it is our main assembly hall and the main center – and symbolic. The contributions of Heydar Aliyev both in the 1970s-1980s and in the 1990s provide for the present-day Azerbaijani realities. We, for our part, will continue to do everything possible to develop the oil and gas industry of Azerbaijan.

Dear friends, I sincerely congratulate you on this historic event once again. Glory to the oil workers of Azerbaijan!

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

1 December 2017, Baku

List of documents signed during the official visit:

- The Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on economic and trade cooperation
- The Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on the promotion and reciprocal protection of investments
- The Agreement between the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Higher Education of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on cooperation in the sphere of education
- The Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in the field of security and law enforcement activity
- The Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan concerning air services

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

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. President for accepting my invitation to come to Azerbaijan. This morning we opened the 7th ministerial conference of the Istanbul process called the “Heart of Asia”.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the President and the Government of Afghanistan for the great social and economic successes the country has achieved. We have had many meetings with Mr. President. I remember our first meeting. Mr. President’s outlook for the future related to the development of Afghanistan made a deep impression on me. I am glad that his plans are being implemented. I am sure that the reforms, transformation and development he has initiated will yield good results. As a friendly and partner country, Azerbaijan is proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with Afghanistan on this development path.

If we look at the history of diplomatic relations between our countries, our cooperation is

at the highest level now. We are good partners and friends. As I have already said, we have had regular meetings with Mr. President. This is the third visit of President Ashraf Ghani to Azerbaijan. This in itself is an indicator of the high level of our partnership.



We have excellent political ties. We support each other in international organizations. We are grateful to Afghanistan for its fair position on the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in accordance with the norms of international law. In its turn, Azerbaijan supports Afghanistan in all international organizations. We are participants of the

Resolute Support Mission. We provide multimodal transit and use of our airspace. We have decided to increase the number of our military personnel serving in Afghanistan and thereby contribute to stability, peace and development in Afghanistan.

It is quite obvious that stability can be ensured only through economic and social development. Therefore, there are always economic issues among the topics we are discussing. We see great potential here. Today we discussed very important issues related to bilateral economic cooperation. The issues discussed are evidence that our agenda is quite extensive. The agreements signed today will also allow us the opportunity to successfully achieve our goals. We will set up a joint working group to discuss all issues related to economic cooperation and reforms.

We are proud that Afghanistan will become one of the states that we take advantage of our “ASAN xidmət” experience. “ASAN xidmət” has created a true revolution in the area of public services in Azerbaijan. The approval rating of this entity is 98 per cent. So it is close to 100 per cent. This organization has made great changes in the field of public services. We are very happy that we will provide these services to our Afghan brothers. In the years of independence, Azerbaijan has moved from one system to another – from a planned to a market economy. Our country has moved from chaos, destruction, recession and a 1,000-per cent inflation to development, progress and prosperity, a situation where unemployment and poverty are at a low level.

I believe that this experience can be of interest to our Afghan brothers. Among the issues of practical cooperation, we have discussed ways of increasing the volume of our trade.

There is great potential there. We have discussed the investment of Azerbaijani state and private capital in Afghanistan. There is also great potential in the development of industry, agriculture, energy, oil and gas, extractive industries.

Of course, we have held discussions on the transport network. Azerbaijan and Afghanistan are involved in large-scale transport projects. During the conference today, both of us touched upon the “Lapis Lazuli” transport project. This is a very important project for all the participating states. At the same time, Azerbaijan, together with neighboring and partner countries, completed the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway project, which opens a new path from Asia to Europe and back. It is the shortest route among all active routes.

Therefore, the creation of this transport network not only opens up new opportunities, but also contributes to overall development. We have witnessed this in our country too. Even after the construction of rural roads, we immediately observe growth in production, easy access to markets and revitalization. Therefore, the linking of our countries by Central Asian and European railway networks is indeed a historic achievement.

Azerbaijani companies are ready and willing to work as contractors and investors in Afghanistan. We have relevant experience, and we want to be of use to our brothers in Afghanistan. Considering the fact that Mr. President and his colleagues are implementing giant projects in Afghanistan and there are certain plans, there is great potential for joint business activity.

Today we also held discussions related to loans, contracts, joint ventures, and as I have already mentioned, our agenda in the field of economy, transport and energy is quite broad. So we have reached agreement that relevant state bodies will deal with these issues on a daily basis and regularly report to Presidents. I hope that our intervention will not be required, and the work will be conducted in a timely and proper manner.

In the forthcoming period, we will witness even stronger cooperation between our countries in the economic sphere. Our economic cooperation should be at the same level consistent with political cooperation. This is our goal. Mr. President, let me once again welcome you and express my gratitude to you for being here with us today.

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV
ATTENDED THE “HEART OF ASIA” – ISTANBUL PROCESS (HOA IP) 7TH
MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE UNDER THE MOTTO “SECURITY AND
ECONOMIC CONNECTIVITY TOWARDS A STRENGTHENED HEART OF ASIA
REGION”**

1 December 2017, Baku

Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

Dear Mr. President Ashraf Ghani,
Heads of Delegations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome distinguished representatives of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process participating and supporting and organizations in Baku for the 7th Ministerial Conference.

I express my gratitude to His Excellency, Honorable President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani for accepting my invitation to inaugurate the Baku Ministerial meeting together.

Azerbaijan regards the Heart of Asia – Istanbul Conference as a valuable mechanism of dialogue and cooperation towards attaining peace, reconciliation, security and economic development of Afghanistan. Since joining the Process in 2012 we have been actively participating in this multilateral platform.

Respect for and adherence to the norms and principles of international law, most notably the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the internationally recognized borders of states, respect for sovereign equality and non-interference in internal affairs is a cornerstone for ensuring regional and international security, providing stability and predictability. These principles constitute the basis of our relations and cooperation within the Istanbul Process and it has been reaffirmed in the Heart of Asia Ministerial Declarations.

Azerbaijan’s security has been seriously challenged from the very beginning of the restoration of its independence by military aggression of Armenia. As a country suffering from the continued occupation of the one fifth of its territories and the forcible displacement of hundreds of thousands of its citizens, Azerbaijan fully realizes the value of peace, security and stability.



For more than 20 years Armenia occupies almost 20% percent of the territory of Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh and 7 other regions of our country. More than one million of Azerbaijanis became refugees and internally displaced persons. Armenia conducted the policy of ethnic cleansing against Azerbaijanis in Armenia, in Nagorno-

Karabakh and 7 other regions of Azerbaijan. The situation in the occupied territories is known to the international community. The OSCE has twice sent fact-finding and assessment missions to the occupied territories, and their reports indicate that facts of vandalism have been committed on these lands. Our cities and villages, buildings, graves, cemeteries and mosques were destroyed by Armenia.

In 1993, United Nations Security Council adopted 4 resolutions demanding immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian troops from the territory of Azerbaijan. The status quo is unacceptable. This is stated not only by Azerbaijan, but also by OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries. The presidents of these countries have repeatedly stated that the status quo must be changed and is unacceptable.

Armenia - Azerbaijan Nagorno - Karabakh conflict must be resolved on the basis of international law, relevant UN Security Council resolutions. Territorial integrity of Azerbaijan must be completely restored.

Distinguished guests,

Azerbaijan is among the first and most active supporters of Afghanistan in its endeavors to overcome the ongoing challenges. We remain committed to supporting the stabilization, peaceful reconstruction and development of Afghanistan through bilateral efforts as well as active participation within the multilateral platforms.

Well-being and prosperity of Afghanistan, economic growth and regional cooperation are interlinked and dependent on the overall security environment in the region. It is crucial that while focusing on the reconstruction and economic development of Afghanistan, we continue addressing the security challenges the country faces to maintain the progress made so far.

Thus, it is of utmost importance to continue our joint efforts in fighting the security threats emerging from terrorism, violent extremism and separatism in all their forms and manifestations, and enhance regional cooperation to that end.

Azerbaijan remains committed to sharing its experience with Afghanistan also through bilateral channels and providing training assistance in spheres of good governance, military, law-enforcement and demining. We are contributing to the post-ISAf “Resolute Support Mission” by providing troops, multimodal transit, training and financial assistance.

Transparent, zero tolerant to corruption and bribery the Azerbaijani State Agency for Services and Social Innovations to the Citizens – “ASAN Service” is actively cooperating with Afghanistan. This cooperation is aimed at improving the state services of Afghanistan through establishment of “one stop shop” centers providing public and private services to the citizens.

Azerbaijan is also engaged in cooperation with Afghanistan with a view to facilitate its integration into the regional economy and reviving trade with its neighbors and beyond through increased regional connectivity.

The ongoing regional connectivity projects initiated by Azerbaijan, including such strategic backbone components as the recently inaugurated Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad, the new Baku International Sea Trade Port, logistics center on the shores of the Caspian Sea, linking up railway networks of Azerbaijan and Iran represent qualitatively new achievement in developing trans-regional infrastructure with multi-module capabilities along the East-West and North-South axes. These projects will facilitate Afghanistan’s access to global market and provide connectivity in the region, capable of handling cargo and containers in a much shorter, faster, efficient and cost-effective way.

The recently signed Lapis-Lazuli Route Agreement by Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey and Turkmenistan is a major international trade and transport corridor deal that will connect Afghanistan directly to Europe. It is a milestone in Afghanistan’s efforts to achieve connectivity through improvement and building of infrastructure for increased trade across Eurasia. Being part of this Agreement Azerbaijan is glad to contribute to providing multiple options for Afghanistan in terms of transit and transportation.

In view of Afghanistan’s role as an important hub for regional trade, transit and transport, the role of the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA) in sharing

the benefits of this geographical location and supporting the sustainable development in Afghanistan is very important.

Helping Afghanistan is not only a matter of human solidarity. It is about providing security and unlocking the huge potential of this country in terms of regional economic cooperation for the benefit of the entire region. The subject of the Baku Ministerial meeting, “Security and Economic Connectivity towards a Strengthened Heart of Asia Region” is particularly chosen with the aim of holding strategic debates around these two essential dimensions of providing peace, security and prosperity in the Heart of Asia region. We are confident that with its suitable geographic location, determination of its people and efforts of its Government, Afghanistan will be transformed into an important player of regional trade and connectivity in the Heart of Asia.

I believe, our joint efforts to support Afghanistan in the transformation decade of 2015-2025 is an important pillar of Afghanistan’s aspiration to become what it deserves to be – a secure, unified, prosperous country, at peace with its neighbors.

I would like to reiterate Azerbaijan’s support for Afghanistan’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence and wish the Government of National Unity every success in its efforts towards achieving a unified, peaceful and prosperous future for the friendly and brotherly people of Afghanistan.

Thank you.

**SEVENTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE OF
THE HEART OF ASIA - ISTANBUL PROCESS**

1 December 2017, Baku

BAKU DECLARATION

“Security & Economic Connectivity Towards A Strengthened Heart of Asia Region”

1. We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and high-level representatives of the participating and supporting countries, joined by high level representatives of the international and regional organizations, have met in Baku, the Republic of Azerbaijan, on 1st December 2017 at our Seventh Ministerial Conference of the Heart of Asia - Istanbul Process (HoA-IP). The Conference was co-chaired by H.E. Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan and H.E. Mr. Salahuddin Rabbani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

2. We express our gratitude to H.E. Mr. Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and H.E. Mr. Ilham Heydar oğlu Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan for inaugurating the Seventh Ministerial Conference.

3. We recall the six Ministerial Conferences in Istanbul (2011), Kabul (2012), Almaty (2013), Beijing (2014), Islamabad (2015) and Amritsar (2016) and we reaffirm our commitment to the principles, objectives, and outcomes enshrined in the Declarations of these Conferences that have defined the ideals for the working of the HoA-IP and its overarching goal of promoting peace and prosperity in the Heart of Asia region.

4. We reaffirm that the HoA-IP is a unique and important platform for enhancing dialogue and building trust among regional countries. The HoA-IP promotes regional political, security and economic cooperation with the goal of building peace, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan and the entire region.

5. We stress the need to advance regional cooperation as an effective and necessary means to address common challenges and to promote security, stability and socio-economic development in the Heart of Asia region. To this common end, we renew our commitment to strengthening enhanced cooperation among participating countries in a sincere and effective manner.

6. We reaffirm our commitment to the United Nations Charter and its enshrined principles of sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, inviolability of internationally recognized borders, sovereign equality of nations and non-intervention in the internal affairs of other states as well as universally recognized principles and norms of international law. Furthermore, we reaffirm our commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We reiterate the importance of increased political dialogue and consultation between the countries comprising the Heart of Asia for a stable, peaceful and prosperous region.

7. We reiterate the obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the political independence, territorial integrity, or sovereignty of any state. We reaffirm our commitment to develop friendly relations among HoA countries based on good neighborly relations, peaceful co-existence, and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

8. We reaffirm our appreciation and express strong and unequivocal support for the ongoing constructive efforts and commitments of the Government of Afghanistan to promote regional connectivity and the development of infrastructure links as well as building an environment of increased trust.

9. We recognize the need to strengthen trust and cooperation in the region in order to meaningfully promote the stability and prosperity of Afghanistan and its surrounding region. We agree to actively participate in a process of continuous and effective dialogue between Afghanistan and its near and extended neighbours concerning all issues of common interest and importance for Afghanistan and the region as a whole.

Fight Against Terrorism

10. We recognize terrorism, violent extremism conducive to terrorism, extremism, radicalization, separatism and sectarianism, and linkages among them, as the gravest challenges to the peace, security and economic development of Afghanistan, the Heart of Asia region and the international state system in general.

11. We reaffirm that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group.

12. The fight against terrorism is a major priority for all Heart of Asia countries and we reiterate our resolve to work together to prevent and suppress terrorist acts through increased regional solidarity and cooperation, in accordance with the UN Charter and obligations under international law, including international human rights law, international refugee law

as applicable and international humanitarian law, as well as through the full implementation of the relevant international conventions, the UN Security Council Resolutions and the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy. We express our readiness to work with the newly-established United Nations Office on Counter Terrorism to prevent, suppress and eradicate terrorism in the Heart of Asia region, in accordance with the UNGA Resolution 21/79.

13. We strongly call for concerted regional and international cooperation to ensure elimination of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including dismantling of terrorist sanctuaries and safe havens, preventing and interdicting the movement of terrorists and terrorist groups, including foreign terrorist fighters, across the countries of the Heart of Asia region, as well as disrupting all financial, tactical, logistical or any other support for terrorism without any distinction. In this regard, we call upon all states to take action against these terrorist entities in accordance with their respective national counter-terrorism policies, their international obligations and the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy.

14. We reaffirm our recognition made in Islamabad in the 5th HoA-IP Ministerial Conference that violent extremism conducive to terrorism facilitates, encourages, incites and justifies acts of terrorism and violence and we are committed to take all relevant measures and cooperate to prevent and counter terrorism. We recognize the necessity of taking serious measures to address radicalization and recruitment of youth by terrorist networks and their supporters. We realize that the radicalization of elements of the population, especially youth, can only be prevented by effective de-radicalization and counter-radicalization strategies involving all the Heart of Asia countries. We commit to learning from and applying lessons learned in de-radicalization and counter-radicalization by individual Heart of Asia countries.

15. In recognition of the Heart of Asia as a regional platform for addressing regional threats, we believe that a concerted and coherent regional approach is required to combat the menace of terrorism, extremism and violence. We welcome the first expert meeting on the draft of the regional counter-terrorism strategy held on the 20th of September on the margin of the 72nd session of the UNGA, following the decisions taken by the HoA-IP Ministerial Conferences in Islamabad and Amritsar. We agree to continue the expert meetings to discuss the key elements of the proposed draft framework of the strategy and present the recommendations to the Senior Officials Meeting of the HoA-IP.

16. We remain gravely concerned by the high level of violence in Afghanistan and the Heart of Asia region by the Taliban and all terrorist groups including those referenced in the previous HoA Declarations of 2015 and 2016. Having a symbiotic relationship with organized crime,

these terrorist groups continue to pose grave threats to the security and stability of our nations, violating the sovereignty and security of our countries with impacts on the political and geopolitical situation in our region. We further call on the Counter Terrorism CBM's Regional Technical Group to finalize an agreed consolidated list of terrorist groups that threaten the peace and security of Afghanistan and the Heart of Asia region and to elaborate ways and methodologies for fighting them through a joint effort. While Afghanistan continues to fight at the forefront of the war against these terrorist groups, the HoA-IP participating countries support the efforts of the government of Afghanistan towards peace and reconciliation with the Afghan Taliban and its fight against terrorist groups.

17. We condemn in the strongest terms the terrorist attacks throughout this year in Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Russia and elsewhere in the region which took the lives of hundreds of innocent people, including the 11th January Kandahar, the 31st May Kabul and the 7th November Jalalabad attacks against the diplomatic community, causing hundreds of injuries and the destruction of public and private properties.

18. We commend the Afghan National Defense Security Forces (ANDSF) in fighting terrorist groups including Daesh/ISIL in Afghanistan and for their brave role in ensuring peace and security in that country. We welcome the agreements between the International Community and the Government of Afghanistan that provide for continued financial and military-technical support and assistance to the ANDSF until 2020, as well as the training, advice and assistance provided to them by the post-ISAF Mission to achieve long-term, sustainable security and stability in Afghanistan. We also pay tribute to the sacrifices made by the ANDSF and international forces.

Narcotics & Organized Crime

19. We are concerned about this year's drastic increase in illicit cultivation and production of opium in Afghanistan, the volume of drug trafficking, drug trade, trafficking of precursors and the rising demand for illicit narcotics in the HoA region and beyond. This poses a threat to the socio-economic development, security and stability not only in Afghanistan, but also in the surrounding region and the world as a whole. Further eradication of opium cultivation, alternative livelihoods, law enforcement, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and public information efforts are required as part of a comprehensive and integrated strategy to address this common challenge, based on the principle of common and shared responsibility, and consistent with the international drug Conventions.

20. We take note of the Regional Conference held on 9-10 October 2017 in Kabul to discuss

the problem of counter narcotics and make efforts to draft a counter narcotics regional strategy. We also welcome the High-level International Conference on ‘Promoting Afghanistan’s Alternative Development Initiatives Amongst Regional and International Partners’ which was held on 16-17 November 2017 by UNODC in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. We support alternative development measures that should be promoted within the framework of comprehensive strategies for crop control, preventing drug trade and precursors trafficking, including eradication and law enforcement. We believe it is essential to implement a comprehensive approach in addressing the drug problem in Afghanistan, the Heart of Asia region and globally. We stress the urgent need to respond to the serious challenges posed by the nexus between revenue from illicit narcotics and financial support for terrorist entities in Afghanistan, the Heart of Asia region, and globally. We emphasize the need to accelerate efforts on implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action of 2009, the Ministerial Statement of 2014 by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the outcome document of the Thirtieth Special Session of the UN General Assembly on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS) entitled ‘Our Joint Commitment to Effectively Addressing Encountering the World Drug Problem’ held in April 2016.

Refugees & Returnees

21. We commend countries in the region and beyond for their hospitality and all kinds of support in hosting millions of Afghan refugees for around four decades. We acknowledge in particular the role of neighboring Iran and Pakistan in hosting Afghan refugees for such a long time and call for creating conducive conditions in Afghanistan for voluntary, safe and dignified return of the refugees to their homeland. In respecting the well being and human rights of the refugees, we urge the international community to provide support and targeted assistance for their dignified repatriation and their sustainable resettlement in Afghanistan, with emphasis on youth, education and livelihoods. The international community should also continue to assist the host communities in taking care of the essential needs of Afghan refugees living in these countries.

22. We take note of the Afghanistan-Pakistan-UNHCR and Afghanistan-Iran-UNHCR Tripartite Commissions on Voluntary Repatriation of Afghan Refugees from Iran and Pakistan as vital steps in the Solutions Strategy and support the Final Statement of the ‘UNHCR Executive Committee High Level Segment’ refocusing the international community’s attention on the Afghan refugee situation in this critical period. We urge donors to continue to donate to the UNHCR to support the repatriation grant – which has been halved – for voluntary repatriation to its previous levels.

Role of International Community

23. We appreciate the commitment of the International Community for supporting the government and people of Afghanistan and stress the crucial need for continuation of such support for achieving a peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan. We appreciate the continuation of such assistance for Afghanistan. We commend and recognize the importance of the development assistance commitments made by over 100 countries and international organizations during the Brussels Conference last year based on mutual accountability.

24. We call on the International Community to further strengthen international and regional cooperation towards sustained efforts for a secure, stable and prosperous Afghanistan, based increasingly on infrastructure connectivity within the Heart of Asia region and enhanced economic ties.

25. We appreciate the continued efforts by the OIC and Afghanistan to convene the International Ulema Conference on peace and security in Afghanistan with inclusive representation of the Islamic countries and are convinced that a positive outcome will contribute to lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan. We also appreciate the proposal in the 3/44 POL Resolution of the 44th. Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC for the establishment of an Islamic University in Kabul, Afghanistan, and welcome OIC Secretary General's delegation composed of the IDB, ISF and other interested potential donor states to Kabul for consultations with the Afghan officials to explore the legal, practical and financial aspects of the project. The establishment of this University could contribute toward the promotion of education, de-radicalization and peace building in Afghanistan.

26. We recognize the significance of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and its subsequent resolutions on the role of women in conflict prevention, peace negotiations and post-conflict processes in the Heart of Asia region.

Regional Organizations

27. We recognize the important role of the regional organizations covering different combinations of the Heart of Asia countries. In particular, we highlight the role of Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the United Nations Special Programme

for the Economies of Central Asia (UNSPECA), and the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC), in the context of cooperation towards enhanced security and economic development in the region.

28. We welcome Afghanistan's active participation in the regional organizations it is currently a member of, including SAARC, ECO, CICA, ACD, UNSPECA and CAREC. We also welcome the full membership granted by SCO to Pakistan and India, and further recognize Afghanistan and Iran's official requests to become full members of that organization. In this regard, we note the successful holding of the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group meeting in Moscow on 11 October 2017.

29. We welcome the recommendation of the HoA-IP 2016 Annual Report regarding the need to strengthen the relations of HoA-IP with other regional organizations, as well as conducting a study and exploring some areas of cooperation for developing a better framework of cooperation and present their suggestions to the SOM meetings of the HoA-IP.

Peace and Reconciliation Efforts

30. We appreciate the government of Afghanistan's efforts to reach a peaceful political settlement to conflict through pursuing peace talks with those parties and groups who are willing to join the peace process. We welcome the peace agreement with Hizb-e-Islami Gulbuddin Hekmatyar reached in September 2016 and currently being implemented. We expect that the implementation of the agreement will lead to the reduction of violence in Afghanistan, and establish a precedent for future peace talks with all other armed groups.

31. We recognize that a politically negotiated settlement remains important for durable peace in Afghanistan. We reiterate our support to the Government of Afghanistan in its efforts to advance an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process. In this regard, we welcome the steps taken by the Heart of Asia Countries since the sixth Amritsar HoA-IP Ministerial Conference, including the Kabul Process Conference, the Moscow format meetings, the work of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) and other regional initiatives that aim to bring peace and stability to Afghanistan through an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process.

32. We urge the Afghan Taliban to enter into peace talks with the Government of Afghanistan. While recognizing the importance of the contributions of neighboring countries and regional partners in this process, we urge all those countries in the region and beyond who have leverage and influence over the Taliban to use their leverage and influence to bring the Taliban to the negotiation table under the leadership of Afghanistan for the purpose of finding a

peaceful and permanent political solution to the conflict in Afghanistan.

Regional Economic Cooperation

33. We acknowledge the crucial role of Afghanistan as a natural land-bridge in promoting regional connectivity and economic integration in the Heart of Asia region, and we reiterate our strong support for Afghanistan's efforts to use its geographic location to enhance wider regional economic cooperation. We further stress that economic development will contribute to achieving lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan and the region, and enhance regional economic integration. In this regard, we welcome the practical implementation of TAPI and CASA 1000, the ongoing discussions on TAP 500-KV, the progress made with respect to the Five Nations Railway including the completion of the 3rd phase and the ongoing steps towards the construction of the fourth phase of Khaf -Herat- railway segment as well as the ongoing work on Mazar Sharif-Herat Railway; the completion of the first stage of the Asian International Railway Corridor between Imamnazar (Turkmenistan) and Aqina (Afghanistan), the initial stages of TAT linking Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan projects as well as the completion of Mazar-e-Sharif-Hairatan Railroad and Surkhon – Pule Khumri electricity line. We welcome the inauguration of the air cargo corridor between Afghanistan and India and the MoU on Jointly Building the Silk Road Economic and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, as well as the launch of the construction of Serhetabat – Torghondi Railway.

34. We are encouraged by the continued commitment of regional countries to establish significant North-South and East-West corridors within the Heart of Asia Region with a focus on the development of infrastructure connecting Afghanistan and the region to seaports. We also note the significant ongoing steps taken by Afghanistan, Iran and India and the operationalization of their transport and transit agreement based on sea access through Chabahar. We recognize the crucial significance of ensuring multiple sea and land access required by Afghanistan to markets in the region and beyond. In this context, we welcome the signing of the Lapis Lazuli Route Agreement and support its timely implementation, as well as the ongoing activities under the Belt and Road Initiative as it relates to Afghanistan. Once implemented, these corridors will provide additional and dependable access for Afghanistan and the wider region to regional and global markets.

35. We acknowledge the necessity to maximize the speed of movement of goods across the region, and in this context we agree to collaborate more closely in removing the non-tariff barriers to trade and transit, establishing and implementing bilateral and multilateral

regional transit-trade framework agreements. In this regard, we stress the urgent need to integrate, through the land route, South Asia and Central Asia through the expansion of existing bilateral trade and transit agreements both northwards and southwards.

36. We recognize the importance of the role of small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) in the economic growth and income generation in the HoA region. We commit to undertake measures to strengthen the growth of SMEs, including women entrepreneurship, and enable their expansion across borders into other countries of the region. We stress the importance of market access for SMEs in particular for women entrepreneurs.

37. We recognize the important role of RECCA as a regional platform for promoting economic cooperation in Afghanistan and the region. In this regard, we welcome the successful conclusion of the 7th Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA VII) held on 14-15 November 2017 in Ashgabat, and the valuable role of Turkmenistan in hosting this Conference. We reiterate our support to the implementation of the decisions on priority regional projects in key areas of energy, transport networks, trade and transit facilitation, communications, B2B and labor support as reflected in the RECCA VII's Declaration.

Confidence Building Measures

38. Reiterating our collective support to promote the implementation of the six CBMs identified in the HoA-IP, we note with satisfaction that a number of activities under various CBMs were carried out since we last met in Amritsar in December 2016.

39. We welcome Afghanistan's initiative to appoint technical focal points for CBMs from sectoral line ministries, which will help mainstream CBMs and increase their effective implementation.

40. Expressing appreciation for convening of the Regional Technical Group (RTGs) meetings and implementation of the activities organized in the framework of the CBMs by Iran in March, Turkmenistan in April, India in August, and Azerbaijan and Turkey in November. We request the lead countries of CBMs to hold their RTG meetings regularly as decided in Beijing (2014) and in Islamabad (2015) HoA-IP Ministerial Declarations. We also call upon participating and supporting countries to collaborate closely to implement prioritized activities under the CBMs of which they are members. We particularly urge the lead countries to ensure the implementation of prioritized activities of each CBM with the assistance of supporting countries and organizations.

41. We appreciate the valuable support of the international community to the HoA-IP. In this context, we look forward to continued contributions of the supporting countries and organizations to realize the implementation of activities prioritized under each CBM.

42. We welcome the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process 2016 Annual Report. We encourage participating countries and supporters to consider the recommendations it proposes for more effective implementation of the CBMs. We also endorse the recommendation of the 2016 Annual Report regarding the inclusion of culture in the Education CBM, and agree that from now it will be called the ‘Culture and Education CBM’.

43. Realizing the significant role of agriculture in the economic development of Afghanistan and the Heart of Asia region, we task the co-chairs to work on developing an Agriculture CBM plan to be discussed and agreed upon by the Senior Officials Meeting to be held in the first half of 2018.

Conclusion

44. We task our Senior Officials to hold the first 2018 Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of this process, within three months of this Conference, and engage in substantive discussions on various important subjects in accordance with our commitments in Beijing, Islamabad, Amritsar and Baku, and also to review the plans submitted by the RTGs.

45. We express our sincere appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan for hosting the Seventh Ministerial Conference of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process in Baku. We welcome the willingness of the Republic of Turkey to host the Ministerial Conference in 2018 and the Republic of Tajikistan in 2019.

46. We welcome the presence of guest countries Uzbekistan, Republic of Latvia and Organizations UNODC, UNRCCA, UNDP, Turkic Council and International Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation in this Conference and appreciate their participation and interest in the Heart of Asia Istanbul Process.

47. This Declaration was adopted in Baku, Azerbaijan on 1st December 2017 by the Foreign Ministers and high-level representatives of the participating countries of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, People’s Republic of China, Republic of India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Russian Federation, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey, Turkmenistan, the United Arab Emirates,

and the United Nations. This Declaration was welcomed and supported by the Foreign Ministers and high-level representatives of the supporting countries of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process, and the high-ranking representatives of the supporting international and regional organizations: Commonwealth of Australia, Canada, Royal Kingdom of Denmark, Arab Republic of Egypt, European Union, Republic of Finland, Republic of France, Federal Republic of Germany, Republic of Iraq, Republic of Italy, Japan, Republic of Poland, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States, Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

BƏYANATLAR – STATEMENTS – ЗАЯВЛЕНИЯ

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

1 April 2017, Baku

One year has passed since the April 2016 escalation in the frontline. On April 2, 2016, the armed forces of Armenia increased fighting from their positions in the occupied territories, subjecting the armed forces of Azerbaijan along the line of contact and the adjacent densely populated areas under control of Azerbaijan to intensive fire with heavy artillery and large-caliber weapons. As a result of Armenia's attacks and subsequent hostilities, 34 towns and villages in Azerbaijan were shelled, 6 civilians, including children were killed and 33 were seriously wounded. Substantial damages were inflicted upon the private and public property.

The armed forces of Azerbaijan have taken the necessary counter measures within its internationally recognized borders to ensure the safety of civilian population and to stop the further provocations of Armenia.

Armenia's provocative offensive actions also caused casualties and injuries among the servicemen of the armed forces of Azerbaijan. Numerous signs of post-mortem mutilation of the bodies of Azerbaijani servicemen committed by Armenian side were also registered.

On 5 April 2016 in Moscow, under the mediation efforts of the Russian Federation, the ceasefire was agreed between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Despite that, Armenia subjected to intensive heavy artillery fire the civilian Azerbaijani population in the towns and villages situated along the line of contact on April 26-27, 2016 as well.

The April escalation once again demonstrated that the unlawful presence of the armed forces of Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan remains the main cause of escalation in the frontline and is the major impediment to political settlement of the conflict.

After April escalation upon the initiative of Foreign Ministers of OSCE Minsk Group C-Chair countries the meeting of Presidents of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia was organized in Vienna on May 16, 2016. At the invitation of the President of the Russian Federation, the Presidents of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Armenia and Russian Federation met in Saint Petersburg on June 20, 2016 and had substantive

negotiations towards the resolution of Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

However, since then by deliberate political-military provocations and different pretexts Armenia did not let to sustain the momentum and transform the understandings reached in Sankt-Petersburg meeting into the concrete actions, reduce tension and did not start the withdrawal its troops from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

The recent statements and warmongering rhetoric of political-military leadership of Armenia and its attempts to boycott and precondition the substantive negotiations indicate the apparent unwillingness of the Armenia to engage constructively for the settlement of conflict. Continued efforts of Armenia to strengthen its military build-up in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, illegally changing the demographic, cultural and physical character of these territories reveal notorious intentions of the Armenian side to derail the peace process and ensure annexation of Azerbaijan's territories.

The Republic of Azerbaijan once again underlines that it shall never reconcile with the occupation of its territories. 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 principled basis for the settlement of the conflict is laid down in the United Nations Security Council resolutions 822(1993), 853(1993), 874(1993) and 884(1993), which condemn the use of force against Azerbaijan and occupation of its territories and reaffirm the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and the inviolability of its internationally recognized borders. In those resolutions, the United Nations reaffirmed that the Nagorno-Karabakh region is an inalienable part of Azerbaijan and demanded immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces from all occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

We urge the international community and the OSCE Minsk Group Co-chairs to demand from Armenia to engage constructively in substantive negotiations with a view of withdrawing its armed forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and changing the status quo of occupation and ensuring lasting peace in the region.

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

8 May 2017, Baku

The armed forces of Armenia occupied an ancient Azerbaijani city of Shusha on May 8, 1992. As a result of occupation, Shusha city and 30 villages of Shusha region were destroyed, 195 innocent civilians were killed, 165 were wounded and 58 persons still remain missing. More than 24.000 inhabitants of Shusha were subjected to ethnic cleansing.

The occupation of Shusha was part of Armenia's systematic policy of occupation and aggression against Azerbaijan. As an outcome of this policy, Armenia by use of force occupied the Nagorno-Karabakh region and seven adjacent districts of Azerbaijan, conducted notorious ethnic cleansing against more than one million Azerbaijanis in the seized territories and committed other serious war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Along with being an inalienable part of the internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan Shusha city, which is under occupation for 25 years has high historical, cultural, moral and symbolic meaning for the people of Azerbaijan. Occupation of Shusha city, which is called "Cradle of Azerbaijani music", "Conservatory of the Orient" inflicted heavy damage to the cultural, spiritual and moral heritage of the people of Azerbaijan.

In the framework of Armenia's deliberate policy of destruction, plundering, desecration and embezzlement of cultural and religious heritage of Azerbaijan in the occupied territories, only in Shusha more than 170 buildings with the status of architectural monument, 160 cultural and historical monuments, mosques, rare manuscripts were destroyed and subjected to vandalism. "Imarat of Panah khan complex" and library, Khan palace and Karvansaray, Yukhari and Ashagi Govharaga Mosques, Saatli Mosque, Mausoleum of Vagif, Natavan's House and many others are among them.

The Nagorno-Karabakh region, which is under the temporary occupation by Armenia has always been and will remain inalienable part of Azerbaijan. In 1993, the UN Security Council adopted resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993), condemning the occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan and reaffirming respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and the inviolability of its internationally recognized borders. In those resolutions, the Security Council also confirmed that the Nagorno-Karabakh region is part of Azerbaijan, and demanded immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces from all the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Other international

organizations have adopted a similar position.

The international community supports and respects in an unequivocal and principled manner the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan. It makes clear to Armenia that the current status-quo achieved as a result of occupation will never be accepted. Moreover, it demonstrates that the international community does not and will not accept attempts to change the internationally recognized borders by use of force. In total disregard of the position of the international community and in flagrant violation of the international law, Armenia still refuses to withdraw its troops from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, changes physical, demographic and cultural character of the seized lands, prevents the hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijani forcibly displaced persons from returning to their homes, and exercising their right to property, tries to further consolidate the status quo of occupation.

Armenia misuses the noble principle of self-determination to cover up its attempts to annex territories of the neighboring State, Azerbaijan, by use of force. The situation, which Armenia tries to present as a self-determination of the Armenians living in Azerbaijan, has nothing in common with the principle of self-determination contained in the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act. In fact, the principle of self-determination requires the return of the displaced Azerbaijani community of Nagorno-Karabakh, consisting of more than 80.000 persons including 33.000 inhabitants of Shusha to the Nagorno-Karabakh region, where they will live together with the Armenian community in peace, dignity and prosperity within the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan.

The Republic of Azerbaijan calls upon the international community to force Armenia to peace and exert serious political-diplomatic pressure on Armenia to fulfill its obligations under the international law, cease occupation of Azerbaijan's territories and withdraw its troops from the occupied lands, and engage constructively in the negotiations.

Azerbaijan is the most interested party in the soonest negotiated settlement of the conflict. However, if the negotiations fail to bring as an outcome withdrawal of the armed forces of Armenia from our occupied lands, Azerbaijan retains its inherent rights under the UN Charter to ensure the restoration of its sovereignty and territorial integrity within the internationally recognized borders.

**JOINT STATEMENT BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN**

26 July 2017, Baku

The armed forces of Armenia by using heavy weapons continue in an intensive manner to violate the ceasefire and perpetuate provocations along the line of contact and the state border of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The armed forces of Armenia alongside with the positions of the armed forces of Azerbaijan deliberately and systematically subject to shelling civilians and civilian objects in inhabited areas.

It is very well known that on July 4, as a result of such brutal actions of Armenian armed forces a 51-year-old resident of the village of Alkhanli of the Fizuli district of Azerbaijan, Sahiba Allahverdiyeva and her 2-year-old granddaughter, Zahra Guliyeva were killed, 52-year-old Sarvinaz Guliyeva was seriously wounded, which was strongly condemned by the international community.

On July 25, the armed forces of Armenia used combat unmanned air vehicle (UAV) and dropped on the position of Azerbaijan's armed forces hand-made projectile containing incendiary and explosive charges as well as metal fragments.

In June and July further intensification of Armenia's provocations are not sporadic and isolated acts, against the background of OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs visit to the region, meetings for the resolution of conflict and serious calls by Azerbaijan, OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs and the international community to re-engage in substantive negotiations are being committed in a deliberate and systematic manner.

At the same time such ill-intentioned actions of Armenia are accompanied by politically motivated provocative steps. Regardless of international community's rejection, holding fabricated "presidential" elections by the sham "parliament" of illegal regime established by Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan is yet another vivid proof of that.

Thus, chronicle of events once again prove that when Azerbaijan with the support of the international community makes further efforts to resolve the conflict through serious negotiations, Armenia resorts to provocations to undermine the negotiations, to maintain the status quo of occupation and intentionally escalate the situation. Such actions of Armenia, as

it was the case before, have to be rejected and condemned by the international community in strong and serious manner.

Continuation of Armenia's war against Azerbaijan and occupation of its territories in breach and complete disregard to the norms and principles of international law, not only violates the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan, but also poses serious threat to the regional peace and security.

With a view of ending the conflict and ensuring the peace and stability in the region the withdrawal of armed forces of Armenia from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan is an absolute inevitability.

Despite the efforts of Armenia's false propaganda machine irrefutable facts demonstrate that Armenia and its armed forces conducted aggression against Azerbaijan and occupied its territories and perpetrated ethnic cleansing against Azerbaijani population in the seized lands.

The armed forces of Azerbaijan takes and will take all necessary measures to prevent the cruel provocations of Armenia and guarantee the security of Azerbaijani civilian population inhabited in the vicinity of line of contact.

We over again declare that the responsibility for committed provocations and consequences of continuation of occupation lies completely on the Republic of Armenia

TARİXİ SƏNƏDLƏR – HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS – ИСТОРИЧЕСКИЕ ДОКУМЕНТЫ

KUREKCHAY TREATY*

14 May 1805

IN THE NAME OF GOD ALMIGHTY

We, i.e. Ibrahim Khan Shushinsky (of the city of Shusha) and Karabakhsky (of the Khanate of Karabakh) and General of infantry of all Russia's troops Caucasian inspection on infantry and others Prince (knyaz) Pavel Tsitsianov with the full power given to me by his Emperor's Highness the dearest and greatest Sir Emperor Alexander Pavlovich took up with the help of God the matter of granting everlasting citizenship of all Russian Empire to Ibrahim Khan Shushinsky and Karabakhsky with all family, posterity and possessions of his. The Treaty was concluded, confirmed and signed with the following articles.

THE FIRST ARTICLE

Ibrahim Khan Shushinsky on my behalf, on behalf of my heirs, successor abdicate and vassalage and whichever title it might be any dependence from Persia or any other state and in this way I declare the fact to the whole world that I don't consider myself and the successors of mine of having any power. The only power we recognize is the Supreme Power of His Emperor's Highness All Russia's great Emperor and his greatest heirs and successors of All Russia's Emperor Throne. I promise to keep faithfulness to the throne like faithful slave and to which I have to swear on Koran in accordance with the custom.

THE SECOND ARTICLE

His Emperor's Highness on behalf of his openhearted promise he gives his word of honor and reassures with his Emperor's word of honor for himself and for his successors that favor and care towards Ibrahim Khan Shushinsky and Karabakhsky and will never cease to exist. To prove this fact His Emperor's Highness gives the guarantee to keep the whole possessions and successors of His Majesty (Khan) intact.

THE THIRD ARTICLE

To repay the openheartedness of Ibrahim Khan Shushinsky and Karabakhsky to recognize the supreme and sole power of All Russia's Emperor over himself and his

* Акты собранные Кавказскою Археографическою комиссиею. Том II. Тифлис 1868 г. с. 705.

successors this article states that he, the Khan and later his elder son and each elder successor when accepting the Khanate has the right to receive Emperor's confirmation on the Khanate from the Governor of Georgia. It consist of the deed (official document), official state seal. While receiving it the new Khan is to take the oath to be faithful to Russian Empire and to recognize the supreme and sole power of Russian Emperor over himself and his successors. The form of the oath is enclosed in this Treaty. The present Ibrahim Khan Shushinsky and Karabakhsky took the oath in presence of Governor of Georgia and general of infantry prince Tsitsianov.

THE FOURTH ARTICLE

I, i.e. Ibrahim Khan Shushinsky and Karabakhsky to prove that my intentions towards me and my successors' faithfulness to All Russia's Empire and recognition of the Supreme and sole power of the highest possessors of the Empire promise not to have any relations with neighboring possessors without preliminary consent of Governor of Georgia. And when the envoys from them come or the letters are sent I promise to send most important ones to the Governor and demand the solving of the questions from him and the ones with less importance to be reported and discussed with the person representing the Georgian Governor at my place.

THE FIFTH ARTICLE

His Emperor's Highness accepts the recognition of his supreme and sole power over the possessions of Ibrahim Khan Shushinsky and Karabakhsky with good will and promises: 1) to treat the peoples of these possessions with the same honor as his own faithful citizens without sorting them out from those inhabiting the vast Russian Empire. 2) to preserve continuously the honor of Ibrahim Khan, his spouse, heirs and posterity in the area of Shusha Khanate. 3) to give all the power of internal governing, court and persecution, income and its possession to Ibrahim Khan. 4) in order to guard Ibrahim Khan, his spouse and his possessions I promise to send troops (500 persons) with cannons, headquarters and officers and in case of greater defense the Governor of Georgia will have to increase the number of troops due to circumstances to defend militarily the possessions of All Russia's Empire.

THE SIXTH ARTICLE

I, i.e. Ibrahim Khan Shushinsky and Karabakhsky in response of my faithful diligence make commitment: 1) At the beginning and later on to store up the necessary quantity of wheat and corn by reasonable price determined by the Chief Governor because its supply from Elisavetpol is rather difficult or even must be stated as impossible. 2) The above mentioned troops should be provided with houses to stay in Shusha Fortress. They should be

selected by the will of the Commander. They should be supplied with reasonable quantity of firewood. 3) To make the Elisavetpol bound entrance into Shusha fortress comfortable and to build the road suitable for arba passing. 4) It would be convenient for the government to build up a road from Shusha Fortress in direction of Djevad. The workmen must be paid the salary determined by the government.

THE SEVENTH ARTICLE

His Emperor's Highness showing his goodwill and kindness to his majesty Ibrahim Khan kindly presents his banner with the state Emblem of Russian Empire which is to be kept with him a symbol of Khanate and power. Nobody except the Khan has the right to carry it to war as it was presented by his Emperor's Highness.

THE EIGHTH ARTICLE

I, i.e. Ibrahim Khan Shushinsky and Karabakhsky having His Emperor's Highness permission to spend my usual income make the commitment to pay contribution into the exchequer treasury of His Emperor's Highness in Tiflis 8.000 chervonets (gold piece coin) a year, to pay it in two halves. 1st half on February 1st and the second half on September 1st beginning with the 1st payment of 4.000 chervonets. Conforming the concluding this treaty by his Emperor's Highness and according to Asian tradition, besides the oath to faithfulness I pawn my elder son's Mamed Hassan Aga's son of the second Shukur Ullah to stay forever in Tiflis.

THE NINTH ARTICLE

His Emperor's Highness kindly expressing his mercy as a taken of faithfulness guarantees his Majesty Khan's grandson 10 roubles of Russian money a day.

THE TENTH ARTICLE

This Treaty is concluded forever and is not to be subjected to any changes from now to forever.

THE ELEVENTH ARTICLE

The confirmation of this Treaty by His Emperor's Highness with the state sealed deed (official document) must be presented within 6 months after it's signing or sooner if possible.

In confirmation of that the undersigned parties signed these articles in the camp of Elisavetpol region near Kurek River in summer of 1805 A.D. (Mohammedan 1220) on May 14th.

ВО ИМЯ ВСЕМОГУЩЕГО БОГА

Мы, т. с. Ибрагим хан Шушинский и Карабахский и Всероссийских войск ген. от-инфантерии, Кавказской инспекции по инфантерии, инспектор и проч. кн. Павел Цицианов по полной мочи и власти, данной мне от Е. И. В.¹ всемилостивейшего моего великого Г. И.² Александра Павловича, приступив с помощью Божеею к делу о вступлении Ибрагим хана Шушинского и Карабахского со всем его семейством, потомством и владениями в вечное подданство Всероссийской Империи и ныне счастливо царствующего великого Г. И. Александра Павловича и Его высоким преемникам, заключили, постановили и подписали на следующих артикулах:

АРТИКУЛ ПЕРВЫЙ

Я, Ибрагим хан Шушинский и Карабахский, именем моим, наследников и преемников моих торжественно навсегда отрицаюсь от всякого вассальства или, под каким бы то титулом не было, от всякой зависимости от Персии или иной державы и сим объявляю перед лицом всего света, что я не признаю над собою и преемниками моими иного самодержавия, кроме верховной власти Е. И. В. Всероссийского великого Г. И. и Его высоких наследников и преемников престола Всероссийского Императорского, обещанная тому престолу верности, яко верноподданный раб оногo, - в чем и должен дать присягу по обычаю на святом Коране.

АРТИКУЛ ВТОРОЙ

Е. И. В., приемля со стороны е высокоств толь чистосердечное обещание, равномерно обещает и обнадеживает Императорским своим словом за себя и преемников своих, что милость и попечение Их от высокоств Ибрагим хана Шушинского и Карабахского и преемников его, яко от верноподданных своих, никогда не будут отъемлемы, в доказательство чего Е. В. дает Императорское свое ручательство на сохранение целости настоящих владений е высокоств и преемников его.

АРТИКУЛ ТРЕТИЙ

Во мзду того чистосердечия, с каковым е высокоств Ибрагим хан Шушинский и Карабахский признает верховную и единственную власть Всероссийских Императоров над собою и преемниками его, постановлено, что помянутый хан, а после его старший сын и так далее потомственно по старшинству колена, вступая на ханство, получать имеют через главноуправляющего Грузиею Императорское на ханство подтверждение с инвеститурою, состоящею в грамоте, государственною печатью утвержденной по получении которой новый хан долженствует торжественно учинить присягу на верность подданства Российской Империи и на признание верховной и единственной

¹ Е. И. В. – Его Императорского Величества

² Г. И. – Государь Император

власти Всероссийских Императоров над собою и его преемниками. Форма же присяги прилагается при сем трактате, дабы и ныне владеющий Ибрагим хан Шушинский и Карабахский исполнил сей обряд в присутствии главноуправляющего Грузиею и сие постановление совершающего, ген отинф. кн. Цицианова.

АРТИКУЛ ЧЕТВЕРТЫЙ

Я, Ибрагим хан Шушинский и Карабахский, в доказательство, что мои намерения в рассуждении моего и преемников моих верноподданства Всероссийской Империи и признания верховной и единственной власти всепресветлейших тоя Империи обладателей суть непрочны, обещаю без предварительного согласия главноуправляющего Грузиею не иметь сношения с окрестными владетелями, а когда от них приедут посланцы или присланы будут письма, то большую важность в себе заключающие отсылать к главноуправляющему и требовать от него разрешения, а меньшей важности сообщать и советовать с особою, имеющего пребывать от лица главноупрапляющего Грузнею при мне.

АРТИКУЛ ПЯТЫЙ

Е. И. В., приемля с благоволением признание верховной и единственной Его власти над владениями Ибрагим хапа Шушинского и Карабахского, обещает именем своим и преемников своих: 1) Народы тех владений почитать яко своих верноподданных, не различая немало с населяющими обширную Российскую Империю. 2) Высокоств Ибрагим хана и его дому наследников и потомков сохранять безпеременно на ханстве Шушинском. 3) Власть со внутренним управлением сопряженную, судъ и расправу, так равно как и доходы с владением его предоставить его высокоств в полную его волю. 4) На охранение особы его высокоств и его дома, так как и всех его владений поставить в Шушинскую крепость Всероссийского войска с пушками 500 человек с их штабом и обер офицерами, а на случай большей обороны главноуправляющий Грузиею обязан будет, смотря по обстоятельствам и по нужде, усиливать отряд тот и военною рукою оборонять владение его высокоств, яко Всероссийской Империи принадлежащее.

АРТИКУЛ ШЕСТОЙ

Я, Ибрагим хан Шушинский и Карабахский, в знак верноподданического моего усердия обязуюсь: 1) Как на первый случай, так и в последствие времени заготовлять на вышесказанные войска потребное число пшеницы и просяных круп, по умеренной цене, утвержденной главноупрапляющим, ибо подвоз оног из Елисаветполя затруднителен или совсем невозможным признан быть должен. 2) Вышесказанным войскам назначить в Шушинской крепости под постой дома, по выбору начальника оных, и снабжать их потребным числом дров. 3) Въезд в Шушинскую крепость от стороны Елисаветполя сделать удобным и дорогу устроить к проезду арбами способною. 4) Буде благоугодно

будет правительству устроить дорогу, ведущую от Шушинской крепости к Джеваду, то нужных для того работников поставить мне за цену, назначенную от правительства.

Артикул седьмой

Е. И. В. в знак вящего благоволения и милости своей к е. высокоств Ибрагим хану Шушинскому и Карабахскому всемилостивейше дарует ему преемникам его знамя с гербом Всероссийской Империи, которое долженствует оставаться при нем и по нем при владеющем хане знаком ханства и власти, Высочайше дарованной над оным владением, с копии на войну, если б потребовалось, никто кроме самого хана выехать не может.

Артикул восьмой

Я Ибрагим хан Шушинский и Карабахский, имея Высочайшее Е. И. В. соизволение пользоваться обыкновенными моими доходами, обязуюсь вносить в дань в казну Е. И. В., в Тифлисе находящуюся, по 8.000 червонных в год, уплачивая оные в 2 срока, т. е. 1-го февраля одну половину, а другую 1-го сентября, начав взносом первой половины, т. е. 4.000 червонных, при утверждении сего трактата Е. И. В., а сверх того по обычаю Азиатскому долженствую я, сверх присяг на верность, в залог оной дать старшего моего сына Мамед-Хасанагу сына второго Шукур Уллаха на всегдашнее пребывание в Тифлис.

Артикул девятый

Е. И. В. из особого своего милосердия всемилостивейше дарует на содержание имеющему пребывать в Тифлисе, в залог верности, с высокоств внуку по 10 р. с Российской монеты на день.

Артикул десятый

Сей договор делается на вечные времена и не долженствует подвергаться никаким переменам отныне навсегда.

Артикул одиннадцатый

Утверждение Е. И. В. на настоящии трактат Высочайшею Его грамотою, утвержденною государственною печатью, долженствует быть доставлено и 6 месяцев от подписания сего или и скорее, буде возможно.

В достоверие чего нижеподписавшиеся подписали сии артикулы и приложили к ним свои печати, в лагере Елисаветпольской округи, при р. Курак, и лето от Р. Х.³ 1805-е (по магомет, же исчислению 1220), мая месяца (сафар) 14-го дня.

³ Р. Х. – Рождества Христова

MƏQALƏLƏR - ARTICLES – СТАТЬИ

ETNİK MÜNAQIŞƏ TƏRƏFLƏRİNİN HÜQUQLARININ BEYNƏLXALQ HÜQUQ NORMALARI KONTEKSTİNDƏ TƏNZİMLƏNMƏSİ

Adış MƏMMƏDOV*

Tədqiqatlar göstərir ki, çoxmillətli ölkələrdə keçid dövründə milli münasibətlər demokratik proseslərin təsiri ilə imtahan qarşısında qalır. Çünki demokratik proseslərin həyata keçirilməsi bu ölkələrdə məskunlaşan azsaylı xalqlarda və etnik qruplarda belə bir yanlış təsəvvür yaradır ki, guya onların hamısı ayrılıb müstəqil qurum yarada bilərlər. Halbuki, millətlərin və xalqların öz müqəddəratını təyin etmək kimi təbii hüquqları heç də başqasının zərərinə həyata keçirilməməli, illərlə mövcud olmuş dövlət sərhədlərinin və ölkə bütövlüyünün pozulmasına xidmət etməməlidir. Bu halda azlıqların müəyyənləşdirilməsi aktual məsələ kimi qarşıda durur. Azlıqlar nədir və necə başa düşülməlidir, etnik azlıqların hüquqları və yerli xalqların hüquqları hansılardır?

Bu anlayışın müəyyən və aydın olması, onun hamı tərəfindən hörmətlə qəbul edilməsi olduqca vacibdir. Çünki azlıqların hüquqlarının pozulması və onların təqib olunması beynəlxalq hüququn əsas problemlərindəndir. Təbii ki, obyektiv mənada hüquqa xas olan əlamətlər beynəlxalq hüquq normaları üçün də səciyyəvidir. Ən əsası, bu normalar da müvafiq subyektlər üçün hüquqi ümumməcburi xarakter daşıyır və onların yerinə yetirilməsi müəyyən sanksiya ilə təmin edilir. Lakin, beynəlxalq hüquq onu dövlətdaxili (milli) hüquqdan fərqləndirən bir sıra xüsusiyyətlərə malikdir. Bu xüsusiyyətlər, hər şeydən öncə, beynəlxalq hüququn mövcud olduğu və fəaliyyət göstərdiyi dövlətlərarası mühitlə və suveren, formal baxımdan bir-birindən asılı olmayan dövlətlərin olması ilə əlaqədardır. Birincisi, fiziki və hüquqi şəxslər və dövlət orqanları arasındakı münasibətləri nizama salan dövlətdaxili hüquqdan fərqli olaraq, beynəlxalq hüquq dövlətlər və beynəlxalq hüququn digər subyektləri (beynəlxalq təşkilatlar və s.) arasında yaranan münasibətləri nizama salır. İkincisi, beynəlxalq sistemdə qanunverici orqan yoxdur. Heç bir beynəlxalq təşkilat və ya orqan, o cümlədən Birləşmiş Millətlər Təşkilatı dövlətlər üçün hüquqi cəhətdən məcburi olan normalar yaratmaq səlahiyyətinə malik deyildir. Beynəlxalq təşkilatların orqanlarından biri kimi fəaliyyət göstərən parlamentlər də (məsələn, Avropa İttifaqında - Avropa parlamenti, Avropa Şurasında – Parlament Assambleyası və s.) milli parlamentlərə xas olan bəzi əlamətlərə malik olsalar da, “qanunvericilik” səlahiyyətindən məhrumdurlar. Üçüncüsü,

* Azərbaycan Respublikasının İsveç Krallığındakı Fövqəladə və səlahiyyətli səfiri

beynəlxalq sistemdə, dövlətin daxilində olduğu kimi, mərkəzləşdirilmiş icra və məhkəmə mexanizmi yoxdur. Beynəlxalq hüquq normalarının yerinə yetirilməsinin təmin edilməsi dövlətlərin öz ixtiyarına buraxılmışdır; beynəlxalq hüququn yaradıcısı və başlıca təminatçısı dövlətlərdir. Lakin, bəzi hallarda bu funksiyaları dövlətlər müqavilələr vasitəsilə bu və ya digər dərəcədə beynəlxalq təşkilat və ya orqanlara həvalə edirlər. BMT-nin Təhlükəsizlik Şurası beynəlxalq sülhə və təhlükəsizliyə real qorxu yaradan dövlətə qarşı hərbi və qeyri-hərbi sanksiyalar tətbiq edə bilər. BMT-nin Beynəlxalq Məhkəməsi ilə bağlı qeyd etmək lazımdır ki, o, bu və ya digər işə yalnız müvafiq dövlətlər buna razılıq verdikdə baxa bilər. Sadəcə dillə desək, ən ağır beynəlxalq hüquq pozuntusu törətmiş dövləti belə onun razılığı olmadan Beynəlxalq Məhkəməyə “vermək” olmaz.

Azlıqlar suveren dövlətin ərazisində yaşayan öz milli, etnik, dini və dil xüsusiyyətləri ilə başqa (əsas) xalqlardan və qruplardan fərqlənən və seçilən özünəməxsus toplumdur. Heç şübhəsiz ki, azlıqlar sayına görə əhalinin əksər hissəsini təşkil edən çoxluğa güzəştə getməli, onunla razılışmalı və ona tabe olmalıdırlar. Ancaq, bəzən elə vəziyyət yarana bilər ki, milli azlıqlardan (qruplardan) heç biri çoxluq təşkil etməsin. Belə olan halda da sayca ən az olan azlıqlar da heç bir qanun pozuculuğuna məruz qalmamalı, onlar da hamı tərəfindən qəbul olunmuş insan hüquqları haqqındakı ümumi qanunlarla müdafiə olunmalıdırlar.¹

Xalqların hüquq bərabərliyi və onların öz müqəddəratını təyin etməsi müasir beynəlxalq hüququn hamı tərəfindən qəbul edilmiş prinsiplərindən biridir. Müxtəlif xalqlar arasında mövcud olan və hətta bu günədək davam edən tarixi münaqişələr, iqtisadi inkişafın şərait müxtəlifliyi, irqi, milli, etnik, dini və mədəni düşüncələrin müxtəlifliyi kimi gerçək ziddiyyətlər və fikir ayrılıqlarından başqa, beynəlxalq ictimaiyyətdə sabitliyi, sülhü və təhlükəsizliyi pozan amillərdən biri də xalqların öz müqəddəratını təyin etmək hüququnun yanlış mövqedən şərh edilməsi, təcrübədə onun ayrılmaq hüququna çevrilməsidir.

Bu münaqişələr zamanı iqtisadi və sosial inkişaf üçün zəruri şəraitlər dağıdılır, hədsiz dərəcədə yoxsulluq içərisində olan əhalinin təminatı üçün labüd sayılan ən vacib məsələlərin - ərzaq, təhsil və mənzil məsələlərinin həllinə cəlb olunacaq ehtiyatlar sərf edilir. Bir çox hallarda amansız etnik, dini, sosial, mədəni və dil çəkişmələri və ədavətləri dövlətlərin bütövlüyünü təhlükə altına alır.²

¹ Etnik azlıqların hüquqlarının təmin olunmasında və münaqişələrin tənzimlənməsində BMT-nin və ATƏT-in rolu. Tərt. R.Musabəyov. Bakı: İnam Plüralizm Mərkəzi, 2000, s. 8(40 s)

² Reşetov Y. Öz müqəddəratını təyin etmə hüququnun həyata keçirilməsi münaqişələrin həll edilməsində töhfə kimi // Avropada etno-siyasi münaqişələrin nizama salınmasının hüquqi çərçivəsi. Konfransın Materialları, Bakı, 11-12 yanvar, 2002, s. 53-62.

Sivil və ya global dini münaqişələr də mövcud situasiyaya qarışıqda, yaxud, xüsusən də əsas amilə çevrildikdə, vəziyyət daha faciəvi xarakter alır. Belə hallarda həmin münaqişələrin bəşəri fəlakətə çevrilməsindən ehtiyatlanmağa hər cür əsas var.

Yuqoslaviya və Sovet İttifaqı ərazisində baş vermiş hadisələr dövlət müstəqilliyi barədə tələblərin dağdıçı nəticələrindən xəbər verir. Ayrılma narazılıq və insan hüquqlarının pozulmasına işarə edərək, yeni münaqişələrin və insan hüquqları sahəsində yeni pozuntuların başlanğıcıdır. Belə halda tarixə müraciət etməyin də faydası olmur. Əksər hallarda isə necə ayrılma yolları da bəlli olmur.

Çox vaxt müstəqil dövlətçilik iddiaları bu və ya digər səbəb üzündən artıq mövcud olan başqa dövlətlər tərəfindən də dəstəklənir, nəticədə yeni yaranan dövlətlərin tələm-tələsik tanınması prosesi baş verir və bununla da bir çox hallarda sərhədlərin də özbaşına müəyyənləşdirilməsi halları qəbul edilir. Bəzi ekspertlərin fikrincə, keçmiş Yuqoslaviya xalqlarının faciəsinin baş verməsi, müəyyən mənada Qərbin aparıcı dövlətləri tərəfindən yeni respublikaların tələsik tanınması nəticəsində mümkün olmuşdur.³

Bəzi hallarda mədəniyyət və dillərinin inkişafı üçün şəraitin çatışmazlığı ilə bağlı olan və siyasətçilər tərəfindən öz məqsədləri üçün qızışdırılan narazılıqlar, minlərlə insanın həyatı bahasına başa gələn müstəqillik naminə qanlı münaqişələrlə əvəz olunur.

Adətən, öz müqəddəratını təyin etmək adı altında bu və ya digər millətin hüquqi, yaxud digər məhdudiyət olmadan, sərbəst surətdə öz dilini tətbiq etmək, milli adətlərini və mədəniyyətini saxlamaq, inkişaf etdirmək, dövlət quruculuğu və idarə olunmasında, ölkənin siyasi, sosial-iqtisadi həyatında bərabər hüquqla iştirak etmək imkanı nəzərdə tutulur. Öz müqəddəratını təyinetmə hüququnun banilərindən olan ABŞ prezidenti V.Vilson hesab edirdi ki, bu, müstəmləkə xalqlarının hüququdur və silahdaşlarından birinin sözlərinə görə, bu prinsip “əmin-amanlıq və sabitlik üçün təhlükədir”, bir çox ölkələrdə çətinliklər yarada bilər, “dinamitlə doludur”.⁴

Öz müqəddəratını təyinetmə prinsiplərinin təkamülü Millətlər Cəmiyyətinin yaradılmasından sonra hüquqi problem kimi beynəlxalq səviyyədə də diqqət mərkəzində dayanmışdır. Məsələn, Millətlər Cəmiyyəti çərçivəsində bir çox məsələlərin həlli zamanı

³ By Herman Wagenbichler. “The Yugoslav Tragedy Why Multicultural Societies” // Volume 3, Number 4 (Summer 1993) // http://www.thesocialcontract.com/artman2/publish/tsc0304/article_285.shtml

⁴ Allen Lynch. Woodrow Wilson and the principle of ‘national self-determination’: a reconsideration. Review of International Studies / Volume 28 / Issue 02 / April 2002, pp 419 – 436. 2002 British International Studies Association

bu fikri rəhbər tutmuşlar ki, beynəlxalq hüquqda ayrılmaq hüququ yoxdur. Eyni zamanda, Millətlər Cəmiyyəti milli azlıqların mədəniyyətə, dinə və təhsilə olan hüquqlarının müdafiəsi sahəsində böyük töhfə vermişdir.⁵

İkinci dünya müharibəsindən sonrakı dövrdə BMT Nizamnaməsi xalqların hüquq bərabərliyi və öz müqəddəratının azad təyin etməsi prinsipinin dövlətlərin dinc, mehriban, dostluq münasibətlərinin əsası elan edir və prinsipin ümumi icbarı norma olmasını elan edir. Xalqların hüquq bərabərliyi və öz müqəddəratını azad təyin etməsi prinsipi əsasında dostluq münasibətlərini inkişaf etdirmək tələbi BMT Nizamnaməsinin 1-ci maddəsinin 2-ci bəndində təşkilatın əsas məqsədlərindən biri kimi göstərilir. BMT Nizamnaməsinin 13, 55, 76-cı və bir sıra digər maddələrində milli, irqi, dini və s. mənsubiyyətindən asılı olmayaraq, hamı üçün əsas insan hüquq və azadlıqlarına hörmət edilməsi və onlara riayət edilməsi ilə əlaqədar olaraq xalqların hüquq bərabərliyi və öz müqəddəratını təyin etməsi prinsipi də qeyd edilir.⁶

BMT Nizamnaməsində bu prinsip ümumi beynəlxalq sülhün və təhlükəsizliyin qorunması və təyin edilməsi üçün ən mühüm şərt olduğu göstərilir. Xalqların hüquq bərabərliyi və öz müqəddəratını təyin etmə prinsipi sonrakı dövrün bir sıra beynəlxalq hüquqi aktlarında da təsdiq edildi. BMT Baş Məclisinin 1948-ci ildə qəbul etdiyi “İnsan Hüquqları Bəyannaməsi”ndə, 1960-cı il tarixli “Müstəmləkə ölkələrinə və xalqlarına istiqlaliyyət verilməsi haqqında Bəyannamə”də, 1965-ci ildə “İrqi-ayrı seçkiliyin bütün formalarının ləğvi haqqında Saziş”də, 1966-cı ildə “İnsan hüquqları müşahidələri”nin 1-ci maddəsində BMT Nizamnaməsinə uyğun olaraq dövlətlər arasında dostluq münasibətlərinə və əməkdaşlığa aid olan beynəlxalq hüquq prinsipləri haqqında 1970-ci il bəyannaməsində, 1975-ci ildə Helsinkidə qəbul olunmuş “Yekun aktı”nda və s. bu kimi sənədlərdə bəhs olunan prinsip və müddəalar əksini tapmışdır.⁷

Ərazi bütövlüyü prinsipi BMT Nizamnaməsinin 2-ci maddəsinin 4-cü bəndində dolayı yolla əks olunmuşdur. Müstəqil prinsip kimi o, Helsinki Yekun Aktında təsbit olunmuşdur. Göstərilən prinsipin başlıca məzmunu ondan ibarətdir ki, dövlətlər bir-birinin ərazi bütövlüyünə hörmət etməlidirlər. Hər bir dövlət başqa bir dövlətin ərazi bütövlüyünün pozulmasına yönəlmiş hüquqazidd hərəkətlərdən çəkinməlidir. Dövlətin ərazisi qanunsuz güc tətbiqi nəticəsində hərbi işğal obyektinə ola bilməz. Ərazi bütövlüyü prinsipi özündə digər bir prinsip – hələ 19-cu əsrdə Latın Amerikasında formalaşmış və 1986-cı ildə Burkina Faso

⁵ The Covenant of the League of Nations // http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp

⁶ Chapter I: Purposes and principles // <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter1.shtml>

⁷ Article 55. Chapter IX: International Economic and Social Co-operation // <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter9.shtml>; Ağayev İ. Müasir şəraitdə Azərbaycanda milli-etnik proseslər. Bakı: MBM, 2006, s. 92 (180 s.)

/Mali işində BMT-nin Beynəlxalq Məhkəməsi tərəfindən ümumi beynəlxalq hüquq norması kimi xarakterizə edilmiş *uti possidetis* prinsipini ehtiva edir. *Uti possidetis* prinsipinin məğzi ondan ibarətdir ki, müstəmləkələrin və ya federasiya subyektlərinin əvvəlki sərhədləri müstəqil dövlətlərin beynəlxalq sərhədləri olur və müvafiq razılıq olmadan dəyişilə bilməz.⁸ Azərbaycanla bağlı demək olar ki, onun SSRİ dövründə malik olduğu ərazisinin bütövlüyünə istənilən iddia və ya qəsd sözügedən prinsipə tamamilə ziddir.

Xalqların özünümüəyyənətmə prinsipi BMT Nizamnaməsində, Müstəmləkə ölkələrinə və xalqlarına müstəqillik verilməsi haqqında 1960-cı il Bəyannaməsində, insan hüquqları haqqında 1966-cı il Beynəlxalq Paktlarının 1-ci maddəsində, 1970-ci il Bəyannaməsində, Helsinki Yekun aktında, habelə BMT-nin Beynəlxalq Məhkəməsinin bir sıra qərar və məsləhət xarakterli rəylərində öz əksini tapmışdır. Şərqi Timor haqqında işdə (1995-ci il) Beynəlxalq Məhkəmə qeyd etmişdir ki, xalqların özünümüəyyənətmə hüququ *erga omnes* hüququdur, yəni bütün dövlətlər bu hüquqa hörmət etməlidirlər və onun həyata keçirilməsinə maneə törətməməlidirlər.⁹

Prinsipin məzmununu açıqlamaq üçün iki anlayış – “xalq” və “özünümüəyyənətmə” anlayışlarının məna yükünü düzgün bilmək lazımdır. Göstərilən prinsipin kontekstində və ümumiyyətlə, beynəlxalq hüquqda “xalq”, bir qayda olaraq, etnik anlamında başa düşülmür. Beynəlxalq-hüquqi anlayış kimi “xalq” hər hansı milli və ya etnik qrupu deyil, məhz dövlətin (və ya dövlətçilikdən qeyri-qanuni məhrum edilmiş ərazinin) bütün əhalisini bildirir. Yəni, “xalq” etnos kimi deyil, demos kimi başa düşülür. Yalnız, xalq bütövlükdə bu hüququn daşıyıcısıdır. Xalqın bir hissəsinin, o cümlədən, milli azlıqların belə bir hüququ yoxdur. Bu, beynəlxalq hüquqda birmənalı olaraq qəbul edilmişdir.

“Özünümüəyyənətmə” o deməkdir ki, hər bir xalq xaricdən müdaxilə olmadan sərbəst olaraq özü öz siyasi statusunu müəyyən edə bilər və öz iqtisadi, sosial və mədəni inkişafını həyata keçirə bilər. Müstəmləkə altında olan və ya işğal olunmuş ərazinin bütün əhalisi üçün bu:

- a) müstəqillik əldə edilməsində və suveren dövlət qurulmasında;
- b) hər hansı bir müstəqil dövlətə qoşulmaqda, yaxud
- c) hər hansı bir müstəqil dövlət ilə birləşməkdə ifadə oluna bilər.

Təbii ki, müstəqil dövlətlərin xalqı (əhalisi) da özünümüəyyənətmə hüququna malikdir. Həmin xalq üçün özünümüəyyənətmə, hər şeydən öncə, demokratik idarəetmə hüququ

⁸ Волова Л.И. Принцип территориальной целостности и неприкосновенности в современном международном праве. Ростов, 1981, с.24-26

⁹ Экономический и Социальный Совет ООН, 30 мая-3 июня 2005

deməkdir. Yəni, xalq daxildən və xaricdən təzyiq və ya müdaxilə olmadan demokratik vasitələrlə öz iqtisadi, sosial və mədəni inkişafını həyata keçirmək imkanına malik olmalıdır. Əlbəttə ki, bu xalq öz siyasi statusunu sərbəst surətdə özləri müəyyən edə bilərlər. Xüsusi vurğulanmalıdır ki, özünümüəyyənətmə hüququnun həyata keçirilməsi dövlətlərin suvernliyi və ərazi bütövlüyü ilə uzlaşmalıdır və sesessiyanı (dövlətdən müəyyən ərazinin ayrılmasını) sanksiyalaşdırma bilməz. Başqa sözlə, bu hüququn həyata keçirilməsi müstəqil, demokratik dövlətin parçalanması üçün əsas ola bilməz.

Beləliklə, xalqların hüquq bərabərliyini və onların öz müqəddəratını təyin etməsini etiraf və təsdiq edən BMT Nizamnaməsinin, habelə sonrakı mühüm beynəlxalq hüquqi aktların ən qısa xülasəsindən də aşkar görünür ki, həmin prinsip təkə rəsmi-siyasi bəyanat deyil, indi o, icbari xarakterli beynəlxalq hüquq normasıdır, müasir beynəlxalq hüququn mühüm bir prinsipidir. Bu beynəlxalq razılaşmaların və Bəyannamələrin əsasnamələrində azlıqlara çoxluqlarla eyni hüquqlar verilib və onların aralarında eyni münasibətlər mövcuddur. İnsan Hüquqlarının Ümumi Bəyannaməsi, eləcə də Vətəndaş və Siyasi Hüquqların Beynəlxalq Paktı azlıqların hüquqlarının tam qarantı sayıla bilər. Bu hüquqlar aşağıdakılardan ibarətdir: onlar hüquqi subyekt kimi tanınır, məhkəmə qarşısında bərabərdirlər, qanun qarşısında bərabərdirlər və qanunla bərabər müdafiə olunurlar.

Hər bir dövlət yarandığı ilk gündən, xalqların öz müqəddəratını təyin etmək hüququnu özünün milli siyasətinin əsas prinsipi olduğunu elan etməlidir. Həm də hamı tərəfindən qəbul olunmuş, beynəlxalq, eləcə də dövlətlərin ərazi bütövlüyünə əməl edən hüquq normaları prinsiplərini əsas götürərək bu prinsipi həyata keçirməlidir.

Əvvəla, “Nizamnaməyə uyğun olaraq hər bir dövlət müştərək və müstəqil fəaliyyəti sayəsində insan hüquqları və əsas insan azadlıqlarına hörmət edilməsinə yardım göstərməlidir.”

İkincisi, bu qəbildən öz müqəddəratını təyin etmə hüququnun həyata keçirilməsi üsulları qısa, lakin, kifayət qədər aydın şəkildə sadalanır: “suveren və müstəqil dövlət yaradılması, sərbəst şəkildə müstəqil dövlətə qoşulmaq və ya onunla birləşmək, xalq tərəfindən sərbəst müəyyənəndirilmiş hər hansı siyasi statusu qəbul etmək.”

Üçüncüsü, Bəyannamədə nəinki suveren və müstəqil dövlətlərin parçalanmasına, ya da ərazi bütövlüyünün və ya siyasi birliyinin qismən, yaxud da tamamilə pozulmasına aparan hərəkətlərin rədd edilməsi barədə mühüm tələblər göstərilir, hətta, mahiyyətcə, öz müqəddəratını təyinetmə hüququ məhdudlaşdırılır və onun dövlətin parçalanmasına, ərazi bütövlüyünün və siyasi birliyinin pozulmasına səbəb ola bilməməsi üçün riayət edilməli

şərtlər də göstərilir. Bunlardan ən mühümü irqi, dini və insanın dərisinin rənginə görə fərqlər nəzərə alınmadan, bütün xalqı təmsil edən, həmin əraziyə məxsus hökumətin olmasıdır.

Buna görə də, əgər hökumət ayrı-seçkilik qoyulmadan insan əsas hüquq və azadlıqlarının qorunduğu təqdirdə öz əhalisinə dövlətin siyasi və sosial həyatında iştirak etmə hüququ verirsə, onda dövlətin parçalanmasına yönəldilmiş cəhdlər, onun ərazi bütövlüyünün və siyasi birliyinin pozulması qeyri-qanunidir.

Beləliklə, öz müqəddəratını təyinetmə son məqsəd deyil. Xalqların öz müqəddəratını təyinetmə hüquqlarının həyata keçirilməsini və bu hüquqa hörmətlə yanaşılmasını dəstəkləyən dövlətlər birgə və müstəqil fəaliyyət yolu ilə BMT Nizamnaməsinə uyğun olaraq əsas insan hüquqları və azadlıqlarına ümumhörmət və riayət edilməsinə yardım etməlidirlər. Bu fəaliyyətlərin dəyişməz tərkib hissəsi, azlıqda olan insanlara öz xüsusiyyətlərini ifadə etməyə və mədəniyyətlərini, dillərini, dinlərini, adət və ənənələrini inkişaf etdirməyə imkan verən əlverişli şərait yaradılması tədbirlərinin görülməsi olmalıdır. Dövlət həm də yerli xalqların hüquqlarını, onların sosial, mədəni, iqtisadi və siyasi əlamətlərini möhkəmlətmək və qorumaq üçün tədbirlər görməlidir.

Müasir beynəlxalq hüquq bu mövqedən çıxış edir ki, ayrılmaq hüququ, xalqların öz müqəddəratını təyinetmə hüququnun həyata keçirilməsinin hamılıqla avtomatik tanınmış üsulu deyil.

Milli və etnik qrup tərəfindən suveren və müstəqil dövlətin yaradılması və ya ona digər müstəqil dövlətə sərbəst birləşməsi o hallarda qanuni sayıla bilər ki, həmin hal bu və ya digər dövlət çərçivəsində müxtəlif milli və etnik qruplar arasında razılaşmanın nəticəsi olsun, ya da həmin dövlətlərin konstitusiyalarında təsbit edilmiş və bu dövlətlərin və beynəlxalq hüquq normalarının müvafiq prosedurlarının gözlənilməsi ilə həyata keçirilmiş olsun.¹⁰

İstər müstəqillik əldə etmək üçün xalqların öz müqəddəratını təyinetmə hüququnun həyata keçirilmə vasitəsi kimi, istərsə də ayrılma barədə dinc tələblərin boğulması üçün hər hansı bir bəhanə ilə güc tətbiqinə yol vermək olmaz. Təəssüf ki, biz bunların əksər hallarda kobud şəkildə pozulmasının şahidi oluruq. Bəzən belə bir nüans xüsusi olaraq qeyd olunur ki, azlıqlar o zaman statusa malik ola və çoxluqlar buna təbii bir proses kimi baxa bilərlər ki, həmin azlıqlar öz ana dilindən müstəqil şəkildə istifadə edə bilsinlər, öz məktəblərini

¹⁰ Reşetov Y. Öz müqəddəratını təyin etmə hüququnun həyata keçirilməsi münaqişələrin həll edilməsində töhfə kimi // Avropada etno-siyasi münaqişələrin nizama salınmasının hüquqi çərçivəsi. Konfransın Materialları, Bakı, 11-12 yanvar, 2002, s. 53-62.

yaratsınlar, onların təşkil etdikləri xidmət sahələri dövlətin iqtisadi və siyasi həyatında əhəmiyyətli rol oynasın.

Hazırda mövcud olan beynəlxalq müqavilələrin heç biri azlıqların hüquqlarını kompleks şəkildə əhatə etmir. Bununla belə, əldə olunmuş bəzi vacib razılıqlar azlıqların nümayəndələrinə imkan verir ki, onlar öz mədəniyyətlərini, din və dillərini qoruyub saxlasınlar.

Xalqların öz müqəddəratını təyin etmə hüququnun həyata keçirilməsinin onların iradəsinin ifadə edilməsinə və siyasi, sivil, sosial, iqtisadi və mədəni hüquqlarına daha çox hörmət bəslənilməsi və qorunmasına xidmət edən ümumtənzimləşdirilmiş üsulları milli-mədəni muxtariyyət, milli-ərazi muxtariyyəti, federalizm və konfederalizmin müxtəlif formalarıdır. Məhz bu halda onlar etnik münaqişələrin qarşısının alınması və tənzimlənməsində ən səmərəli təminatdır.

Müqəddəratı təyin etmənin belə formalarının həyata keçirilməsinin səmərəliliyinin psixoloji əsası ondan ibarətdir ki, əgər xalq, etnos, etnik qruplar onların vasitəsi ilə dövlət və ictimai problemlərin həllində, insan hüquqlarının təmin edilməsində ənənəvi mədəniyyət və dinin saxlanılmasında, təbii ehtiyatlardan istifadə olunması və ekoloji tədbirlərə nəzarətdə fəal iştirak edirlərsə, onlara öz talelərinə əlavə təsiretmə imkanını verməyən, amma onları yeni, bəzən həllənməz və uzun müddətə çox böyük iztirablarla dolu yeni vəzifələrlə qarşılaşdıraraq tam müstəqillik uğrunda mübarizəyə başlamağa sövq edəcək tutarlı səbəblər çətin ki, tapılsın. Təbii ki, bu zaman etnik birliklərin öz müqəddəratını təyin etmə hüququnun reallaşdırılması ilə bağlı məşğul olduqları məsələlərin həcmi muxtariyyətin müxtəlif formalarında müxtəlif olacaqdır.

Dünyada kifayət qədər geniş yayılan muxtariyyət ən müxtəlif formaları olan milli-mədəni muxtariyyətdir. Bu cür muxtariyyət bu və ya digər xalqın etnik özünəməxsusluğunu qoruyub-saxlamağa, din, mədəniyyət, dil və təhsilin inkişafı məsələlərini həll etməyə imkan verir. Bu formanın üstünlüyü ondan ibarətdir ki, ərazinin ayrılması məsələsi aradan qalxır.¹¹

Milli-mədəni muxtariyyət ölkə əhalisi tərkibində iri yığıcam qrup təşkil etməyən, bəzən də tamamilə pərakəndə olan, digər etnik qruplarla qarışıq yaşayan milli azlıqlara özlərinin mədəni ənənələrindən, dilləri, dinləri və etiqadlarından istifadələrinə imkan və hüquq verir.

Müqəddəratı təyin etmənin bu forması, bir qayda olaraq, əhalinin əksəriyyəti tərəfindən ciddi müqavimətlə qarşılanmır, amma bundan bəhrələnməyə fərdlərdə rahatlıq hissi yaradır ki, bu da kəskin münaqişə hallarının yaranmasını aradan qaldırır.

¹¹ Federica Prina. Introduction – National Cultural Autonomy in Theory and Practice // Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe. Vol 12, No 1, 2013, pp. 1-6

Milli münaqişələrin qarşısının alınması və ya tənzimlənməsi nöqtəyi-nəzərindən istər unitar, istərsə də federativ dövlətlərdə, milli-ərazi dövlətçiliyi və ya muxtariyyətinin imkanları xüsusilə böyükdür.

Müqəddəratı təyinetmənin bu formasına siyasi suverenliyin müəyyən səviyyəsi (onu müstəqilliklə qarışdırmaq lazım deyil) xas olduğu üçün muxtar ərazinin əhalisinin rahatlıq hissəsinin səviyyəsi yüksəkdir və əksər hallarda separatizmi istisna edir. Əlbəttə ki, bu zaman söhbət saxta muxtariyyətdən deyil, əsl muxtariyyətdən gedir.¹²

Problemin ayrı-ayrı ölkələr üzrə müqayisəli şəkildə araşdırılması göstərir ki, bir sıra dövlətlərdə muxtar qurumların nəinki geniş daxili səlahiyyətləri, eyni zamanda metropoliyadan asılı olmadan xarici iqtisadi işlərdə iştirak etmək kimi geniş real imkanları da vardır. Buna misal olaraq Danimarka krallığının bir hissəsi sayılan Farer adaları və Qrenlandiyanı göstərmək olar.¹³ Qrenlandiyanın bağladığı xarici iqtisadi və balıq ovçuluğu sazişləri, hətta Danimarkanın özünün maraqlarına uyğun gəlmir. Müqəddəratı təyinetmənin bu cür yüksək səviyyəsi prosesual formalarda da öz ifadəsini tapır. Məsələn, Şimal Şurasının (Nordic Council) sessiyası zamanı beş (bu təşkilatın üzvlərinin sayı qədər – Danimarka, İslandiya, Norveç, Finlandiya və İsveç) deyil, əlavə olaraq daha üç (Finlandiyanın ərazisi olan Aland adaları, Qrenlandiya və Farer adalarının) bayraq asılır. Bütün bunların nəticəsində həmin asılı ərazilərin əhalisi öz statusunu qorumağa üstünlük verir və tam müstəqilliyə can atmır.¹⁴

Şübhəsiz ki, müstəqil dövlət olmayan etnik qurumların beynəlxalq əməkdaşlıqda iştirakının artmasına onun intensivləşdirilməsi və qloballaşdırılması prosesləri kömək edir. Beynəlxalq hüququn inkişafı bu istiqamətdə gedir və onun sayəsində, məsələn, insan hüquqları məsələsi müstəsna olaraq təkə dövlətin daxili səlahiyyətlərinə aid edilmir.

Müşahidələr də göstərir ki, düşmənçilik edən tərəfləri barışdırmaq üçün çıxış yolu həmin dövlətin daxilində müvafiq əraziyə ən yüksək səviyyəli muxtariyyət verilməsini təklif etməkdədir. Ola bilsin ki, bu cür qərara qarşı, o cümlədən onun dövlətin daxili strukturuna asimmetriya verəcəyi bərdə hər cür etirazlar olacaq, çünki dövlətin digər hissələri belə statusa malik deyildilər. Lakin münaqişəni tənzimləmək naminə belə şərtlə razılaşmaq olar ki, həmin etnik toplum üçün cəlbədicə olmasa da, heç olmazsa, həmin dövlətin bir hissəsi kimi qalmaqdan ötrü məqbul perspektiv yaransın.

¹² David J. Smith. Non-Territorial Autonomy and Political Community in Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe // Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe. Vol 12, No 1, 2013, 27-55

¹³ Regions and territories: Faroe Islands // http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/3434335.stm

¹⁴ The new government of Greenland, an interesting coalition // <http://greenlandtoday.com/gb/category/the-new-government-of-greenland-548/>

Vaxtilə ABŞ-ın BMT yanındakı daimi nümayəndəsi olan Eleonora Ruzvelt hələ 1952-ci ildə “öz müqəddəratını təyin etmə hüququ ayrılmaq deməkdirmi?” sualına belə cavab verirdi: “Etnik münaqişələrin qarşısının alınması nöqtəyi-nəzərindən milli azlıqların öz müqəddəratını təyin etmə hüququnun subyektləri rolunun inkar edilməsi mövqeyi pozuculuqdur. Əgər məsələyə hamının qəbul elədiyi formada düzgün cavab verilsə, onda, bizə məlum formalarda, milli azlıqlara və ya hər hansı digər etnik icmalara muxtariyyət şəklində öz müqəddəratını təyin etmə hüququnun reallaşdırılmasına razılıq verməmək nəinki ağlısızlıqdır, hətta psixoloji cəhətdən təhlükəlidir. Bu, əslində milli –etnik münasibətlərdə sabitliyin laxlanmasına bərabərdir və həmin icmalara mədəni və məqbul formalarda öz müqəddəratını təyin etmə hüququnun verilməməsi, həmin icmaları pozucu addımlar atmağa təhrik edərdi”.¹⁵ Müəllifin söylədiyi fikirləri belə bir formula ilə ifadə etmək olar ki, öz müqəddəratını təyin etmə hüququnun məhz bu formalarda həyata keçirilməsi və bu yolla daxili etnik münaqişələrin qarşısının alınması və tənzimlənməsi cəmiyyətin yüksək səviyyədə demokratik inkişafını, dövlətdə hakimiyyətin bölünməsi prinsipinin həyata keçirilməsini və başqa demokratik institutların mövcudluğunu həm mərkəzi, həm də yerli hakimiyyətin proseslərdə iştirakını daha yaxşı təmin etmiş olur. Təbii ki, bu cür məqsədlərə nail olunması uzun və asan olmayan danışıqlar yolunu, dialoqu, müvafiq razılaşmaların hazırlanmasını və imzalanmasını nəzərdə tutur. Fikrimizcə, bəhs olunan bu məqamları birlikdə öz müqəddəratını təyin etmə mədəniyyəti, başqa sözlə, bunu öz müqəddəratını təyin etmə probleminə siyasi mədəniyyətin tətbiqi demək lazımdır.

ATƏT-in sənədlərində, daha dəqiq desək, 1975-ci il Helsinki Yekun Aktında, 1990-cı il Avropa üçün Paris Xartiyasında və bir il sonra insanlıq ölçüləri üzrə Konfransın Moskva müşavirəsində qəbul olunmuş sənəddə xalqların öz müqəddəratını təyin etmə prinsipi şərh edilərkən dövlətlərin ərazi bütövlüyü prinsipinə riayət edilməsi xüsusi vurğulanır. Xüsusilə, Moskva müşavirəsində qəbul olunmuş sənəddə iştirakçı dövlətlər qeyd edirdilər ki, Avropada Təhlükəsizlik və Əməkdaşlıq Konfransının Yekun Aktı və yeni Avropa üçün Paris Xartiyasına müvafiq olaraq hüquq bərabərliyi və öz müqəddəratını təyin etmək hüququna BMT Nizamnaməsi və dövlətin ərazi bütövlüyü ilə əlaqəli normalar da daxil olmaqla beynəlxalq hüququn müvafiq normalarına uyğun olaraq hörmət edilməlidir.¹⁶ Belə bir nəticəyə gəlmək olur ki, BMT-nin təyinatına uyğun olaraq iki hal – özünüidarə etməyən ərazilər və qeyri-qanuni işğal altında olan ərazilər istisna olmaqla öz müqəddəratını təyin etmə hüququ birtərəfli şəkildə müstəqillik və ya ayrılma hüququnu nəzərdə tutmur. Öz müqəddəratını təyin etmə hüququnun subyektləri sırasına həmçinin respublikaların könüllü birləşməsi nəticəsində yaranan federasiyaları da əlavə etmək lazımdır.

¹⁵ Reşetov Y. Öz müqəddəratını təyin etmə hüququnun həyata keçirilməsi münaqişələrin həll edilməsində töhfə kimi // Avropada etno-siyasi münaqişələrin nizama salınmasının hüquqi çərçivəsi. Konfransın Materialları, Bakı, 11-12 yanvar, 2002, s. 53-62.

¹⁶ Document of the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE // <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/14310>

Öz müqəddəratını təyin etmə hüququnun beynəlxalq hüquqa müvafiq olaraq kifayət qədər dəqiq müəyyənləşdirilməsinə baxmayaraq, qeyd etmək lazımdır ki, bir çox problemlər o halda yaranır ki, xarici qüvvələr, xüsusilə də “ana dövlət” tərəfindən hərəkətə gətirilən qruplar milli və ya etnik azlıq xalqı təmsil etdiyini bəyan edir və ayrılma və ya sərhədlərin dəyişdirilməsi yolu ilə öz müqəddəratını təyin etmək tələbini irəli sürür. Bu zaman azlıqlar tərəfindən həyata keçirilən etnik millətçilik siyasətinin qaçılmaz nəticəsi kimi sonuncular “təmiz” etnik tərkib yaratmaq və əhalisinin əksəriyyəti eyni etnik qrupa malik olan qonşu dövlətlə birləşmək üçün sərhədlərin dəyişdirilməsinə nail olmaq məqsədilə onlar regionu burada yaşayan digər etnik qrupların nümayəndələrindən təmizləməyə çalışırlar. Bu faktorları Dağlıq Qarabağ münaqişəsi ilə bağlı nəzərdən keçirən Azərbaycanlı ekspertlər belə hesab edir ki, Ermənistan Dağlıq Qarabağ erməniləri üçün müstəqillik tələbi ilə eyni zamanda öz ərazisinin və Dağlıq Qarabağın azərbaycanlılardan “təmizlənməsi”ni əsas götürməklə öz müqəddəratını təyin etmə probleminin həll yolunu ancaq birtərəfli qaydada ayrılma və “etnik təmizləmə”də görür.¹⁷ Bu münaqişəyə münasibətdə Ermənistan xalqın öz müqəddəratını təyin etmək hüququna əsaslanmaqla öz mövqeyinə bəraət qazandırmaq və onu qanuniləşdirmək istəyir. Ermənistan Azərbaycanın Dağlıq Qarabağ regionunda yaşayan erməni azlığının “qayğısına” qalır. Milli azlıqların hüquqlarına gəldikdə isə Helsinki Yekun Aktının 7-ci prinsipinə uyğun olaraq: “Ərazisində milli azlıqlar yaşayan iştirakçı-dövlətlər belə azlıqlara aid olan şəxslərin qanun qarşısında bərabərlik hüququna hörmət edəcək, insan hüquqlarından və əsas azadlıqlardan faktiki istifadə üçün onlara tam şərait yaradacaq və bu yolla onların bu sahədəki qanuni maraqlarını qoruyacaqdır”.¹⁸ Beləliklə, milli azlıqların hüquqları bütövlükdə insan hüquqları kontekstində müdafiə olunur.

Helsinki Yekun Aktının 8-ci prinsipinə əsasən xalqın öz müqəddəratını təyin etməsi milli azlıqlara deyil, “dövlətlərin ərazi bütövlüyünə hörmət də daxil olmaqla BMT Nizamnaməsinin məqsədləri və prinsiplərinə, eləcə də müvafiq beynəlxalq hüquq normalarına uyğun şəkildə fəaliyyət göstərən” xalqlara aiddir. Beləliklə, əgər Ermənistan milli azlıqlara məxsus olan şəxslərin hüquqları haqqında danışarsa, onda onlar (azlıqlar) bütövlükdə insan hüquqları mənasında müdafiə olunurlar. Ermənistan Azərbaycanın Dağlıq Qarabağ regionunda yaşayan erməni azlığının öz müqəddəratını təyin etmək hüququndan danışarsa, bu hüquq, birincisi, milli azlıqlara aid deyil, ikincisi, o, ayrılma anlamına gəlmir. Əgər ermənilər Dağlıq Qarabağın statusu haqqında danışarsa, bunun əhaliyə heç bir dəxli yoxdur, bu, yalnız ərazi iddiasıdır. Əslində, Ermənistan Respublikası Azərbaycan Respublikasının ərazi bütövlüyünü tanıyır, Azərbaycanın Dağlıq Qarabağ regionunun əhalisi üçün özünüidarədən imitina edir və

¹⁷ Мусаев Т. Армяно-азербайджанский конфликт: история право, посредничество. Баку, 2008, с. 124

¹⁸ Мəммədov İ. Dağlıq Qarabağ münaqişəsinin hüquqi həlli yolları // Avropada etno-siyasi münaqişələrin nizama salınmasının hüquqi çərçivəsi. Konfransın materialları. Bakı, 11-12 yanvar, 2002, s.98-100.

dəfələrlə, xüsusən də 1996-cı il Lissabon Sammitində və sonrakı dövrlərdə Avropa Şurasının digər iclaslarında görüldüyü kimi Dağlıq Qarabağın müstəqilliyinə çalışır.

1992-ci ildə milli, etnik, dini və ya dil azlıqlarına mənsub olan şəxslərin hüquqları haqqında BMT Bəyannaməsi qəbul olundu, onun 8-ci maddəsinin 4-cü bəndində qeyd olunur ki, “Bəyannamə”də heç nə Birləşmiş Millətlər Təşkilatının məqsəd və prinsiplərinə, o cümlədən suveren bərabərlik, ərazi bütövlüyü və dövlətin siyasi müstəqilliyi prinsiplərinə zidd olan fəaliyyətə imkan verən müddəə kimi şərh edilə bilməz.¹⁹

BMT-nin insan hüquqlarının müdafiəsi yarım komissiyasının azlıqlar üzrə İşçi Qrupunun sədri A.Eyde tərəfindən hazırlanmış Bəyannaməyə dair şərhərdə qeyd edildiyi kimi, azlıqların öz müqəddəratını təyin etmə hüququ xalqların hüququndan onunla fərqlənir ki, onlar kollektiv deyil, individual xarakter daşıyır, dövlətdən ayrılma və ya dövlətin parçalanması üçün əsas ola bilməz. Bu yanaşma, həmçinin, BMT-nin İnsan hüquqları üzrə Komitəsinin 1994-cü ildə qəbul etdiyi 23 (50) saylı ümumi qaydalı rəyində də təsdiq edilir.²⁰

Dövlətə və cəmiyyətə münasibətdə azlıqların öhdəlikləri 1995-ci ildə qəbul edilmiş Milli azlıqların müdafiəsi haqqında Avropa Şurasının Çərçivə Konvensiyasında da öz əksini tapmışdır. Konvensiyanın 1-ci fəslinin 1-ci maddəsində qeyd edilir ki, milli azlıqların müdafiəsi ən yüksək beynəlxalq əməkdaşlıq səviyyəsində qorunmalıdır. Onun 3-cü bölməsinin 20-ci maddəsində isə qeyd edilir ki, “bu Çərçivə Konvensiyada nəzərdə tutulmuş prinsiplərdən irəli gələn hüquq və azadlıqların həyata keçirilməsi zamanı milli azlığa mənsub olan hər bir şəxs milli qanunvericiliyə riayət edir və başqalarının, xüsusilə də əhalinin əsas hissəsini təşkil edən milli qrupa və ya digər milli azlıqlara aid olan şəxslərin hüquqlarına hörmət edir”.²¹ Maraqlıdır ki, Avropa Şurasının Çərçivə Konvensiyasının 20-ci maddəsində verdiyi şərhərdə ilk növbədə o hallara diqqət yetirilir ki, orada milli azlıqlara aid olan şəxslər bütün dövlət çərçivəsində azlıq olur, lakin bu dövlətin müəyyən regionu çərçivəsində çoxluq təşkil edirlər. Çərçivə Konvensiyasının növbəti maddəsində o da qeyd edilir ki, bu Konvensiyada heç nə beynəlxalq hüququn əsas prinsiplərinə, xüsusilə də suveren bərabərlik, ərazi bütövlüyü və dövlətin siyasi müstəqilliyi prinsiplərinə zidd olan istənilən fəaliyyətlə məşğul olmaq və ya istənilən hərəkətlər etməyi nəzərdə tutan müddəə kimi şərh edilə bilməz.²² Həm beynəlxalq hüquq müddəalarından, həm də ayrı-ayrı ölkələrin

¹⁹ Pamphlet No. 8. The Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. United Nations Guide for Minorities //

²⁰ Musayev T. Göst. əsəri, s.63-70

²¹ Рамочная конвенция о защите национальных меньшинств и Пояснительный доклад к ней // Страсбург, 1 февраля 1995: Musayev T. Göst. əsəri, s. 67

²² Musayev T. Göst. əsəri, s. 67.

qanunvericiliyindən çıxış edərək göstərmək lazımdır ki, əgər hökumət ayrı-seçkiliyə yol vermədən əsas insan hüquq və azadlıqlarına hörmət etməklə bütün əhaliyə dövlətin siyasi və ictimai həyatında iştirak etmək hüququ verirsə, bu halda dövlətin parçalanması, ərazi bütövlüyünün və siyasi birliyinin pozulması cəhdləri qeyri-qanuni hesab edilməlidir.

Belə bir sual ortaya çıxa bilər: əgər bu və ya digər qrup müəyyən hökumətin bütün əhalini təmsil etmədiyini və ona münasibətdə ayrı-seçkilik siyasəti həyata keçirdiyini bəyan edirsə, bu halda nə etməli?

Bununla əlaqədar olaraq belə bir fikir mövcuddur ki, müvafiq qrupun nümayəndələri müstəqillik uğrunda mübarizədə ancaq o vaxt kömək tələb edə və ala bilərlər ki, onlar çoxluğun zorakılıq aktlarına görə böyük məsuliyyət daşdığını kifayət qədər inandırıcı şəkildə sübut etsinlər. Bu halda belə fikirlər səslənir ki, qrupların bəyanatlarını beynəlxalq səviyyədə milli ayrı-seçkiliyin aradan qaldırılması Komitəsi və ya İnsan hüquqları Komitəsi çərçivəsində müzakirə etmək olar. Əgər bu dövlət Avropa Şurasının üzvüdürsə, onda məsələyə həmçinin insan hüquqları haqqında Avropa Konvensiyasının 14-cü maddəsi və 1 sayılı əlavə olaraq baxmaq olar.²³

Buna baxmayaraq qeyd etmək lazımdır ki, bu gün milli və etnik qrupların bəyanatlarına baxılması üçün dəqiq beynəlxalq-hüquqi əsas olmadığı üçün insan hüquqları üzrə müqavilə orqanlarının tövsiyələri hökumətlərə sadəcə müvafiq təsir vasitəsi ola bilər, ərazi problemlərinin həll edilməsi vasitəsi ola bilməz.

Dağlıq Qarabağ münaqişəsinə dair BMT TŞ-nin müvafiq Qətnamələrini (822, 853, 874 və 884 sayılı) və ATƏT sənədlərini beynəlxalq hüquq kontekstində nəzərdən keçirərkən əminliklə qeyd etmək olar ki, bu halda ərazi bütövlüyü və xalqların öz müqəddəratını təyin etmək prinsipləri arasında ziddiyyət olduğuna dair hər hansı əsaslar yoxdur.

BMT TŞ-nin qətnamələrində “Azərbaycan Respublikasının Dağlıq Qarabağ regionu” ifadəsinin işlənməsi ilə, həmçinin eyni ifadənin “Birləşmiş Millətlər Təşkilatı ilə Avropada Təhlükəsizlik və Əməkdaşlıq Təşkilatı arasında əməkdaşlığa” dair Baş Assambleya tərəfindən hər il qəbul edilən qətnamələrə daxil edilməsi ilə Azərbaycan Respublikasının suverenliyi və ərazi bütövlüyünə hörmətin təsdiqi Dağlıq Qarabağın mənsubiyyəti haqqında bütün keçmiş və gələcək mübahisələri və əhalinin ayrılma kontekstində öz müqəddəratını təyin etmə hüququnun olması haqqında xəyalları tamamilə əsassız edir.

²³ Musayev T. Göst. əsəri, s. 68.

BMT TŞ-nin Dağlıq Qarabağ münaqişəsinə dair qətnamələrində beynəlxalq sərhədlərin toxunulmazlığı, ərazi əldə etmək üçün güc tətbiq edilməsinin yol verilməzliyi və Azərbaycan Respublikasının ərazilərinin işğalının pislənməsini nəzərə alaraq, əminliklə qeyd etmək olar ki, əks tərəfin hərəkətləri BMT Nizamnaməsinin məlum müddələrinin kobud şəkildə pozulmasından başqa bir şey deyildir.

Təbii olaraq belə bir sual ortaya çıxa bilər: nəticə etibarilə münaqişə necə həll oluna bilər? Bu suala cavab vermək üçün ilk növbədə başa düşmək lazımdır ki, dövlət əhalinin bütün təbəqələri üçün ümumi ev olmalıdır, bu zaman həm çoxluq, həm də azlıqlar öz tələblərini elə qurmalıdırlar ki, başqaları ilə eyni şeyi əldə etmək imkanından məhrum olmasınlar. Beləliklə də, artıq göründüyü kimi, Dağlıq Qarabağ münaqişəsinə beynəlxalq-hüquq nöqteyi nəzərindən baxarkən, biz bir-biri ilə qırılmaz surətdə əlaqədə olan prinsiplərə - ərazi bütövlüyü, milli azlıqların müdafiəsi və xalqların və millətlərin öz müqəddəratını təyin etməsi – toxunuruq. Etnik münaqişələrin əksəriyyətində ərazi mübahisənin predmetinə çevrilir. Əksər hallarda öz müqəddəratını təyin etmə prinsipi nəinki pozulur, əksinə terrorizmə, etnik təmizləməyə, separatizmə və insan hüquqlarının kobud şəkildə pozulmasına bəraət qazandırmaq məqsədilə qəsdən istifadə edilir. Öz müqəddəratını təyin etmə prinsipi nəinki separatizmi təşviq etmir, həm də birbaşa olaraq onun qarşısının alınmasına yönəlmişdir. Belə ki, BMT-nin Beynəlxalq hüququn prinsipləri haqqında Bəyannaməsində deyilir ki, öz müqəddəratını təyin etmə prinsipi ayrılmaya icazə verən və yaxud ona təşviq edən müstəqil dövlətin ərazi bütövlüyünü qismən və ya tamamilən pozulması kimi şərh edilməməlidir.²⁴

Göründüyü kimi həm ərazi bütövlüyü prinsipi, həm millətlərin öz müqəddəratını təyin etmək prinsipi, həm də milli azlıqların hüquqları insan hüquqları ilə qırılmaz surətdə bağlı olan anlayışlardır. Bu faktlar nəyi göstərir? Millətlərin öz müqəddəratını təyin etmək hüququ nə tarixi, nə də etik məsələdir – yalnız və yalnız siyasi məsələdir. Siyasi şəraitə uyğunlaşdırılmış konkret tarixi mərhələdə və onun təsiri vasitəsilə konkret dövlətin siyasi şəraitinə təsir göstərir.

Bunun siyasi məsələ olduğunu bir fakt da təsdiq edir ki, indi xalqlar yalnız dil və mədəniyyət sahəsində hüquq bərabərliyindən çox, siyasi cəhətdən hüquq bərabərliyi uğrunda mübarizə aparırlar. Əvvəllər onların siyasi həyatda fəal iştirak etməkdən təcrid olunmaları, daha doğrusu, tərkibində fəaliyyət göstərdiyi dövlətin siyasi strukturlarında iştirak etmək vasitəsilə öz həyatlarına təsir göstərmək imkanına malik olmamaları, həmin dövlətləri siyasi müstəqillik yolunda durmağa vadar etmişdir.

²⁴ Quliyev R. Dağlıq Qarabağ münaqişəsinin Avropa Şurasının yanaşmaları baxımından nizama salınmasının hüquqi aspektləri // Avropada etno-siyasi münaqişələrin nizama salınmasının hüquqi çərçivəsi. Konfransın Materialları, Bakı, 11-12 yanvar, 2002, s. 101-106

AZERBAIJAN'S PERSISTENCE TO RESOLVE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT: PROBABLE SCENARIOS AND SUGGESTIONS

Mehmood UI HASSAN KHAN*

Abstract

The Nagorno-Karabakh issue is the bleeding wound for the Republic of Azerbaijan which is also a looming security threat to the whole region of South Caucasus. Azerbaijan's successive leaders and people have been striving hard to resolve Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with Armenia which shows its persistence. But reconciliatory efforts have not yet been succeeded due to many complicated reasons.

25 years, 300 months, 9125 days the Republic of Azerbaijan has had been trying its best to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh within the true spirits of international law, rule of sovereignty, respect of human rights and the last but not the least, mutual respect, showing its strong political commitment to do something meaningful for the suffering people of occupied areas under Armenia illegal occupation.

Right from the beginning, the government of Azerbaijan's took a principled stance that "Nagorno-Karabakh is an "integral part" of it. It has been using government, public, religious and the last but not the least sports diplomacy to achieve the desired goal of de-occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh and seven adjacent districts under illegal occupation of Armenia.

There is substantial development within region and globe, towards realization of Nagorno-Karabakh as potential threat to region and the European Union (EU) in recent times.

Introduction

Even most recently Azerbaijan's President H.E. Ilham Aliyev¹ while addressing to 72 General Assembly of the UN projected the miseries of Nagorno-Karabakh people before the so called "international conscious". He highlighted Armenia aggressive policy towards people of Azerbaijan living in territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and seven other regions of the country. Armenia occupied more than 20 percent of Azerbaijan whereas Nagorno-Karabakh remained an ancient and historical part of Azerbaijan. Now the continued occupation of Azerbaijani territories by Armenian armed forces is a threat to peace and stability in the South Caucasus, as well as a source of destabilization for the region in the future.

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¹AZERTAC, President Ilham Aliyev addressed opening of 72nd Session of UN General Assembly, September 20, 2017, https://azertag.az/en/xeber/President_Ilham_Aliyev_addressed_opening_of_72nd_Session_of_UN_General_Assembly-1095443

President H.E. Ilham Aliyev briefed about human aspects of this ongoing crisis by saying that more than one million of Azerbaijanis became refugees and internally displaced persons. Armenia conducted the policy of ethnic cleansing against Azerbaijanis in Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh and seven other regions of Azerbaijan.

Khojaly Genocide

Khojaly genocide considered to be byproduct of Armenia's aggression, brutality and state sponsored terrorism against innocent and helpless people of Azerbaijan. On February 26, 1992, Armenia committed a war crime, killing 613 peaceful residents of Khojaly, among them 106 women and 63 children," he further added. It was an act of barbarism. It was a crime against humanity. He reminded that leading international organizations adopted resolutions demanding withdrawal of Armenian troops from the territories of Azerbaijan².

Figure-1



The Khojaly massacre is one of the most heinous and bloodiest events of the 20th century. It is still a black spot on the collective human conscious of the region and the globe as well. It is an act of barbarism and discrimination. The town of Khojaly came under intensive fire from

² Shazia Mehmood Khan, Khojaly Massacre and Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Resolution, Defence Journal, September 2017.

the town of Khankendi and Askeran already occupied by Armenian armed forces February 25, 1992. According to an official report, 613 civilians were killed, including 106 women, 70 elderly and 83 children, and a total of 1,000 civilians were disabled. Moreover, 1,275 innocent people were taken hostage³.

Khojaly tragedy is another terrible example of the policy of ethnic cleansing and genocide against the Azerbaijani people, which is pursued by the Armenian nationalists and their patrons for a long time. The Khojaly genocide was an integral part of the occupation policy of Armenia against Azerbaijan, and this led to the massive and gross violation of the norms and principles of international law and human rights and freedoms.

Armenia's Aggressive Policy and Missing People

According to Azerbaijan's official figures over 3,800 people⁴ went missing due to Armenian aggression. Details are given below as:-

Moreover, 872 out of 3,868 missing people were captured or became hostages of Armenian soldiers during intense combat action, and are currently kept in caption by them. "They are 591 military personnel and 291 civilians. The civilians include 29 children, 98 women and 111 elderly people."

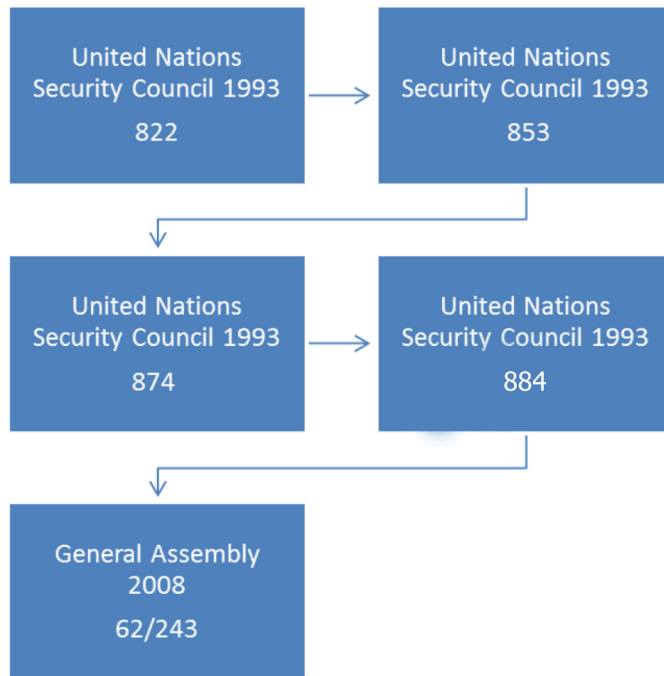
United Nations Security Council

Right of Azerbaijan on Nagorno-Karabakh territories is even recognized by the United Nations Security Council which adopted four resolutions 822, 853, 874 and 884 condemning the use of force against Azerbaijan and the occupation of its territories in 1993. It reaffirmed respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, reconfirmed that the Nagorno-Karabakh region is an integral part of Azerbaijan and demanded the immediate, full and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces from all the occupied territories. Moreover, it demands, including in the first place the withdrawal of the occupying forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, have still not been implemented, and the mediation efforts conducted for the last 20 years within the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) have also yet to yield results⁵.

³ Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan, Khojaly Genocide and Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Resolution, Election Times, February 20, 2017, <http://electiontimes.pk/khojaly-genocide-and-nagorno-karabakh-conflict-resolution/>

⁴ Rashid Shirinov, Over 3,800 people went missing due to Armenian aggression, AZERNEWS, September 12, 2017, <https://www.azernews.az/aggression/118898.html>

⁵ Shazia Mehmood Khan, Khojaly Massacre and Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Resolution, Defence Journal, September 2017.

*Azerbaijan's International Support (UN & General Assembly)***Figure-II**

The above given resolutions clearly show international support in favour of Azerbaijan on the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and respect its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Moreover, these resolutions also acknowledge Azerbaijan's legitimate right about its illegally occupied territories by Armenia.

The General Assembly also condemned the use of force against Azerbaijan and occupation of its territories and reaffirmed the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and the inviolability of its internationally recognized borders.

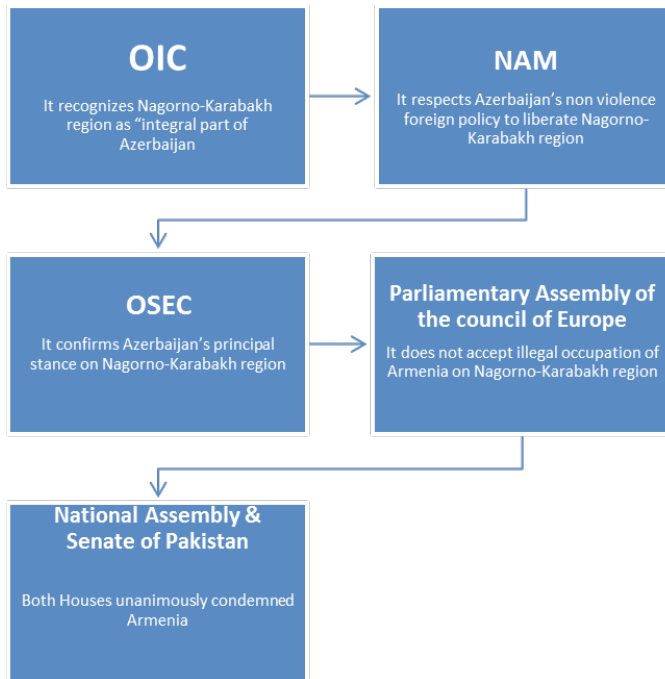
Azerbaijan's Pursuits in International Organizations⁶

Azerbaijan is a peaceful country owing to which it never used violence to any country even Armenia. It always believes in dialogue, development and not destruction. It rigorously pursued other important organizations⁷ to project its country right on Nagorno-Karabakh region. Following figure upholds Azerbaijan's persuasions in the various international organizations⁸.

⁶ Shazia MehMood Khan, Khojaly Massacre and Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Resolution, Defence Journal, September 2017.

⁷ Jean-Christophe Peuch, Azerbaijan: PACE Criticizes Armenian Occupation Of Azerbaijani Territories, Radio Free Europe January 25, 2005, <https://www.rferl.org/a/1057066.html>

⁸ APA, NAM Summit Final Document expresses support for Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, September 18, 2017, <http://en.apa.az/azerbaijan-politics/foreign-news/nam-summit-final-document-expresses-support-for-azerbaijan-s-territorial-integrity.html>

Figure-III⁹

Armenia has been negating international resolve and it is still not ready to listen regional and international organisations serious concerns about the resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh region. Ilham Aliyev stated that Armenia for 24 years has been ignoring the UN Security Council resolutions¹⁰, and unfortunately it is not punished for that. “This is a double standard approach, and it is unacceptable,” Ilham Aliyev said.

International Sanctions

Ilham Aliyev while delivering a historic speech in 72 General Assembly of the UN requested international sanctions on Armenia which upheld true spirits of the Security Council. Armenia does everything to keep the status-quo unchanged, block substantive negotiations. The co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group France, Russia, and the USA on several occasions stated that the status-quo is unacceptable,” he said.

He argued that a corrupt, failed state, ruled by a despotic, medieval regime afforded to violate the international law for so many years, and ignore the resolutions of the UN Security Council and statements of the leading countries of the world because of the double standards.

There has been on international pressure on the aggressor, no international sanctions

⁹ Rashid Shirinov, OIC always supports Azerbaijan’s fair position on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, says Secretary General, AZERNEWS November 2, 2017, <https://www.azernews.az/karabakh/121606.html>

¹⁰ AZERTAC, President Ilham Aliyev addressed opening of 72nd Session of UN General Assembly, September 20, 2017.

imposed on Armenian dictatorship. “This policy must be stopped. Such a policy towards the aggressor is not only a demonstration of injustice, it also creates the illusion that the Armenian dictatorship can continue its policy of terror,” he said.

International Stakeholders & Vested Interests

International main stakeholders led by the USA and the EU have their own vested socio-economic, geo-political and geo-strategic interests which they do not desire to diminish in the ongoing conflict/end game. US efforts have been neutralized due to decisive “Russian factor” in the region. It is always hard to play a “good inning” in other “home ground” and South Caucasus is home ground/turf of Russia. EU brinkmanship is confined only to its economic interests in the region especially in terms of “energy security” Occupational-nationalist policy of the Armenian-lobby is also one the vital factor in maintaining the status-quo. It has now become security flash-point in the region and ethnic conflicts turned into international geopolitical struggle.

Regional countries i.e. Turkey and Iran have different approaches towards Armenia. Turkey’s support to Azerbaijan creates greater socio-economic integration, regional connectivity and political harmony. Whereas Iran follows its own path of engagement.

Its increasing economic ties and greater political understanding with Armenia shows its own “path of engagement” where socio-economic, geo-political and geo-strategic priorities come first. Turkey’s solidarity with Azerbaijan has been marginalized due to Russian’s military presence and its own trade & commerce relations and mega projects in the region and especially “front state” behind Armenia’s status-quo.

The CIS and South Caucasian countries have very little to maneuver and its “isolated policies” are one the main reasons of their ineffectiveness in resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh.

President’s Endeavors

Azerbaijan’s President H.E. Ilham Aliyev has been engaged to different forums and held high officials meetings to resolve the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. He had constructive meeting with President of Armenia which showed that Azerbaijan ready for substantive talk to solve the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Upon the proposal of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-chairs, the meeting of the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia was in Geneva on October 16, 2017 to discuss the settlement process of Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

A joint statement¹¹ issued after the talks by the Azerbaijani and Armenian and foreign

ministers and the co-chairs of the Minsk Group said that “the meeting took place in a constructive atmosphere.” Both the presidents agreed to take measures to intensify the negotiation process and to take additional steps to reduce tensions on the Line of Contact. Both presidents had meetings in Vienna in May and St. Petersburg in June. After that, the talks stalled, although the Azerbaijani side constantly affirmed Baku’s readiness to sit at a negotiating table with Yerevan. Armenia was ignoring the calls.

President’s Address in Developing Eight Economic Cooperation (D-8)

While addressing to D-8 President Ilham Aliyev drew the attention of participants to the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. He briefed about different aspects of the ongoing crisis. He also mentioned double standards of the UN Security Council which adopted four resolutions on the said conflict.

Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict’s Multiplier Collateral Damages

Unresolved Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict’s has multiplier collateral damages. Thousands of people lost their lives and over one million people became refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). More than Twenty percent of Azerbaijani territory has been occupied and material damages worth billions of dollars as the whole infrastructure devastated or destroyed in the occupied regions. Armenian aggression has badly affected all sectors of its macro-economy¹².

According to the Azerbaijan figures (February 2017) Azerbaijan 890 cities, villages and settlements, 102 thousand dwelling houses, 7000 public buildings, 695 healthcare facilities, 693 secondary schools, 927 libraries, 310 industrial and building enterprises, 464 historical monuments and museums, 6 state theaters and concert studios have been completely destroyed in the occupied territories¹³.

Infrastructural and telecommunication damages

Collateral Damages	Estimations
Railroad	240,4 km
Motor road	800 km
Bridges	160
Water Reservoirs	3 mega projects
Water-line	2,300 km

¹¹ Radio Free Europe, Armenian, Azerbaijani Presidents Hold ‘Constructive’ Talks on Karabakh, RFERL October 16, 2017, http://en.apa.az/nagorno_karabakh/meeting-of-azerbaijani-armenian-presidents-kicks-off-in-geneva.html

¹² Shahmar Hajiyev, The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and an estimate of war damages for Azerbaijan. Modern Diplomacy February 17, 2017, http://modern diplomacy.eu/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=2264:the-nagorno-karabakh-conflict-and-an-estimate-of-war-damages-for-azerbaijan&Itemid=133

Air	4 airports
Gas distribution stations	35
Gas-pipe	Baku-Khankendi-Nakhchivan
Fuel Stations	2,500
Electric lines	15,000 km
Telecommunications	35 000 subscribers
Source	http://karabakh.org

Decrease in Agricultural Production/output

Nagorno-Karabakh's conflict played havoc during 1990-1994 during which GDP of the Azerbaijan decreased about 63 percent in total due to agriculture output falling about 43 percent which led to massive unemployment because of loss of fertile agricultural lands. The occupied regions had quite strong progress in agricultural production and productivity growth. However, all those production facilities destroyed and remained in the occupied territories. Azerbaijan preliminary calculations show that the total damage to Azerbaijan caused by Armenian aggression estimated around \$60 billion.

Azerbaijan's Soft Power & Image Showcasing

The government of Azerbaijan has been remained center of interfaith harmony, tolerance, dialogue and development for so many years. It initiated many meaningful international forums and as well as conducted various seminars and conference to showcase its strong commitment towards international dialogue, partnership and cooperation between Muslim and Europe. It also started "Baku Process" which was also supported by the UN.

Figure-IV



Azerbaijan hosted Fourth Islamic Solidarity Games in 2017 in which more than 3,000 athletes from 56 countries took part. It was also a great contribution to the promotion of multiculturalism.

Azerbaijan's Religious Diplomacy

Religion is sacred and believes in “holistic approach” to settle any conflict. During 2017, Azerbaijan's government also adopted “track-II” diplomacy in shape of religious diplomacy with the hope that it might bring desired goals in term of Nagorno-Karabakh de-occupation and greater peace in the region. Religious leaders of Azerbaijan, Russia and Armenia intended to contribute to pacification of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict¹⁴. Chairman of the Caucasian Muslims Office Sheikh-ul-Islam Haji Allahshukur Pashazade, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill and Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II held a meeting in Holy Danilov Monastery. All sides mainly discussed the settlement process of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It was held at the initiative of the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church to discuss ways to resolve the Karabakh conflict, a joint statement was adopted.

Joint Statement¹⁵

- (a) Special importance to the consistent development of the peacekeeping dialogue, the continuation of the negotiations and the mediation efforts of the international community that will help achieve a comprehensive settlement of the conflict.
- (b) Principles of good neighborliness and moral values preached by traditional religions ought to be preserved.
- (c) For preservation of peace and the speedy resolution of all humanitarian problems related to the conflict, the political and public figures must take positive steps.
- (d) Seek peaceful and just ways to resolve contradictions.
- (e) Appeal to facilitate the release of all civilians who did not participate in hostilities and were taken prisoner.
- (f) Rise to religious harmony; protect churches, mosques and other shrines.
- (g) Readiness to support peacekeeping initiatives to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

They expressed readiness to continue cooperation in the field of peacekeeping and voiced hope that the upcoming trilateral meeting will contribute to the settlement of the conflict in

¹⁴ Rashid Shirinov, Rashid Shirinov, Religious leaders seek to contribute to pacification of Karabakh conflict. AZERNEWS September 8, 2017, <https://www.azernews.az/karabakh/118733.html>

¹⁵ APA September 8, 2017, http://en.apa.az/azerbaijan_religion_news/azerbaijani-russian-and-armenian-religious-leaders-meet-in-moscow.html

the South Caucasus. It was also proposed to establish a group comprising religious leaders of Azerbaijan, Russia and Armenia for the settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, like the OSCE Minsk Group.

Azerbaijan's Main Principles & Requirements in the Peace Process

The Republic of Azerbaijan's main principles and requirements in the peace process are i.e. Armenia's withdrawal from the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent territories, and Nagorno-Karabakh's remaining within Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan always expresses its readiness to grant Nagorno-Karabakh the highest status under international law and practice.

Armenia still controls fifth part of Azerbaijan's territory and rejects implementing four UN Security Council resolutions on withdrawal of its armed forces from Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding districts. Azerbaijan¹⁶ has long ago stated it is ready to settle the conflict through direct negotiations with Armenia with mediation of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs. However, the Armenian side is constantly trying to make up reasons to avoid a constructive dialogue and preserve the unacceptable status quo in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Azerbaijan's at Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)

On its part, Azerbaijan did not leave any regional and international valuable forum to present its case of Nagorno-Karabakh. His foreign minister while attending the ECO's Extraordinary Session of Council of Ministers (2017) stressed the need to resolve the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh through greater regional security cooperation¹⁷.

He purposefully briefed about Armenian constant "aggressive policy" towards Azerbaijan people especially living around the control lines due to which regional security and stability got compromised. Wave of State terrorism of Armenia diminished full-fledged regional cooperation.

He warned that Armenia must be restrained from any type of social, economic and cultural involvement in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. He rightly shared that greater regional cooperation and socio-economic prosperity linked to withdrawal of Armenian military forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and ensuring the return of the refugees and internally displaced people to their houses.

¹⁶ Rashid Shirinov, Armenia must end occupation of Azerbaijani lands. AZERNEWS, September, 20 2017, <https://www.azernews.az/karabakh/119258.html>

¹⁷ Trend, Azerbaijani FM: Security and stability – crucial in regional co-op, September 20, 2017, <https://www.azernews.az/karabakh/119233.html>

Munich Conference (2017) and Emerging Security Scenarios

The government of Azerbaijan also utilized the annual “Munich Security Conference” which has been a venue for discussions on pressing security matters on the geopolitical agenda and projected the urgent need of Nagorno-Karabakh’s conflict resolution. It also showed that Europe’s growing vulnerability due to long-lasting conflicts in its territory.

The Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is the very conflict threatening the security of not only the South Caucasus region, but also the entire Europe. Due to Armenia’s continued state terrorism, aggression and repeated violations the situation is now even worse than one feared, as graver escalation could draw in powerful neighboring countries¹⁸.

Armenia’s Provocative Measures/Actions

The Armenia has been “guilty” to provocative actions, strongly violates the ceasefire regime on the contact line of troops, breach certain agreements reached in the settlement of the conflict, thus hampering peace talks. It targets provoking Baku and keeping the status-quo, which promises “no good”. The fragile peace and current deteriorating situation in the region transmits spillover repercussions in the South Caucasus, as well as Europe, because of oil & gas security which banks close to the Karabakh front line. It is feared that Armenia prolonged and unstoppable military action may spoil region “security umbrella” of South Caucasus and that of Eastern Europe.

Azerbaijan’s President once again tabled Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in the center of discussion of Munich conference and drew the attention of the international community to the existence of double standards in the approach of some global players in this matter. He successfully highlighted UN’s “double standard” in terms of its failure of implementation of the Security Council resolutions, which stated the necessity of withdrawal of Armenian armed forces from the occupied Azerbaijani territories, have not been fulfilled, no sanctions have so far been imposed on Armenia. The country-aggressor did not face any pressure despite the fact that it seized the territory of another state.

He emphasized that all the conflicts must be solved on the same principle, on the same approach, territorial integrity of every country must be respected, cannot be violated, and internationally recognized boundaries cannot be changed by force.

¹⁸ AZERNEWS, Long-lasting conflicts: Uncertainty leading to unpredictability, February 21, 2017, <https://www.azernews.az/editorial/109240.html>

IDPS & Refugees

Azerbaijan has been facing inflows of Internally Displaced People (IDPS)¹⁹ and refugees on its soil for so many years because of Armenian illegal occupation in Nagorno-Karabakh and its adjacent seven districts. It creates considerable “human crisis” in the country. Key to their safe and sound settlement in their legitimate lands is conditioned to resolve of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict which must be settled as soon as possible.

Azerbaijan is the role model for IDPs and refugees in the region but it also wants peaceful resolution of long awaited conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Armenia’s Deliberate Efforts/Actions to Change Ground Realities of Nagorno-Karabakh

Armenian has been deliberately engaged in so many illegal activities in order to change “ground realities” associated with Nagorno-Karabakh and its seven adjacent districts.

Armenia’s War Hysteria

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan’s visited occupied Azerbaijani territories, on March 25, 2017²⁰ and inspected military exercises demonstrated Armenia’s aversion to settle the conflict through peaceful negotiations. It showed its provocative “war hysteria” pugnacious grandiloquence which negated the Armenian government’s stated commitments, both under international law and within the ongoing political process toward the resolution of the conflict with Azerbaijan.

The government of Azerbaijan strongly condemned Armenia’s recent military drills in occupied Karabakh as well as President Sargsyan’s aggressive statements during his illegal visit to this internationally recognized Azerbaijani territory and termed it a clear manifestation of the continued illegal use of force by Armenia against Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan also appealed to all OSCE members to act in unity to reverse such flagrant violations of the Helsinki Final Act. The Armenian president’s statement contradicts the Bishkek Protocol of 1994 the basis for the ceasefire in Karabakh.

Armenia’s Efforts to Change Physical & Human Geography Equations

Armenian government is trying its levels best to change the existing “physical & human

¹⁹ Rashid Shirinov, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict must be resolved ASAP. AZERNEWS, April 24, 2017. <http://www.azernews.az/karabakh/111933.html>

²⁰ Najiba Mustafayeva, Risk of Further Serious Hostilities in Karabakh Remains High. Eurasia Daily Monitor Volume: 14(48). April 7, 2017.

geography” equations in the occupied territories by some apparent and mostly secretive methods not confined to “census”, “resettling of Syrian Armenian” and even dangerous use of natural resources like water. Reportedly, Government agencies of Armenia, including its Ministry of Diaspora, as well as other organizations of Armenia, in particular the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), which designed “Help your Brother” program for this purpose. Armenians from Syria many from Qamishli and Aleppo in Syria are settled mainly but in the occupied Zangilan, Gubadly and Lachyn districts.²¹

Census Operations

Holding of census²² in the disputed areas/territories is against the basic philosophy of international law and true spirits of conflict resolution. Frequent floating of “right of to self-determination” and “independent state” are systematic means to change the composition of Nagorno-Karabakh and its adjacent seven districts.

Armenian authorities have been repeatedly held “referendum & elections” in the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, thereby trying to prove something “strange” to the whole world. On the contrary, Armenia could not succeed to impress the world community from these tactics.

Establishment of Illegal Republic

Armenia established so called republic in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan accompanied by “ethnic cleansing” of the Azerbaijani population is not recognized by the subjects of international law, the states of the world community and international organizations.

Armenia’s Scorched-Earth Strategy

Armenian authorities are also indulged in “scorched-earth” strategy in Nagorno-Karabakh and its adjacent seven districts. Its military often attacks villages and town in the occupied areas/districts to make areas unlivable for the people. Today every town and village in the occupied Azerbaijani lands has been totally damaged.

There is hardly a building with a roof left on it. There are now empty districts, villages with empty houses and facilities, pocked by gunfire and artillery, position in ruin. Constant

²¹ Shahmar Hajiyev. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and an estimate of war damages for Azerbaijan. MODERN DIPLOMACY February 17, 2017.

http://modern diplomacy.eu/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=2264:the-nagorno-karabakh-conflict-and-an-estimate-of-war-damages-for-azerbaijan&Itemid=133

²² Trend. Expert: Census in Karabakh enough to expose Armenian lies. AZERNEWS August 3, 2017. <https://www.azernews.az/karabakh/117087.html>

atrocities carried out against civilians explain supremacist mind-set of Armenians. The whole of Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding districts have been razed to the ground.²³

Armenia's Environmental Harm

Armenia is also systematically conducting serious environment damage²⁴ against Azerbaijan and neighboring countries. Armenia causes environmental harm to its neighbors, as rivers originating in Armenia flow into neighboring countries. The use of water resources as a tool for ecological terror and pressure is the state policy of Armenia.

Ratio of Fresh Water in South Caucasus	Countries %
Georgia	62
Armenia	28
Azerbaijan	10
Source	AZERNEWS

Azerbaijan's two largest rivers, the Kura and Araz pass through Armenia and Armenians have been regularly polluting them for many years. Both rivers play a major part in agriculture and the economy of Azerbaijan.

Cultural & Heritage Terrorism

Armenia is notorious for cultural and heritage terrorism. According to the Chairman of Azerbaijan's Copyright Agency²⁵ (April 20, 2017) since the beginning of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and occupation of Azerbaijani territories, Armenian aggressors badly looted Azerbaijan's rich cultural treasures

Cultural & Heritage Terrorism	Quantity
Historical & Architectural Monuments	1200
Looted Museums	27
Illegal Export of Valuable Items	100,000
Total Destruction	
Religious Monuments	152
Mosques	62
Book	4,600,000
Libraries/ Holy Quran & Rare Islamic Manuscripts	927
Source	AZERNEWS

Poor Performance of OSCE/ Helsinki Commission

One of the causes of stagnation in the negotiation process is the crisis of the OSCE Minsk Group format, which for many years demonstrates inconsistency in carrying out an

²³ Fuad Muxtar-Aqbabali, Armenia's scorched earth strategy against Azerbaijani lands, monuments. AZERNEWS July 20, 2017. <https://www.azernews.az/aggression/114981.html>

²⁴ Rashid Shirinov. Armenia uses water as means of environmental terror. AZERNEWS July 20, 2017. <https://www.azernews.az/aggression/116479.html>

²⁵ Rashid Shirinov. Armenia continues embezzling tangible, intangible values of Azerbaijan. AZERNEWS April 20, 2017. <https://www.azernews.az/karabakh/111766.html>

intermediary mission on this issue.

The process of peaceful settlement of the conflict is also stalled due to the failure of the Minsk Group in general and the passive activity of the co-chairs, since none of the intermediary countries in the OSCE Minsk Group format expresses its position categorically or shows proper activity.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) could not achieve the desired goals of settlement due to unconstructive position of Armenia to give up its occupational position. Unfortunately, OSCE co-chairs could not put pressure to Armenia in order to commit its obligation arising from the resolution of UN Security Council and European organizations on Karabakh. The Minsk Group of OSCE carries the regulative mission of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It was established in May 1992.

Madrid Principles

The Madrid Principles was promulgated in 2007 indicating the return of the regions surrounding the Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan control; ensuring the security and self-government of Nagorno-Karabakh by granting a temporary status; establishing a corridor linking Armenia with the Nagorno-Karabakh. Moreover, the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh will be determined by a popular referendum which would have legally binding power; right of all the refugees to return back to the territories, where they were living before and the last but not the least, the conflict; providing international security, which includes peace-keeping operations.

Illegal Settlements

According to OSCE (April 2011) Armenians²⁶ illegally resettled 14,000 persons of Armenian origin to occupied Lachin district against all accepted international laws and norms, including the Article 49 of the 1949 Geneva Convention forbidding the “occupying power” to transfer parts of its own civilian population into occupied territories which must be rectified now.

Historically, its activities have brought no breakthrough results so far and the situation worsens due to the daily breaches of ceasefire and provocations of the Armenian forces. Moreover, there are elements of anger, disappointment and dissatisfaction among the people of Azerbaijan that OSCE co-chairs serve only Armenia’s interests. Therefore, the OSCE co-chairs should be more active in the issue of forcing Armenia to hold substantive negotiations

²⁶ Trend. Richmond Times-Dispatch: Armenia must comply with UNSC resolutions. AZERNEWS May 24, 2017. <https://www.azernews.az/karabakh/113703.html>

with Azerbaijan so that the multi-year problem is resolved through a constructive dialogue of the parties, and not by force.

OSCE has been very active since last April 2016 when war again broke out between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Many consultations, meetings and visits in both the countries have been carried out since last April due to which meetings between foreign ministers and presidents have been arranged and held. It urged to have continuous dialogue/efforts to achieve peace and solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Now it supports peaceful means to put an end to chronic conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh.

OSCE Minsk Group & Humanitarian Issues

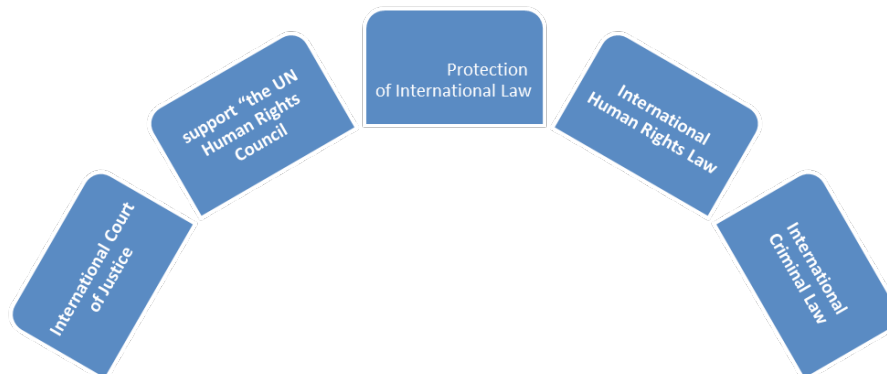
For the time being, the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs must involve in humanitarian issues such as the return of Azerbaijani refugees to their native lands, while settling the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The OSCE Minsk does not have a balanced approach mentioning the principle of the right to self-determination of peoples in the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict along with the principle of ensuring the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Since Armenia has been violating peace agreement so, OSCE Minsk group co-chairs should demand that Armenia withdraws from the occupied Azerbaijani territories, and change the current status quo.

Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict and Role of International Community

International community has been remained mummied and never undertook any initiative to resolve Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and seemingly it is not going to do anything to resolve it. Even role of the European Union (EU) has not been up to mark on this burning issue and declared it a “frozen conflict/issue”.

A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy

Figure V



The above mentioned figure upholds “EU Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy” which aims to promote “the responsibility to protect, international humanitarian law, International Human Rights Law and International Criminal Law” as well as to support “the UN Human Rights Council and encourage the widest acceptance of the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice”. But unfortunately the EU has not done its responsibility to settle the conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh.²⁷

Now EU should work towards strengthening the humanitarian dimension of the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process. By improving the humanitarian situation on the ground and respecting international humanitarian law, as well as taking a more robust stance incorporating political and diplomatic pressure, the EU and the OSCE Minsk Group can help overcome the current disagreement between both the countries and move forward in the direction of a lasting resolution of this protracted armed conflict.

European Parliament’s Stance

Although, European Parliament considers status quo in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict fragile but practically does nothing. It is also concerned about an arms race in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone, confrontational rhetoric and incidents on the line of contact between Azerbaijani and Armenian troops, which lead to casualties.

It has no military solution and a long-term settlement based on international law is urgently needed. EU must support the OSCE Minsk Group’s efforts, calling on the parties to respect the ceasefire and their commitment to peaceful settlement of the conflict.

Biased PACE

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) has once again showed its partiality and prejudice towards Azerbaijan. It has become icon of hypocrisy and double standards. PACE, by adopting certain documents against Azerbaijan more likely tried to demonstrate its service to interests of certain people and circles, instead of showing commitment to the real interests of European community.

Ours world is the “derivative” of international power politics and existence of conflicts are also created by most of the “Western States”. Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has

²⁷ Gulshan Pashayeva. Azerbaijan is disappointed with EU’s role in Nagorno-Karabakh. EURACTIV Jul 18, 2017. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/azerbaijan/opinion/azerbaijan-is-disappointed-with-eus-role-in-nagorno-karabakh/>

been neglecting by all the western states. The major powers must put pressure on Armenia in order to achieve substantive talks for resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

On part of the US, major global power and co-chair of OSCE must confirm its commitment to fulfilling vital role in Karabakh process. It will prevent the resumption of hostilities, which will have an impact on the entire region, including neighboring Georgia that depends on gas supplies from Azerbaijan. Intense fighting could disrupt the region's energy transportation network, which also carries Azerbaijan's resources to US allies in Europe. For USA, greater volatility in the South Caucasus would further complicate already strained its relations with Russia, Turkey, and Iran".

Arms Sale to Armenia

Russian supplied pledged weapons to Armenia which would be negatively impact Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution. Russia has decided to supply Armenia with a loan worth \$200 million to buy modern weapons. The Armenian government approved the first \$100 million loan package October 12, 2017. Azerbaijan expects more balanced solutions from Moscow for the resolution of the conflict with Armenia.

It is feared that Russia's continuous arms supplies to Armenia would benefit the aggressor country, Armenia in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, along with threatening security of the entire region. Russian supply arms to Armenia can be regarded as the support to aggression rather than balanced policy between the conflicting parties i.e. Azerbaijan and Armenia. It is also feared that the arms deals with Russia would further strengthen the "status quo".

Russia along with the U.S. and France is a co-chair country of the OSCE Minsk Group which must not provide arms to Armenia which is also against the basic protocol and mandate of OSCE Minsk Group.

Russia, providing Armenia with a loan worth \$200 million to buy modern weapons, violates its obligations as an OSCE Minsk Group co-chair and fails to follow the principle of neutrality, which is the most important factor for achieving a fair resolution of the said conflict.

Armenia and Nazi ideology

Fascism remained powerful tool to disgrace humanity, weaker factions, people, groups and countries alike in the 19th century. It burnt the true spirits of humanity i.e. free choice, fair play, equal rights and human rights and created demotivation, destruction, disintegration in so many countries around the globe. The "Nazi ideology" caused unsalvageable damage to

many people in different countries, as well as to the economies of various states. It was era of hegemony which led to horrendous crimes against humanity and people.

Azerbaijan's Staunch Advocate of Democracy & Human Rights

Right from the beginning Azerbaijan has been staunch advocate of democracy, human rights, free choice and external interferences and illegal occupation. Even Russia stands for anti-Nazism. It initiated a resolution during the 70th session of the UN General Assembly which was subsequently adopted on “combating glorification of Nazism and neo-Nazism” It was supported by 126 states.

Armenia is now promoting Nazi ideology at state level which has serious consequences. There is a process of glorification of war criminals in Armenia. There is a monument to the accomplice of the Nazi regime Garegin Nzhdeh, who killed thousands of innocent people. By the way, the President of this country attended the opening ceremony.

Greater unity, strengthening outreach and advocacy may be effective to expose Armenia carriers of fascist ideology and achieve positive change. On Azerbaijan's part up to 600,000 of its citizens actively participated in the fight against fascism, and nearly half of them died.

Armenia's War Obsession

Armenia continuously purchases advanced weapons which may be a serious security threat to peace and stability in the South Caucasus and the Europe. It is feared that Russian arms supplies will further instigate armed clashes in the line of contact. Furthermore, more innocent Azerbaijani civilians will be at the mercy of fascist Armenia. It would also damage socio-economic prosperity in the Caucasus region. Surprisingly, neither NATO nor the European Union have denounced and condemned the recent purchase of weapons made by Armenia.

Suggestions

Following suggestions may be useful to achieve the desired goals in term of de-occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh and seven adjacent districts namely Kalbajar, Lachin, Qubadli, Jabrayil, Zangilan, Agdam and Fuzuli which have been under illegal occupation of Armenian, an aggressor. By following given below suggestions, the Republic of Azerbaijan may gradually but surely deescalate position at contact line, honorable return of IDPs and refugees.

It is hoped that a “holistic approach” based on these suggestions would bring greater socio-economic prosperity, energy cooperation, sustainable transport corridors and above all dreams of a “qualitative life” in the days to come.

- (a) Armenia “*the mosque destroyer*” cannot be friend of any Muslim country must be rigorously projected and pursued while engaging the OIC and its all members in the future.
- (b) Armenia’s “*Nazi ideology*” and its functionality need to be projected especially in the EU in order to seek support for achieving a peaceful solution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.
- (c) Armenian purchase of arms from Russia or elsewhere must be highlighted among the EU countries as “*potential security threat*” to region and the EU.
- (d) Armenian dangerous interference with nature and natural resources are compounding serious threats of climate change should be tabled among the concerned regional as well as global organizations.
- (e) Armenian is purposefully extinguishing Azerbaijan’s culture, heritage and historical places, buildings and monuments which should be brought into discussion of concerned organizations of the EU and world alike because “*human’s culture and heritage*” is a “*common asset*” to all and diversity of humanity, faith, sect, belief and political understanding must be valued and respected.
- (f) Armenian nuclear program has been declared “*unsecured*” and “*imperfect*” by all the international regulatory bodies which need to be voiced at every regional and international forum.
- (g) The government of Azerbaijan should seriously think to change the composition of “*OSCE Minsk Group co-chair*” because it has not been caring about the interest of Azerbaijan and peaceful liberalization of its occupied territories from aggressor Armenia.
- (h) Rigorous “*religious diplomacy*” may provide essential “*missing*” “*magic box*” for lessening of human miseries and sufferings of Azerbaijani IDPS, and refugees.
- (i) Proposal for removing of snipers from the contact line should be pursued for a greater safety and stability.
- (j) Reliable “*people diplomacy*” may put an end to isolation of Azerbaijani living in Nagorno-Karabakh and its seven adjacent districts.
- (k) Diplomatic request may be forwarded to all brotherly and friendly regional as well as world countries to include some “*Literature/Material*” in their universities about “Black January”, Khojaly genocide and Nagorno-Karabakh conflict for creating better political understanding and winning widespread human support.
- (l) Policy makers of Azerbaijan must also find or exploit “*conflict of interest*” among the power brokers in the region to achieve some strategic cushion or space for political maneuvering on the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In this regard, experts of international relations, political science, human psychology and philosophy must

also be formed as soon as possible.

- (m) Gross human right violations, violations of ceasefire, poverty, unemployment, discrimination and widening insecurity among the factions of the Armenia ought to be highlighted regionally and globally. Severe economic meltdown, bankruptcy, corruption, lack of transparency and even denial of basic necessities of life must be showcased in the international media on regular basis.
- (n) Azerbaijan is blessed with natural resources of oil and gas. Its economy is smart which future prospects is also bright. It may consider using “*superior economy*” to make alliances against Armenian aggression and liberalization of occupied areas in the region and outer world.
- (o) Azerbaijan must utilize its strong ties with Israel to win lobby in the power corridor of the US power politics against Armenia whose diaspora reportedly financed against Trump and favored Hillary Clinton in the recently held Presidential Election.
- (p) Azerbaijan’s government must also extend its friendly relations with NAM so that vital support on the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict may be received in the future.
- (q) Azerbaijan must also have meaningful dialogue with the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) so achieving greater socio-economic connectivity and vital political support on the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.
- (r) Since Aristotle, power is balanced with superior power and “*strong defense is the best deterrence*”. Azerbaijan must further develop and diversify its military production facilities and defense industries in order to marginalize the ill designs of Armenia. Further strengthening of military ties with Pakistan and Turkey would be fruitful and decisive. There is great scope in the development of Azerbaijan Air Force which may be achieved by strengthening bilateral military relations with Pakistan and Turkey.
- (s) Inclination of Iran towards Armenia should be managed through rigorous commercial diplomacy and alternative solutions for achieving befitting propositions.
- (t) Try to seek membership of Developing Eight Economic Cooperation (D-8) as soon as possible for achieving greater political support against aggressive policies of Armenia.
- (u) Tourist potential of Azerbaijan needs to be mirrored in foreign countries by which, it may clinch hearts and souls of visiting tourists against Armenia.
- (v) Azerbaijan may also consider “*cultural diplomacy*” to seek political support from the regional as well as world countries.
- (w) Armenia’s participation and serious military engagement with NATO needs to be highlighted to Russia.
- (x) Armenia’s rapprochement with the European Union and NATO is a new political line of Armenia which considers Russia it’s most reliable partner over the Nagorno-

Karabakh conflict's settlement, as well as the country's main facilitator in the economic and political context. Armenia's new search for "safe heavens" needs to be deeply studied and projected to Russia.

- (y) Concerted efforts of parliaments of Eurasian countries may bring about solution to regional problems, including the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict which must be explored.
- (z) Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry has traced so many secretive activities of Armenia intelligence agencies which must be shared to all the regional as well as international countries.
- (aa) The visit of Turkish MP Garo Paylan to Yerevan benefitted the cause of Armenia which must not be repeated anyway in the future.

Conclusion

Khojaly genocide was an ethnic cleansing of Armenia forces against helpless Azerbaijanis. It was an act of barbarism and naked use of military power but it could not produce any dint to the spirits of Azerbaijanis who are still trying to liberate its occupied areas from Armenia.

Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is a potential "security threat" to South Caucasus and the European Union. Its nuclear plants/program is outdated, unsecured and imperfect which again may be fatal to nature and humanity alike in the future. Its constant purchase of arms may start a race of arms in the region due to which brighten prospects of economic development may be diminished. Moreover, due to Armenian martial posturing, it has been labeled as "North Korea of the EU" which has serious consequences.

With so many conflicts in the world, Nagorno-Karabakh gets little attention. The bloody fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces in the mountainous enclave in April 2016 was a reminder that it should be resolved as soon as possible. The specter loomed of a wider war, one that could draw in Russia, Turkey and Iran.

Its persuasion of Nazi ideology may spoil the basic core and philosophy of the European Union. Its systematic and secretive ways and means to maintain "status quo" would be disastrous for the region and beyond.

Nagorno-Karabakh and its seven adjacent districts namely Kalbajar, Lachin, Qubadli, Jabrayil, Zangilan, Agdam and Fuzuli have been under illegal occupation of Armenia for more than 25 years. Life has been stagnated. Economy has been worsened. Social life and society has been sieged and caged in all the illegally occupied territories. Moreover, climate,

nature and natural resources have been polluted because of criminal psycho of Armenia. Physical infrastructure has been demolished. Cultural buildings have been flattened. Agricultural activities have also been diminished in these areas.

Armenia always pursues the path of escalation. It undertakes consistent measures to consolidate the results of its occupation policy and to maintain unacceptable and unsustainable status quo. It undermines efforts for the peaceful resolution of the conflict through hidden activities. Holding of military drills, census, resettlement of Syrian Armenian, referendum and elections are the serious violations of international law and ceasefire agreement.

According to Azerbaijan's foreign ministry, Armenia has been conducting systematic, deliberate and targeted attacks on civilian population encompassing inter alia women, children and elderly residing in the densely populated areas adjacent to the frontline.

Moreover, Armenia's direct and deliberate attacks against the Azerbaijani civilian population and civilian objects, constitute a serious violation of international humanitarian and human rights law, in particular the 1949 Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol I thereto, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

Azerbaijan has repeatedly brought to the attention of the international community that the primary reason of the tension and incidents in the frontline and major impediment to the resolution of the conflict is the unlawful presence of the armed forces of Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

It illegally changes the demographic, cultural and physical character of the occupied territories.

Moreover, it engages in negative economic and other activities, including transfer of Armenian population into these territories with the ultimate goal change the nature of demography. Armenia also undermines and puts under jeopardy the regional and international peace and security. It is also against the true spirits of international law.

Baku always shows its readiness to start meaningful dialogue in order to achieve any peaceful solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It highlighted its lawful right on Nagorno-Karabakh and its seven adjacent districts at every regional as well as international

forum including, UN Security Council, World Economic Forum, Economic Cooperation Organization, Organization of Islamic Countries, Munich Security Council, OSCE Minsk Group, European Parliament and World Cultural Forum etc. UN Security Council adopted four resolutions about illegal occupation of Armenia and instructed it to de-occupy Nagorno-Karabakh and its seven adjacent districts which have not yet been implemented because of “dubious character of international power brokers and “double standard” of international organizations.

OSCE Minsk Group which is meant for peaceful resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has been not so effective and interactive rather it has been inactive due to so many reasons. OSCE Minsk Group has its own vested interests due to which the said group miserably failed to prevent Armenia from its constant policies of aggression, and annexation. Armenia has been notorious for failed promises and falsified reports which must be exposed at every forum.

Azerbaijan expects from the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmen to take practical steps to intensifying the negotiations. Azerbaijan reiterates that it welcomes the efforts of the Co-Chairmen aimed at reinvigorating the substantive, results-oriented talks. Azerbaijan also expects the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group and the OSCE participating States to condemn any effort to promote and propagate the illegal regime established in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Moreover, Azerbaijan clarifies that no peace settlement of the said conflict can be reached which violates the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan and is inconsistent with international law. It reaffirms that the military occupation of the territory of Azerbaijan does not represent a solution and will never produce a political outcome desired by Armenia.

Political standing of regional countries of South Caucasus is not so big to achieve any platform or common ground for the settlement of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Turkey shares lots of common grounds with Azerbaijan and it has been supporting principled stance of Baku on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict but still ineffective.

Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) is die hard supporter of Azerbaijan and always advocates its right over Nagorno-Karabakh and its seven adjacent districts. It always condemns Armenian military atrocities at line of contact. It has also formed a contact group on this specific issue. But to resolve the long pending issue i.e. Nagorno-Karabakh there is an urgent need for the further strengthening of liaison between the OIC and Baku.

Most recently while visiting Baku, Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has termed the

Nagorno-Karabakh issue as bleeding wound for Turkey as for Azerbaijan. “Unfortunately, unless Armenia ends occupation of the Azerbaijani territories, this issue will not be resolved,” he said. He stressed the occupation should be immediately ended on the basis of the principles of territorial integrity, sovereignty and inviolability of borders of Azerbaijan. He also strongly condemned provocations targeting the civilian population along with Armenia’s occupation policy.

While addressing to the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly he once again stressed that restoration of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and Georgia must for peace in the South Caucasus region.

On part of Pakistan it always ready to support the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Pakistan has repeatedly declared its support for the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and recognized the tragedy in Khojaly as genocide. Moreover, Pakistan backed Azerbaijan during and after the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh war. Pakistan also adopted a resolution strongly condemning the genocide against the civilian population of Khojaly, which was committed by the Armenian armed forces.

The Republic of Azerbaijan and its people are fully committed under the strategic leadership of H.E. President Ilham Aliyev to liberate all the occupied areas under Armenian occupation. Azerbaijan has proven socio-economic superiority and military might as compare to Armenia so nefarious provocations could not achieve nothing but further widespread condemnation and political isolation. A series of horrible incidents of “Black January” and unresolved issue of “Nagorno-Karabakh conflict” is still the reminder of Armenia’s brutal aggression against helpless Azerbaijanis living in occupied areas.

INDIA AS THE NEWCOMER IN SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION

Dr. Bai Lianlei*

Introduction

India and Pakistan became full members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in the Astana Summit in 2017. This is the first time for the SCO to have new full-fledged members since it came into being 16 years ago. India actually showed interest in SCO as early as its establishment and its engagement with the Organization gradually evolves as SCO itself comes to mature. In 2010, “the Regulation on Accepting New Members” and “the Rules of procedure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization” were ratified in the 10th Meeting of the Council of SCO Heads of States in Tashkent; in 2014, the Dushanbe summit ratified the “Model Memorandum on the Obligations of Applicant States for Obtaining SCO Member State Status” and “the Procedure for Granting the Status of SCO Member States”. At this point, the procedure for expansion of SCO is clear and Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj formally applied for full membership of SCO on behalf of India at SCO Heads of State summit 2014 at Dushanbe, in Tajikistan.

India's perceptions of SCO

Firstly, India identifies with the organizational philosophy of SCO. Ever since the founding of SCO, Shanghai Spirit gradually takes shape emphasizing Mutual Confidence, Mutual Beneficiary, Equality, Consultation, Respect for Diverse Civilization and Seeking Common Development. SCO commits to the principle of sovereign equality, opposes to interference into internal affairs of sovereign states, and advocates resolving disputes through dialogue and negotiations without resorting to force. This principle was exemplified by riots in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan when SCO did not meddle in in the absence of relevant legislation. Such trait of noninterference suits India's taste very much.¹ In 2013, the External Affairs Minister of India said that “India strongly believes in the philosophical principles that guides SCO, like progress through consensus, decisions by constructive dialogue and strengthening mutual confidence, friendship and good neighborly relations.”

Secondly, SCO is a valuable platform to boost mutual understanding. SCO has made great progress in mechanism construction. SCO creates a communication mechanism among observers, full members and dialogue partners under the guidance of Shanghai Spirit.

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¹ S.Y.Surendra Kumar, “India and The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Issues and Concerns”, International Journal of China Studies, vol. 4, No. 3, December 2013, p. 352.

Its openness, extensiveness and inclusiveness make SCO one of the few international organizations that can bring China, India, Pakistan, former Soviet republics, as well as Middle East countries who possess different political, cultural and religion believes respectively together and carry out dialogues over extensive agendas. The primary target of SCO upon its establishment is to resolve boundary problems among member countries, alleviate risks of military clashes and enhance mutual confidence in security. 16 years later, the mutual confidence among member countries has remarkably improved and such political dividend has spilled over to economic cooperation and facilitated multi-sector and multi-area cooperation. Particularly, SCO helps China and Russia avoid contentions in Central Asia and create the new cooperation model of two great powers in intermediate regions.²

What India would like to do in SCO

India has the potential and ambition to play as a great power rather than a follower or bystander. After acceding to SCO, India will firstly consolidate its place in the Organization, and then push forward its ambitions on engagement with central Asia and Afghanistan, anti-terror campaigns, connectivity programs and improving national energy security.

1. Securing its new place

India perceives China as the leading country of SCO, and misunderstands China as a hostile neighbor that combines with Pakistan to go against India.³ Therefore India worries about the scenario of being constrained by a China-Pakistan alignment. India's accession to SCO benefits largely from Russia's support, but it never implies a total confidence of India in Russia. India believes Russia's dependence on China is much larger than on India, especially concerning global strategic issues.⁴ In this logic, even though India could be made use of in counterbalancing China, a strengthening China-Russia coordination is the predominant trend, and even a China-Russia-Pakistan coordination is not impossible in the eyes of Indian observers. In this way, Indian experts propose to carefully and skillfully handle the relations with China, Russia and Pakistan; weaken China-India relation at the proper time; actively further its engagement with Central Asian republics, especially with Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

India takes "belt & road" as a key problem given all member countries of SCO have voiced support for it, and some Central Asian countries even expressed interest in China-

² Meena Singh Roy, "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: India Seeking New Role in The Eurasian Regional Mechanism", Institute for Defence and Analyses, February 2014, pp. 75.

³ Ashok Sajjanhar, "India's prospects in China-dominated SCO", Observer Research Foundation. June 5, 2017. <http://www.orfonline.org/expert-speaks/india-prospects-china-dominated-sco/> (visiting date: 2017.07.02)

⁴ Meena Singh Roy, "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: India Seeking New Role In the Eurasian Regional Mechanism", Institute For Defence And Analyses, February 2014, pp. 80.

Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which is strongly opposed by India. Facing such a complicated situation, India decides to lock its position, i.e. puts the Chabahar Port as the gateway to Central Asia and pushes forward India-edition connectivity initiatives aiming to competing with China;⁵ closely engages in regional security dynamics, and gets along with the cooperation on energy, trade, culture and so on, to maintain India's influences on areas covered by SCO.⁶

2. Engaging in Central Asia affairs

India and Central Asian countries have long had cultural and political connections. Central Asia and South Asia were in the same cultural and geographical plates in history, and have gotten through long-time clashes and integration of civilization through Afghanistan. During the Soviet Union era, India moved closer to and learned from the Soviet Union with Central Asia as the frontier. At that time, India was one of the few countries that had a Consulate General in Tashkent reflecting India's big attention to Central Asia. The establishment of SCO in effect made Central Asia a neutral zone between India and Pakistan, which relieved India greatly.

Central Asia involves strategic interests of India. Historically, forces of Afghanistan, Turkey, Greece and Mongolia all entered the South Asian subcontinent from the northwest. Therefore, India regards Central Asia and Afghanistan as a key area concerning national security.⁷ At present, Central Asia affects the strategic interests of India in two aspects. First, Central Asia is the intersection place of Indian and East Asian countries. Besides, Central Asia is the heart of the "great game". In recent years, Central Asia faces a new round of "great game", in which the United States is the foreign players, taking Central Asia as the supporting point for pivot to Asia; China and Russia as inside contender and operator engaging in Central Asia with the help of SCO, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Silk Road Economic Belt etc.. The "great game" played by great powers around infrastructure connectivity, contention on energy and ideology is becoming more complex.⁸

In the past 20 years, India has paid little attention to and has had few high-level contacts with Central Asia. Until 2015, Modi's whirlwind visit to the five Central Asian countries implied

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ashok Sajjanhar, "India's prospects in China-dominated SCO", Observer Research Foundation. June 5, 2017, <http://www.orfonline.org/expert-speaks/india-prospects-china-dominated-sco/> (visiting date: 2017.07.02)

⁷ M. Reyaz "Is India Finally Getting Serious About Its Connect Central Asia Plans? ", December 23, 2016, <https://thewire.in/88943/india-central-asia/> (visiting date: 2017.04.26)

⁸ Syed Ata Hasnain, "India And The New Great Game In Central Asia", June 23, 2016, <https://swarajyamag.com/world/india-and-the-new-great-game-in-central-asia> (visiting date: 2017.04.26)

that India was beginning to adjust its policy towards Central Asia.⁹ India is getting involved in Central Asia affairs more proactively to expand India's strategic interests (see Table 1). In this way, India pays more attention to the value of SCO. First, SCO covers areas concerning energy, trade, infrastructure, connectivity, culture, non-traditional security, military mutual trust and many other issues, which are the central focus of the "great game". Thus SCO plays as both an important handle helping India to join the "great game" and a perfect platform for India to get involved more deeply in Central Asia.¹⁰ Second, although the function of SCO is not sufficient and the efficiency is low, SCO as a multilateral mechanism is still helpful for members to avoid risks and create opportunities and enhance the credibility of the specific bilateral cooperation projects.¹¹

Table1: India's interests in Central Asia

No.	India's interests in Central Asia
1	Exploiting natural resources
2	Preventing the revival of a hostile states group
3	Safeguarding the strategic interests of India in the "great game"
4	Containing Pakistan's influence
5	Trying to contain China
6	Enhancing soft power and expanding economic and cultural influence

Note: compiled basing on literatures as following: Meena Singh Roy, "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: India Seeking New Role in The Eurasian Regional Mechanism", Institute for Defence and Analyses, February 2014, pp.10; P. Stobdan, "India's Accession to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization", The National Bureau of Asian Research for the Senate India Caucus, August 2015, pp. 3-6; Brig Vinod Anand, "SCO Important for India's 'Connect Central Asia' Policy" Vivekananda International Foundation, 30 September, 2013, pp.5.

3. Furthering India-edition transportation connectivity program

India-edition connectivity is out of both economic and political considerations. India now is aggressively catching up with leading great powers, but faces a disadvantage, i.e. its location in a relatively close geographic plate surrounding by undeveloped economies. Thus carrying out traffic connectivity programs to reach more developed economies and obtain larger foreign market and more sophisticated technology is necessary. Indian-edition traffic connectivity is also a response to the emerging Eurasia traffic integration programs represented by China's Belt and Road since India is accustomed to rivaling China.

⁹ Rashmini Koparkar, "Shanghai cooperation organization: New Delhi's march into Eurasia", June 14, 2017, <https://swarajyamag.com/politics/shanghai-cooperation-organization-new-delhis-march-into-eurasia> (visiting date: 2017.06.15)

¹⁰ Syed Ata Hasnain, "India and The New Great Game In Central Asia", June 23, 2016, <https://swarajyamag.com/world/india-and-the-new-great-game-in-central-asia> (visiting date: 2017.04.27)

¹¹ Ibid.

Given India's preference to maximize interests in the comparative sense, initiating its own connectivity program rather than engaging in China's is a must.¹²

India's connectivity often direct eastward or southward, like "look east", "act east", "monsoon plan", "road of prepper", etc., while the traffic connectivity and economic programs heading for Central Asia and West Asia were long blocked by the obstacle posed by India-Pakistan conflict. Recently, India initiates an icebreaking transportation connectivity program that follows a detouring approach connecting Central Asia first by sea to Iran's Chabahar port and then through Iran's land-based transportation network to Afghanistan and Central Asia. Following the detouring approach, India makes efforts as following: In September 2000, India started its "north-south transportation corridor" aiming at connecting India, Iran and Russia and thus bringing Persian gulf, Middle East, Central Asia and Russia into an integrated economic area. In 2016, India joined the Ashgabat Agreement to streamline trans-border transportation systems covering Amman, Iran and the five republics of Central Asia. India also hopes to transform Afghanistan into a trade and energy hub of Central and South Asia, for which India believes the TAPI natural gas pipeline project can be a catalyst.¹³

However, all these projects face various obstacles and challenges, and India hopes its new membership in SCO could contribute to getting rid of them and facilitate the connectivity cooperation among member countries and observer countries.¹⁴

4. Improve Energy Security

India was the fourth largest energy consuming country in the world after China, America and Russia in 2014 and with fast urbanization and industrialization the proportion of imported energy in energy demand will increase to 80% up to 2020.¹⁵ Thus, many Indian strategists believe energy is going to be the first priority of India.¹⁶

India mainly imports oil from Middle East and southwestern countries like Indonesia, thus faces risks and uncertainties deriving from maritime transportation. If land-based

¹² Nataraj G. and Sekhani R. "China's One Belt One Road Initiative: Analysis from an Indian Perspective", <http://beltandroad.hktdc.com/tc/market-analyses/details.aspx?ID=473727> (visiting date: 2017.04.05)

¹³ Meena Singh Roy, "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: India Seeking New Role In the Eurasian Regional Mechanism", Institute For Defence And Analyses, February 2014, pp. 80.

¹⁴ News Desk, "Connectivity a priority for India, says Modi", The Express Tribune, June 10, 2017, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1431845/connectivity-priority-india-says-modi/> (visiting date: 2017.07.02)

¹⁵ Roshan Taj Humayun, "Pakistan and India Accession to SCO: Future Prospects and Challenges", BILGESAM Analysis/Central Asia, No.1280, January 11, 2016, pp. 1-7.

¹⁶ S.Y.Surendra Kumar, "India and The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Issues and Concerns", International Journal of China Studies, vol.4, No. 3, December 2013, pp. 349.

transportation routes heading to Central Asian and Russian oil resources, the energy security level could be increased a lot. But the hostile India-Pakistan relation and the unstable situation of Afghanistan pose a big challenge.¹⁷

Thus the significance of SCO highlights in the eyes of India. Firstly, many member countries of SCO, represented by Russia and Kazakhstan, are significant non-OPEC oil & gas exporters. Russia also proposed to found a “SCO energy club” in 2007. It’s estimated that this club, if it were to come into being, will possess a quarter of the world’s oil reserves, one half of natural gas reserves, 35% of coal reserves and one half of uranium mine.¹⁸ Hydrocarbon producers, consumers and transit countries will be combined to provide energy security to all members. This scenario is just what India eager to see.

What India would bring to SCO

India and Pakistan acceding to SCO makes a historic milestone. It leads to an incredible increase in the scale of population, economic volume, military capability etc., more prominent influence on the international affairs and more extensive representativeness of emerging powers, as well as a delicate but profound implication to the Eurasian geopolitical dynamics since South Asia and Eurasia will intensify interactions ever since.¹⁹ However when looking to the looming complex contradictions around India, what India makes on SCO is neither simply positive nor negative but multifaceted impacts.

1. Further the cooperation of SCO on economics and security

India is a major economy of the world. According to World Bank data in 2016, India is the seventh largest economy in the world by current U.S dollar. Its accession to SCO will increase the GDP of the organization by 17.8%, its population by 83.3% and its FDI inflow by 22.4%. Since 1990, the average annual growth rate of Indian economy has been 5.35%, only behind China in SCO. The Age dependency ratio of working population in India has begun decreasing since 1966 meaning the demographic dividend will emerge as a catalyst in economic growth.

India enjoys an integrated industrial system benefiting largely the transnational industry cooperation. China, Russia and India, as the three largest economies in SCO, focus on different

¹⁷ Ibid. pp. 349-250.

¹⁸ Bandana Upadhyay, “India’s SCO Membership: Prospects & Constraints”, Indian Council of World Affairs, August 12, 2016. pp. 3.

¹⁹ Meena Singh Roy, “India Seeking New Role in the Eurasian Regional Mechanism”, IDSA Monograph Series No. 34, Chapter VI of India and SCO, February 2014, pp. 1-5.

and mutually complementary export sectors, i.e. India does well in agricultural and industrial raw materials exportation, Russia on energy and mineral products and China concentrating on technology and capital intensive manufactured goods. Therefore, the accession of India to SCO will further diversify the goods trade among member countries of SCO.

Table 1 : Economic indicators of SCO member countries in 2016

	GDP (billion Current U.S dollars)	Foreign trade/GDP (%)	Population (million)	FDI inflow/GDP (%)
India	2264	40	132	2.08
Pakistan	284	25	19	0.36
China	11200	37	138	1.52
Russia	1283	46	15	2.57
Kazakhstan	134	62	2	3.57 ^②
Kirgizstan	7	111 ^①	1	17.06 ^③
Tajikistan	7	53	1	4.95
Uzbekistan	67	42	3	1.60 ^④

Note: ①②③④ is based on data of 2015.

Source: World Bank Database.

India is the fourth largest military power according to Global Firepower after America, Russia and China.²⁰ India, becoming a full member of SCO, will significantly enhance the military power of the organization. India has long suffered from three evils, i.e. terrorism, separatism, extremism, and drug & weapon trafficking. According to the U.S. State Department, 55% terrorist attacks of the world occurred in the five most severely victim countries including India.²¹ Indian security forces have long taken three evils and trans-boundary crimes as the key targets and accumulated rich experiences, which caters for the need of three evil-committed SCO quite well.

2 · Exacerbates the inherent flaw of SCO

SCO firmly commits to the principle of reaching consensus through consultation which means its voting rule is similar to that of the UN Security Council but quite different from that of IMF. The latter is an organizational decision-making process emphasizing decision efficiency, whereas the former is a diplomatic process emphasizing process legitimacy

20 “2017 Military Strength Ranking”, GFP, 2017, <http://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.asp> (visiting date: 2017.08.03)

21 Bureau of Counterterrorism, “Country Reports on Terrorism 2016”, United States Department of State, July 2017, p. 244-247, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/272488.pdf> (visiting date: 2017.09.03)

22 Pan, Q., et al., “新开发银行新在何处—金砖国家开发银行成立的背景、意义与挑战” [The New Development Bank: Background, Implication and Challenges], International Economic Review, No. 2, 2015, pp. 146.

more than decision efficiency.²² Therefore, while SCO embedded democratic feature in the decision making process, it also suffers from the difficulties in making decisions. The dilemma between democracy and efficiency has shadowed SCO ever since it's established making low action efficiency the most often mentioned flaw.

India's access will aggravate the aforementioned problem. Firstly, the internal negotiation will become more complicated with India as a regional power attending SCO. There will be significant and interwoven bilateral relations between China, Russia, India and Pakistan after SCO's expansion. Currently the relations between China and Russia, China and Pakistan, Russia and India are all better than that between India and Pakistan, China and India. Because of its overall good relation with China, India and Pakistan, Russia gains better strategic status in SCO through the expansion. But such a good position based on delicate balances is far from enabling Russia to resolve the highlighted inherent problems among member countries.

Secondly, when India and Pakistan, the two largest countries of South Asia, are included in SCO, issues of both Eurasia and South Asia will interconnected in SCO. But the shortness of mutual trust between India Pakistan and China implies South Asian issues in SCO will play more as a source of conflict rather than of cooperation in the short term which recently has been testified by China-India standoff in China's Donglang region and the exchanged artillery fire between India and Pakistan alongside the LAC in Kashmir. Additionally, the policy divergence on the definition of terrorism between India and other members will also impede the anti-terror campaigns and beyond.

Conclusion

India has engaged in SCO for 12 years since it became an observer country in 2005. Thus the accession of India to SCO is an important and conscious decision for both India and SCO. Such an expansion implies profound changes, but the focus of SCO is an exception. Most member countries believes the tradition of focusing on Central Asia should remain unchanged; Indian observers and officials also declare that bilateral conflicts of South Asia will not be submitted to SCO. It means taking Central Asia as the focus of SCO fits to expectations of all sides. Besides, sticking to Central Asia makes for the inheritance of organizational value and culture thus facilitating the integration of new members to the big family of SCO.

THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA'S RELATIONS WITH THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN IN THE CONTEXT OF GEOPOLITICAL EVOLUTIONS

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International cooperation has always played a central role in the foreign policy of states, including the former soviet republics, which has been achieved through the application of various classical patterns. In the case of the Republic of Moldova, the model was taken from the West, but implemented in the Soviet manner. It means that relations with the state, which does not prove to be a potential aggressor or do not announce or identify some interference policies, had a formal and sporadic character, being limited to some official visits, hidden under the official declaration on “improvement” of existing ones and diversification on other dimensions. This rating can also be attributed to the stages of the Republic of Moldova’s relations with the Republic of Azerbaijan. Although the potential for cooperation with this country proved to be promising, especially since they are part of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), no significant results have been seen either on the bilateral or multilateral level. The cooperation of the Republic of Moldova with the ex-soviet republics of the Muslim geopolitical space continued under the conditions of another political and legal framework. They aim was to assure prolific and mutually advantageous relations, one of the reasons being the common historical past in the USSR, but as well as the challenges of post-Cold War system on geopolitical aspect and geo-economics.

Diplomatic relations between the Republic of Moldova and the Republic of Azerbaijan were established on May 18, 1992, the bilateral relations being developed on the principles of the Interstate Treaty of Friendship and Collaboration, signed on 27 November 1997 and entered into force on 4 November 2003. We note that it was subsequently constituted a strong regulatory basis for the future of mutually beneficial cooperation by signing more than 50 agreements,¹ the political and economic aspect being extended to the humanitarian and cultural-scientific coordinates,² and the second includes the support of doctoral theses in the fields of law and economics. Referring to the investment component, we note that its capitalization is delayed, according to the estimations of Ambassador N. Aliyev, because the investment climate is not favourable,³ a claim against which we don’t have counterarguments.

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¹ Bilateral cooperation between the Republic of Moldova and Republic of Azerbaijan, <http://www.mfa.gov.md/bilateral-cooperation-en/>. (05.08.2017)

² Ibid.

³ Азербайджан готов инвестировать в Молдову, <http://www.pan.md/paper/Interviyu/Azerbaydjan-gotov-investirovati-v-Moldovu/46946>. (11.08.2017).

Regarding energy security of the Republic of Moldova, the alternative of developing a sustainable framework for ensuring the energy independence was the cooperation with states that had a high potential for exploiting such resources, and Azerbaijan was ranked among them. In addition, “Ascom-Grup” SA was the first company in the Republic of Moldova, which in 1995 invested in the Turkmen oil industry with the capacity to expand its investment area in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Iran.⁴

Although the investment climate was declared unfavourable to potential investors from Azerbaijan, we are witnessing the launch of a grand project for the Republic of Moldova - the construction of the Giurgiulesti Petroleum Terminal, conceptualized by the Government of the Republic of Moldova in 1993, started in 1996 and resumed in 2004 after a suspension due to financial reason. The main objective of this project, which was the only way out of the Danube, was to solve the problems generated by clear energy dependence, and its construction was seen as a reduction of this dependence on the Russian Federation. Another objective was a wide opening in the sphere of economic relations, which involved the transshipment of the oil products by rail directly to the markets of the CIS countries and the European Union member countries. Thus, we estimate the double importance of this investment project. The benefits of free access to the Black Sea were expected to be overly diversified, and the grand project was not accidentally called “Maritime gates”, especially to include job creation and passenger transport, favouring tourism development.

Looking back on the implementation of this investment project, Azertrans Company has invested more than 18 million USD in the Giurgiulesti Oil Terminal, and the financial problems led to the cessation of the project. Later in 2001, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) declared it bankrupt.⁵ The situation mobilized the Government of the Republic of Moldova to invite several potential investors to negotiations, succeeding in 2004 to finalize them by the signing with three companies from Azerbaijan: Azpetrol, Azertrans and Azpetrol Refinery a set of agreements regarding the completion of the construction of the Petroleum Terminal at Giurgiulesti.⁶ The Government of the Republic of Moldova favoured the activities of the aforementioned companies by offering them some tax benefits, such as exemption for eight years, VAT and customs duties on the import of

⁴ http://www.ascom-sa.com/?page_id=2. (08.08.2017).

⁵ Terminalul de la Giurgiulești și dependența energetică, http://www.bbc.co.uk/romanian/news/story/2006/02/060221_giurgiulesti_moldova.shtml. (28.08.2017)

⁶ УКАЗ Nr. 2235 от 24.02.2005 о промульгации Закона об утверждении Инвестиционного соглашения. «О Международном свободном порте «Джурджюлешть»» между Правительством Республики Молдова и ООО «Azpetrol», ООО «Azertrans», ООО «Azpetrol Refinery», <http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=289881&lang=2>
DECRET Nr. 2235 din 24.02.2005, privind promulgarea Legii pentru aprobarea Acordului de investiții «Cu privire la Portul Internațional Liber «Giurgiulești»» dintre Guvernul Republicii Moldova și «Azpetrol» - S.R.L., «Azertrans» - S.R.L., «Azpetrol Refinery» - S.R.L., <http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=289881&lang=1>. (28.08.2017)

petroleum products, land for port infrastructure in accordance with the provisions of article 104 of the Fiscal Code of the Republic of Moldova.⁷ However, we attest to the fact that Azertrans's top management, besides the fact that the latter invested in the Giurgiulesti Petroleum Terminal and paid its debt to the EBRD,⁸ was involved in an acute conflict with the Azerbaijani authorities, being created favourable circumstances for the company to change its owner and name soon with the other two.⁹

At the start of the activity of the Giurgiulesti Petroleum Terminal, there was expected a strong blow to the shadow economy in the oil business of the Republic of Moldova, but also for those who compete on the oil market of the country, thus creating a competitiveness in this field. In this respect, the Azerbaijani investor's project included several stages, one of which included the freight terminal and passenger transportation, being expected investments of 250 million USD and the creation of about 2500 new jobs. In order to strengthen the strategic direction of diversification of oil suppliers, the Government of the Republic of Moldova provided for the construction of a refinery with a capacity of up to 2 million tons. It would be a country's first refinery to produce bioethanol from corn and wheat, followed by the launch of a network of petroleum product filling stations as well as blends of petroleum products and biofuels.¹⁰ We emphasize that the first stage was expected to supply Azerbaijan oil.

Beyond the attractiveness of the project, which generated a series of verbal altercations between the Dutch and Azerbaijani partners, appeals to the courts, we mention that the government project transformed it into a private project, the owner of which is not known. It assumes that it is not excluded that the new owner could represent the interests of former local and foreign officials, who prefer to remain anonymous.

We remind that the bilateral relations between the Republic of Moldova and Azerbaijan were established, as we mentioned, on the basis of the principles of the Interstate Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation of November 27, 1997,¹¹ the bilateral political-legal framework being gradually increased for 25 years. Among the most significant bilateral meetings are 14 high-level meetings,¹² which were aimed at starting some joint projects in order to conceptualize

⁷ Codul Fiscal al Republicii Moldova. [http://www.lex.md/fisc/codfiscaltxtro.htm#Articolul 104](http://www.lex.md/fisc/codfiscaltxtro.htm#Articolul%20104). (28.08.2017)

⁸ IMF Country Report Nr. 06/184

https://books.google.md/books?id=z17n9Z0HtVkC&pg=PA48&lpg=PA48&dq=EBRD+Giurgiulesti&source=bl&ots=cKY1Xw4cFE&sig=Tixx71z0gG8TjZrjJvGXryUy2no&hl=ru&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=snippet&q=EBRD%20Giurgiulesti&f=false. (28.08.2017)

⁹ Azpetrol и Рафик Алиев в центре коррупционного скандала в Молдове, <https://haqqin.az/news/69372>. (28.08.2017)

¹⁰ Credit Suisse va acorda 25 mil. USD pentru EASEUR HOLDING BV, <http://www.interlic.md/2007-03-29/160-160.html?highlight=Giurgiule%20C8%99ti>. (28.08.2017)

¹¹ <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=356810>. (09.08.2017)

¹² Bilateral cooperation between the Republic of Moldova and Republic of Azerbaijan, <http://www.mfa.gov.md/cooperare-bilaterala/>. (09.08.2017).

and develop the Strategic Partnership between the Republic of Moldova and Azerbaijan. With reference to official visits, we mention them as follows:¹³ 8 meetings of Presidents, 3 visits at the level of Prime ministers and 3 visits at the level of Foreign Affairs Ministers.

Regarding the Moldovan-Azeri relations in the commercial-economic field, the trade balance is partial, taking into account the export and import relations without including the eastern districts of the Republic of Moldova. We consider it necessary to come up with such a clarification, because information provided to the mass media by the State Statistics Committee of Azerbaijan¹⁴ are different from those presented above. This situation has a credible basis and the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova does not have information on the value of imports and exports in the eastern districts of the country.

Looking at the trade table, we are witnessing some periods when the trade balance was favourable, with the value of exports predominating the volume of imports. However, there was some data indicating that the export was overtaken by the import, the trade balance being negative, and this clearly indicated an economic deficit and therefore a poor performance on that field. Therefore, taking into account the results of bilateral trade relations, the trade balance at certain stages was either active, when exports exceeded, a passive import - when the import were higher than export (1997, 1998, 2005), an equality between them not being registered.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics, the trade between the Republic of Moldova and the Republic of Azerbaijan during 1997-2016 years oscillated according to the climate of the bilateral relations and the economic situation both regional and international, the data about them being presented in a table as follows:

Years	Export, thousands USD¹⁵	Import, thousands USD¹⁶	Trade balance, thousands USD
1997	1 478,20	3 537,90	-2 059,70
1998	572,00	1 536,40	-964,40
1999	600,80	116,20	484,60
2000	436,50	19,40	417,10

¹³ <http://www.president.md/rom/comunicate-de-pres/presedintele-republicii-moldova-igor-dodon-a-avut-o-intrevedere-cu-presedintele-republicii-azerbaidjan-ilham-aliyev>. (09.08.2017)

¹⁴ Вугар Новрузов: Молдова и Азербайджан должны быть ближе, <http://www.logos.press.md/node/39296> (28.08.2017)

¹⁵ http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/pxweb/ro/40%20Statistica%20economica/40%20Statistica%20economica__21%20EXT__EXT010__serii%20anuale/EXT010200.px/?rxid=b2ff27d7-0b96-43c9-934b-42e1a2a9a774

¹⁶ http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/pxweb/ro/40%20Statistica%20economica/40%20Statistica%20economica__21%20EXT__EXT010__serii%20anuale/EXT010300.px/?rxid=b2ff27d7-0b96-43c9-934b-42e1a2a9a774

2001	328,30	32,50	295,80
2002	1 098,70	104,50	994,20
2003	993,40	50,20	943,20
2004	1 232,10	62,90	1 169,20
2005	3 718,20	4 526,50	-808,30
2006	4 765,80	1 840,50	2 925,30
2007	8 739,90	196,20	8 543,70
2008	7 128,00	338,50	6 789,50
2009	3 767,90	224,50	3 543,40
2010	7 480,20	204,30	7 275,90
2011	5 720,10	2 680,20	3 039,90
2012	5 367,40	452,90	4 914,50
2013	6 467,30	273,80	6,193,50
2014	5 916,30	114,50	5 801,80
2015	3 525,30	254,10	3 271,20
2016	4 665,19	594,95	4 070,24

The data on the trade between the sides during the period January-August 2017 were not certified in the reports of the relevant institutions. The temporary absence of statistical information does not reflect any stagnation in the Moldovan-Azeri trade relations, especially in that direction with reference to concrete actions in the realization of the joint projects are expected discussions at the Ordinary Meeting of the Moldovan-Azerbaijani Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation, planned in October 2017, in Baku. This agenda was expected after the meeting of Economy Minister O. Calmic, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, M. Mammad-Gulyev, Ambassador of Azerbaijan in Moldova, H.E. G. Osmanov, and Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova to Azerbaijan, H.E. Gh. Leuca.

The subject of the talks was the intensification of the economic and trade cooperation between the two countries, the Moldovan minister expressing the willingness of the Moldovan delegation to take part in the Ordinary Meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission by remarking the importance of organizing a Platform of Moldovan businessmen in this forum Azerbaijan, which will help intensify cooperation in areas of common interest. We remind that the third meeting of the Moldovan-Azerbaijani Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation took place on April 26, 2012 in Chisinau. According to data provided by the State Registration Chamber of the Republic of Moldova, 118 companies from Azerbaijan were registered with a total investment in the social capital of over 32.6 million MDL.

A strategic partnership is built with states that have an acceptable infrastructure in vital domains, and a critical road infrastructure diminishes from attractiveness of the Republic of Moldova. In the field of road infrastructure development in the Republic of Moldova,

we attest to the presence of a Euro-Asian Construction Corporation “EVRASCON” JSC is contracted in the national road rehabilitation projects.¹⁷

The decisive role in promoting the bilateral relations plays the diplomatic representation of the Republic of Moldova in Azerbaijan, which carries out a wide range of activities, among which we will notice the propagation of the positive image of the country and the work with the diaspora. We underline that bilateral relations with the Republic of Azerbaijan are actively promoted through representatives of diplomatic and university-academic environments, in courses organized by the Embassy of Azerbaijan in the Republic of Moldova,¹⁸ in spite of disagreements with this country, generated by some dissonances regarding some actions, and as an example could be the armed arms transactions for Armenia. In this respect, in 2013, the statement of Defense Minister V. Marinuta confirmed that “Moldova does not intend to sell arms to Armenia and the execution of the previously signed contract was stopped”, mentioning that the information that has recently appeared in mass media is false and aims of tensioning the political situation in the country, as well as of the climate of the Moldovan-Azeri relations.¹⁹ The Moldovan authorities’ assurance, that the decision to halt the fulfilment of the obligations stipulated in the contract, signed with the Government of Armenia, is a final and decisive one for the bilateral relations. It had increased the credibility of the Republic of Moldova to Azerbaijan, which was confirmed by the statements of Ambassador N. Aliyev, when he brought the decision on this issue and considered it as a friendly one to the people of Azerbaijan.

We note a similar point on the political agenda of the Republic of Moldova and the Republic of Azerbaijan - the presence of an unresolved conflict on the territory of each state. The difference between them is that the one in the eastern districts of the Republic of Moldova started from linguistic and geopolitical disagreements, while that in the Karabakh region was based on the first interethnic conflict recognized in the territory of the Soviet Union. With reference to the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, after the dissolution of the USSR, according to A. Zverev, the Soviet pressure was substituted by Turkey’s influence.²⁰ We point out that the dispute has forced Azerbaijan to trace a new geopolitical direction and to assert itself as an active agent in the regional security subsystem. Obviously, this would not have been possible without the outside support of the USA, the EU and NATO,²¹ which places this area

¹⁷ <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/2737325/Contracte-Evrascon.pdf>. (28.08.2017)

¹⁸ Întrevedere cu Ambasadorul Extraordinar și Plenipotențiar al Republicii Azerbaidjan în Republica Moldova, E.S. I. Vahabzade în cadrul unei prelegeri cu titlul „Ce înseamnă diplomația”, <http://istorie.ulim.md/news/events/intrevedere-in-aula-azerbaidjan-ce-inseamna-diplomatia>. (vizitat: 12.11.2013).

¹⁹ Republica Moldova nu intenționează să vîndă armament Armeniei, <http://www.interlic.md/2013-04-09/republica-moldova-nu-intentzioaneaza-sa-vinda-armament-armeniei-29361.html?highlight=Azerbaidjan>. (28.08.2017)

²⁰ Алексей Зверев, ”Этнические конфликты на Кавказе, 1988-1994”, in Спорные границы на Кавказе / под ред. Копитерса Бруно. (Москва: Весь Мир, 1996), стр. 19.

²¹ Николай Зенкович, Ильхам Алиев. Взгляд из Москвы (Москва: ЯУЗА & ЭКСМО, 2008), стр. 459.

in the sphere of its interests due to the energy resources and, therefore, stability in the sub-region proves to be the main goal.²²

The positions of leaders in the post-Soviet Muslim area, presented at regional summits, such as the Reunion of Turks State Presidents, held in Istanbul on 18-19 October 1994, resulted from a variety of problems in the Central Asian and Caucasian areas. A factor that increases the dynamics of the relations with the former soviet republics - Turkey's cultural hinterland, is the traditional affinities. However, we believe that this activation should be perceived as one with peaceful intentions, focusing on the strengthening of the cultural-linguistic traditions, and technical and financial assistance in carrying out several joint projects. In this respect, we note the intensification of the relations between the Executive Committee of ATU Gagauzia and the Azerbaijani-Turkish Business Community by signing a Memorandum of Cooperation. The representatives of this structure, who have been working for more than 15 years during a working visit to the ATU Gagauzia, discussed a series of feasible economic opportunities, more precisely in the agrarian, wine and pharmaceutical sectors.

The delegation, headed by President J. Yangin, visited ATU Gagauzia on the initiative of Turkey's Minister of Economy in order to identify common interests in the commercial and investment spheres related to the financial, banking, tourism, light and textile industries. It is important to recognize that Azerbaijan is an important partner of the ATU Gagauzia in the Turkish area, obviously after Turkey.

The Republic of Moldova has shown its interest in cooperation with Azerbaijan in the energy, investment and commercial-economic fields, aiming at diversifying the cooperation processes in order to ensure economic development. These efforts did not enjoy a consistent support in business environment, at the state level, the promotion of this "main foreign policy direction" had even more modest support, and the latter did not really benefit from the opportunities set. The truth is that the partners have not shown the fairness and accountability for their commitments under the signed agreements and long-term negotiations.

Membership in the CIS or in other organizations in the post-Soviet space, did not prove to be a catalyst for the deepening of the cooperation processes, either on the multilateral or the bilateral level between the Republic of Moldova and Azerbaijan, even if they announced several projects: bilateral, multilateral or private, both being partners in GUAM.

Referring to GUAM's cooperation, this was a modest one, although we attest some initiatives on the development of sectoral collaboration and on the conflict resolution issues. Regarding the

²² Фёдор Ангели, Республиканская Турция. СулейманДемирель (Chişinău: Tipografia Centrală, 2005), стр. 498.

second, we mention the signing at the Kyiv, within the Summit, of the Joint Declaration of the heads of state of the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development - GUAM. We underline that this document stipulates that the settlement of conflicts within the territories of GUAM member states is one of the priority objectives of GUAM cooperation. We emphasize the importance of demilitarization of conflict zones and the establishment of security in these areas, with the support of the UN or OSCE multinational peacekeeping forces deployed under them.

Various measures have been taken to resolve the conflicts in the territories of GUAM states. Thus, the GUAM states have reached an agreement on some effective actions, together with the UN, its institutions and programs, adopting some action plans of permanent representations within international organizations. As a result, one of the initiatives regarding the impact of conflicts on international peace, security and development has been included in the agenda for the 61st Session of the UN General Assembly. On 5 December 2007, a draft resolution with the same title was officially sent for revisions to the UN General Assembly, and consultations on the adoption of the resolution remain ongoing between the GUAM member states. The idea of integrating into the region and creating the security space, which was the key idea of the Baku Summit, became the main obligation assumed by Azerbaijan. The attention of the state, which holds the presidency, was drawn to the regional importance of GUAM and increased international support, strengthening the positions of participating states and developing the cooperation system within the Organization. At the Baku Summit on 19 July 2007, the Council of Heads of State adopted the GUAM Sectoral Cooperation Development Strategy, which set out the main directions for sectoral cooperation within the Organization.

On the field of multilateral cooperation, we are witnessing some initiatives to boost relations between the Republic of Moldova and the Republic of Azerbaijan. This was remarked during the participation of Prime Minister P. Filip at the meeting of GUAM member states, held in Kiev in March 2017. It is undeniable the importance of deepening the multilateral co-operation in order to consolidate the democracy, economic development and regional security, P. Filip's attention being focused on the common actions to overcome the risks faced by member states. On the agenda was the issue of regulating the conflicts on the territory of the GUAM member states, but also the facilitation of the trade and the scientific-technological cooperation, the second initiative being strengthened by signing of two protocols on the creation of the Free trade and facilitating the customs procedures between the four states.²³

Therefore, the start of the relations between the Republic of Moldova and the Republic of Azerbaijan was marked by the mutual recognition of independence after the collapse of the USSR. The establishment and development of relations took place according to commercial and economic interests, but also political ones, largely conditioned by the inherited traditions

²³ Pavel Filip a participat astăzi la reuniunea șefilor de Guverne ale statelor membre ale Organizației pentru Democrație și Dezvoltare Economică – GUAM, <http://www.interlic.md/2017-03-27/pavel-filip-a-participat-astazi-la-reuniunea-efilor-de-guverne-ale-statelor-membre-ale-organiza-iei-pentru-democra-ie--i-dezvoltare-economica---guam-48124.html?highlight=Azerbaijan>. (28.08.2017)

external developments. Although the results of one of the investment projects, such as the construction of the Giurgiulesti Petroleum Terminal, have become a palpable one for the economy of the Republic of Moldova after the transshipment,²⁴ we do not attest a dynamics of the relations after the signing of the bilateral cooperation agreements on the branches of common interest. Under such circumstances, we are tempted to note that the Republic of Moldova did not elaborate a well-defined policy on Moldovan-Azeri relations, even though several mechanisms of cooperation, including membership of the CIS, were available. From the above, a chart of predominantly positive indicators in the foreign trade chapter emerges, gradually increasing relations in some branches, but not to the extent that there is potential.

Azerbaijan, as a supplier of energy agents, has not come to the attention of diplomats in the Republic of Moldova as an objective of interest at the same time with the mutual recognition of independence. The delays in conceptualizing the foreign policy vector on the strategic partnership in the field of energetic security, including Azerbaijan, have been an impediment that deferred the use of the estimated potential.

Azerbaijan's position to promote an independent energy policy, as mentioned above, has become a priority interest for the Republic of Moldova, which seeks to diversify its energy resource providers. In this respect, S. Aparatu, an expert at "IDIS – Viitorul", expressed his conviction that some international projects included "Turkey, as well as the source being Azerbaijan, possibly Turkmenistan and other Central Asian countries." The researcher believes that these gases will be available for the Republic of Moldova as an alternative to Russian gas just over 7-10 years.²⁵

If the energy goal has been enshrined as a fundamental element of national security, it is indispensable to pay more attention to relations with Azerbaijan on this dimension, at the same time to identify new markets, which we continue to call traditional for the goods and products from the Republic of Moldova.

We consider that the most serious difficulty in deepening the cooperation consists of identifying potential partners and transporting energy agents, goods and agri-food products. Starting from new challenges of the contemporary stage, relations with Azerbaijan need to be strengthened, as they have demonstrated a real potential for valorisation and there are multiple reservations for resetting the cooperation. The positive developments of the Moldovan-Azeri relations and boosting trade and economic relations are already tangible, due to the signing of the Association Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union.

²⁴ Giurgiulesti Port Increases Transshipment by 4% in 2016, http://en.cfts.org.ua/news/giurgiulesti_port_increases_transshipment_by_4_in_2016. (28.08.2017)

²⁵ Siguranța energetică a R. Moldova – între gazul convențional și gazul de șist, <http://www.interlic.md/2014-01-22/siguranza-energetica-a-r-moldova-intre-gazul-conventzional-shi-gazul-de-shist-33120.html?highlight=Azerbaijan>. (28.08.2017)

YENİ TƏYİNATLAR – NEW APPOINTMENTS – НОВЫЕ НАЗНАЧЕНИЯ



25 May 2017

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Rashad Aslanov, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Argentine Republic as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Republic of Chile



25 May 2017

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Elkhan Polukhov, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Federative Republic of Brazil as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Republic of Ecuador, the Co-operative Republic of Guyana and the Republic of Suriname

8 December 2017

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Elkhan Polukhov, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Federative Republic of Brazil as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago



25 May 2017

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Elman Abdullayev, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Republic of Rwanda

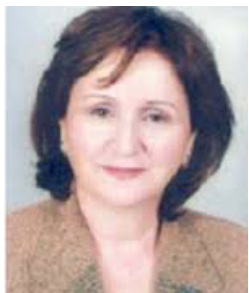


23 June 2017

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Rahman Mustafayev as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the French Republic

5 October 2017

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Rahman Mustafayev, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the French Republic as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Holy See and the Principality of Monaco



12 July 2017

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan granted Elmira Sarigalinskaya the diplomatic rank of Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the First Category



12 July 2017

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Helmut Manzenreiter as the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the city of Klagenfurt am Wörthersee of the Republic of Austria



12 July 2017

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Andreas Koenigsberger as the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the city of Sankt Pölten of the Republic of Austria



12 July 2017

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Tariq Hamza Zain Al Abdeen as the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Republic of the Sudan



19 July 2017

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Akram Zeynalli as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the People's Republic of China



13 September 2017

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan granted Hanum Ibrahimova the diplomatic rank of Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Second Category

13 September 2017

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Hanum Ibrahimova as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Swiss Confederation

8 December 2017

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Hanum Ibrahimova, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Swiss Confederation as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Principality of Liechtenstein



5 October 2017

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Khazar Ibrahim as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Republic of Turkey



8 December 2017

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Fakhraddin Gurbanov as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Republic of Croatia

8 December 2017

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Abdullah Muhammadas the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Republic of Djibouti



8 December 2017

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Ramzi Teymurov, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Republic of Korea as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the State of Mongolia



18 December 2017

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Hasan Mammadzada as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Republic of Tajikistan

YENİ NƏŞRLƏR – NEW PUBLICATIONS – НОВЫЕ ИЗДАНИЯ

«АРМЯНСКИЙ ВОПРОС В ОСМАНСКОЙ ИМПЕРИИ: МИФЫ И РЕАЛЬНОСТЬ»

Гюнтер Леви



Гюнтер ЛЕВИ
Армянский вопрос
в Османской
империи:
мифы и реальность

В издательстве «Политическая энциклопедия» вышла книга известного американского политолога, заслуженного профессора Массачусетского Университета в Амхерсте Гюнтера Леви «Армянский вопрос в Османской империи: мифы и реальность». Данное издание является переводом книги автора, которая была издана в США The University of Utah Press в 2005 году под названием «The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey A Disputed Genocide» («Армянские погромы в Оттоманской Турции: спорный геноцид»).

В отличие от большинства авторов, кто писал и пишет на эту тему и является сторонниками той или иной версии, автор не принадлежит ни к одному из двух конфликтующих

лагерей историков. Оставаясь верным принципу историзма, Гюнтер Леви исследует данный вопрос без политических предрассудков, проводит критический анализ двух историографий и реконструирует ход исторических событий на основании глубокого изучения и выверки всех доступных архивных материалов, опубликованных документов и обширной мемуарной литературы.

Вышедшая в Америке книга вызвала огромный резонанс как в академической, так и в общественной армянской и турецкой среде