



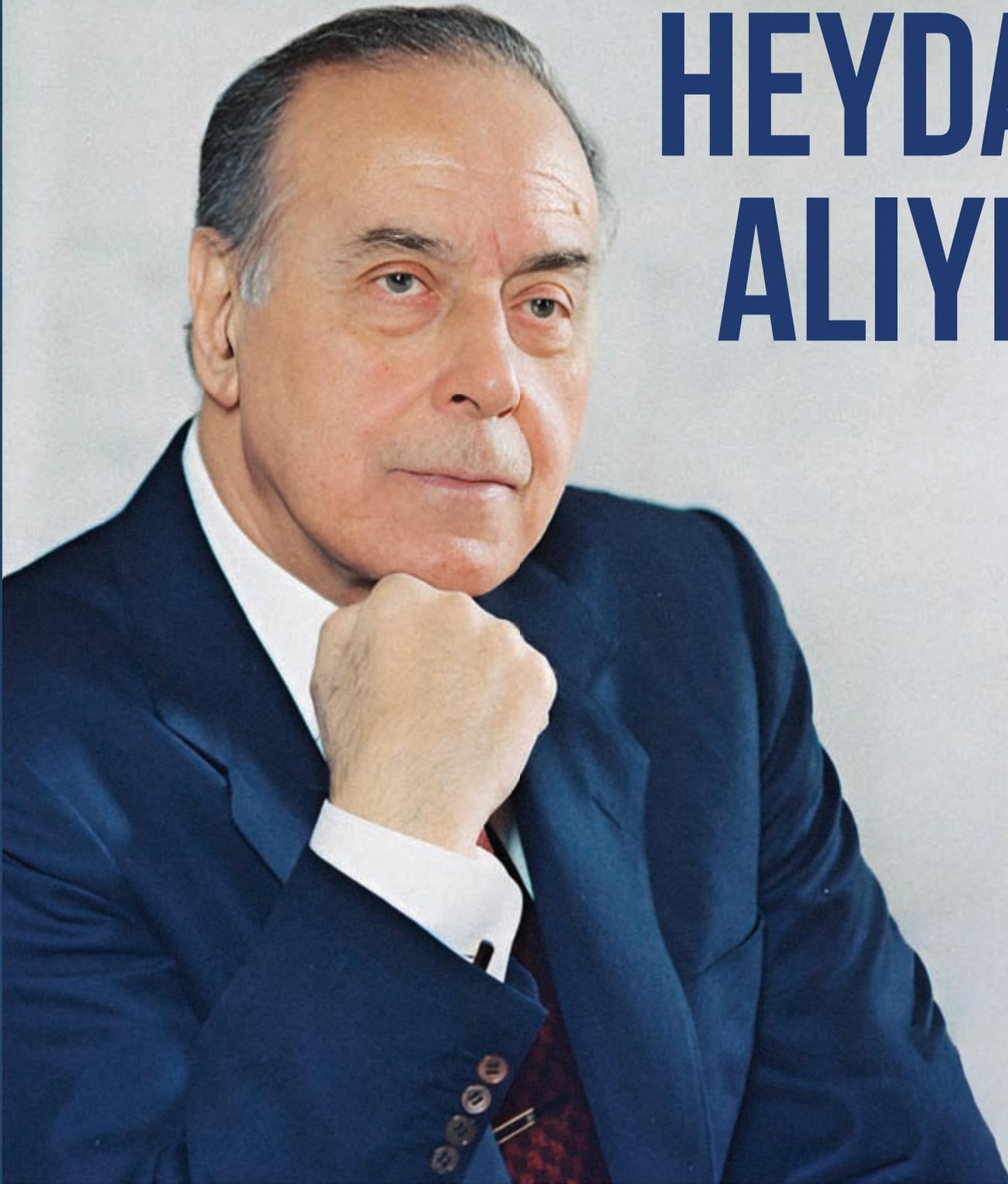
AZƏRBAYCAN RESPUBLİKASI XARİCİ İŞLƏR NAZİRLİYİNİN JURNALI  
JOURNAL OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

# DİPLOMATİYA ALƏMİ

## WORLD OF DIPLOMACY

№59/2023

SPECIAL EDITION DEDICATED TO THE CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL LEADER



# HEYDAR ALIYEV

*“Azərbaycanın xarici siyasəti sülhsevər siyasətdir, dünyanın bütün ölkələri ilə qarşılıqlı surətdə faydalı əlaqələr saxlamaq, sülhü, əmin-amanlığı qorumaq, qonşularla mehribanlıq, əmin-amanlıq, sülh şəraitində yaşamaq, bütün başqa ölkələrlə də mehriban əlaqələr yaratmaq və bütün sahələrdə geniş əməkdaşlıq etmək siyasətidir.”*

**HEYDƏR ƏLİYEV**

*“The foreign policy of Azerbaijan is the policy of peace, maintaining reciprocally beneficial relations with all the countries of the world, preserving peace, living in friendship, peace and security with neighbors, establishing friendly ties with other countries and cooperating broadly in all fields.”*

**HEYDAR ALIYEV**

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"World of Diplomacy" journal is published since 2002.

Registration №1161, 14 January 2005

ISSN: 1818-4898

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"Union Photographer Azerbaijan"

Printed at OJSC "Sharq-Qarb"  
AZ1123, Baku, st. Ashig Alaskar 17

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# HEYDAR ALIYEV

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# Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Proclaiming 2023 as the “Year of Heydar Aliyev” in the Republic of Azerbaijan\*

May 10, 2023, marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of Heydar Aliyev, the National Leader of the Azerbaijani people, an outstanding politician and statesman, who built the independent state of Azerbaijan.

Heydar Aliyev embodies a strong personality who successfully guided his nation through the historical and political challenges of the time, leading it towards independence with his unwavering determination and tireless efforts. The people of Azerbaijan entered the new century and millennium under the illuminating influence of Heydar Aliyev’s wisdom. The modern Azerbaijan, a country confidently advancing on a path of continuous development, stands as a testament to the triumph of Heydar Aliyev’s life mission.

During Heydar Aliyev’s first period of leadership in Azerbaijan, the Republic experienced a rapid and remarkable development in socioeconomic, scientific-technical, and cultural realms thanks to his exceptional managerial prowess, unbending will, patriotism, and his visionary and goal-oriented decisions. This period of time that witnessed a profound transformation in the course of our history and the harmony of our life, when the sentiments of freedom and independence began to dominate in the national thought, stands as the brightest chapter in the history of Azerbaijan. The resolute steps taken by the Great Leader to restore the historical memory of the nation by directing the people’s creative energy to the revival of the national spirit, served to self-awareness and return to the roots, thus becoming the cornerstone of the road of independent state-building.

Heydar Aliyev’s great political will, unwavering determination, and boundless talent for state governance once again manifested themselves in their entirety during the years when he worked as one of the leaders of the USSR and led the implementation of large-scale projects.

\* The present text is an unofficial translation of the Decree from the Azerbaijani language. The original can be accessed on <https://president.az/az/articles/view/57413>

Heydar Aliyev consistently promoted the interests of his beloved people using all available opportunities for the development of the Republic.

Azerbaijan, destined to restore its state independence in 1990s, faced the threat of being erased from the political map of the world and losing its statehood due to Armenia's aggression, external pressures and internal stand-offs. Heydar Aliyev, who returned to power upon the resolute demand of the nation at a time when the very future of the Republic was at stake, demonstrated unparalleled selflessness to rescue his country from the clutches of socio-political division and chaos, reversed the recession taking place in all areas, protected the country from all encroachments and charted a course towards sustainable development. The years of Heydar Aliyev's leadership of Azerbaijan represent a fateful stage when our nation seized a rare historical opportunity to render its independence eternal and irreversible at the cost of great suffering.

All stages of Heydar Aliyev's meaningful life and exceptional activities complemented each other, embodying his deep connection to the people and dedication to the ideology of national statehood. With profound knowledge and intellect, Heydar Aliyev made well-thought-out and courageous decisions to successfully resolve the issues of concern that arose within the Azerbaijani society throughout all times. The Great Leader clearly saw the interplay between different areas of society, adeptly defined and skillfully implemented tasks in public, political, social, economic, cultural and other fields through the national development strategy he had himself authored. As a result of the successful implementation of Heydar Aliyev's national oil strategy, our nation has become the full owner of its natural resources and, in a short time, obtained resources that provided a strong impetus to the country's overall development. Heydar Aliyev's exceptional contributions to the Azerbaijani people also encompass the adoption of the first Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the implementation of comprehensive reforms across all spheres, the establishment of democratic and rule-of-law based institutions, and the creation of a regular army. The formation of the ideology of Azerbaijanihood that united our people around a single goal, safeguarding the mother tongue at the state level, introduction of the tradition to regularly celebrate significant events of Azerbaijan's public, political, scientific and cultural history, global recognition of Azerbaijan as an ancient land with centuries-old spiritual and cultural heritage and as a place of tolerance located at the crossroads of civilizations were all integral parts of Heydar Aliyev's remarkable activities.

Standing alongside the most influential politicians of his time, Heydar Aliyev played an exceptional role in promoting the modern stance of Azerbaijan and the rich values of our people, and in securing a worthy position for Azerbaijan in the system of international relations. The resolution of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict based on the norms and principles of the international law was the paramount task laid out by the

Great Leader, and the entirety of the country's resources and capabilities of our people were mobilized for the restoration of historical justice. The strong Azerbaijani state, the masterpiece of the Great Leader, demonstrated its capacity to protect its sovereignty and independence by achieving a glorious Victory in the 44-day Patriotic War.

Heydar Aliyev, who has left an indelible mark in the history of our statehood, was always proud of being an Azerbaijani and remains a source of national pride and inspiration, is recognized as a symbol of Azerbaijan throughout the world. Our people always cherish and remember his dear memory with gratitude and celebrate the day when he returned to power as a national holiday of the Republic of Azerbaijan – National Salvation Day.

The independent Azerbaijan is the legacy of the Great Leader for the present and future generations, while his rich and diverse heritage is the national wealth of the Azerbaijani people. It is the honorable duty of every Azerbaijani to preserve this sacred heritage.

Guided by Paragraph 32 of the Article 109 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in order to ensure the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of the National Leader of the Azerbaijani people, Heydar Aliyev, at a state level, I hereby decide as follows:

1. 2023 is hereby proclaimed as the “Year of Heydar Aliyev” in the Republic of Azerbaijan.
2. Within the next two months the Administration of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan shall prepare and submit to the President of the Republic of proposals regarding an action plan related to the designation of 2023 as the “Year of Heydar Aliyev” in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

**ILHAM ALIYEV**

*President of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
Baku city, 29 September, 2022*

# National Leader Heydar Aliyev and Foreign Policy Strategy of Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan of today is in stark contrast to Azerbaijan of the early years of independence. Whereas in 1991-1993, Azerbaijan was in disarray and on the brink of a catastrophe, nowadays Azerbaijan is a country firmly standing on its feet, a pillar of the region and a strong contributor to regional and international security. The people of Azerbaijan owes this transformation to his National Leader – Heydar Aliyev. The wisdom, leadership and statesmanship of the National Leader laid the foundation of Azerbaijan's success. Below, I will try to highlight the certain aspects of the vision of the National Leader.

**JEYHUN BAYRAMOV**

*Minister of Foreign Affairs  
of the Republic of Azerbaijan*

Once Azerbaijan restored its independence back in 1991, it faced immense challenges to its statehood. The war of aggression launched by Armenia caught the people of Azerbaijan off guard and unprepared. The war resulted in the military occupation of almost one fifth of the territory of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijanis were ethnically cleansed from both Armenia and the occupied territories. Newly independent Azerbaijan became the country with the biggest number of refugees and IDPs per capita in the world. All this, coupled with the economic turmoil and sustained campaign to undermine Azerbaijan's statehood, brought the nation to the brink of a catastrophe. Under these circumstances, the people of Azerbaijan turned to Heydar Aliyev asking him to take the power and save the nation from the impending disaster.

At the time when Heydar Aliyev accepted the invitation and headed the state in June 1993, he inherited the situation deteriorating with every passing day.

The aggressor not interested in peace and taking advantage of the crisis in Azerbaijan doubled its efforts to illegally occupy more of the country's territory. Therefore, the first task in front of Heydar Aliyev was to stop the aggressor and give the young country a chance to recuperate. Despite the ongoing aggression and illegal occupation, Heydar Aliyev consolidated power, as well as introduced a unified command and control system within the disorganized military forces. This brought a sense of confidence and motivation to the people of Azerbaijan. Soon, the newly established Armed Forces of Azerbaijan took over the initiative on the battlefield and Armenia with its exhausted armed forces had to search for peace, and under these conditions a ceasefire agreement was reached.

Having successfully fulfilled the first task, the National Leader then pursued a three-line strategy to strengthen Azerbaijan's capacity and capabilities: 1) signing mutually beneficial agreements with major Western energy companies and reviving the ancient Silk Road to boost Azerbaijan's economy; 2) embarking upon domestic reforms and institution building; and 3) launching an effective diplomatic campaign to ensure restoration of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity.

The vision espoused by the National Leader was simple and compelling. The path of Azerbaijan's political independence as a hard-won historic achievement is irreversible and it will not compromise its sovereignty for external protection. Azerbaijan will continue along the path to strengthen its own potential and through that to contribute to regional stability and development. Azerbaijan seeks no confrontation but mutually beneficial partnership. This formula envisioned Azerbaijan as the pillar of the broader region where Azerbaijan's policy will make it stable and successful. At the same time, no regional stability will be possible without Azerbaijan's territorial integrity.

The year of 1994 was the most important and consequential in terms of decisions taken by the National Leader for Azerbaijan. After imposing a ceasefire agreement on Armenia, Azerbaijan negotiated and signed the "Contract of the Century" to jointly develop the deep water reserves of "Azeri", "Chirag" and "Guneshli" fields. The Contract involved leading oil companies from countries like the USA, the UK, Russia, Turkiye, Norway and Saudi Arabia. The Contract was followed by other agreements in the

From signing ceremony of the "Contract of Century", 20 September 1994, Baku, Azerbaijan.



fields of oil and gas in the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea. In 1996 an agreement on exploration and development of the “Shah Deniz” gas-condensate field was signed, which also involved multiple companies from both the region and beyond. The composition of the signatory companies and the states they represented was the initial embodiment in practice of the National Leader's vision described above.

Successful oil and gas agreements raised the question of strategic relevance on the means of delivery of energy resources. Stakeholders and interested partners had their views and preferences. The choice made by Azerbaijan that was later supported by its partners and most of the stakeholders was rational and strategic: to utilize the existing infrastructure for oil deliveries, while constructing the main export pipeline system for Caspian hydrocarbon resources.

The issue of the main export pipeline offered both challenges and opportunities. Challenges were to make it technically and commercially viable. While having this pipeline pass through the region could present a real opportunity to strengthen political independence and ensure energy security of neighbours.

The National Leader did not even rule out that an oil export pipeline could be built through Armenia. Having illegally occupied a big part of Azerbaijan's territory, Armenia became bereft of economic opportunities emerging in the region. Azerbaijan and its partners proposed to Armenia a viable option – Armenia puts an end to its aggression and illegal occupation and gains a real chance to be part of the soon-to-be developing region and through this to strengthen its statehood. While this option was on the table for some time, Armenia made a fateful mistake by rejecting it and threw itself into isolation lasting until these days.

In 1997, the Baku-Novorossiysk pipeline, which had been in existence in the Soviet era, was put into operation. In 1999, the Baku-Supsa oil pipeline was commissioned. The foundation of the main oil export pipeline, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, was laid in 2002 and its construction was completed in 2005. The main export pipeline is 1,768 km in length and it passes through the territory of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkiye.

The diversification of oil delivery routes allowed Azerbaijan both to be independent in the export of national energy resources to world markets and to engage with all parties, sometimes those with conflicting political and economic interests, for the sake of regional development. In fact, it was a reflection of the foreign policy strategy identified by the National Leader.

Along with the energy strategy, the National Leader initiated a policy and took actions to transform Azerbaijan into a transportation hub. The key idea was to capitalize on Azerbaijan's strategic location at the intersection of East-West and North-South. At the time, with no viable transportation infrastructure and resources in place, Azerbaijan developed a Silk Road Strategy and worked towards attracting investment and expertise to the



**THE NATIONAL LEADER MADE IT CLEAR THAT AZERBAIJAN'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY WAS A RED LINE. IT WAS BOTH A MATTER OF THE COUNTRY'S SOVEREIGN RIGHTS AND THE RIGHTS OF ITS PEOPLE, INCLUDING THOSE FORCIBLY DISPLACED BY ARMENIA, TO LIVE IN THEIR HOMELAND".**

country. For this purpose, Azerbaijan hosted the first ever “International Conference on Restoration of the Historic Silk Route” in Baku, Azerbaijan, on September 7-8, 1998.

The second line of the National Leader’s strategy - domestic reforms and institution building – had also a foreign policy dimension. The main focus of reforms was to learn from the best international practices and adapt them to the local context. Thus, Azerbaijan had joined multiple international organizations by the mid-1990s. Pro-active membership in the UN and its specialized agencies, engagement with the OSCE and the Council of Europe, participation at the CIS events and other platforms made Azerbaijan internationally well-positioned.

As for the institution building, I should note Azerbaijan’s active partnership with NATO, which is quite outstanding in its nature. Being one of the first signatories of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) Program, Azerbaijan embarked upon defense institution building and reforms of the Armed Forces in line with NATO standards, including preparations for international peacekeeping operations. Since 1999 Azerbaijani peacekeepers started to contribute to peacekeeping missions in various parts of the globe.

The third line of the strategy – effective diplomatic campaign to ensure restoration of Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity – merits special attention. Territorial integrity, fundamental for the Azerbaijan’s statehood and premised on just, legitimate and legal basis, is a prerequisite for the region’s stability and development. The entire Caucasus region, home to hundreds of ethnicities, is vulnerable to separatism and aggressive ideologies widely espoused by Armenia.

The National Leader made it clear that Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity was a red line. It was both a matter of the country’s sovereign rights and the rights of its people, including those forcibly displaced by Armenia, to live in their homeland. Under existing circumstances, Azerbaijan systematically engaged with international organizations to achieve the resolution of the conflict on the basis of respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of international borders of Azerbaijan as provided for by international law. In this context, the United Nations Security Council, the body with primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, adopted four resolutions that reconfirmed the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of international borders of Azerbaijan and demanded immediate, unconditional and complete withdrawal of the occupying forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Yet another big diplomatic victory by the National Leader was the OSCE Lisbon Summit of 1996 where all OSCE participating States, except for Armenia, recognized that the conflict should be resolved within the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

These diplomatic achievements put political pressure on Armenia and made it impossible to legitimize the results of its aggression against



Azerbaijan. Also, as it was mentioned above, Armenia failed to seize on the strategic and consequential opportunity of becoming a part of the large-scale regional projects initiated by Azerbaijan.

The National Leader masterminded a strategy of economic prosperity and international partnerships for Azerbaijan. This very strategy also led to the diplomatic defeat and economic isolation of the aggressor that ended up with the eventual defeat of Armenia on the battlefield.

Today, Azerbaijan, under the able leadership of President Ilham Aliyev, true to the vision and principles put forward by the National Leader, has restored its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Azerbaijan continues not only to develop itself but supports stability and development of the region. Azerbaijan has become a trans-regional connector between East-West and North-South transportation networks. Azerbaijan is contributing to the energy security of its neighbours and European countries. For the last 10 years, Azerbaijan has provided humanitarian and development assistance to more than 140 countries. The Armed Forces of Azerbaijan, while capable to defend its borders, contribute to international security worldwide.

The development and prosperity of Azerbaijan have benefited all its partners. Azerbaijan and the region still have untapped potential. In line with the vision of its National Leader, Azerbaijan looks forward to further developing mutually beneficial cooperation, building partnerships across geopolitical dividing lines and serving as a model for multiculturalism.

President Heydar Aliyev at the OSCE Lisbon Summit, 2 December 1996, Lisbon, Portugal.



**TODAY, AZERBAIJAN, UNDER THE ABLE LEADERSHIP OF PRESIDENT ILHAM ALIYEV, TRUE TO THE VISION AND PRINCIPLES PUT FORWARD BY THE NATIONAL LEADER, HAS RESTORED ITS TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY.**

# Heydar Aliyev is the Architect of the Democratic State Governed by the Rule of Law, and Modern Judicial and Legal System

**FIKRAT MAMMADOV**  
*Minister of Justice of the  
Republic of Azerbaijan*

**M**ay 10, 2023 marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of Heydar Aliyev, the National Leader of Azerbaijani people, a prominent politician and statesman.

More than 30 years of the history of modern Azerbaijan are closely linked with Heydar Aliyev. There is no area in our country that was not masterminded by him.

His governance of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic from 1969 to 1982 is the substantial period of progress registered in Azerbaijan.

It was during those years that Azerbaijan, which in the times of a totalitarian Soviet regime was considered as one of the least developed republics, advanced to the ranks of the most developed ones, achieving successes in economy, industry and agriculture, as well as culture and education.

At the same time, Heydar Aliyev always prioritized justice, rule of law and legal order, and stated that “justice can not be restored by injustice”. He considered maintaining rule of law and establishment of law-enforcement activities on the basis of these principles as fundamental criteria.

It was in 1970, after the National Leader assumed the leadership in Azerbaijan, that a disorganized justice system was transformed into a unified and smoothly functioning mechanism.

For the first time in the USSR, Heydar Aliyev openly and courageously spoke out about crime and corruption and showed zero tolerance to them. Later, when he served as a member of the Political Bureau, the leading body of a giant state as the USSR, and as First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Heydar Aliyev never hesitated to openly criticize the wrongdoings and shortcomings of the center and always supported transparency. He was responsible for the management of important strategic areas in the Soviet Union, and yet he remained strongly dedicated to his native Azerbaijan.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, in 1991, Azerbaijan, which had only recently regained its state independence, was faced with the threat of losing it. A war was waged against Azerbaijan and its territories were occupied. There were almost no governance in the country. It was in a state of disarray and anarchy.

The people of Azerbaijan was convinced that only historic personality like Heydar Aliyev could rescue them from this difficult situation, a socioeconomic and political-military crisis.

As famous French thinker Voltaire once said, “one genius is enough to save the state”. Such personalities play an incomparable role in the fate of the people by assuming responsibility in critical political situations. Thus, the Americans had George Washington, French people had Charles de Gaulle, the Germans had Otto von Bismarck, the people of Türkiye had Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and the Azerbaijanis had Heydar Aliyev!





**IN THE MOST CHALLENGING TIMES FOR OUR NATIONAL STATEHOOD, HEYDAR ALIYEV, A SKILLED STATESMAN WITH INNATE TALENT, DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF POLITICAL PROCESSES, AND AN IMMENSE REPUTATION, UNDERTOOK THE MISSION TO SAVE OUR COUNTRY.**

Therefore, it is no surprise that 2023 was declared the “Year of Heydar Aliyev” in the Republic of Azerbaijan to honor the exceptional contributions of the Great Leader in consolidating our independence and statehood, establishing a democratic state governed by the rule of law, and positioning Azerbaijan in the system of international relations. Various events are being organized both within the country and abroad to commemorate his legacy.

In the most challenging times for our national statehood, Heydar Aliyev, a skilled statesman with innate talent, deep understanding of political processes, and an immense reputation, undertook the mission to save our country. With his extensive experience in statecraft, he successfully preserved our independence and ensured its perpetuity.

He determined the building of democratic and secular institutions based on rule of law as a path for the development of Azerbaijan, a country with a rich history of statehood, committed to national-moral values and also known for its traditions of multiculturalism and tolerance.

Initially, socio-political stability and the rule of law were restored in the country to launch the building of a democratic law-governed state and to carry out fundamental reforms. In 1994, a historic decree aimed at combating crime, which marked a turning point in strengthening the rule of law and legal order was signed. And in 1995, the first democratic parliament was established since restoration of the independence.

The Azerbaijani model of a state governed by the rule of law was introduced through the first national Constitution. Heydar Aliyev played a pivotal role in personally drafting the first Constitution of Azerbaijan, which was designed to reflect universal values and democratic achievements across the world. It was then adopted in 1995 through a referendum. In order to ensure the supremacy of the Constitution, the Constitutional Court was established for the first time in the history of our country in 1998.

The Constitution contained all principles of a democratic law-governed state, such as the rule of law, protection of human rights, separation of powers, principles of constitutional control, while setting the protection of human rights as the supreme goal of the state.

The National Leader attached great importance to the process of institution building based on the rule of law and reforms of the legal system and he personally chaired the Legal Reform Commission that was established for this very purpose.

The legal system and legislation common to totalitarian regimes inherited from the Soviet Union was not conducive to building a civil and democratic society, establishing the rule of law and protecting human rights and freedoms. To overcome this obstacle, an analysis of the best international practices was carried out. As a result, a series of progressive laws and codes were drafted and adopted in a relatively short period of time. These new laws and codes, which were reviewed and approved by reputable

international experts, defined the essence of a modern legal system and were of utmost importance for both the present and future of our country.

It wouldn't have been possible to establish a perfect legal system without an independent and impartial judiciary, which is one of the cornerstones of a democratic society.

In this context, at the National Leader's initiative, a completely new "Law on Courts and Judges" was adopted in accordance with democratic traditions in 1997. With the purpose of forming the judiciary as an authoritative and independent institution, as well as preparation of a competent and professional corps of judges, the Judicial-Legal Council was established in 1998.

The process of launching a conceptually new and modern model of judicial proceedings started and, after abolishing former Soviet courts, a new three-tier independent judicial system was created.

Protection of every individual's rights and freedoms by courts was ensured. The adoption of important decisions restricting human rights was entrusted to the exclusive competence of courts. Any forms of control over courts were eliminated. On the contrary, the institution of democratic judicial control was introduced.

Within the framework of reforms, the functions and powers of the Supreme Court were also revised. It became a purely cassation instance court for civil, criminal, and other cases considered in courts of general jurisdiction or specialized courts.

Demonstrating its commitment to fundamental human rights once again, Azerbaijan became one of the first post-Soviet countries where the right to choose arrest as a measure of restraint was given to courts, thereby applying the principle of "Habeas Corpus".

In 2000, for the first time in the history of our statehood, judges were appointed based on transparent procedures, including selection through test exam. Ultimately, 60% of the previous corps of judges was renewed. Thereby, the foundation was laid for a new, contemporary way of thinking within the judicial system.

At that time, the National Leader assessed these reforms at the international conference in Washington D.C. by saying: "We have raised the judicial system of Azerbaijan to a completely new level and set it up based on democratic principles. All judges passed a test, went through competition, and whoever succeeded was appointed as a judge."

As a result of the reforms, the powers of the Prosecutor's Office common to the totalitarian regime were abolished and it was reorganized according to the principles of a democratic society, its main function was defined as carrying out criminal prosecution and upholding state prosecution in full compliance with the principle of equality of arms.



**IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT AND HISTORIC STEPS TAKEN IN THIS FIELD WAS THE ABOLITION OF DEATH PENALTY. IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS RETURN TO POWER IN 1993, HEYDAR ALIYEV, WHO ALWAYS ADHERED TO THE PRINCIPLES OF HUMANISM, INTRODUCED A VETO ON THE EXECUTION OF DEATH PENALTIES, AND IN 1998, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE EAST, THIS PUNISHMENT WAS COMPLETELY ABOLISHED IN AZERBAIJAN.**

At the same time, considering the exceptional role of the Bar Association in ensuring human rights and providing quality legal aid to citizens, its activities were reformed according to the democratic principles. Hence, it was transformed into a fully independent institution, whereas in some countries it is functioning within or under the control of public institutions even today. Another tangible example of the special importance attached to the protection of human rights was the signing of the Decree “On measures to secure the protection of human and civil rights and freedoms” in 1998. This elevated the issue of human rights to national level. The Ombudsman institution was established in Azerbaijan. Our country joined all main international treaties in this field, a special State Program on human rights was prepared and started to be implemented.

It goes without saying that one of the most important and historic steps taken in this field was the abolition of death penalty. Immediately after his return to power in 1993, Heydar Aliyev, who always adhered to the principles of humanism, introduced a veto on the execution of death penalties, and in 1998, for the first time in the East, this punishment was completely abolished in Azerbaijan. Extensive application of pardon and amnesty acts was restored. Thus, in 1995–2003 tens of thousands of prisoners were pardoned, released from imprisonment and other types of punishments as a result of approximately 40 acts of humanism adopted in the country.

In the process of institution building based on rule of law, progressive reforms were carried out in all law enforcement agencies; laws “On Police”, “On Intelligence Activity” and other progressive legislative acts were adopted.

At the same time, historic decisions were made on the comprehensive development of justice institutions.

First, the transfer of penitentiary institutions from the criminal investigation body to the Ministry of Justice was completed in accordance with the democratic principles. This step was aimed at improving the system of execution of punishments, humanization of correctional work, and most importantly, ensuring the protection of human rights and freedoms.

New tasks related to the execution of court decisions to meet modern challenges were determined, that resulted in establishment of the Bailiff Service at the Ministry. Moreover, an Investigation department was created and the Ministry of Justice was entrusted with pre-trial investigation of crimes against administration of justice and several other related offences.

By taking important steps to promote democracy in Azerbaijan, local self-governing bodies, municipalities were formed for the first time. The Ministry was tasked with ensuring the legality in the activities of these bodies in accordance with the international practices, providing them with methodological assistance and submitting annual reports to the Parliament.

As a result of the country's dedication to democratic values and progressive reforms, Azerbaijan became a full member of authoritative international organizations, including the Council of Europe in 2001.

Due to the successful foreign policy strategy, the country's international relations expanded and bilateral cooperation was established with other states in political, economic, legal, and other fields.

The steady line towards comprehensive democratic development established by Heydar Aliyev has been successfully continued since the election of Mr. Ilham Aliyev as a President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Alongside this, our judicial and legal system, which was established by the Great Leader on the basis of democratic principles, is being constantly modernized and reformed to cope with modern challenges.

World experience shows that reforms in this field are an ongoing process. Even in developed countries this process is permanent – meaning that even though it has a beginning, it is a never-ending endeavor.

In this context, consistent and focused actions have been taken aimed at a continuous development of the judicial system, which is one of the priorities of our state policy.

Within the framework of progressive reforms implemented under the leadership of the Head of State and in cooperation with the Council of Europe taking into account international experience, the existing judiciary-related legislation has been improved almost every year, which has resulted in the adoption of new laws.

By taking important institutional measures, the activity of the Judicial-Legal Council as an independent self-governing body of the judiciary was re-organized on a new basis. Also, the Selection Committee of Judges was established and the Rules for the most transparent selection of candidates for judges were introduced.

In addition, further guarantees for the independence of the judiciary were introduced, mechanisms for the prevention of interference in its activity by the Judicial-Legal Council were determined. Moreover, judicial budgets can only be adopted in coordination with the Council, while it was prohibited by law to reduce judges' salaries.

In order to simplify access to justice, approximately 40 new courts, including courts of appeal, and a system of administrative justice were established in all regions. The existing court infrastructure was modernized with the participation of the World Bank, and hi-tech courthouses and complexes were built to accommodate 35 courts in the capital and regions. Most of them were inaugurated by the President of the country, who guarantees the independence of the judiciary by the Constitution.



Presentation of innovations in justice and judiciary, 21 December 2018, Baku, Azerbaijan.

Along with that, in order to improve access to courts and increase customer satisfaction, the “Electronic court” information system, which covers the entire process from the moment of application to the court until the enforcement of the court decision, was launched and is being successfully implemented.

It should be noted that following the Decree of the President dated 3 April 2019 “On Deepening of the Reforms in the Judicial-Legal System”, our judicial reforms entered a new stage in accordance with the modern challenges.

Enormous work has been done in a short period of time on the implementation of this decree, and this work is highly valued by international experts. Within the framework of institutional measures, 13 regional courts, including separate administrative and commercial courts in the regions, have been established, private forensic expertise has been introduced, and a mediation institute has started to operate.

Up to 350 changes were introduced to the Civil Procedure Code to ensure flexibility of the court proceedings, more efficient consideration of cases, and, generally, to improve the quality of justice. Also, the scope of simplified and written proceedings was broadened, video conference and electronic format proceedings, as well as differentiation of court fees, were applied.

The policy of humanity introduced by Great Leader Heydar Aliyev successfully continued through the implementation of measures related to the humanization of penal policy in accordance with the decree.

It should be noted that the protection of rights of persons deprived of their liberty is always in the limelight. In this context, the adoption of a new “Law on Ensuring the Rights and Freedoms of Persons Detained in Prisons” played an important role in ensuring the rights of detained or arrested persons, and they were afforded the same rights and privileges as prisoners.

At the same time, detention conditions of prisoners were improved in accordance with the international standards and new modern penitentiary institutions were built in the capital and regions. The President of Azerbaijan, who always attaches special importance to the protection of human rights, including rights of prisoners, visited these institutions and got acquainted with the conditions there.

The quality of medical care provided to the prisoners is constantly improving, the positive experience of our country in fighting TB is appreciated across the world and other countries regularly benefit from it in accordance with the recommendations of prestigious international organizations.

Furthermore, by humanizing the penal policy after studying best international practices, extensive and conceptual amendments were made to the criminal legislation in the past period. As a result, many offences were decriminalized, some punishments were eliminated, and punishments alternative to deprivation of liberty, including new ones such as restriction of liberty, were introduced.

It should be also noted that the Probation Service within the Ministry of Justice was established. It widely uses electronic monitoring tools (electronic bracelets) to execute the above-mentioned punishments, thereby enabling non-stop probation control.

In addition, the decree “On Deepening of the Reforms in the Judicial-Legal System” defined progressive mechanisms for unified judicial practices, as well as for the evaluation of judges’ performance.

As a result of increased confidence in courts and improvement of access to justice, the workload in courts rose dramatically, and, therefore, the number of judges has been increased by a third to ensure more qualitative consideration of cases.

In order to fill the vacancies of judges, selection of candidates is organized via fully transparent and multi-stage procedures, which include long-term trainings and internships in courts where future judges study best international practices.

It should be noted that our judicial reforms are highly appreciated internationally as well. The selection procedure distinguished with its transparency received a high assessment from the Council of Europe and the European Union as a model of best practice, and recommended to other countries.

At the same time, our project “Court Pulse-Revolution in Management” has participated in the Council of Europe’s competition in the field of administration of justice and was awarded the “Crystal Scales of Justice Prize” for its achievements in the judicial system.

Also, the World Bank has evaluated a justice- related project in Azerbaijan as one of the most successful projects and announced it as the winner under the “Creation and application of innovative methods for providing higher quality services to citizens” nomination.

According to the reports of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), Azerbaijan has surpassed many developed Western European and other states in terms of court efficiency indicators. In addition, our country has significantly exceeded average European figures in terms of the speed of proceedings and wide application of information technologies in courts. Azerbaijan is ranked 14th among 49 countries in the IT development.

All taken measures and achievements are the result of President Ilham Aliyev’s successful implementation of the state development strategy, which is rooted in great deeds and based on a solid foundation laid by Heydar Aliyev.

Today, the modern state of Azerbaijan is strong as never before. In particular, it’s worth mentioning that our native lands, which were occupied for 30 years despite of the UN Security Council’s Resolutions, were liberated by military and political means, thus, turning National Leader’s testament and the dream of our people into a reality.

Our main task now is to restore and efficiently organize activities of juridical institutions in those lands.

At present, in the territories completely destroyed during the occupation, massive reconstruction works are underway and the entire infrastructure is being rebuilt under the leadership of the Head of State. It is of great concern that landmines laid heavily in those territories by Armenia during the occupation and even after the war have already claimed the lives of 55 people and caused serious injuries to more than 300.

The Heydar Aliyev Foundation, which is named after the Great Leader and has contributed significantly to the socioeconomic development of the country since its establishment, is implementing important projects in this regard at the initiative of its President, First Vice-President of Azerbaijan, Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva. Our ancient monuments and cultural heritage are being restored there, and our compatriots are already returning to their ancestral homes.

All this demonstrates the strong capacity of our state in the world. Azerbaijan, which is known as a peaceful state, reliable partner and a country that stands at the forefront of reforms, is on the path of sustainable development of a modern secular and democratic state governed by the rule of law. This progress is triggered by the successful implementation of a thoughtful and far-sighted policy, which is based on a solid foundation laid by Great Leader Heydar Aliyev.

# National Leader Heydar Aliyev and the Islamic World

Azerbaijan is one of the centers of Islamic civilization in the world. Historically, the people of Azerbaijan have made great contributions to the development of Islamic culture and remained faithful to the Islamic religion despite living in different public and political systems. It is no coincidence that the Islamic religion spread to the rest of the Caucasus precisely from Azerbaijan. Bahmanyar al-Azerbaijani, Abu Said Bardai, Eynalguzat Miyanaji, Nizami Ganjavi, Shahabaddin Suhravardi, Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, Khatib Tabrizi, Shams Tabrizi, Jalaladdin Tabrizi, Gatran Tabrizi, Safiyaddin Urmavi, Seyid Imadaddin Nasimi, Seyid Yahya Bakuvi, Muhammad Fuzuli, Yusif Ardabili, Safiyaddin Ardabili, Sirajaddin Ismail Shirvani and many other Azerbaijani scientists and thinkers have played an exceptional role in the development of science, literature and art in the Caucasus and the Islamic world as a whole. Unfortunately, since religion was banned in the USSR, the connection of Azerbaijan and other Muslim republics with the Muslim world and culture weakened. However, after the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991 and Azerbaijan regained state independence, a favorable historical and political environment emerged for the centuries-old national and moral values of the Azerbaijani people to take their rightful place in society.

The return of National Leader Heydar Aliyev to power in Azerbaijan in 1993 paved the way for Islamic values, which were under severe pressure during the Soviet era, to regain their rightful place in the republic and for the development of relations with the Muslim world.

The adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan at the initiative of Heydar Aliyev in 1995 established the relations between the state and religion in Azerbaijan on the principle of secularism. As a result of the Great Leader's visionary policy, all citizens of the country regardless of their religious beliefs rallied around the ideology of Azerbaijanihood and began to actively participate in the process of independent state building. As a result of the successful implementation of Heydar Aliyev's policy towards ensuring freedom of conscience and religion and developing the relations between the state and religion, religious stability in Azerbaijan was strengthened.

The restoration and reconstruction of religious-cultural and historical sites belonging to the Islamic and other religions as well as respect for their spiritual values held an important place among the main directions

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**THE ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN AT THE INITIATIVE OF HEYDAR ALIYEV IN 1995 ESTABLISHED THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE STATE AND RELIGION IN AZERBAIJAN ON THE PRINCIPLE OF SECULARISM.**

of Heydar Aliyev's domestic policy. In remarks at the swearing-in ceremony after being elected President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on October 10, 1993, Heydar Aliyev stated that the Islamic religion had played a tremendous role in the development of the centuries-old culture of the Azerbaijani people and formation of its national-spiritual values. The Great Leader noted that Islam had had a great influence on the spirituality, science and power of the Azerbaijani people. "In many cases, our national traditions and culture have been passed down from one generation to another through the Islamic religion, and have reached the present days as an enormous national asset. All conditions have been and will continue to be created for people to practice Islam freely in Azerbaijan."<sup>1</sup>

During a trip to Saudi Arabia in July 1994, Heydar Aliyev visited the places considered holy in the Islamic world. The National Leader said in this regard, "What makes this trip quite special is that the people accompanying me and I have visited holy places of Muslims. I said in an interview in Mecca, in front of the Kaaba, and I can repeat now that visiting the holy places and connecting myself to them was my most cherished dream for years and decades. This is why this visit is very important to me."<sup>2</sup> Heydar Aliyev wrote heartfelt words in the book of honor of the Prophet's Mosque in the city of Medina: "As a Muslim, I consider myself happy to have visited the holy city of Medina, the holy monuments of Islam, the mausoleum and mosque of the Prophet Muhammad. Thank God the dream and intention I had been cherishing in my heart for many years have come true. This historic event has created a great feeling of excitement and relief in my heart. I have once again realized how universal, philosophical and scientific the foundations of Islam are. I have realized the greatness of Allah."<sup>3</sup>

Azerbaijan has historically been noted for tolerant relations between different religions. Our people have always treated different religions with respect and this has been a way of life. Interreligious dialogue is one of the key directions of the secular relations between the state and religion founded by Heydar Aliyev. This dialogue plays a stabilizing role in society, as people share their religious and cultural experience, needs and desires through it.

Heydar Aliyev gave a high assessment to the unique experience of Azerbaijan, a country located at the crossroads of civilizations. Both during domestic trips and visits to foreign countries, he cited the cultural diversity and religious tolerance in Azerbaijan as an example for the rest of the world: "The Azerbaijanis have always been tolerant to other religions. This is what the Holy Koran and Prophet Mohammad

1 *Heydər Əliyev. Müstəqilliyimiz əbədidir. Birinci kitab* [Heydar Aliyev. Our independence is eternal. First book]. Azərneşr, 1997 p. 133.

2 *Heydər Əliyev. Müstəqilliyimiz əbədidir. İkinci kitab* [Heydar Aliyev. Our independence is eternal. Second book]. Azərneşr, 1997 p. 82.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 59

instructed us to do,” he said<sup>4</sup>, emphasizing that the Islamic religion had historically taken a tolerant position towards other religions.

Heydar Aliyev’s respect not only for Islamic values, but also for the traditions of different religions earned Azerbaijan an international reputation for being a secular state with developing traditions of multiculturalism and tolerance. The environment of religious tolerance in the country has contributed to sustainable solidarity and peaceful coexistence between religious denominations.

In a number of speeches, Heydar Aliyev stated that all citizens of Azerbaijan had equal rights regardless of their religious and ethnic affiliation. He stated that Azerbaijan’s geographical location at the crossroads of Eastern and Western civilizations, its public and political structure and historical traditions had a significant impact on the country’s role and place in the system of international relations.

Many local and international events were organized in Azerbaijan during Heydar Aliyev’s presidency to highlight the importance of protecting spiritual values and strengthening Islamic solidarity. One of such events was the international conference on “Modernity and religious and moral values” held in Baku on September 30, 1998. According to the Great Leader, the very fact that the conference, dedicated to the pertinent subject of connection between the religious values and modernity, and attended by renowned scientists and religious figures from various countries, was held in Baku is a high testament to the growing influence of the independent Azerbaijani state. He emphasized that this event was especially important amid a backdrop of a biased campaign against the tenets of Islam and Muslim states in a number of countries around the world.

In his remarks at the conference, Heydar Aliyev emphasized the importance of Islamic solidarity in the world and stated that the people of Azerbaijan, regardless of their religious affiliation, always strived to strengthen friendship, brotherhood and kindness, as well as peace and well-being. Heydar Aliyev also informed the conference participants that religious and cultural sites, in particular the tangible cultural monuments related to the Islamic religion, in the territories of Azerbaijan occupied by Armenia had been vandalized.

The holding of the international conference on the “Role of religion and belief in a democratic society: studying the ways to fight terrorism and extremism” in Baku on October 10, 2002 was the result of Azerbaijan’s principled policy on the fight against extremism and terrorism. In his remarks, Heydar Aliyev said that the conference was “dedicated to discussing the role of religion and belief in fighting terrorism and extremism in the modern democratic society, as well as preventing and eliminating conflicts, as well as underlining the importance of interreligious and intercultural dialogue along the Great Silk

<sup>4</sup> Tarixi və milli-mənevi dəyərlər kontekstində Azərbaycan milli kimliyi [Azerbaijan's national identity in the context of historical and national-moral values]. (2014). *Science and Education*. p. 184

Road”. “We perceive religion, first of all, as a phenomenon and an integral part of our culture, historical heritage, and national mentality,” Heydar Aliyev said, adding that it was unacceptable to link religions that actually serve the spiritual renaissance of humanity, especially Islam, a religion of peace, with extremism and terrorism. Noting that religious extremist and terrorist activities taking place in the world were posing problems to international security, Heydar Aliyev said: “Today, terrorism often manifests itself under the veil of religion, in religious guise. This should not distract us from its true essence...In some cases, in an attempt to achieve their biased political goals and protect the interests of certain groups, terrorist forces cite universal values that are sacred to all of us and try to justify terrorism. Today, terrorism hides behind various religious veils and tries to divert attention from its disruptive and destructive goals.”<sup>5</sup>

In order to implement the state policy in the field of religious activities, promote the environment of mutual respect, understanding and tolerance between organizations representing different religions, prevent radicalism and extremism, conflict and discrimination on religious grounds, President of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev signed a decree on June 21, 2001 to establish the State Committee on Religious Associations.

The development of relations with Islamic countries in bilateral and multilateral formats was high on the agenda of Heydar Aliyev’s foreign policy strategy. The Great Leader attached special significance to Islamic solidarity and unity among denominations in Islam, emphasized its importance at various events, and paid special attention to the development of relations between Islamic countries and Azerbaijan. Heydar Aliyev considered it important to prevent threats to the Islamic religion and civilization in the world, and show solidarity in solving the issues of concern to Muslim countries. The development of relations with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (known as the Organization of the Islamic Conference until 2011), the leading international organization of the Muslim world and the second biggest intergovernmental organization for the number of member states after the UN, was among foreign priorities. Starting from the second half of 1993, the relations and contacts with the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) were stepped up, which was fully consistent with the foreign policy course of President Heydar Aliyev in relation to this organization.<sup>6</sup>

National Leader Heydar Aliyev’s visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in July 1994 laid the groundwork for the further development of cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the OIC. The Umrah pilgrimage performed during the visit, as well productive meetings with government officials, increased the interest and attention of all Muslim countries to Azerbaijan.

5 *Heydər Əliyev. Müstəqilliyimiz əbədidir. Qırx birinci kitab* [Heydar Aliyev. Our independence is eternal. Forty-first book]. Azərneşr, 2012, p. 182.

6 *Heydər Əliyev və Şərq. Birinci kitab* [Heydar Aliyev and the East. First book]. “Tural” NPM, 2002, p. 63.



Addressing various OIC events, Heydar Aliyev emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation between Muslim countries, ensuring peace for Muslim people, improving their well-being, and preserving and developing the Islamic religion and culture. He also noted that Azerbaijan, a part of the Muslim world, was located in an important geopolitical space between Europe and Asia, the Caucasus and the Middle East, playing the role of a bridge between civilizations.

President Heydar Aliyev attending the Seventh Summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, 13 December 1994, Casablanca, Morocco.

The participation of President Heydar Aliyev in the Seventh Summit of the Heads of State and Government of OIC member countries held in Casablanca, Morocco, on December 13-15, 1994 was the first time the President of Azerbaijan participated in the supreme assembly of this organization. Extensive discussions of the tasks facing the Muslim world were held during the event.

In his speech at the summit conference, Heydar Aliyev emphasized that the Muslim world had made great contributions to human civilization and supported its spiritual development. He said intricate and contradictory developments were unfolding in the world, noting that international security was faced with regional conflicts and problems such as nationalism. Speaking about the way out of the current situation, Heydar Aliyev said: "Our countries are at the center of these processes, and we must properly contribute to the strengthening of international security and the victory of peace and progress. We must make effort. To reach this aim we must remove the obstacles to the development of Muslim countries; extend a

helping hand to each other; prevent division and isolation; unite and help our brothers in need, and extinguish the flames of bloody wars and armed conflicts.”<sup>7</sup>

In his meetings with the ICT leadership and heads of state of Muslim countries, Heydar Aliyev provided detailed information about Armenia’s military aggression against Azerbaijan and its consequences, emphasizing that it was important for the international community to take effective measures against the aggressor. The decision adopted at the end of the Seventh Summit of the OIC regarding the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict condemned Armenia’s military aggression against Azerbaijan, demanded an unconditional withdrawal of armed forces of Armenia from all occupied Azerbaijani territories, and called for OIC member states, including international Islamic organizations and institutions, to provide economic and humanitarian aid to Azerbaijan, which was subjected to aggression and had more than a million refugees and internally displaced persons.

Following the Seventh Conference of the Heads of State and Government of member states, the OIC started keeping the issues related to Azerbaijan in the spotlight and adopting decisions regarding the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. Documents demanding an unconditional withdrawal of armed forces of Armenia from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan were also adopted at the OIC summit meetings held in Tehran (Iran) in 1997, in Doha (Qatar) in 2000 and in Putrajaya (Malaysia) in 2003. During the later periods of Heydar Aliyev’s presidency, the OIC adopted important documents calling for a fair resolution of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict based on respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. After the liberation of Azerbaijani lands from the military occupation as a result of the 44-day Patriotic War in 2020, the OIC adopted resolutions on the “Elimination of the consequences of the aggression of the Republic of Armenia against the Republic of Azerbaijan”, “Economic assistance to the Republic of Azerbaijan”, “Destruction and desecration of Islamic historical and cultural relics and shrines in the territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan resulting from the aggression of the Republic of Armenia against the Republic of Azerbaijan”, and “Solidarity with the victims of the Khojaly massacre of 1992”.

During Heydar Aliyev’s presidency, Azerbaijan’s relations with Muslim countries developed in political, economic, foreign trade, cultural and other fields. Documents on cooperation in trade, investment, culture and other areas were signed with countries such as Turkiye, Pakistan, Iran, the UAE, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, reciprocal visits were paid, various initiatives were put forward and implemented to develop economic and cultural relations.

The policy defined by National Leader Heydar Aliyev in the field of strengthening relations with the Muslim world is being successfully

7 Ibid, p. 16

continued by the President Ilham Aliyev. The head of state attaches special importance to relations with the Muslim world and cooperation within the OIC.

The present-day Azerbaijan is taking important steps to preserve the progressive traditions of Islam. Along with the initiative of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, the Heydar Aliyev Foundation headed by the First Vice-President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mehriban Aliyeva is implementing major projects in the direction of preserving and restoring the religious monuments of Islam and other religions.

With the aim of developing and implementing programs on the protection of moral values and promoting the relations between the state and religion, the Foundation for the Promotion of Moral Values was established within the State Committee on Religious Associations by a Decree of the President Ilham Aliyev dated October 10, 2017. In addition, the establishment of the Azerbaijan Institute of Theology within the State Committee on Religious Associations by a Decree of the President Ilham Aliyev dated February 9, 2018 is of tremendous importance for the preservation and enrichment of religious and spiritual values and training of qualified personnel in the field of organization of religious activities.

The declaration of 2017 as a Year of Islamic Solidarity in Azerbaijan by a decree of the President Ilham Aliyev dated January 10, 2017 was an important event in the development of Azerbaijan's relations with the Muslim world. President Ilham Aliyev said in this regard: "The main objective of the Year of Islamic Solidarity is to strengthen the unity in the Muslim world and to show the world that Islam is a religion of peace and culture."<sup>8</sup> This decree of the President Ilham Aliyev is further evidence that Azerbaijan, which has been one of the centers of Islamic civilization for centuries, remains loyal to the Islamic religion and its progressive values. The fact that Azerbaijan hosted the Fourth Islamic Solidarity Games in 2017 is a clear indication of the influence our country enjoys in the Muslim world.

Azerbaijan closely cooperates with OIC institutions such as ISESCO, the Islamic Development Bank and the Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum. Proceeding from a decree of the President Ilham Aliyev dated January 14, 2016, the National Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan on ISESCO was established to coordinate cooperation with ISESCO. An international awareness campaign "Justice to Khojaly" is being implemented at the initiative of Leyla Aliyeva, the chief coordinator for intercultural and inter-civilizational dialogue of the Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum. As a result, the Khojaly tragedy was recognized as an "act of genocide" and a "crime against humanity" by a number of world parliaments, as well as the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers and the OIC Parliamentary Union.



**THE POLICY DEFINED BY NATIONAL LEADER HEYDAR ALIYEV IN THE FIELD OF STRENGTHENING RELATIONS WITH THE MUSLIM WORLD IS BEING SUCCESSFULLY CONTINUED BY THE PRESIDENT ILHAM ALIYEV. THE HEAD OF STATE ATTACHES SPECIAL IMPORTANCE TO RELATIONS WITH THE MUSLIM WORLD AND COOPERATION WITHIN THE OIC.**

8 *Ilham Əliyev. İnkişaf məqsədimizdir. Səksəninci kitab* [Ilham Aliyev. Development is our goal. Eightieth book]. Azərneşr, 2019, p. 52.

# Heydar Aliyev and Azerbaijan's Oil Strategy. The Great Role of the National Leader in the Development of Oil Industry

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Experienced oil workers will probably remember that when Heydar Aliyev first took up leadership of Azerbaijan in 1969, the situation in all areas of the republic's economy, including the oil and gas industry, was not at all encouraging. Instead of going forward, the republic was actually in decline. This backwardness was particularly obvious in the oil and gas industry. Clearly, this wasn't the way to go because the economic and social development of the republic was closely associated with the oil industry, and the Great Leader knew this perfectly well.

The plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan in December 1970 stands out in my memory quite vividly. It was the first plenary session after Great Leader Heydar Aliyev was elected as First Secretary of the Central Committee. In his remarks at the session, Heydar Aliyev deeply analyzed the situation in the republic's oil industry. He provided reasons for the backwardness and difficulties, and also outlined a program for the future. It was then that the problems accumulating in the oil and gas industry for years started to be addressed and the development of fields in the Caspian Sea and onshore picked up pace.

Just imagine that prior to that, the equipment used in the Caspian Sea was good enough only for work in depths not exceeding 40 meters. And almost all of the oil and gas fields at those depths had already been discovered.

A potential increase in offshore oil and gas production was associated with deposits lying at greater depths. It was on the initiative and through the effort of Heydar Aliyev that more than 400 ships of 75 types, including heavy-lift crane barges, pipe-lay barges, seismic vessels, passenger ships and others, were brought to Azerbaijan in the 1970-80s. A 2,500-ton "Azerbaijan" crane barge started operating in the Caspian Sea. At the initial stage, "Khazar" jack-up rigs were purchased to perform geological exploration in depths of up to 70 meters and then "Shelf" semi-submersible drilling rigs were acquired for work in depths of up to 200 meters. This made it possible to discover the rich oil and gas deposits in deep portions of the sea. As a result, "March 8", "Alat-deniz", "Bulla-deniz", "Western Absheron" and other oil and gas fields were discovered. The republic's oil

reserves doubled and gas reserves tripled. In 1975, the total production of oil and gas reached 27.1 million tons of conventional fuel. In the 1980s, oil workers had 11 floating drilling rigs at their disposal. As a result of the use of these facilities, the oil fields of Guneshli, Chirag and Azeri, which now provide most of the oil produced in Azerbaijan, were discovered in depths ranging from 80 to 350 meters.

The Soviet government allocated 450 million dollars for the construction of a deep-water jackets factory in Baku, which had no analogues in the world at the time. The construction of the factory was originally planned in Astrakhan, but it was eventually built in Baku thanks to Heydar Aliyev's determination and courage.

Therefore, it was under Heydar Aliyev's wise leadership that Azerbaijan's oil industry secured a rightful place in the republic's economy and restored its international reputation.

In 1970, the "KhazarDenizNeft" Production Association was established. Taking into account the offshore experience of Azerbaijani oil workers, the USSR Ministry of Oil Industry entrusted Azerbaijani oil workers with geological exploration, drilling, development, operation and other activities in all sectors of the sea from the Iranian border to the North Caspian Sea.

Azerbaijani specialists worked in all sectors of the Caspian until 1991.

Over the course of 22 years Azerbaijani oil workers discovered more than 350 geological structures, including oil and gas fields in Turkmen, Kazakh and Russian sectors of the Caspian Sea.

In 1982–1987, as a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and First Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers in Moscow, Heydar Aliyev closely followed the work of Azerbaijani oil workers and always appreciated the special role of the republic's oil industry. After all, he had dedicated many years of his life to the development of Azerbaijan's oil industry.

The work he did for the development of the oil industry was also oriented for the future.

Heydar Aliyev saved Azerbaijan's oil industry and the republic as a whole from a serious disaster for the second time in the 1990s. At the end of 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed and Azerbaijan regained state independence. However, there was instability in the republic at the time. The oil and gas industry was in a severe crisis. Financial and technical equipment issues were piling up, and no-one knew when they would be resolved. There were several reasons for that:

The first reason was that lately the Soviet government had been paying little attention to Azerbaijan's oil industry anyway. Offshore oil and gas production



**HEYDAR ALIYEV SAVED AZERBAIJAN'S OIL INDUSTRY AND THE REPUBLIC AS A WHOLE FROM A SERIOUS DISASTER FOR THE SECOND TIME IN THE 1990s.**

was very expensive, especially since new fields were discovered in Siberia, Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, and their operation was cheap.

The second reason was that during the Soviet period, all republics were in close contact with each other. Some were providing machinery and tools, others equipment and pipes. All those contacts were disrupted.

The third reason was the events and turmoil in Azerbaijan. These reasons brought the situation of the oil industry to an unenviable state.

This was why it was not possible to develop the deep-water portion of the “Guneshli” field discovered in 1979, the “Chirag” field discovered in 1985 and the “Azeri” field discovered in 1987. It was only possible to develop the shallow portion of “Guneshli” with water depths of up to 200 meters. Under such circumstances, Heydar Aliyev, who had taken up leadership of Azerbaijan for the second time, undertook to restore and develop the republic’s oil industry.

There were two options for the development of “Azeri” and “Chirag” and the deep-water portion of “Guneshli”: we either had to wait for 30-40 years for the financial and economic state of the country to improve, or we had to invite foreign oil companies to the republic. There were forces opposed to foreign investment in the country’s oil industry. They were operating both in the republic itself and abroad. Therefore, the President of Azerbaijan invited oil professionals and asked their advice. The views of the president and the oil workers coincided and the decision was made to invite foreign oil companies to Azerbaijan. This signaled the launch of the oil strategy developed by the Great Leader of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev. Negotiations with foreign companies began.

Negotiations with western oil companies began in March 1994 in Baku and were continued in Istanbul, Türkiye. The final stage of the talks was held in Houston, US. There were quite a few dramatic moments in the 45-day negotiations in Houston, which lasted from July 21 to September 4, 1994. It was an uphill task to fulfill the tasks Heydar Aliyev had set before the Azerbaijani delegation. The negotiations were difficult. Both parties were trying to secure their own interests. Things even reached a point when either the other party or we wanted to abandon the negotiations altogether. The other party once put forward the condition that if Azerbaijan did not resolve the issue of the legal status of the Caspian Sea with Russia, the negotiations would not be continued. Can you imagine what that meant? It is known that this issue was resolved with Russia only in 2002, as a result of President Heydar Aliyev’s efforts. So if the Houston talks had been suspended back in 1994, we would have had to wait for seven to eight years. A member of our delegation, Mr. Ilham Aliyev, who was Vice-President for foreign relations of the State Oil Company of the Republic of Azerbaijan at the time, informed the President of Azerbaijan about the situation, then flew to Washington D.C. on the President’s instructions, held very productive meetings there and resolved the issue.

We should also take into account that Azerbaijan's oil specialists did not have sufficient experience in negotiating with foreign companies as the republic had just embarked on a path of independence. However, Mr. Ilham Aliyev, who had graduated from the Institute of International Relations in Moscow, received an academic degree and then taught at that institute, has excellent command of English and is well-versed in international law. His ability to communicate directly with our partners, find ways out of complex situations and defuse tension in meetings in Washington proved crucial.

Finally, on September 20, 1994, an agreement was signed with 11 well-known oil companies from seven countries on the development of the "Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli" (deep-water portion) fields, which was later branded as the "Contract of the Century". This was Heydar Aliyev's first oil industry masterpiece during his second term of leadership of Azerbaijan.

I should also note that by a decree of President Heydar Aliyev, September 20 has been celebrated as Oil Workers' Day in Azerbaijan since 2001.

The "Contract of the Century" proved extremely important for Azerbaijan. I would like to highlight the key aspects of it.

From a political perspective, the importance of the agreement was that the world's leading states and companies were convinced that Azerbaijan is an independent state and a reliable partner, and it was possible to work with and invest in it. It is no coincidence that this agreement was followed by the signing of a further 35 more agreements with foreign companies.

The economic significance of the agreement is that oil production in Azerbaijan reached 51 million tons in 2010 after hitting the historical low of 9 million tons in 1996. Oil production increased 5.6 times.

At present, most of the oil and gas produced in Azerbaijan comes from the "Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli" and "Shah Deniz" fields.

An average of 53,000 tons of oil and 37 million cubic meters of gas per day are produced by 136 wells from "Azeri", "Chirag" and the deep-water portion of "Guneshli". At the beginning of development, 571 million tons of oil and 205 billion cubic meters of gas were produced from the "Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli" fields.

Partners in the "Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli" project have been receiving revenues from "profit oil" for 24 years now. Until 1999, the revenues from the sale of oil were spent on recovering the investment, but starting from December of that year, Azerbaijan's "profit oil" was already exported to foreign markets. By April 1, 2023, a total of 338 million tons of Azerbaijan's "profit oil" from ACG was sold on world markets, which constitutes 59 percent of the total 571 million tons of oil produced under the project.



President Heydar Aliyev being updated on new oil and gas projects during International Exhibition “Caspian Oil and Gas-97”, 3 June 1997, Baku, Azerbaijan.

While Azerbaijani oil had been exported to European and world markets via the northern route (Baku-Novorossiysk) since 1997 and western route (Baku-Supsa) since 1999, it started to be exported via the unique Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan main export pipeline named after Heydar Aliyev in May 2006. This pipeline is Heydar Aliyev’s second masterpiece.

I would also like to touch upon another issue. There were opponents of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan export oil pipeline project as well. But notice that up until April 1, 2023, a total of 650 million tons of Azerbaijani oil were exported to world markets, of which 478 million tons were transported through the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline. If it was not for this pipeline, how could we delivered so much oil to the world markets?

Whereas the “Contract of the Century” re-introduced Azerbaijan to the world as an oil country, the discovery of the giant gas field of “Shah Deniz” and the successful implementation of the “Shah Deniz” gas project made Azerbaijan known to the world as a major exporter of gas.

“Shah Deniz” was discovered as a gas field in July 1999.

On July 12 of that year, in a meeting dedicated to the presentation of results obtained from the “Shah Deniz” field, the great leader first gave the floor to the president of the consortium. In his remarks, he noted that 400 billion cubic meters of gas in Shah Deniz could actually reach 700 billion cubic meters. Then the Great Leader also gave the floor to me. I spoke about National Leader Heydar Aliyev’s unparalleled contributions to the discovery and operation of oil and gas fields in the Caspian Sea. I also provided information about the “Shah Deniz” field, noting that the fate of this field was also associated with Heydar Aliyev. I said: “Although Azerbaijani geologists and geophysicists believed in the future of this field and worked there for 20 years, nothing noteworthy happened. I remember May 1996. Our esteemed President gathered us all and listened to us. With the determination characteristic of him, he decided that we should work with foreign companies on “Shah Deniz” to supply Azerbaijan with gas. Then, touching upon the reserves of “Shah Deniz”, I said: “We believe that after the second and third wells are drilled in the field, its reserves will be even greater. We have no doubt about that.” At that time, Mr. Heydar Aliyev and I had the following conversation:

Heydar Aliyev said: “So it is 700 billion cubic meters. Is that what you are saying?”

I answered: “Yes, but If you ask me, the reserves there are not less than a trillion cubic meters, perhaps even more.” Heydar Aliyev said: “God willing”.

In his closing remarks at the ceremony, Heydar Aliyev congratulated SOCAR and the companies of the consortium on these achievements. He said: “It is a big day for me personally today. Because, as dear Khoshbakht Yusifzadeh mentioned here, ever since 1969 when I was the head of Azerbaijan, and in the 1970-80s, I have been doing a lot for the development of the oil industry. Khoshbakht is absolutely right, if we hadn’t created the necessary material and technical infrastructure for the oil and gas fields lying in the depths of the Caspian Sea at that time, and hadn’t done all this work, we would not have achieved this today.”



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Then the Great Leader said: "... The president of the consortium has declared that there are 400 billion cubic meters of gas here, but this figure could reach 700 billion cubic meters. Our highly respected geologist – there is hardly anyone in Azerbaijan who would know the Caspian Sea as well as Yusifzadeh does– is saying that there will be up to a trillion cubic meters of gas there."

As fate would have it, the wells drilled in the "Shah Deniz" gas-condensate field confirmed the presence of one trillion 200 billion cubic meters of gas and 240 million tons of condensate reserves.

Since the beginning of development, 187 billion cubic meters of gas and 41 million tons of condensate have been produced from "Shah Deniz".

"Shah Deniz" is Heydar Aliyev's third masterpiece.

President Heydar Aliyev  
at the opening of the  
exhibition "A Chronicle  
of Construction",  
13 July 1999,  
Baku, Azerbaijan.



The following day, on July 13, 1999, a wonderful exhibition called “A Chronicle of Construction” was opened at the Sports and Exhibition Center on Tbilisi Avenue in Baku. The Great Leader personally attended the opening ceremony of the exhibition dedicated to the 30th anniversary of his coming to the political leadership of Azerbaijan. The exhibition was a demonstration of unparalleled achievements during Heydar Aliyev’s leadership of Azerbaijan in the language of facts, documents and photographs. There was also a stand of the State Oil Company of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

During the exhibition, I met with the Great Leader again and provided him with extensive information about SOCAR’s stand. I said the foundation for the current and future development of the oil industry in Azerbaijan had been laid by Heydar Aliyev back in the USSR. This exposition is also a reflection of the hard work he had done. I once again confidently told our Great Leader that there was more than a trillion cubic meters of gas in “Shah Deniz”.

The President listened to this information with great attention and satisfaction, and then said: “Everything you said is accurate. Most of the people in the company have been working in it for five to 10 years. But you have dedicated your entire life to this work, you have dedicated 50 years of your life to offshore oil production. Therefore, everything you said is true, and I have no doubt that this is the case.”

The Ilham Aliyev era of oil and gas industry development is a bright page in the country’s oil and gas epic. In the last 20 years, so many remarkable things have been done under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev to implement the oil and gas strategy of Great Leader Heydar Aliyev that Azerbaijan has turned into a country playing an important part in European energy security and redrawing the world’s energy map.

In general, all the work the foundation of which was laid by the Great Leader is being successfully carried out by President Ilham Aliyev.

In this regard, I would like to mention some of the landmark developments in Azerbaijan’s oil and gas industry. These developments have been of tremendous importance not only for our country, but for the whole of Europe.

The “Contract of the Century” was signed for 30 years and was supposed to expire in 2024. However, the ACG epic will not end – it has been extended until 2050. To do this, the agreement on the joint development of the “Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli” fields, the foundation of which was laid by Great Leader Heydar Aliyev, was amended, and the updated agreement was signed by SOCAR and the BP-operated International Operating Company in a ceremony held at the Heydar Aliyev Center in Baku on September 14, 2017. In his remarks at the ceremony, President Ilham Aliyev appreciated



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the work done within the framework of the “Contract of the Century” and spoke about the terms of the new agreement.

The updated agreement envisages quite favorable conditions for Azerbaijan. In particular, the sharing of profit hydrocarbons remains at the same ratio as today, i.e. 75 percent to Azerbaijan and 25 percent to the contracting parties. This ratio will not change until 2050. The share of the Azerbaijan ACG company, acting as a contractor, has been increased from 11.6 to 25 percent, i.e. more than twice. Under the agreement, partner companies will pay a bonus of 3.6 billion dollars to the Government of Azerbaijan. The associated gas produced from the fields will be Azerbaijan’s as before.

Up to 500 million tons of oil will be produced from ACG by 2050.

On November 8, 2017, two billionth tons of oil was produced in Azerbaijan. On the same day, in a ceremony at the Heydar Aliyev Center in Baku, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev congratulated oil workers and the people of Azerbaijan on the production of two billionth tons of oil. He described the production of two billionth tons of oil in Azerbaijan as a historic event.

Let me note that a billionth ton of oil was produced in Azerbaijan under the leadership of Heydar Aliyev – on March 28, 1971. On April 2 of that year, while addressing the 24th Congress of the Communist Party in Moscow, Azerbaijan’s leader Heydar Aliyev shared the news of this achievement of the republic’s oil workers with the rest of the world. He said that over the entire history of this ancient oil land, Azerbaijani oil workers had produced a billionth ton of “black gold”.

It so happened that Azerbaijan produced two billionth ton of oil under the leadership of and with the direct participation of President Ilham Aliyev.

It is worth noting that it took Azerbaijani oil workers a century to produce the first billion ton of oil. And it took us less than half a century – only 46 years – to produce the second billion. It is beyond doubt that the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan played an exceptional role in that. Of the 2 billion tons of oil, 300 million tons were produced during the former Soviet Union and 700 million tons in the years of independence, including 460 million tons by the consortium from “Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli” and “Shah Deniz” fields and 240 million tons by SOCAR.

I always say with a great sense of pride that I was lucky enough to know the National Leader of the Azerbaijani people, Heydar Aliyev, implement his instructions, receive awards from him at different times and be worthy of his attention. Till the end of my life I will never forget this brilliant personality and our meetings, till my last breath I will try to live up to the kind words he generously and sincerely said about me.

All these achievements were possible thanks to the new oil strategy developed by National Leader Heydar Aliyev.

I often recall our meetings with him. He always met me with a smile. The manifestations of his utter respect for me – the presidential decree awarding me with the Istiglal Order and the message of congratulation on the occasion of my 70th birthday anniversary – will make my heart beat with great respect for the memory of that great person for the rest of my life.

The last time he spoke about me was in Iran in May 2002. Introducing me to Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, he said:

*– There is no one else who would know the Caspian Sea as well as Khoshbakht. We are taking a good care of him. He is well known in Iran as well. Let me advise you to benefit from him while he is still in the office.*

The Iranian President put his hand on my shoulder and said:

*– We also appreciate you. Together with our experts, you saw the Caspian status issue through to the end.*

At the end of the ceremony, when Heydar Aliyev was passing by me, he said:

*– Did you notice how much I praised you?*

I answered:

*– Dear Mr. President, after your words tears came to my eyes.*

Heydar Aliyev smiled and said jokingly:

*– Look, wipe off the tears and start working with Iranian experts tomorrow. Spend all the energy you have to resolve this issue.*

Heydar Aliyev will forever live in the hearts of our people. Even today, he is part of my life and the lives of thousands and millions of people. He is the founder of the independent and confident state that has asserted itself in the world. It is thanks to his wise policy that trans-regional projects that impressed the whole world have been implemented.

The oil and gas strategy of Great Leader Heydar Aliyev has put our country on a path of rapid development. It lives to this day thanks to the determination and wisdom of President Ilham Aliyev. It successfully plays the leading role in strengthening Azerbaijan's economic and political independence. This strategy developed by our National Leader with great foresight and being implemented by President Ilham Aliyev will bring our country many more achievements.

# Interview with Mr. Petru Lucinschi, the Former President of Moldova

(1997–2001)

**O**n the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the birth of President Heydar Aliyev, former President of the Republic of Moldova Petru Lucinschi, who had known Heydar Aliyev for more than 30 years and maintained friendly relations with him, shared his memories.

The Moldovan statesman expressed his sincere respect and admiration for the personality of Heydar Aliyev, adding that he had the warmest impressions of him.

**– Tell us, please, a few words about the history of your relationship.**

– In 1970, there was a youth event in Baku, which was attended by representatives of all Union republics. A new Gulustan Palace was opened and the event was held there.

It so happened that my son Kirill was born the day before this, my wife was still in hospital and I flew to Baku. Of course, we all knew each other, and there was such an event! There are congratulations, etc. Heydar Aliyev was at the reception – it was for a few years that he was first secretary of the Central Committee. This is where we first met.

Then, four years later, a delegation of the Soviet Union headed by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Kosygin, was established to fly to Bucharest to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the liberation of Romania from fascism.

I received a call from Moscow: you are included in the delegation. Departure is from Sukhumi because Kosygin was on vacation there. I arrived to Sukhumi. Heydar Aliyev accompanied by Eduard Shevardnadze arrived by car from Azerbaijan- were also in Sukhumi. Together we flew to Bucharest.

In Bucharest, as is always the case when you are abroad, the situation was special. I was the secretary of the Central Committee and he was the first secretary of the Central Committee. As head of the delegation, Kosygin was always somewhere, while we were having lunch and dinner together.

So we developed this friendship. Also in the hotel – there was a residency there – we spent time and went to the pool together. I brought the Moldovan Cognac “Codru” to Bucharest. It had just been made, there was even no label on it yet.



Two months later, there was the 50th anniversary of Moldova. Heydar Aliyev arrived and I kind of patronized him and Shevardnadze, and our friendship became even stronger.

After that, I went to Moscow and then to Baku. We both made speeches there. He invited me to try Azerbaijani cognac because we had tried Moldovan cognac in Romania. “Shirvan”, I still remember, was a 10-year-old cognac.

As luck would have it, after many years, I presented the same bottle of “Codru” to Ilham Aliyev and told him this story.

President Heydar Aliyev and  
President Petr Lucinski,  
26 November 1997,  
Baku, Azerbaijan.

So this is how life went on. When Heydar Aliyev was transferred to Moscow, I was there. There, among other things, he delivered a speech at the seminar I was leading. Heydar Aliyev arrived there as First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers and a member of the Politburo.

He was responsible for transport throughout the country and had only worked for four months. I remember everyone saying at the end of his speech: notice how he gave a detailed analysis of the state of transport, railway, aviation, automobile, etc. in a matter of four months.

What a competent person! He was not an expert in this area. There were much broader concepts there – problems in the policies of the entire industry.

There was also this unfortunate time, when it was absolutely unfair... He told me how he ended up in Nakhchivan, at his sister's place and in difficult conditions. He got sick, had a heart attack. It was the hardest period.

President Heydar Aliyev and  
President Petr Lucinski,  
18 December 1998,  
Baku, Azerbaijan.

When I came to Azerbaijan on a visit, he told me about it for four hours when we met in the evening – about this entire period. About Elchibey, the relationship was difficult.



**– How did your contacts develop when Moldova and Azerbaijan became independent states?**

– The situation was about the same everywhere: these Popular Fronts appeared both in Azerbaijan and in Moldova. Shevardnadze went back a little earlier, then Heydar Aliyev returned to Nakhchivan as a speaker of parliament. A while later, I returned to Moldova.

How did GUAM appear? In Soviet times, an agreement between the Soviet Union and Europe was signed on the deployment of medium-range weapons. And it was required that we, as independent states, approve and ratify it in order for it to come into effect.

And Shevardnadze, as a former foreign minister, says: maybe we can somehow get together and have a unified approach to this issue?

Hasan Hasanov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, was also present. He said: “Maybe we can name it accordingly - Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova - GUAM?” Sounds good! So we agreed.

A few months later, in Strasbourg, Heydar Aliyev invited us to a business breakfast, and we agreed to set up this organization. After that, Karimov from Uzbekistan also expressed an interest to join, so it became GUUAM. So we did that.

In all our meetings, it seemed to go without saying that Heydar Aliyev should be the first to speak. It was the case when we were in Moscow, both during the tenure of Yeltsin and Putin. He was indeed elder both in terms of age and experience.

I remember one situation: our delegation was in Baku on issues of fuel and lubricants. The prime minister calls me, it was Sangelis then, and says: “We are being welcomed everywhere, but can you ask Aliyev to receive us?”

I called him, and the issue was resolved immediately. I should say that there was not a single time when he would not answer – unlike many of our colleagues. Heydar Aliyev always had that attitude, which is a sign of high culture.

He was also a man of his word. We kept in touch when both he and I were presidents. Since we were already old acquaintances, we regularly were in contact.

**– What qualities of Heydar Aliyev’s personality impressed you the most?**

– I would like to single out Heydar Aliyev’s strategic vision. Naturally, he constantly dealt with the issues of Azerbaijan.

There was some form of competition during the times of the Soviet Union, and Azerbaijan was often compared with Moldova in terms of indicators.

This is how the distribution was done, especially in the fields of agriculture and winegrowing.

Azerbaijan was ahead of us once. It harvested almost 2 million tons of grapes, while we had 1.5. This shows how Heydar Aliyev was constantly preoccupied with work.

In Soviet times, it so happened that the Politburo included representatives of different territories: of course, Moscow, Leningrad, then Ukraine, Belarus, Siberia, the Urals, then Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan.

The Caucasus was Georgia. Since Stalin's times, there was a tradition that candidates for membership in the Politburo should come from Georgia. From Armenia, Mikoyan was the first deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers, a member of the Politburo.

But there had never been anyone from Azerbaijan. Up until the arrival of Heydar Aliyev, Azerbaijan was on the sidelines. His arrival signaled the start of transformations. While visiting Azerbaijan once, Leonid Brezhnev said: "Azerbaijan is making huge strides." I believe this phrase can be used today too.

Heydar Aliyev became a candidate member of the Politburo, together with Georgia. Having resources, Azerbaijan began to develop in all directions – economy, oil industry, etc.

The economic indicators were very strong. Of course, all this was thanks to him. For the first time, everyone was talking about Azerbaijan. So he became the First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, a member of the Politburo.

But I want to emphasize the main thing: his strategic vision. I remember how many problems there were with the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline, first connection. Early 2000s, we were in Ankara. There was a summit there, and all of us, the heads of state, waited in the lobby while he, Demirel and representatives of oil companies negotiated the Contract of the Century.

It was necessary to create an organization, a consortium, which is a lot of work. There is a distribution of obligations, interests, etc. All global companies were invited and established a consortium. I believe they were producing 5 million tons, but then it immediately jumped to 55. And then gas...

This is a strategic thinking. There was always talks about the prospects for Azerbaijan in terms of oil and gas. This future was secured by his actions. If he had not foreseen it all back then or if this consortium had been created on some other conditions, one may not say how everything would have turned out.

*Interviewer* **Anna Zhdanova**  
Chisinau, April 17, 2023

# The Role of Heydar Aliyev in Enhancing Bilateral Relations between Georgia and the Republic of Azerbaijan

Heydar Aliyev, the former President of Azerbaijan, was a great friend of Georgia, whose far-sighted leadership paved the way for a strong, enduring partnership and a brotherly relationship between Georgia and Azerbaijan that has stood the test of time.

A man of great determination and strength, Heydar Aliyev was a leader who had a vision for his country and his people. He was known for his unwavering commitment to the betterment of Azerbaijan and its people, and for his relentless efforts to building the statehood of his country. Heydar Aliyev's legacy is evident in the many reforms and initiatives he implemented during his time in office. He modernized Azerbaijan's economy, established new trade relationships with other nations, and invested heavily in infrastructure projects that have helped to transform Azerbaijan. His heritage is a testament to the power of determination and the importance of strong leadership in building a prosperous and successful nation.

As a great statesman and a visionary leader, Heydar Aliyev made a remarkable contribution to Azerbaijan's foreign policy, including the development of strong bilateral relations particularly with Georgia. His far-sighted policies and strategic vision were aimed at enhancing regional cooperation and ensuring long-term stability and prosperity in the South Caucasus.

Georgia and Azerbaijan have been steadfast partners in various areas, including the fields of transit infrastructure and trade. The two countries have a long history of loyal cooperation and have worked together to build strong economic ties that have benefited both sides. The effort and resources invested in transport infrastructure, including roads, railways and ports, which has helped to facilitate the movement of goods and people throughout the region, are remarkable. Heydar Aliyev duly recognized Georgia's strategic location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia that has made it a natural hub for the region.

**LASHA DARSALIA**

*First Deputy Minister  
of Foreign Affairs of  
Georgia*



**AS A GREAT STATESMAN AND A VISIONARY LEADER, HEYDAR ALIYEV MADE A REMARKABLE CONTRIBUTION TO AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY, INCLUDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF STRONG BILATERAL RELATIONS PARTICULARLY WITH GEORGIA.**



**TODAY, THE BRIDGE THAT HEYDAR ALIYEV HELPED TO BUILD BETWEEN AZERBAIJAN AND GEORGIA IS AS STRONG AND VIBRANT AS EVER.**

The Baku-Supsa and the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipelines, which were constructed with the support of Georgia, can be viewed as prime examples of our strategic partnership that Heydar Aliyev foresaw decades ago. The pipelines have helped to diversify Azerbaijan's export routes and reduce its dependence on Russia for energy exports. We have also been a reliable partner in the field of trade, with Azerbaijan becoming one of Georgia's largest trading partners. With Heydar Aliyev's tremendous support, the TRACECA transport corridor has helped boost economic cooperation with Georgia. Georgia's favorable business environment has also made it an attractive destination for Azerbaijani businesses looking to expand their operations. We have implemented a range of reforms aimed at improving the business climate.

The strong economic ties between the two countries are a testament to the success of their partnership and the importance of regional cooperation. Thanks to Heydar Aliyev's personal engagement, trade and investment ties between Georgia and Azerbaijan have flourished and remained exceptionally strong throughout the decades.

Apart from his contributions in the economic field, Heydar Aliyev – a strong advocate for the preservation of cultural heritage, played an important role in promoting a cultural exchange between Azerbaijan and Georgia. He recognized the importance of cultural diplomacy in building strong relationships between countries and took steps to promote Georgian culture in Azerbaijan and vice versa.

Today, the bridge that Heydar Aliyev helped to build between Azerbaijan and Georgia is as strong and vibrant as ever. The two countries maintain exceptionally close political and economic ties, with Azerbaijan being an unwavering supporter of Georgia's territorial integrity and one of our largest trading partners. Our contemporary economic and energy projects such as the Black Sea Underwater Electricity Transmission Cable Project are a testament to Heydar Aliyev's vision of peaceful and prosperous regional development. Heydar Aliyev foresaw the importance of South Caucasus years ago, and today we are already working on popularizing the global role of the Middle Corridor that runs through our region. We continue to build on this very solid foundation by undertaking new projects of strategic importance, which will further shape the role of our region as a key connector of East and the West.

His legacy will continue to inspire generations to pursue even stronger collaboration and cooperation while working towards a brighter and more prosperous future for the region.

# Main Goals, Objectives and Directions of the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan (1993–2003)

After Azerbaijan restored its state independence, the process of state building in Azerbaijan was characterized by a transition from the planned socialist economy to a free market one, from a one-party system to a multi-party one, from dictatorship to democracy, as well as a continuation of Armenia's flagrant interference in Azerbaijan's internal affairs and military aggression. Under such circumstances, the main foreign political goal of the Republic of Azerbaijan was to secure favorable international conditions for state building within the country. In order to achieve this goal, it was necessary to fulfill the following tasks: promoting, protecting and strengthening state independence, setting the country on a path of development, stopping Armenia's aggression and ending the occupation, etc.

In 1991–1993, it was not possible to meet these goals. In the conditions of a severe socioeconomic, political, psychological crisis, the gap and contradictions between the government and the people, and between different branches of the government, were deepening.

As Armenia's military aggression continued, the government, unable to suppress a military mutiny in Ganja and stop separatist trends, instigated in the country's north and south and fuelled from abroad, completely lost control over the situation. The country faced the threat of disintegration and loss of state independence. The foreign policy, which is an extension of domestic policy, became entangled in a difficult situation and reached an impasse. It was a difficult moment in the history of Azerbaijan's statehood.

The Azerbaijani people believed that only Heydar Aliyev was capable of preventing the loss of state independence and the country's disintegration, creating stability, laying the groundwork for development, leading Azerbaijan out of the economic and psychological crisis, stopping Armenia's military aggression, revising the foreign policy that had brought the country to a dead end, and addressing other issues of concern to people and the state. So Heydar Aliyev, who lived in Nakhchivan at the time, responded to the people's appeal to return to Baku.

The main task for Heydar Aliyev, who initially addressed the parliament, travelled to Ganja to acquaint himself with the situation on the ground and was elected Speaker of the Parliament after returning to Baku, was to halt

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the Armenia's military aggression, abandon the unipolar foreign policy course, create favorable conditions for institution building in the country, etc. Achieving all these objectives was an extremely difficult in Azerbaijan, which due to its favorable geographical and political position and abundant natural resources, had become a "testing ground" for states pursuing imperial ambitions.

Relying on the people to solve the country's domestic problems, Heydar Aliyev nipped separatism in the bud without resorting to arms and united citizens around one flag, one state, one nation, one homeland. Stability was gradually restored in Ganja.

Speaking about the tasks for the future in a swearing-in ceremony on October 10, 1993, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev said:

"One of the primary tasks facing the independent Republic of Azerbaijan is state building..., building democratic and rule-of-law-based institutions in independent Azerbaijan. The state of Azerbaijan should act on the basis of democratic principles, benefit from its historical traditions, national traditions, make effective use of democracy and universal values, and follow the path of democratic state building... This is both consistent with our historical past and is a necessary condition for integration with the world as an independent state."<sup>1</sup>

Seeing the future development of the Azerbaijani people in state independence, Heydar Aliyev considered it necessary to define a correct foreign policy:

"One of the primary objectives for strengthening the independence of our Republic is to have a prudent and competent foreign policy that can protect the interests of Azerbaijan on a global scale... Our foreign policy should, first of all, be aimed at ensuring the state independence of Azerbaijan. The goal is to create and develop equal and mutually beneficial relations with all countries of the world, strengthen the international standing of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and use these relations to develop the economy, science and culture of the Republic... We will try to ensure the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Republic through foreign policy."<sup>2</sup>

In accordance with this vision, the inefficient foreign policy line that did not meet national interests was abandoned, and a balanced, pragmatic and multipolar foreign policy that enabled flexibility and maneuverability was implemented.

President Heydar Aliyev paid his first official foreign visit to the Republic of France, a country where the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic established by the Azerbaijani people for the first time in the Muslim East had been

1 Speech at the swearing ceremony of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. October 10, 1993. *Heydar Əliyev. Müstəqilliyimiz əbədidir. Birinci kitab* [Heydar Aliyev. Our independence is eternal. First book]. Azərneşr. 1997. p. 204.

2 Ibid, p. 205-206.

de facto recognized at the Paris Peace Conference in 1920. France made great contributions to world democracy through the Great French Revolution but it is also a country with strong Armenian organizations and lobby. Choosing France for the first visit was intended to show that the people of Azerbaijan had taken the path of independent and democratic development, was a member of the European family, its independence was permanent, eternal and unshakable, it would not turn away from this path, it would protect its own interests, not those of any country or group of countries, and that any provocations of the Armenian lobby and patrons would be rebuffed.

In the conditions of weak state authority and army, as well as a depleted economy, Azerbaijan either had to continue the endless war with an unknown outcome or achieve a ceasefire with Armenia to deal with the problems inside the country, organize effective state building and benefit from the opportunities of cooperation with leading countries of the world to facilitate the country's economic development. Therefore, the cessation of hostilities and the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict by political means on the basis of Azerbaijan's sovereignty and territorial integrity became one of the main foreign policy priorities. In this context, the adoption by the UN Security Council of resolutions No. 822, 853, 874 and 884 in 1993, which reconfirmed the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and demanded immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces from the territories of Azerbaijan, was of particular importance. As a result of a successful Horadiz operation in late 1993 and early 1994, some of the territories were liberated from occupation. By doing this, Azerbaijan showed that it would not come to terms with the occupation of its territories and liberate them by all means. After the Horadiz operation, a ceasefire was reached between Armenia and Azerbaijan with the mediation of Russia on May 12, 1994. Thus, a situation of "neither peace, nor war" was created.

By accepting the ceasefire, Armenia aimed to prolong the negotiation process and portray the occupation as a "fait accompli".

The main goal of Azerbaijan accepting the ceasefire was to gain time to make the government functional, increase the pressure of the international community on Armenia forcing it to end the occupation, and build the army. After that there was an opportunity to seriously deal with state building in the country.

Azerbaijan gave preference to the Minsk Group of the CSCE (OSCE after the 1994 Budapest summit - M.G.). The occupying Armenia did not accept the "step-by-step" and "package" solution proposed by the Minsk Group Co-chairs, while a "common state" plan was rejected by Azerbaijan because it contradicted state sovereignty. Although a number of meetings were held at various levels, Armenia did not withdraw from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

One of the priority tasks of Azerbaijan's foreign policy was to enable the country's development, solve the country's problems through cooperation with foreign countries in the oil sector, and strengthen the state independence. In this regard, the signing in Baku on September 20, 1994 of an agreement for a period of 30 years on the joint development and production sharing for the Azeri and Chirag fields and the deep-water Guneshli field in the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea by 13 companies from eight countries – Azerbaijan, USA, UK, Russia, Turkiye, Norway, Japan and Saudi Arabia – was of tremendous economic and political importance. In his speech after the signing ceremony, Heydar Aliyev stated:

“... this agreement will help the Republic of Azerbaijan to secure a worthy place in the world, closely connect our country's economy with the global economy, with the free market economy. Most importantly, this agreement will bring great benefits to the Azerbaijani people today and in the future and lay the foundation for the improvement of their well-being”.<sup>3</sup>

The agreement, branded as the “Contract of the Century”, was the beginning of Azerbaijan's oil strategy. It played a significant role in the political, economic, cultural, spiritual and psychological life, as well as strengthened Azerbaijan's international standing, and opened a new stage in the development of the oil industry. With the signing of this document, the oil policy became an integral part of the country's overall development strategy and paved the way for the influx of foreign investment. Although it was mostly an economic deal, its economic and political factors complemented each other, thus playing an important role in preserving and strengthening state independence, ensuring its socio-economic, military and political security and bolstering the morale of the Azerbaijani people. Oil companies from major countries taking interest in the Caspian Sea got to work there.<sup>4</sup> The Caspian Sea, where politics and economics converged, became a mirror and one of the world's geopolitical centers.

On November 19, 1994, the Azerbaijan International Operating Company was established, consisting of major oil companies from Azerbaijan, UK, USA, Japan, Norway, Russia, Turkiye and Saudi Arabia. Companies working separately in different parts of the world created a consortium in Azerbaijan for the first time. Thus, the Republic of Azerbaijan, a country with a relatively small territory and population, turned into a center of attraction of states and transnational oil companies. This was quite a rare phenomenon in the history of international relations.

Azerbaijan gave preference to cooperation and diversification of pipeline routes rather than confrontation in oil production and transportation. First of all, problems related to the northern route were resolved. On February 18, 1996, an agreement was signed in Moscow on the transportation of Azerbaijani oil through Russian territory to the port of Novorossiysk.

3 Closing speech at the signing ceremony. September 20, 1994. *Heydər Əliyev. Müstəqilliyimiz əbədidir. İkinci kitab* [Heydar Aliyev. Our independence is eternal. Second book]. Azərneşr. 1997. p. 261-262.

4 Geopolitika Kaspiskogo regiona. Sbornik statey [Geopolitics of the Caspian region. Collection of articles]. M., IMEMO, 2005, p. 4.



The issue of construction of an oil pipeline to the port of Supsa was also resolved. On March 8, 1996, the Azerbaijan International Operating Company, the International Oil Corporation of Georgia and the State Oil Company of the Republic of Azerbaijan signed an agreement on the construction and operation of the Baku-Batumi oil pipeline and construction of an oil pipeline from Batumi to the port of Supsa. The Baku-Supsa pipeline was meant as a preparatory step for the Baku-Ceyhan export oil pipeline, which would enable the export of Azerbaijani oil to world markets. This pipeline met the economic and political interests of Azerbaijan and was intended to diversify the oil delivery roots.

President Heydar Aliyev  
and President Bill Clinton,  
White House,  
24 April 1999  
Washington D.C., USA.

In order to avoid confrontation in the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan continued to pursue its cooperation efforts and involved new companies in the process. On January 13, 1997, following Heydar Aliyev's talks with French President Jacques Chirac, the fifth major agreement was signed.<sup>5</sup>

This meant that 16 internationally renowned oil companies from 11 countries were involved in the production of oil in the Azerbaijan sector of the Caspian Sea.

5 Statement at the signing ceremony of the agreement between the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan and French oil companies "Elf Aquitaine" and "Total". January 13, 1997. Heydər Əliyev. Müstəqilliyimiz əbədidir. Səkkizinci kitab [Heydar Aliyev. Our independence is eternal. Eighth book]. Azərneşr. 1998. pp. 243-244.

Another step in energy cooperation was taken during Heydar Aliyev's visit to the United States in July-August 1997. In his meeting with President Bill Clinton he insisted that the main oil export pipeline should go through the territory of Turkiye.

The United States, which was in favor of the idea of multiple pipelines and supported Azerbaijan, advocated consideration of three commercially viable options: a pipeline originating in Baku, going through Georgian territory to the Black Sea coast, crossing the Caucasus to the port of Ceyhan in Turkiye; a trans-Caspian oil pipeline originating in Kazakhstan and joining the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline; and a trans-Caspian gas pipeline to transport the gas of Turkmenistan and other countries through Azerbaijan.<sup>6</sup> The UK, which was of the same position as the United States, approached the development of the energy resources of the Caspian Sea not only from the standpoint of economic interests, but also from the point of view of the security of the Euro-Atlantic area.<sup>7</sup> This did not pursue economic interests only, but was also one of the international guarantees of state independence.

Turkiye, which supported Azerbaijan's position and defended the idea of the Baku-Ceyhan export oil pipeline, an alternative to transportation through the Black Sea straits, didn't want the straits to become an oil route for security reasons.

Heydar Aliyev was in favor of construction of several oil pipelines for the export of energy resources to world markets, to the West.

By 1997, the Azerbaijani side had signed nine agreements with international oil companies on the joint development of the fields in the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea. On November 12, 1997, an important event for the implementation of Azerbaijan's oil strategy took place. First oil was produced from the "Chirag" field in the Azerbaijan sector of the Caspian Sea that was operated together with international companies. This signaled the start of a second oil boom in the Republic of Azerbaijan and showed that its energy policy had great prospects. On May 15, 1998, Azerbaijan, Turkiye and Georgia signed a protocol of intent for the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline.

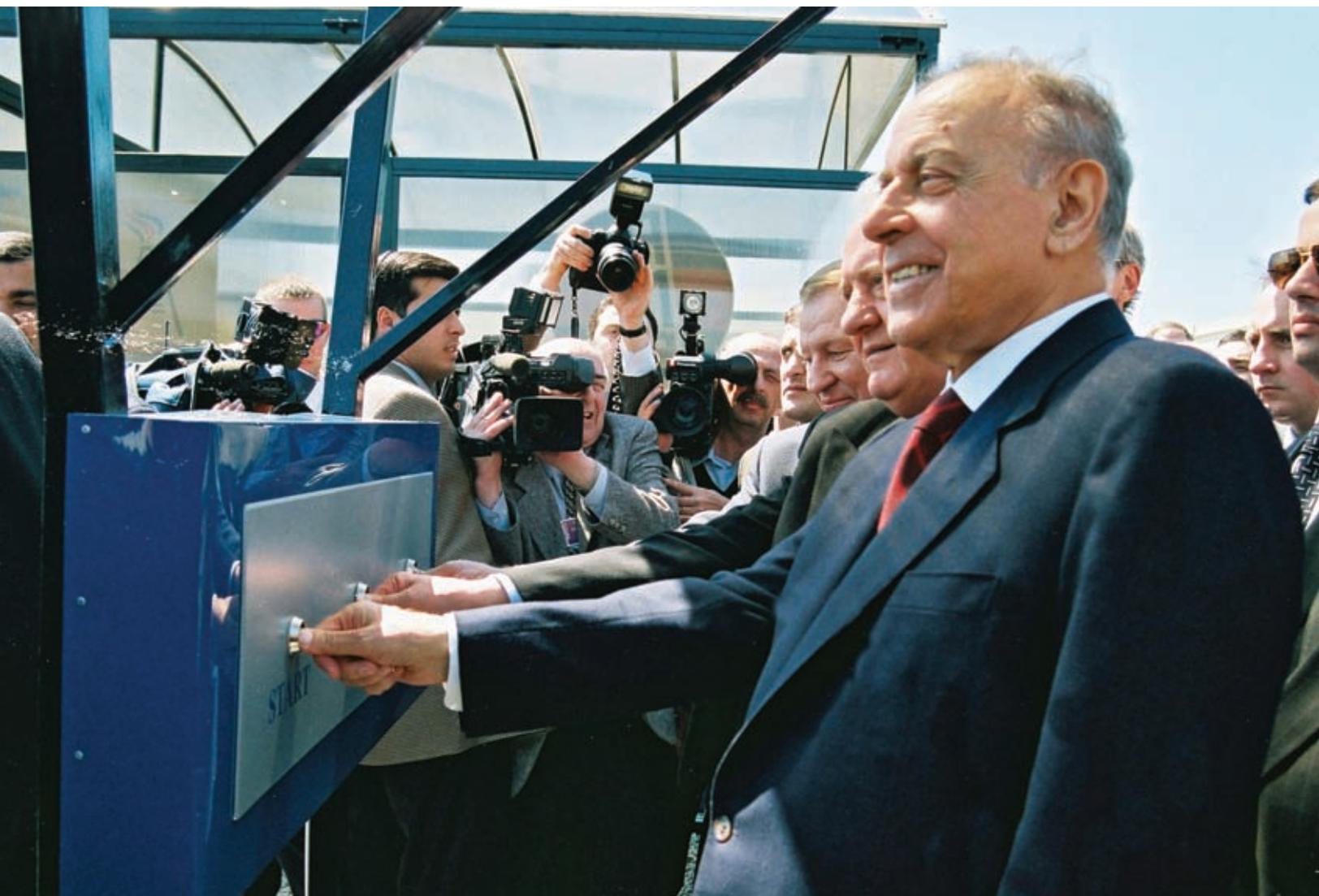
On October 27, 1998, while receiving leaders of the consortium, Heydar Aliyev said that Azerbaijan took a firm position on the issue of the main export oil pipeline and preferred the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline. He said: "For us, politics comes before trade."<sup>8</sup>

Thus, by the end of October 1998, the states had defined their positions on the main export pipeline. During events to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of Turkiye on October 29, 1998,

6 Yagubova, A. (2005). *Azərbaycanın neft diplomatiyası: əfsanələr gerçəkləşir* [Oil diplomacy of Azerbaijan: myths coming true]. Azərneşr. p. 77.

7 Musayeva, G. (2019). *Politiçeskie i ekonomicheskie aspekty neftnyaykh dogovorov, podpisannykh mezhdru Azerbaydzhanom i Velikobritaniyey (1991-2013)* [Political and economic aspects of oil agreements signed between Azerbaijan and Great Britain (1991–2013)]. Sosial Elmlər, (2), p.128.

8 Aliyev: konsorsiyumu takmam [Aliyev: I don't mind the consortium] (1998, October 31). Milliyet.



Heydar Aliyev, President of Georgia Eduard Shevardnadze, President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov, Prime Minister of Türkiye Mesut Yılmaz, and the US Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson signed a 6-paragraph Ankara Declaration, confirming their decision to make the pipeline from the Caspian to the Mediterranean (Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan) the main export pipeline.<sup>9</sup> The declaration emphasized that the pipeline project had become the main export pipeline, noting the importance of efforts to protect the security of the Black Sea, Mediterranean coasts, as well as Turkish straits.

The Baku-Supsa oil pipeline was built. On April 17, 1999, the pipeline and the Supsa aboveground terminal were inaugurated.<sup>10</sup> This was the first Western route.

President Heydar Aliyev  
at the opening ceremony  
of the Baku-Supsa  
oil pipeline,  
17 April 1999,  
Supsa, Georgia.

9 Ankara declaration. 29 October 1998. *Heydər Əliyev. Müstəqilliyimiz əbədidir. On səkkizinci kitab* [Heydar Aliyev. Our independence is eternal. Eighteenth book]. Azərneşr. 2006. p. 125-127; Baku-Ceyhan and World Politics (1998, October 31). *Turkish Daily News*.

10 Qərb neft kəməri və Supsa terminalı işə başladı. [Western route pipeline and Supsa terminal launched]. (1999, April 18). "Azərbaycan" newspaper.

On November 18, 1999, during the OSCE Summit in Istanbul, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Türkiye signed the document on the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline.<sup>11</sup> To support the main export pipeline project and attract oil volumes from Kazakhstan, with the presence of the USA, Istanbul Declaration was signed between the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Türkiye, the Republic of Georgia and the Republic of Kazakhstan; the intergovernmental declaration on the trans-Caspian gas pipeline to transport Turkmen gas to Türkiye and Europe was signed by the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Türkiye, the Republic of Georgia and Turkmenistan; a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Azerbaijan and Türkiye to support the sale of Azerbaijani gas to the Republic of Türkiye and other international markets. During his speech at the signing ceremony, Heydar Aliyev said:

“The signing of the agreements will open a new stage in this field and the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan main export pipeline will begin to be put into practice.”<sup>12</sup>

The documents also had political significance. The unequivocal moral and political support from states strengthened Azerbaijan’s international position and increased its influence. It should also be noted that if the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline had not been commercially viable, the oil companies and international financiers would not have stood behind such a project and allocated funds, whatever political goals may have been involved.

On September 24, 2000, a protocol was signed between Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan on the transportation of Kazakh oil through the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline. On June 19, 2001, engineering work for the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan main export pipeline started. A group of sponsors for the construction of the pipeline founded “BTC Co.” in London on August 1, 2002. On September 18, the foundation of the main export pipeline was laid at the Sangachal terminal.<sup>13</sup> Speaking at the ceremony, Heydar Aliyev said:

“...the number of pipelines is growing. Of course, these are of a tremendous economic importance. However, it is not only economic. We believe that the work we are doing, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan is of political importance. This project and its implementation could be a guarantor of peace and security in the Caucasus region.”<sup>14</sup>

11 Speech at the signing ceremony of the agreement between the Republic of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Türkiye on the transportation of crude oil through the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan main export pipeline across the territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Republic of Türkiye. 18 November 1999. *Heydər Əliyev. Müstəqilliyimiz əbəddir. İyirmi üçüncü kitab* [Heydar Aliyev. Our independence is eternal. Twenty-third book]. Azərneşr. 2008. p. 147-149.

12 Müstəqil Azərbaycanın neft strategiyasının uğurla həyata keçirilməsində yeni mərhələ (Azərbaycan Prezidenti Heydər Əliyev Bakı – Tbilisi – Ceyhan əsas ixrac boru kəməri layihəsi barədə sənədlərin imzalanması mərasimində iştirak etmişdir) [A new stage in the successful implementation of the oil strategy of independent Azerbaijan (President of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev participated in the signing ceremony of the agreements on the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan main export pipeline)]. (2000, October 18). “*Azərbaycan*” newspaper.

13 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan. (2010). *Azərbaycanın xarici siyasəti: sənədlər məcmuəsi. 2002. I hissə* [Azerbaijan’s foreign policy: a collection of documents. 2002. Part I]. p. 618.

14 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan. (2010). *Azərbaycanın xarici siyasəti: sənədlər məcmuəsi. 2002. I hissə* [Azerbaijan’s foreign policy: a collection of documents. 2002. Part I]. pp. 619-622.

The groundbreaking ceremony started in Baku was continued in Turkiye and Georgia. On September 26, the groundbreaking ceremony for the Ceyhan terminal was held in Adana and on May 23, 2003, a similar event was held in the city of Tetri Skaro, Georgia, for the part of the main export oil pipeline that will pass through the territory of this country.

Thus, in 1994-2003, the total number of agreements on the joint development of Azerbaijan's offshore and onshore oil and gas reserves with foreign companies reached 22, the number of participating countries 15 and the number of companies involved 23. As a result of the successful implementation of the energy diplomacy, the Republic of Azerbaijan embarked on a new stage of development. One of the important foreign policy tasks was fulfilled.

The Oil Fund was established. The initial revenues were channeled into reviving the country's economy and strengthening the defense capability.

One of the foreign political tasks facing the country was the determination of the legal status of the Caspian Sea. According to Azerbaijan's position, negotiations on the legal status of the Caspian Sea could continue for years and this issue should not prevent work in the Azerbaijani sector of the sea. A working group was established and negotiations were held with Caspian littoral countries. By 2003, a number of summit meetings of the heads of Caspian states were held and important documents were signed.

The establishment and development of relations with neighboring countries – Turkiye, Russia, Iran, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan – became one of the foreign policy priorities for Azerbaijan, a country located at a sensitive geopolitical crossroads of Europe and Asia. The main goal in the relations with these countries was to establish good neighborly and mutually beneficial relations based on multilateral cooperation. Azerbaijan's friendly neighbors, trade and strategic partners were identified. The line of strategic cooperation with Turkiye and Georgia was chosen. Heydar Aliyev used to say about relations with neighbors:

“...The Republic of Azerbaijan, as a democratic state, should establish equal relations with all states. Regardless of their internal state structure and policies, we should establish normal relations. First of all, the necessary cultural, economic and state relations should be established with our close neighbors. From this point of view, the relations with the Republic of Turkiye are clearly approved by our population. Our relations with the neighboring Islamic Republic of Iran should be improved and developed.”<sup>15</sup>

Neighborly relations with Iran were gradually established. Talking about the importance of developing relations with Russia, Heydar Aliyev emphasized:

15 Speech at the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan. 15 June 1993. *Heydər Əliyev. Müstəqilliyimiz əbədidir. Birinci kitab* [Heydar Aliyev. Our independence is eternal. First book]. Azərneşr. 1997. p. 11.

“Russia is a very large country and our northern neighbor. Obviously, the relations between Russia and Azerbaijan should be based on the principles of independence and become better, broader and more efficient. We need to create broader relations with all the states that were part of the former Soviet Union and are now independent – Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Central Asian states, Kazakhstan, the Baltic States, and Moldova. It is absolutely necessary for us. Because our economic relations, cultural relations, and people-to-people relations with these countries have been very close for many years and centuries. They should not be disrupted, but developed. I have no doubt that such a policy will help the development of the Republic of Azerbaijan as an independent state.”<sup>16</sup>

Progress was made in Azerbaijan-Russia relations and relevant documents were signed.<sup>17</sup> A legal framework of these relations was also created.

Establishing and developing relations with European countries was another direction of Azerbaijan’s foreign policy. The main goal of the foreign policy in this regard was to promote Azerbaijan as an independent state, strengthen its international standing, resolve the conflict resulting from the Armenia’s military aggression, and integrate it into Europe. In this regard, Heydar Aliyev used to say:

“...The Republic of Azerbaijan has already reached the global scale. Our relations with all European countries should be expanded, especially with England, France, Germany and other European countries.”<sup>18</sup>

The directions and forms of relations were determined by the documents signed during visits to France, UK, Germany, Italy and other European countries.

Establishing and developing relations with the United States was another direction of foreign policy. Common interests in relations with the United States were clarified and documents on cooperation in various fields were signed. Heydar Aliyev said:

“All of us are happy to see the recent positive developments in the relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the United States of America, and I believe that these relations should be further expanded and developed.”<sup>19</sup>

A security partnership was established between Azerbaijan and the United States. Azerbaijan participated in the US-led anti-terrorist international operation in Afghanistan, and in peacekeeping forces in Iraq and the Balkans.

16 Ibid.

17 See: Azərbaycan – Rusiya: 1992–2002. Sənədlər toplusu [Azerbaijan-Russia: 1992–2002. Collection of documents] (2002).

18 Speech at the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan. 15 June 1993. Heydər Əliyev. Müstəqilliyimiz əbədidir. Birinci kitab [Heydar Aliyev. Our independence is eternal. First book]. Azərneşr. 1997. p. 11.

19 Ibid, p.11

Another direction of Azerbaijan’s foreign policy was the development of relations with Asian and African countries. Extensive cooperation covering various fields was established with China, Japan and other countries, and relevant documents were signed.<sup>20</sup>

Steps were taken to establish and develop relations with Arab and other Muslim countries. In this regard, Heydar Aliyev said:

“Our relations with all Muslim countries, Arab countries, Turkic-speaking countries should develop even faster.”<sup>21</sup>

Bilateral agreements and protocols were signed for the development of relations. The support of these countries for Azerbaijan in the peaceful resolution of the conflict which erupted due to Armenia’s military aggression provided an opportunity for international influence.

The Republic of Azerbaijan pursued an active foreign policy not only in a bilateral, but also in a multilateral format, and made efforts to secure a place in the international security and cooperation system. Cooperation with international organizations was established in line with foreign policy priorities. Azerbaijan began to actively participate in the activities of the UN, the OSCE, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC, now the Organization of Islamic Cooperation), and the Council of Europe, where it has been a member since 2001. Together with Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova, Azerbaijan founded GUAM. The main goal of multilateral cooperation was to strengthen the international positions of the country, establish mutually beneficial relations in various fields, including security, international political cooperation and economy.<sup>22</sup>

Partnership relations were established with NATO. Azerbaijan participated in various programs of these organizations, including the “Partnership for Peace” program.

The economic factor played an important role in Azerbaijan’s foreign policy course. Azerbaijan cooperated with international financial, banking and other institutions in areas like finance, bank, transport and others. Cooperation was established with the European Union in the fields of energy, transport, communication, etc. Work was done to transform Azerbaijan into a transport, communication and transit center. This cooperation contributed to socioeconomic reforms in the country.<sup>23</sup> Such effective international activity had a positive impact on the developments inside the country. Azerbaijan’s independence and international positions were strengthened, favorable conditions emerged for state building and improving the standard of living. The ground was prepared for the fulfillment of the top priority task – liberation of lands from occupation.



**THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN PURSUED AN ACTIVE FOREIGN POLICY NOT ONLY IN A BILATERAL, BUT ALSO IN A MULTILATERAL FORMAT, AND MADE EFFORTS TO SECURE A PLACE IN THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND COOPERATION SYSTEM.**

20 See: *Çin-Azərbaycan: dostluq sərhədləri aşır* [China-Azerbaijan: friendship goes beyond borders]. (2000).

21 Speech at the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan. 15 June 1993. *Heydər Əliyev. Müstəqilliyimiz əbədidir. Birinci kitab* [Heydar Aliyev. Our independence is eternal. First book]. Azərneşr. 1997. p. 11-12.

22 Gasimli, M. (2015). *Azərbaycan Respublikasının xarici siyasəti (1991–2003). II hissə* [Foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan (1991–2003). Part 2]. Mütərcim. pp. 368-541.

23 *Gasimli, M. (2021). Azərbaycan Respublikasının tarixi (1991–2021). I hissə* [History of the Republic of Azerbaijan (1991–2021). Part 1]. Baku State University. pp. 329-332.

# Heydar Aliyev and the New Economic System in Azerbaijan

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**HE BEQUEATHED TWO GREAT MASTERPIECES TO HIS NATION AND PEOPLE. ONE OF THEM IS MODERN AZERBAIJAN ITSELF, THE LEVEL OF ITS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE, ITS HEROIC SOLDIERS AND PROUD CITIZENS. THE SECOND IS HIS SON – PRESIDENT ILHAM ALIYEV. THESE TWO MASTERPIECES SEEM TO HAVE MERGED AND LEAD EACH OTHER FORWARD.**

## FOREWORD

There are certain historical personalities whose ideas and the essence and purpose of their actions are only fully understood after time, sometimes even decades. This applies not only to people of science and art, who are regarded as creative, but also to political figures. Heydar Aliyev was one such political leader, and this explains why he is recognized as the National Leader of the Azerbaijani people, both at home and abroad.

He bequeathed two great masterpieces to his nation and people. One of them is modern Azerbaijan itself, the level of its political and economic independence, its heroic soldiers and proud citizens. The second is his son – President Ilham Aliyev. These two masterpieces seem to have merged and lead each other forward.

Of course, I do not intend to analyse Heydar Aliyev's contribution to the construction of a new economy in Azerbaijan within such a small article. This is all but impossible, we are discussing here the multifaceted activities of a man who led Azerbaijan through the last decade of the USSR and the first decade of independence and who advanced its economy, to the fullest extent possible within, firstly, the framework of administrative command and, secondly, a free market system - all with the management tools available at that time. We should not forget either that he was destined to be in charge of the difficult and painstaking process of transitioning from the first to the second of these two systems. And this was the most important and challenging part of his work to construct an economy.

## ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

There are interesting "twists" in history: the transition of Azerbaijan's economy from administrative command to a free market system was conducted by one of the brightest representatives of the former system in the USSR (and, indirectly, in the world). It would be safe to say that Heydar Aliyev's words, "Our way is the way of market economy!" stemmed not only from the fact that there was no alternative to the market economy at the time, but also because he knew better than anyone how wasteful and inefficient the administrative command system had been.

Of course, some “innovations” (necessary, at least, for Azerbaijan) were also in process. For example, the transition to liberal pricing, one of the most fundamental values of a market economy, took place in Azerbaijan almost automatically, even before the USSR collapsed. But the most challenging and responsible part of the economic reforms remained the focus of Heydar Aliyev’s policy. The economy he inherited did not operate on the basis of a specific economic system. It was “a bit of this and a bit of that”. Thus, the essence of his actions was not actually a transition at all, but the construction of a whole new economic system. His starting point was an economy on its knees, falling apart, separated from the larger economy it used to be a part of, and whose economic relations with the surrounding world had been totally disrupted. It was an incredibly difficult task, but when we look at the advances we have made over 30 years, impossible not to appreciate the knowledge and skill that Heydar Aliyev devoted to it.

Although a number of legislative acts enabling economic reform had been approved earlier, the legal foundation of the transition to a new economic system was laid by the adoption of the Constitution in 1995. With its adoption, it was determined at the highest level that the country’s economy would be based on free market principles, and that this course was irreversible. But while this was necessary for laying the legal foundation of a new economic system, it was clearly not sufficient. The general provisions of the Constitution had to be underpinned by specific legislation. To do this, more than 500 (!) laws were adopted and the head of state signed hundreds of decrees and orders in quite a short period of time.

I may be going slightly off topic, but it would be unfair not to mention that when Heydar Aliyev returned to power, Azerbaijan was in a perilous condition – severe consequences of Armenia’s military aggression hindered its development, everything was falling apart, and society was in despair. Thus, the construction of a new economic system progressed in parallel with the resolution of countless political, economic and moral problems. Even if those were “day-to-day” problems, it was impossible to avoid them, or put them on the backburner. Much has been said and written about this. Of course, every country that has undertaken economic reform claims that this was implemented under difficult circumstances and true this is: economic reforms are usually required when the situation gets complicated, while the circumstances in Azerbaijan were incomparably more so.

It is common knowledge that the modern economy is based on diversity and equality of economic forms. But to be called a market economy, the number and variety of enterprises based on private ownership should exceed those created on the basis of state ownership. As in all post-Socialist countries, the private sector in Azerbaijan emerged in two ways: the privatisation of state enterprises and the creation of private enterprises



**AZERBAIJAN'S LAW ON LAND REFORM IS MORE REVOLUTIONARY AND PROGRESSIVE THAN SIMILAR LEGAL DOCUMENTS ADOPTED IN OTHER POST-SOVIET COUNTRIES.**

“from scratch”. In the second option, society faces no serious difficulties, and whoever has the skill and investment can register and open a company. The first route is a little more complex. Mainly because, there are different options like an auction, tender or investment competition. At the same time it involves steps ranging from an initial assessment of the state enterprise to be privatized to transparent implementation of the process – all of which may be considered as socially sensitive. Thus, privatization is the core and the most complex part of a transition from an administrative command system based almost entirely on state ownership, to a market economy.

Heydar Aliyev personally led the process of privatization in Azerbaijan. I attended one of the meetings he chaired to discuss the State Programme on the privatization of small and medium-sized enterprises, and I even had a speech there. One could witness how attentively and carefully he listened to all the diverse, sometimes even diametrically opposed opinions, and how much he appreciated serious dialogue.

The privatization of industrial and service enterprises in Azerbaijan was relatively successful, although fraught with certain difficulties. From the beginning of the process until 2003, about 37,000 small enterprises, including some 1,200 industrial, agricultural and construction companies, and more than 13,000 trade, public catering and household service enterprises, were privatized.

Land privatization is a separate topic. In the summer of 1996, based on Heydar Aliyev's proposal, the law “On Land Reform” was adopted. I was a member of the Milli Majlis at the time, and here I restate what I said during discussions. Azerbaijan's law on land reform is more revolutionary and progressive than similar legal documents adopted in other post-Soviet countries. It is totally liberal, as it allows all types of operations involving land (purchase, donation, lease, bequest, mortgage etc.) after privatization. The only serious restriction- the ban on transfer of the land into private ownership by foreign citizens, was also understandable: at the time, foreign nationals becoming land owners in Azerbaijan could have created great economic and even political threats to the country.

Obviously, things do not end with the adoption of a good law. Social tensions and even civil confrontations have occurred in many countries during land reforms. In Azerbaijan, this process was almost painless, but the result was truly revolutionary. Within a short period, more than 2,000 collective and state farms were abolished, more than 850,000 families living in rural areas became landowners of averagely 1.6 hectares, tens of thousands of trucks, tractors, cotton- and grain-harvesting machines were privatized and made available to farmers. In terms of the ratio of forms of ownership, agriculture became the most liberal sector of the country's economy: more than 99 percent of crops were, and still are, produced by private enterprises.

New forms of farming soon produced tangible results in agriculture. In 2002 grain production almost doubled, potato production increased 4.6 times and orchard crops seven times compared with 1993. Livestock breeding also registered growth: during the same period, production of milk, wool and meat increased by 40, 22, and 46 percent respectively. By the end of 2002, there were 2.2 million head of cattle and 7 million head of sheep and goats in the country. People's food supplies improved due to local production in the meantime with the well-being of the rural population.

Following the National Leader, reforms to build a new system were continued by his political successor, President Ilham Aliyev. Just a few years later, in 2007-2008, a number of Azerbaijani economists, including the author of this article, began to opine that the transition to a market economy, in the sense of a systemic transformation in Azerbaijan, was already complete. In his speech in spring of 2009, President Ilham Aliyev officially announced the end of the transition period. This meant that indirect methods of economic regulation had an obvious advantage over direct regulation. Private enterprises have become the leading sector in the economy (currently accounting for about 80 percent of GDP). The end of a transition, of course, did not mean the end of the reform which is a permanent process and the only possible way to adapt the economy to a changing environment, internal and external transformation. In this sense, the economy is always in transition from one state to another, but the transition from the administrative command system to the market economy was already complete, and Heydar Aliyev had been the main player in that transition.

## **ECONOMIC SOVEREIGNTY**

It is safe to say that one of the greatest achievements of Azerbaijan during Heydar Aliyev's presidency and in the subsequent period was the establishment of the economic sovereignty that is quite different from the political independence. The former concept would be completely meaningless if it implied getting rid of dependence on other countries. In a modern world dominated by an international division of labour, it would be wrong in terms of economic efficiency for a country (especially a relatively small country like Azerbaijan) to reduce its economic dependence on others. Nevertheless, the concept of economic sovereignty certainly exists and is even measurable. In my view, economic sovereignty should be evaluated according to three criteria.

The first criterion is the level of a state's independence in determining the forms and methods of economic regulation, taking into account its historical, economic and cultural characteristics and based only on the will of its people – in other words, choosing the model of economic development. In the mid-90's, economic reforms in most post-Socialist countries, including Azerbaijan, were carried out on the recommendations

of international financial institutions. In the circumstances of an acute financial shortage, countries had to accept a loan from these institutions, primarily the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, with all the accompanying obligations to implement specific economic reforms. In other words, countries were told that if they wanted to get a loan, they had to introduce certain changes into their economic governance. It is true that such recommendations were mostly liberal and aligned with the countries' long-term strategic goals, but the compulsory nature of recommendations was undermining the sovereignty.

Heydar Aliyev achieved dramatic changes here. Towards the end of his presidency, creditors' recommendations were purely advisory in nature. Azerbaijan was already establishing its tax budget, monetary, structural and investment policies completely independently and did not surrender its economic management tools to the influence of other states or international organizations.

Financial self-sufficiency is the second criterion. Failing to support itself and counting only on financial supplies from abroad for its development, means that the state is not economically sovereign. According to this criterion, it is possible to measure the level of sovereignty according to the following indicators: (i) the ratio of foreign currency reserves to foreign debt and (ii) the ratio of exports to foreign debt. During Heydar Aliyev's presidency, both of these indicators grew quickly – due to the increase of the numerator and decrease of the denominator. The decrease of the denominator was directly associated with his personal economic outlook: he did not like to borrow. Meanwhile, the numerator increased in leaps and bounds: while in 1993 the country exported only 18 million manats' worth of goods and services, this figure amounted to 2.6 billion manats in 2002 (at current prices). Foreign exchange reserves were \$10 million in 1994 and \$1.4 billion in 2003, having increased 140 (!) times. In terms of financial self-sufficiency, the level of Azerbaijan's economic sovereignty was significantly higher than elsewhere in the CIS.

The third criterion is the extent to which the state's economic potential (primarily its natural resources and infrastructure) is its own and controlled by the government and national companies. Legislating ownership of this potential is only one side of the issue, and a relatively easy one. The key factor is that this potential be actually used as national wealth. Professionals describe this as the economic realization of property.

In Azerbaijan, state ownership of subsurface natural resources (primarily oil and gas, of course) was fully established from a formal and legal point of view with the adoption of the Constitution. Despite the extensive presence of foreign capital in the production and transportation of energy, much of the "working" capital in the country belonged to the state and local private companies. It is true that certain problems remained (and always will) in the functioning of state property as public, but these

problems were not so deep as to undermine the national ownership of economic wealth. Everything is best measured in comparison. According to this criterion, a comparison with Georgia and especially with Armenia reveals Azerbaijan's undoubted superiority. In order to pay off its debts, Armenia transferred whole key sectors of its economy, primarily energy and railways, into Russian ownership and management. In fact, Armenia's economy was placed at the disposal of the Russian state, not private, companies, which added a political dimension to the issue. Azerbaijan managed to maintain its ownership of its national resources, albeit with difficulty at first, and this is one of Heydar Aliyev's undeniable contributions to our state.

However, one point should not be overlooked: economic sovereignty (independence) is a feature of statehood that, even once achieved, doesn't last forever and must always be maintained. Therefore, the country will always face new problems that require resolution. I am sure we will overcome them as well.

It should also be noted that Azerbaijan's achievement of a sufficient level of economic sovereignty was possible thanks to a very successful oil strategy.

## **OIL**

In September 1994, Azerbaijan signed the first contract with the world's leading oil companies (Amoco, BP, Statoil, Pennzoil, TPAO, Ramco, etc.) for the joint development and production sharing of the "Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli" fields. The contract involved huge investment in terms of the size of Azerbaijan's economy at that time - \$7.4 billion.\* With the arrival of high-profile Western companies, Azerbaijan became a 'player', with its own share in the world's energy market. But let us not forget that the road to this fateful agreement was by no means smooth, there was serious resistance. The agreement initially prepared before Heydar Aliyev was not favourable to Azerbaijan and was subsequently improved via intense negotiations to meet the country's interests.

While one of the oil contracts was being discussed in parliament, the leadership of SOCAR displayed a rating list reflecting the degree of complexity of oil contracts signed by different countries with foreign companies. In this ranking prepared by independent experts, United Kingdom had a score of only 1, because it required only taxes from companies producing oil. This was considered the "most favourable" of economic conditions. Azerbaijan was awarded the highest rating - 5 points. In other words, Azerbaijan was amongst countries that negotiated the strictest conditions for its foreign partners. This alone is enough to show how profitable the oil contracts are for our country.

\* The value of the contract has subsequently increased: more than \$40 billion has been invested in the "Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli" fields.

The number of oil contracts began to increase. By 1998, when Heydar Aliyev was elected president for the second time, the Milli Majlis had already approved 13 oil contracts. Some Azerbaijani economists were unhappy about this, saying that we should have stopped at a few contracts and developed the remaining fields ourselves with the revenue received. Heydar Aliyev was, of course, aware that this approach was wrong (otherwise, new contracts would not have been signed!). Now it is obvious to everyone. Why was it wrong? Because, first of all, it wasn't certain whether oil (for which contracts were usually signed) would remain as an important energy source in 30 years' time. It was clear that the importance of renewable and environmentally friendly energy would continue to grow over time. Secondly, it was impossible to predict the level of demand for the Caspian oil after 30 years at a time when new fields were being discovered and pipelines built in different parts of the world. Thirdly and most importantly, the Caspian was a politically problematic sea, and some neighbouring countries tried to take advantage of that to prevent Azerbaijan from accessing the world markets as an independent seller. This was why Heydar Aliyev "fenced" the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian with oil contracts that involved Russian and Iranian companies - a visionary oil strategy in the true sense of the word.

The multiplier effect of growth in the oil sector soon became apparent. Supply enterprises were set up and gradually grew. Foreign companies working in various fields began to show an interest in Azerbaijan and the country became part of the global economy.

Producing oil is only half the job, the other half is getting it to the world markets; markets that already have stable and "wealthy" buyers. The route of the pipelines was the subject of heated international debate, but Heydar Aliyev eventually also managed to achieve everything he wanted. Initially, the Baku-Novorossiysk pipeline was put into operation in 1997 on the basis of an intergovernmental agreement signed with Russia. Then (in 1999), on the basis of an agreement with Georgia (with the participation of the President of Ukraine), the Baku-Supsa oil pipeline (850 km long, with a capacity of 5 million tons per year) and an export terminal were opened in the city of Supsa on the Black Sea coast of Georgia. Finally, in September 2002, the ground-breaking ceremony for the main Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline was held; the largest of the pipelines, 1,768 km long with an annual capacity (since 2010) of 60 million tons. Through it, oil produced in the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea is being transported to the port of Ceyhan in Turkiye via Georgia and from there to European markets across the Mediterranean Sea. Currently, some Turkmen and Kazakh oil is also being exported via the BTC.

Thus, Azerbaijan's main natural wealth reached the buyers and money flowed into the country from abroad. True, this wasn't that much at first. Azerbaijan began earning its main oil revenues in the mid-2000s, after Heydar Aliyev's term as president. However, it was already clear in the

'90s that oil revenues would increase dramatically in the near future and that they needed to be managed effectively. It was also known from the international experience that the release of oil revenues into domestic circulation through ordinary financial channels could have a devastating impact on the country's financial system and, consequently, on the economy as a whole.

Therefore, at the end of 1999, Heydar Aliyev established the State Oil Fund (SOFAZ) whose primary objective was “the protection of macroeconomic stability in the country”. Other tasks such as collecting reserves for future generations and supporting the development of the non-oil sector were also expected of the fund. However, by the decree of Heydar Aliyev the first financial resources allocated from SOFAZ were to improve the living conditions of refugees and IDPs displaced from their homelands as a result of Armenia's aggression. The fundamental social projects financed from the oil fund in later years included the construction of a water pipeline from the Oghuz-Gabala zone to Baku and, more recently, the restoration of post-conflict areas.

## **NON-OIL SECTOR**

Despite the fact how valuable the oil is for Azerbaijan, how great benefits the oil production and exports create, the rapid development of this sector generated a different problem – an imbalance in the structure of the economy. It was impossible to “slow down” the growth of the oil sector to eliminate this and the only way was to achieve the most dynamic development of the non-oil sector.

Understanding this perfectly well, Heydar Aliyev launched a whole campaign for the rapid development of non-oil enterprises. Above all, capital investment in the non-oil sector took on an upward trend: in 2002, investment in fixed capital was 36.3 times higher than in 1993. Interestingly, from 1993-2002, 68.5 percent of investment in fixed capital was by private companies, but it is also true that about 64 percent of all investment was foreign. Positive results of investment activity began to manifest themselves relatively quickly.\* A growth of 13.6 percent was recorded in the processing industry from 1999-2002. Some sectors grew particularly fast: timber production doubled, paper production increased 1.8 times, the chemical industry 2.1 times, building materials 3.5 times and metallurgy 2.5 times. The country began to produce telephones, cash registers, micro-calculators and household appliances. Dependence on imports decreased significantly in many commodity groups.

The transport and communication sectors have developed substantially. From 1996-2002, cargo transportation increased 2.4 times. In 2002, revenue from mobile phone services accounted for more than half of all

\* When studying the statistics on this subject, the mid-90's are usually taken as a reference point, which is correct, because from 1993-1995, President's attention was focused on stopping the war, mitigating the consequences of the armed aggression by Armenia, and overcoming domestic political infighting that was suffocating the country.

revenue from communications services. In 2002, Azerbaijan had trade relations with 128 foreign countries. Foreign trade (largely thanks to the increase in oil sales) grew 2.8 times compared to 1993, and the balance was always positive during that period.

As a result of these positive developments in the economy, the population's well-being improved steadily. In 2002, the average monthly salary was five times greater than in 1995. The average monthly salary in the private sector was, of course, higher (about twice as high) than in the public sector.

## TO CONCLUDE

There is no denying that Heydar Aliyev was the main architect of the new economic system in Azerbaijan. It is thanks to his reforms that we now live in a true market economy. Yes, we still have problems waiting to be resolved and the system is not perfect, but is there a country with an ideal system?



**HEYDAR ALIYEV DID THAT: HE REDUCED STATE INTERVENTION IN THE ECONOMY TO A LEVEL AT WHICH IT IS REGARDED AS A MARKET ECONOMY, AND THANKS TO THIS SYSTEMIC CHANGE, HE ACHIEVED GREAT ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE 10 YEARS OF HIS PRESIDENCY, MAKING AZERBAIJAN THE ECONOMIC LEADER OF THE REGION.**

The rules of state regulation of the economy differ greatly from country to country. There is no country in the world where the state does not intervene in the economy at all or, on the contrary, the economy is fully regulated by the state. The main difference between countries is the level of state intervention in the economy. If this intervention is not below a certain level, the economic system of that country cannot be described as a market economy. Heydar Aliyev did that: he reduced state intervention in the economy to a level at which it is regarded as a market economy, and thanks to this systemic change, he achieved great economic growth in the 10 years of his presidency, making Azerbaijan the economic leader of the region.

There is and always will be a debate about the level of state intervention in the economy. But this is about “small things within the whole”. The outcome of the analysis of development programmes adopted in Azerbaijan in recent years, primarily the “Strategic roadmaps for the national economy and main sectors of the economy” (2016) and “Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for socioeconomic development” (2021), is that President Ilham Aliyev is determined to move the country further in the direction of liberalization, i.e. reducing state interference in the economy. And this is the right strategy. My research into the measurement of the state's forms of model-creating intervention in the economy, using the examples of 95 countries, shows that for the level of liberalism of the economy, Azerbaijan is among the “intermediate group” of countries, and there is still potential for effective liberalization, which can further accelerate the economic growth. It is true that the megaprojects implemented by the state in the territories liberated from the military occupation will most likely alter these indicators. However, in general, there is no doubt that the strategic path defined by the National Leader Heydar Aliyev for Azerbaijan – building a liberal market economy – will be continued.

# Two States, One Nation and a United Heart

## WE ARE ALWAYS PROUD OF STRENGTHENING AZERBAIJAN

**M**y first trip to Azerbaijan was in June 2003. As the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health, I went to Azerbaijan with a delegation headed by Recep Akdağ, the Minister of Health at the time. We had an appointment with Heydar Aliyev, which had to be postponed three times because of Heydar Aliyev's health. Nevertheless, he still talked to us for about 45 minutes during the meeting. He was tired, but even in that state his facial expression got stronger as the word "Türkiye" was pronounced and it was clear that he loved Türkiye dearly. Unfortunately, a couple months after this meeting, in December 2003, his condition worsened and he passed away. Our delegation may have been one of the last international delegations he received.

I say at every opportunity that the late Heydar Aliyev, the third President of Azerbaijan, was a leader who considered the interests of both Azerbaijan and Türkiye in every step he took. Heydar Aliyev with his wise leadership, visionary stance and vision, shone like a lighthouse for Azerbaijani people. He spent every day of his 80-year life meaningfully and always stated that he adored Türkiye. His words "We are one nation, two states" have become a saying passed down through generations in Azerbaijan and Türkiye. This important phrase will form the basis of our relations in the future as it has in the past.

The leadership of Heydar Aliyev, as well as the solidarity and unity of the Azerbaijani people with his leader put the country on a path of development. Since the beginning of the presidency of İlham Aliyev, who was elected as President after Heydar Aliyev, Azerbaijan has grown and strengthened both politically and economically and has taken a well-deserved place as the shining star of the Caucasus. We have always been proud of strengthening Azerbaijan, as Türkiye and Azerbaijan are two states, one nation and a united heart. Azerbaijan and Türkiye have supported each other in every field in the national and international arena and will continue to do so.

The friendship between Türkiye and Azerbaijan can neither be explained nor understood by others. We are two brotherly nations. We share both our joy and grief.

We experienced this again after one of the most devastating natural disasters in the history of our Republic, when in the morning of February

**PROFESSOR  
NECDET ÜNÜVAR**

*Rector of Ankara  
University*

6, 2023, the earthquakes with a magnitude of 7.6 and 7.7, centered in Kahramanmaraş, Pazarcık and Elbistan erupted. The patriotic kindness of Azerbaijani rescue teams, that immediately went to the region and rushed to the aid of their brothers and sisters after the earthquake, is unforgettable.

We can certainly say that our presidents, Mr. İlham Aliyev and Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, raised the relationship between our countries to a new level.

As university rectors, we have an obligation to follow the same path. This is an obligation imposed on us by history. This is the most fundamental principle of fraternity. We, as Ankara University, are working very hard on this path.

### **WE ARE HAPPY TO FULFILL THE DREAM OF THE LATE HEYDAR ALIYEV AT ANKARA UNIVERSITY**

I was invited to join our President, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and President of Azerbaijan İlham Aliyev on a visit to Shusha. A friend of ours said that the late Heydar Aliyev mentioned at a meeting in 1996, “The freedom of Shusha is my biggest dream.” It occurred to me there that since it was his biggest dream, we need to make that dream come true with the tree Heydar Aliyev planted in the garden of Ankara University.

### **THE SAPLING PLANTED BY THE LATE HEYDAR ALIYEV IS NOW A HUGE TREE**

The late Aliyev was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Ankara University Senate on March 16, 2001. Leader Heydar Aliyev planted a blue spruce tree in the garden of the Rectorate on the same day. At that time, Azerbaijan was not as strong economically and militarily, just like the sapling. However, that sapling has now turned into a huge giant spruce.

On December 14, 2020, we commemorated the National Leader again at the Ankara University Rectorate building. And 20 years later, we held a memorial service around the blue spruce tree he planted. This ceremony, which we held on the 17th anniversary of his death, was attended by my dear friend, Khazar İbrahim, who was Azerbaijan's Ambassador to Ankara at the time and is now Ambassador to the USA, and Deputy Şamil Ayrım, the Head of the Türkiye-Azerbaijan Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group in the Turkish Grand National Assembly. Right after the commemoration ceremony held in the Ankara University Senate Hall, we opened a marble pedestal, which was to be placed in front of the blue spruce tree. In his speech at the ceremony, Ambassador Khazar İbrahim stressed the importance of this symbolic deed. He emphasized that very few people knew that the wise leader had planted such a tree at Ankara University.



**“WE ARE GLAD TO BRING TOGETHER THE LAND OF FREE SHUSHA AND BAKU WITH THIS TREE PLANTED BY THE LATE HEYDAR ALIYEV AT ANKARA UNIVERSITY”**

We brought the soil from Shusha, the cultural capital of Azerbaijan liberated in 2020, and put it under the tree in front of the Ankara University Rectorate, which was planted years ago by Azerbaijan’s National Leader Heydar Aliyev, who passed away with the dream of “Free Shusha”.

We celebrated the first anniversary of the liberation of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan with a program held at Ankara University. With the participation of Azerbaijan’s first prime minister and former foreign minister Prof. Dr. Hasan Hasanov, Ambassador Rashad Mammadov, university administration, academics and students, we brought together the soil from Shusha and Baku under the blue spruce tree. The soil was poured into glass bowls on the pedestal under the tree. We have developed a habit of taking a memory photo in front of this tree with our guests, which also gives us a chance to commemorate the late Aliyev.

President Heydar Aliyev  
plants blue spruce tree at  
Ankara University,  
16 March 2001,  
Ankara, Türkiye.

Event held at the Ankara University by the blue spruce tree planted by Heydar Aliyev, 15 November 2021, Ankara, Türkiye.



Azerbaijan is growing day by day like this tree planted by the late Heydar Aliyev. We are very happy about that. I hope the Turkic world will grow just like this tree and all humanity will benefit from that. Because our aim is to bring peace and brotherhood wherever we go. I can confidently say this for Azerbaijan, Türkiye and the rest of the Turkic world – Turks have always promoted peace and freedom, and left their mark wherever they went.

### **OUR HEARTS AND EDUCATION ARE WIDE OPEN**

Ankara University offers a wide range of international activities. We had already opened our hearts, and now we have opened the doors of education. Starting with Azerbaijan, we are developing educational opportunities for the Turkic world. Azerbaijan is like a brother who has a high priority for us. But this is not limited to Azerbaijan; It is the same for Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. We are in very close contact with each of them, but we have a much older relationship with Azerbaijan.

As Ankara University, we have opened our hearts and all our opportunities to our Azerbaijani brothers. We are in close contact not only with universities but also with institutions. I am also proud to have been a part of these relations as President of the Türkiye-Azerbaijan Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group for many years and today as rector of one of the most important Universities in Türkiye.

In the Türkiye-Azerbaijan Parliamentary Friendship Group, which I chaired for a term, I worked on every platform in order to enhance the strategic partnership between the two countries and to further develop our relations. I regarded it as the greatest honor to serve the Turkish-Azerbaijani brotherhood with valuable contributions of our brothers in the Azerbaijani Milli Majlis.

### **WE HAVE CULTURAL, COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION**

The relations between Azerbaijan and Türkiye have always been very strong and are rooted in the past. There are many historical, cultural and economic ties between the two countries. The fact that Türkiye is one of the first countries to recognize the independence of Azerbaijan and that Azerbaijan always stands by Türkiye forms the basis of our relations.

As the relations between Azerbaijan and Türkiye developed, our cooperation in many fields has expanded day by day. We cooperate in areas such as energy, defense industry, tourism, culture and education.

### **IT IS OF HIGH VALUE AND IMPORTANCE TO DECLARE 2023 AS A “YEAR OF HEYDAR ALIYEV” IN THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN**

When we look at the level of development the modern Republic of Azerbaijan has reached, we see again how accurate the decisions taken by the late Heydar Aliyev were.

Today, as in the past, President of Azerbaijan İlham Aliyev and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan are making efforts to take Turkey-Azerbaijan relations further, in line with the same principles. When they take their place in history, future generations will be able to see how precious those relationships are.

On the other hand, the meetings and joint statements by our President, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and the President of Azerbaijan, Mr. İlham Aliyev, in the last 18 years, have been compiled in a valuable book entitled “We Walked These Roads Together”. This valuable work prepared by Azerbaijani Deputy Malahat İbrahimgizi and, edited by Malatya Deputy Öznur Çalık and supervised by me, is another indicator of our friendship.

With these feelings and thoughts, I commemorate the wise leader Heydar Aliyev with respect. May God’s mercy be upon him.

# A Word about the Teacher of Life

## OLZHAS SULEIMENOV

*People's writer of  
Kazakhstan, prominent  
poet, public figure,  
diplomat.*



**I WANT TO NOTE THAT I DEDICATE THE MAIN DISCOVERY FROM THE ETYMOLOGY SERIES “1001 WORDS” TO HEYDAR ALIYEV, WHOSE WORDS HELPED ME TO GET CLOSER TO THE TRUTH ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF THE MYSTERIOUS SUMER AND THE TURKS.**

I have always had great respect for Heydar Aliyev and understood his value as a person and statesman for the entire former Soviet Union, for Azerbaijan and indeed for all Turkic peoples on this earth.

I want to share a story of my first meeting with Heydar Aliyev, which took place in Baku in the summer of 1975. Those were holidays – the Days of Soviet Literature in Azerbaijan. Representatives of writers’ unions of all the republics gathered in Baku and, splitting into groups, dispersed throughout this wonderful country to meet with its people.

I visited the beautiful cities and villages of hospitable Garabagh, where I shared my linguistic discoveries, in particular, regarding the etymology, i.e. the origins of the historical name of this region – Garabagh. The point is that many in Turkic-speaking states understand Garabagh (Gara bagh) literally – a “Black Garden”.

In fact, the word “Kara”(gara) had two meanings in ancient Turkic. In some complex terms, it was used in the meaning of “black” – for example, the common expression “Kara goz” in all Turkic languages means “Black eyes”. But quite often the word “kara” (gara) in historical names and titles expressed a different meaning. For instance, the most famous Kipchak hero Koblandy became the main character of the Kazakh epic “Kara Kipchak Koblandy”. In this case, the word “Kara” preceding Kipchak Koblandy means “great”. Just like the Turkic ruler Karakhan, who was famous in the Middle Ages, was the Great Khan. The Black Sea (Gara Deniz) was not dark either – it was a great sea. The fact of the matter is that the main meaning of the Turkic word “kara” (gara) began to be forgotten in the Middle Ages and the second one came to the fore.

Let me note that the farewell feast of the Days of Soviet Literature in Azerbaijan for the group of writers was hosted by the head of the republic himself. Many of us received words of gratitude for the speeches, and in the end, quite unexpectedly for me, Heydar Aliyev said, “Not only Kazakhstan, but also all Turks need Olzhas.”

These words were forever inscribed in my memory and turned out to be a guiding light for the hard work that began in the mid-1960s, when I first got acquainted with the works on the ancient Turkic runic writing and heard about Sumer, the most ancient state discovered by archaeologists under the hills of Arab Iraq. My fascination with these topics in the 1970s manifested itself in the book “The Language of Writing”, which was written in Rome, and over the past decades I have published about a dozen books

and many articles in which I approached the idea that Ancient Western Asia (Sumer) had a multi-ethnic population, and when Sumer was captured by the ancient Semites in the 3rd millennium BC, a great exodus began: ethnic groups were leaving Mesopotamia (Tigris and Euphrates), taking with them their languages and hieroglyphic scripts. I did not believe that all these languages were also dead.

The works I have prepared can refute the “theories” claiming that the Turks appeared in the Mongolian steppes in the early centuries AD. Also that they borrowed their writing in the 5th century AD from the Persians of Central Asia (Sogds) whose trade caravans reached them.

These works were the result of half a century of passion for the poetry of the icon-makers of the 4th millennium BC. To make these discoveries, I had to prove to myself the origin of “1001 words” from different languages and dialects.

I want to note that I dedicate the main discovery from the etymology series “1001 words” to Heydar Aliyev, whose words helped me to get closer to the truth about the origin of the mysterious Sumer and the Turks.

At the meeting with Heydar Aliyev in Baku in 1999, I remember promising him to tell my friends and associates from different countries about what I saw and felt in Azerbaijan. I have always wished this prosperous land happiness and a speedy way out of the terrible situations in which history placed us. The optimism of these people and certainly their leaders gave hope that everything would work out, that one way or another, with the help of other peoples, their wishes and hopes, the sun that Azerbaijan deserves will shine here again.

I shared these wishes at the meeting with Heydar Aliyev and noted how impressed I was with the way thousands of young people greeted him the day before our meeting. That spoke volumes.

In May 2003, I flew to Baku to congratulate Heydar Aliyev on his 80th birthday, but I was informed that after a sudden attack, an ambulance plane took him abroad for treatment...

In the Kazakh language, along with the Arabic mughalim, or “teacher”, there is a synonymous word that is used less often – ustaz. It comes from the common Turkic word “usta, or “master”, “specialist”, “expert in his field”.

I learned a lot and respectfully called many deserving people “muallim”, but recognized only a few of them as “ustaz” – teachers of life.

This year, in 2023, Azerbaijan celebrates the centenary of the birth of Heydar Aliyev. This is a significant date, and I am sure that the memory of the bright Ustaz will live forever!



**IN THE KAZAKH LANGUAGE, ALONG WITH THE ARABIC MUGHALIM, OR “TEACHER”, THERE IS A SYNONYMOUS WORD THAT IS USED LESS OFTEN – USTAZ. IT COMES FROM THE COMMON TURKIC WORD “USTA, OR “MASTER”, “SPECIALIST”, “EXPERT IN HIS FIELD”. THIS YEAR, IN 2023, AZERBAIJAN CELEBRATES THE CENTENARY OF THE BIRTH OF HEYDAR ALIYEV. THIS IS A SIGNIFICANT DATE, AND I AM SURE THAT THE MEMORY OF THE BRIGHT USTAZ WILL LIVE FOREVER!**

# From the Humanitarian Crisis to the Exemplary Care and Great Return – Heydar Aliyev’s Policy for the Wellbeing of the Forcefully Displaced Population

**YOKO HIROSE**

*Professor,  
Faculty of Policy  
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Keio University,  
Japan*

The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan erupted at the end of the 1980s and resulted, *inter alia*, in a serious humanitarian crisis with a large number of refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDP). More than a million of Azerbaijanis were forcefully displaced, most of them had to leave their native lands in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and more than 200,000 of Azerbaijanis were forced to flee from Armenia. By the beginning of the 1990s, with the population of seven million people, every 7<sup>th</sup> person in Azerbaijan became displaced. Thus, Azerbaijan turned into a country hosting, in per capita terms, one of the highest numbers of displaced people in the world. Along with refugees and IDPs, as a result of the conflict, thousands of Azerbaijanis perished, 50,000 were wounded or became disabled, and almost 4,000 people went missing.

Azerbaijan had to mitigate the grave consequences of the conflict, including the pressing humanitarian crisis related to refugees and IDPs. At that time, Azerbaijanis expelled from their homes were in a very difficult situation: temporarily settled in tent camps, railroad wagons, half-constructed buildings, public facilities, etc. in various parts of Azerbaijan.

The Security Council of the United Nations in its resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993) on the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict expressed grave concern at the displacement of a large number of Azerbaijani civilians. In its resolution 48/114 (1993), entitled “Emergency international assistance to refugees and displaced persons in Azerbaijan”, the General Assembly of the United Nations noted with alarm that the number of refugees and displaced persons in Azerbaijan has recently exceeded one million. It further appealed to all states, organizations and programs of the United Nations, specialized agencies and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to provide adequate and sufficient financial, medical and material assistance to the Azerbaijani refugees and displaced persons.



Heydar Aliyev paid special attention and rendered care to the IDPs and refugees. In one of his statements, he said that the problems of Azerbaijani IDPs and refugees were the first-priority issue both for the country and for him personally.<sup>1</sup> These words show in the best manner how he approached the issue of refugees and IDPs.

IDPs settled in  
railroad wagons,  
1994,  
Sabirabad district,  
Azerbaijan.

Heydar Aliyev regularly visited temporary settlement areas with displaced Azerbaijanis, talked to them and instructed relevant state agencies to solve the problems they faced due to the forcible displacement.

The Government of Azerbaijan undertook actions to improve the living conditions of the forcefully displaced population, including by constructing new and modern residential areas for temporary settlement and providing social assistance and benefits.

During his tenure, Heydar Aliyev signed 43 decrees and orders, the Parliament of Azerbaijan adopted 23 laws, the Cabinet of Minister adopted 192 decrees and orders that formed the legal framework related to the social protection of the displaced Azerbaijanis.<sup>2</sup>

1 State Committee for Affairs of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons of the Republic of Azerbaijan. (n.d.). Retrieved May 5, 2023, from <https://idp.gov.az/en/>

2 *Qaçqınlann və Məcburi Köçkünlerin Rifahı Namine. 1-ci cild* [For the Welfare of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons. Volume 1]. p. 5.



President Heydar Aliyev with IDPs and refugees at the opening of Ashaghi Aghjakend settlement, 13 September 2002, Goranboy district, Azerbaijan.

In order to effectively manage and solve problems that had occurred due to the displacement of huge number of Azerbaijanis, President Heydar Aliyev established in 1998 the post of a Deputy-Prime Minister and Chairman of the State Committee for the Issues of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons.

In the 1990s, Azerbaijan was in a dire economic situation and did not have enough resources to address the problems of the mass displaced population on its own. Therefore, international humanitarian aid was of critical importance.

President Heydar Aliyev used every opportunity to raise awareness of the international community about the refugee and IDP issue that Azerbaijan faced.

In 1996, during his speech at the international conference held in Baku, he underlined that the issues of refugees and IDPs should be of concern to all international community, international organizations and everyone who seeks peace. He also emphasized the necessity for international attention and engagement on these issues.

At his meeting with the United Nations High Commissioner Ms. Sadako Ogata in 1999 in Baku, President Heydar Aliyev described the serious consequences of the occupation of the territories of the Republic of



Azerbaijan. He underlined that the humanitarian assistance provided was not sufficient, and expressed his hope that the UNHCR would deliver more to alleviate the plight of the displaced Azerbaijanis. In her conversation with the President Heydar Aliyev Ms. Ogata confessed that her main take away from this visit was the observation that Azerbaijani refugees and IDPs were determined to return to their homes.<sup>3</sup>

President Heydar Aliyev  
and the United Nations  
High Commissioner  
Sadako Ogata,  
9 September 1999,  
Baku, Azerbaijan.

In September 1994, Azerbaijan under the leadership of President Heydar Aliyev successfully completed negotiations and reached an agreement with international oil companies on the joint development of the oil fields in the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea. Although it took around six years before the oil contract started to generate oil revenues for Azerbaijan, the agreement, called “The Contract of the Century”, gave a serious impetus for the economic development of the country which helped to ease the sufferings of the displaced population.

In 1999, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev issued a decree on the “Establishment of the State Oil Fund of the Republic of Azerbaijan”, the key objective of which was the funding of the most important national projects for the socioeconomic development of the

<sup>3</sup> *BMT-nin qaçqınlar üzrə ali komissarı xanım Sadako Oqata ilə görüşdə söhbəti* [Meeting with the UN High Commissioner Ms. Sadako Ogata]. p.675. <https://files.preslib.az/projects/heydaraliyev/sohbetler.pdf>

country. Due to the seriousness of the problem, the Fund was directly involved in sponsoring the projects aimed at improving the social and living conditions and accommodating refugees and internally displaced persons.

Heydar Aliyev's oil strategy enabled extensive measures related to the social protection of refugees and internally displaced persons in Azerbaijan. According to the decrees of Heydar Aliyev dated August 22, 2001, September 7, 2001, and May 13, 2002, a total of 359 billion manats was allocated from the State Oil Fund to construct 6,410 individual residential houses with a total area of 392,000 square meters, 18 schools, 16 medical centers, 18 kindergartens, 195 kilometers of roads, 188 kilometers of drinking water lines, 350 kilometers of electric lines, 133 kilometers of irrigation pipelines and many other social facilities were built for the displaced population.

Between 1993 and 2003, the amount of benefits for social needs of refugees and internally displaced persons was increased 90 times, the allowance for food expenses 60 times, and funds allocated for communal services 120 times.<sup>4</sup>

Heydar Aliyev did his utmost to improve the living conditions of refugees and IDPs and promptly replace tent camps and railway wagons, in which they had to initially settle, with modern houses. Thus, in June 2003, six months before Heydar Aliyev passed away, five refugee camps were closed, and displaced Azerbaijanis residing there moved to new modern settlements.

President Ilham Aliyev, who was elected president in 2003, also prioritized the issues of displaced persons.

President Heydar Aliyev's intention to replace refugee camps with comfortable buildings was carried on, in particular through the adoption on July 1, 2004 of the "State Program on the Improvement of Living Conditions and Increasing Employment of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons" (Decree No. 298) and its successful implementation.

Up until now, 116 residential settlements have been constructed for IDPs and refugees. As a result, more than 320,000 refugees and IDPs were provided with improved housing. Moreover, employment programs for IDPs were also carried out in tandem with these settlement plans.

Government officials of Azerbaijan also conducted negotiations with international financial institutions along with humanitarian and development organizations to get support for improving lives of refugees and IDPs. Through these efforts, living standards for a great number of refugees and IDPs have been raised significantly.<sup>5</sup>

4 Orujov, A. (2011, May 6). *Heydər Əliyev qaçqın və məcburi köçkünlərin problemlərinin həllinə böyük qayğı göstərirdi* [Heydar Aliyev attached special importance to the problems of refugees and IDPs]. *Xalq Qazeti*. <http://www.anl.az/down/meqale/xalqqazeti/2011/may/173641.htm>

5 State Committee for Affairs of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons of the Republic of Azerbaijan. (n.d.). *Information on the work done by the State Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the Affairs of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in 2004–2008*. Retrieved May 10, 2023, from <http://idp.gov.az/en/law/102/parent/15>



Without a doubt, both President Heydar Aliyev and President Ilham Aliyev did not spare effort to improve the living conditions of refugees and IDPs. Although these measures were of critical importance, they could not solve the displacement problem in the country once and for all. The displaced population always dreamed about returning to their homes.

During my stay in Azerbaijan from 2000 to 2001, I conducted research in Baku and throughout Azerbaijan (62 towns and districts), visiting temporary housings and camps to interview refugees and IDPs. I witnessed that life for them was extremely difficult at the time. In Baku, for example, school dormitories, hotels, and other buildings were open to refugees and IDPs. The government provided them with water and other rations, as well as monthly subsidy payments. I saw that while refugees and IDPs were grateful to their government for the assistance provided, they expressed strong determination to return to their previous homes as soon as possible. However, it was not possible until 2020 as the military occupation was continuing and the occupying forces were not allowing them to return.

Azerbaijan's victory in the 44-day Patriotic War of 2020 put an end to the 30-year-old conflict with Armenia and resulted in the liberation of the occupied territories. Thus, conditions conducive for safe, dignified and voluntary return of hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis to their homes were created.

President of the  
Republic of Azerbaijan  
Ilham Aliyev and First Lady  
Mehriban Aliyeva at the  
opening ceremony of the  
first smart village Aghali,  
27 May 2022,  
Zangilan district,  
Azerbaijan.



Aghali smart village,  
Zangilan district,  
Azerbaijan.

Following the liberation of Azerbaijani territories in 2020, President Ilham Aliyev adopted a program entitled the “Great Return” for the return of the IDPs, designating it as the nation’s most critical issue.

A wide range of reconstruction plans, including smart city plans, were developed in different districts liberated in 2020, and the “Great Return” of the IDPs has been progressing in phases, starting with the return of 58 IDPs to the liberated Zangilan in July 2022.

Below are some areas where residents have already returned:

- Aghali village, Zangilan district: This village became the first place in the liberated territories where IDPs returned to and resided in since October 2022. It is a “smart village” fully equipped with renewable energy facilities, electronic administrative services, etc. So far, 86 families - 420 persons in total have returned to Aghali.
- Talish village, Tartar district: Reconstruction was completed in March 2023, and first 20 families - 94 IDPs moved into their homes. A school and a kindergarten have been built here as well.
- Lachin city, Zabukh village and Sus village of Lachin district: On May 2023, 20 families - 97 IDPs returned to Lachin city. By the end of 2023, 298 families will be returning to Lachin city and 296 families to Zabukh and Sus villages of Lachin district.
- 450 Azerbaijani families are expected to return to Shusha city by the end of this year.
- Fuzuli district: International airport was opened soon after the liberation in 2021. It is estimated that Fuzuli city and 10 villages will be restored by

2026. Additionally, Dovlatyarli village is being developed as the second smart village.

- Aghdam, once the largest city in the Garabakh region of Azerbaijan, was totally destroyed during the years of military occupation. The territory of the city became the center of reconstruction and rehabilitation intended to accommodate a population of 150,000 people.

I visited the liberated town of Shusha in May 2023. As I arrived at the newly-built Fuzuli International Airport, I was not only impressed with the beauty of the airport but was also deeply moved as I imagined how this airport signified the recovery of Garabakh in both name and reality. Seeing displays of reconstruction plans and town planning for Fuzuli and other nearby areas in this same airport and then what appeared to be a great deal of infrastructural development and residential construction taking place on the way to Shusha, I could keenly sense just how quickly the rebuilding of Garabakh and its surroundings had progressed and how the whole nation is working to bring the refugees and IDPs back home.

## CONCLUSION

The fate and well-being of IDPs and refugees has always been among the top priorities for the Government of Azerbaijan. Personal attention extended by the then President Heydar Aliyev ensured comprehensive approach and care to IDPs and refugees.

I salute President Ilham Aliyev and his government for proceeding along the path laid out by Heydar Aliyev with respect to refugees and IDPs to this point and into the future. Azerbaijan had to overcome serious difficulties in recovering from the consequences of the war, including solving the displacement issue.

Despite being strong enough, Azerbaijan needs support from the international community in order to achieve safe and dignified return of its citizens to the liberated areas. Here, first of all, one should mention the total annihilation of the urban infrastructure during the years of occupation and implantation of landmines as main impediments for the return. The tragic statistics indicates that since November 2020, 304 Azerbaijanis suffered from mine explosions: 57 were killed and 247 received various bodily injuries.<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, international assistance to Azerbaijan in post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction, as well as demining, is of serious importance. It would greatly contribute to the further exercise of human rights, most notably, the right to return to homeland and live in safety.

<sup>6</sup> ANAMA [@ANAMA\_gov\_az]. (2023, May 31). *Since November 2020, as a result of mine #explosions, 57 out of 304 people – were killed, 247 – received various bodily* Twitter. [https://twitter.com/ANAMA\\_gov\\_az/](https://twitter.com/ANAMA_gov_az/)

# Personal Memories about National Leader Heydar Aliyev's Energy Strategy

## ART MCHAFFIE

*Executive Vice President  
of the Azerbaijan  
International Operating  
Company (1994 to 1997),  
Honorary Consul of  
Azerbaijan in Santa Fe,  
New Mexico (2008-2021)*

Azerbaijan had long been an oil producing country. The Soviet Union continued to explore for oil in the Caspian Sea. Following the geologic trend of onshore oil fields in the Absheron peninsula, the offshore Oil Rocks complex was developed using a network of platforms and causeways to connect offshore wells to onshore production facilities. Substantial oil discoveries were made in deep-water, but the Soviet Union lacked the technology and financial capital to develop these petroleum resources.

When Heydar Aliyev decided to leave his Nakchivan retirement in 1993 and was elected President of Azerbaijan, the country was in crisis. Armenia invaded Azerbaijan's territory in 1988-94 seeking to capture the then Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast. The war went badly for Azerbaijan with more than 30,000 casualties and the loss of about 20 percent of its sovereign territory. The Soviet Union dissolved in December 1991. Two months before it, the Azerbaijani people overwhelmingly approved declaration of independence from the Soviet Union. The State Oil Company of Azerbaijan, SOCAR, commenced negotiations with international oil companies to develop the Azeri, Chirag and deep water Guneshli oil fields.

Soon after his election in 1993, President Heydar Aliyev focused on rebuilding the national economy and stabilizing the regional political situation. President Heydar Aliyev placed urgency on completing the negotiations with international oil companies. President Aliyev also agreed to a ceasefire with Armenia effective May 12, 1994, to stop the casualties and costs due to the war.

I was invited to speak at the first Caspian Oil and Gas Exhibition held in Baku on May 25, 1994. President Heydar Aliyev was the keynote speaker. He highlighted the importance Azerbaijan placed on the development of its offshore Caspian oil reserves. There were many other speakers, including the late Natig Aliyev, then president of SOCAR, and representatives from many foreign governments and international companies. The main message of my talk was to encourage Azerbaijan to offer contractual terms to the international oil companies that would

reward these companies with a fair economic return on their investments and provide substantial economic benefits to the people of Azerbaijan.

My first interaction with the President of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev was after the “Contract of the Century” was signed in 1994.

This contract was important because it brought foreign capital and deepwater technology to develop the giant offshore Azeri, Chirag and Guneshli oil fields. President Heydar Aliyev had the wisdom to form a consortium of foreign oil companies from the United States, Europe and Turkiye, which collectively could undertake this enormous financial commitment. Additionally, President Aliyev secured political backing from the governments where the foreign oil companies were based, principally in Washington DC, London, Oslo and Ankara. Counting SOCAR’s 10 percent share, the Azerbaijan International Operating Company (AIOC) had 11 shareholders from seven countries.

As a representative of Amoco Corporation, I was appointed as Executive Vice President of the AIOC. Terry Adams from British Petroleum was appointed as President of AIOC.

Within a few weeks of the signing of the Contract of the Century, the Azerbaijan International Operating Company’s initial management team arrived in Baku. As a condition included in the contract at the insistence of President Aliyev, first oil production from the contract was to be achieved within three years. This put us on a fast track to refurbish the offshore Chirag-1 jacket, design and build the processing facilities to be installed on the platform, rebuild the barge to lay the pipelines to shore, find a suitable onshore terminal to receive the oil and gas that would flow from new offshore pipelines, build the onshore storage tanks and pipelines required to move the oil to export markets. In addition, we were charged with rebuilding the Dada Gorgud offshore drilling rig to drill and complete further wells to delineate the extent of the oil reserves within the contract area. Furthermore, AIOC needed to recruit hundreds of Azerbaijani employees, hire international and Azerbaijani contractors, find and refurbish office space and secure suitable living accommodations for foreign staff.

In our first meeting in President Aliyev’s office, he politely but firmly reminded us of our obligations. We sensed the importance and urgency that President Aliyev placed on the first oil deadline which guided all of our efforts to achieve early oil production.

AIOC’s management team had regular meetings with SOCAR President Natig Aliev, SOCAR Vice President Ilham Aliyev and other SOCAR representatives to seek counsel and update them on our progress.



**IN OUR FIRST MEETING IN PRESIDENT ALIYEV’S OFFICE, HE POLITELY BUT FIRMLY REMINDED US OF OUR OBLIGATIONS. WE SENSED THE IMPORTANCE AND URGENCY THAT PRESIDENT ALIYEV PLACED ON THE FIRST OIL DEADLINE WHICH GUIDED ALL OF OUR EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE EARLY OIL PRODUCTION.**

I recall that we requested a meeting a few months later with President Heydar Aliyev to discuss export pipeline routes. AIOC's initial low-cost plan was to connect with the Transeft pipeline network at the Russian border and receive oil in return from Transneft at their Black Sea terminal at Novorossiysk. We asked President Aliyev whether AIOC should be considering a western export route through Georgia to the Black Sea. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that two export routes would provide more assurance that Azerbaijan's oil would reach international markets. President Aliyev's personal relationships with President Yeltsin of Russia and President Shevardnadze of Georgia were crucial in enabling the export of Azerbaijan's oil from Black Sea ports of Novorossiysk (Russia), and Supsa (Georgia).

AIOC commenced first oil production in November 1997. AIOC invested more than 1 billion USD on the first oil project. This achievement marked a major turning point for Azerbaijan and its economic development. Azerbaijan would now receive payment in foreign currency for its oil production. President Aliyev established the State Oil Fund of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SOFAZ) in 1999 to receive and invest a portion of Azerbaijan's oil riches to benefit future generations of Azerbaijanis. Through its management and strategic investments, SOFAZ contributes to the long-term economic stability, diversification, and sustainable development of Azerbaijan.

The success and track record of the first oil project encouraged the foreign oil companies to invest several billion additional dollars in full Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli field development, to establish the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline and subsequently to build the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) gas pipeline to Turkiye.

The BTC oil pipeline that became operational in 2006 was a key project in this regard. It allowed Azerbaijan to transport its oil directly to international markets, providing the country with greater energy independence and diversification. The pipeline is a major energy infrastructure project that connects the capital city of Azerbaijan, Baku, with the Turkish port of Ceyhan on the Mediterranean Sea, passing through Georgia. The BTC consortium invested billions of dollars in the construction of the pipeline. Financial institutions such as the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) also provided funding for the project. The BTC pipeline has significant geopolitical implications for the countries involved.

Together with the oil sector, Heydar Aliyev emphasized the exploration and development of natural gas fields in Azerbaijan. The Shah Deniz gas field, discovered in 1999, became a major focus of his government. The development of this field, along with other smaller fields, significantly

increased Azerbaijan's natural gas production capacity. Notably, Heydar Aliyev played a crucial role in the establishment of the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline, which enables the transportation of Azerbaijani natural gas to Türkiye and onward to Europe. It serves as a crucial component of the Southern Gas Corridor, a 3,500 km long giant pipeline, a strategic initiative aimed at diversifying Europe's natural gas supply sources. The BTE pipeline project was implemented by a consortium of international oil and gas companies, including BP as the operator, along with partners from Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Türkiye. Financial institutions such as EBRD provided financial support for the project as well.

Thanks to all the mentioned energy projects initiated during Heydar Aliyev's tenure as president and further successfully developed, today Azerbaijan plays a crucial role in the energy security of the European Union in the crucial period of the history the West is passing through. Besides oil, Azerbaijan is becoming an important player in the global gas market, exporting 16 billion cubic meters of gas, out of which 10 billion cubic meters is going to the EU, with the prospect of being doubled in the foreseeable future, desperately in need of energy resources.

Oil and gas were not the full story; numerous other ancillary and unrelated businesses flourished in the business-friendly environment promoted by President Aliyev. Azerbaijan made a tremendous progress to diversify its economy and reduce its dependence on oil and gas. Non-oil sectors such as agriculture, construction, manufacturing, telecommunications, and tourism have been growing steadily.

I fondly remember the evening when President Aliyev was my gracious and kind host at a private performance by one of Baku's preeminent opera singers.

President Heydar Aliyev had the unique vision, the knowledge, and the relationships with regional and world leaders to help Azerbaijan achieve its economic potential.



**THANKS TO ALL THE MENTIONED ENERGY PROJECTS INITIATED DURING HEYDAR ALIYEV'S TENURE AS PRESIDENT AND FURTHER SUCCESSFULLY DEVELOPED, TODAY AZERBAIJAN PLAYS A CRUCIAL ROLE IN THE ENERGY SECURITY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE CRUCIAL PERIOD OF THE HISTORY THE WEST IS PASSING THROUGH.**

# Speech by Mr. Budimir Lončar\* at the commemorative event dedicated to the Centennial Anniversary of Heydar Aliyev, held at the margins of the Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement in Baku on 05 July, 2023

*\* Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia*

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a privilege to be here and to be given the opportunity to say a few words in the framework of this event, marking the 100th birth anniversary of Heydar Aliyev. I am deeply honored indeed.

Heydar Aliyev and I belong to the same generation. He was only a few months older. We spent our youth in the 1920s, we got our education in the 1930s. And our youth was brutally interrupted by the Second World War.

Regardless of where we were born and raised, we suddenly became grown-ups in the anti-Fascist war, in the united Allied front stretching from the Soviet Union to the United States and from the United Kingdom of UK and Northern Ireland to the partisans in Yugoslavia, in whose ranks I fought. It was a fight against Nazi-Fascism that determined not only our generation's destiny, but also the destiny of future generations too.

After the war, Heydar Aliyev continued his education in Leningrad and Moscow to become a distinguished security expert, high-ranking officer and later politician in his native Republic of Azerbaijan. In 1982, he became First Deputy Chairman of the USSR's Council of Ministers and a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party.

What a career!

But this career was built upon his ability to understand how big systems work and on his foresight. Namely, he saw that a new era was coming and changes were unavoidable. His commitment to his principles led him to leave the Party, thus protesting against the unfair treatment and repressions,



to which his countrymen were subjected. At that time, he came back to Azerbaijan, to where he was born.

Leaving the Party did not mean that he left politics for good. After he came back, he was elected President of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1993. As a respected political leader, he contributed to the strengthening of the independence of his homeland and led it towards prosperity. Without Heydar Aliyev, Azerbaijan would not be what it is today: a fast growing victorious country.

In my long career as a diplomat, I met many politicians and statesmen. I was actively involved in the birth and the first two decades of the activity of the Non-Aligned Movement, a truly global movement to which Azerbaijan is a member too. Looking back at those years, I must say that there were not many leaders, even from our generation, who contributed to the international image of their countries the way Aliyev did. And this policy has been continued by his son, today's President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, the current chairman of the NAM.

Let me conclude by saying this: in our generation, a generation witnessing fundamental changes of the 20th century and taking part in them, there are only a few outstanding figures their nations could be proud of. Heydar Aliyev is one of them.

Thank you!

Budimir Loncar  
at the commemorative  
event dedicated to the  
Centennial Anniversary of  
President Heydar Aliyev,  
5 July 2023,  
Baku, Azerbaijan.



## Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement

Baku, the Republic of Azerbaijan

5 – 6 July 2023

# Commemorative Declaration of the Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement Coordinating Bureau on Centennial Anniversary of Heydar Aliyev, the National Leader of the Republic of Azerbaijan

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Non-Aligned Movement Member States,

Welcome with respect the centennial anniversary of Heydar Aliyev, the National Leader of the Republic of Azerbaijan who has been staunch supporter of Bandung Principles, and congratulate the people and Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan on this significant occasion,

Acknowledge with appreciation that Heydar Aliyev was an author of non-alignment policy of Azerbaijan which paved the way for membership of Azerbaijan to the Non-Aligned Movement, and pay tribute to the dearest memory of Heydar Aliyev whose legacy continues to foster strong partnership between Azerbaijan and the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement.



Ministerial Meeting of the  
NAM Coordinating Bureau,  
5 July 2023,  
Baku, Azerbaijan.