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Postal address: Analysis and Strategic Studies Department,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sh.Gurbanov Str. 4, Baku AZ 1009

Tel.: 596-91-03; 596-93-31 e-mail: css@mfa.gov.az

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THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE HEADS OF DIPLOMATIC SERVICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN 21-23 September 2012, Baku

**ЧЕТВЁРТОЕ СОВЕЩАНИЕ РУКОВОДИТЕЛЕЙ ОРГАНОВ
ДИПЛОМАТИЧЕСКИХ СЛУЖБ АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ
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DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, H.E. Mr. ILHAM ALIYEV IN SECOND AND THIRD QUARTER OF 2012

VISITS BY THE PRESIDENT OF AZERBAIJAN H.E. Mr. ILHAM ALIYEV

04-06.04.2012

State visit to the Czech Republic



On 4 April 2012, President Ilham Aliyev left for the Czech Republic on a state visit.

A guard of honor was lined up in honor of the President of Azerbaijan at Stara Ruzyne Airport of Prague where flags of Azerbaijan and the Czech Republic were hoisted.

Meeting President Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban Aliyeva were senior state and government officials of the Czech Republic.

An official welcoming ceremony of President Ilham Aliyev has been held at the Prague castle.

The guard of honor was arranged in honor of the President of Azerbaijan in a square decorated with state flags of Azerbaijan and the Czech Republic. The chief of the guard of honor delivered a report to the President of the Czech Republic.

President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Klaus and his wife Livia Klausova met President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban Aliyeva.

A military orchestra played the national anthems of Azerbaijan and the Czech Republic. The chief of the guard of honor delivered a report to the President of Azerbaijan. The heads of state reviewed the guard of honor. The President of Azerbaijan saluted Czech soldiers.

The guard of honor marched in front of the Presidents under the accompaniment of a military march. State and government officials of the Czech Republic were introduced to President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, while members of the Azerbaijani delegation were introduced to President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Klaus.

President Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban Aliyeva left a note in the Book of Distinguished Guests of the Prague castle.



After the official welcoming ceremony, a joint meeting of President Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban Aliyeva was held with President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Klaus and his wife Livia Klausova.

After the joint meeting of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban Aliyeva with President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Klaus and his wife Livia Klausova, a meeting in an expanded format with the participation of delegations was held.

During the meeting the sides expressed their satisfaction with the development of bilateral relations between the two countries and indicated that the relations in the political, economic and other spheres were strengthening. The parties pointed to a good potential for a further development of cooperation between Azerbaijan and the Czech Republic. The sides indicated that the relations were also successfully developing within the framework of the European Union.



After the meeting of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Klaus an expanded format with the participation of delegations, the ceremony of signing of Azerbaijani-Czech documents was held.

“The Agreement on cooperation in the area of tourism between the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic” was signed by the Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Abulfaz Garayev, and the Minister of Regional Development of the Czech Republic, Kamil Janovsky.

“The Agreement on cooperation in the area of culture between the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic” was signed by the Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Abulfaz Garayev, and the Minister of Culture of the Czech Republic, Alena Hanakova.



“The Memorandum of Understanding between the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan and the National Museum of the Czech Republic” was signed by the Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Czech Republic, Tahir Tagizadeh, and the Director of the National Museum of the Czech Republic, Michal Lukes.

“The Memorandum of Cooperation between the National Library named after M. F. Akhundzadeh and the National Library of the Czech Republic” was signed by the Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Czech Republic, Tahir Tagizadeh, and the Director General of the National Library of the Czech Republic, Thomas Behm.

After the ceremony of signing of Azerbaijani-Czech documents, a joint press conference of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Klaus was held in Prague.

First, the two Presidents made statements.

Recalling his visit to Azerbaijan in May of last year, the President of the Czech Republic said the relations between the two countries were developing rapidly in many spheres.

President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Klaus expressed his confidence that President Ilham Aliyev's visit to Prague would give an impetus to a further development of bilateral relations. He said:

- At the same time, I want to indicate that during the meeting we informed each other about the political situation in our countries. I am pleased to say that our positions on many international issues coincide.

In conclusion, I want to state that I have assured the President of Azerbaijan that the Czech Republic welcomes Azerbaijan's plans on integration into the European space. From this standpoint, we will support Azerbaijan in its relations with Europe and the European Union and are ready to do everything in our power for that.

Expressing his gratitude to President Vaclav Klaus for the invitation to visit the Czech Republic, President Ilham Aliyev said the relations between the two countries were gradually expanding. The President of Azerbaijan said:

- I am very pleased that the relations between the Czech Republic and Azerbaijan are developing dynamically and rapidly.



Your official visit to Azerbaijan last year, the talks held and the agreements reached have preconditioned this rapid development. Our political relations are developing very fast. Mutual high-level visits are clear evidence of that. Compared to last year, our trade has increased several times, showing our successful economic cooperation. The documents signed today cover the areas of culture and tourism. So cooperation in the humanitarian sphere is also in the spotlight.

We have also had a very open and detailed discussion on regional affairs and reviewed regional security issues.

Azerbaijan closely cooperates with the European Union and NATO. We always appreciate the Czech Republic's support for this cooperation. We have also paid attention to energy security issues. Our relations in this area are developing very fast. I am sure that new development directions will be opened in the future.

I want to thank you again for the invitation and hospitality. Thank you.

Then the Presidents answered questions from journalists.

Correspondent of Czech radio Dorozin: I have a question for President Ilham Aliyev. What investment opportunities are there in Azerbaijan, in the Azerbaijani economy for Czech companies? As regards the volume of trade, we are aware that it is not very large at present.

President Vaclav Klaus: Please note that Mr. President and I we have discussed this issue in detail. We are talking about the opportunities of Czech companies to invest and, in general, to work in Azerbaijan. We were pleased to note that there are opportunities for the specific joint projects in the future. Our trade opportunities should also be expanded. In particular, Czech companies can work in the field of engineering.

You have touched upon trade. I want to say that our trade with many countries does not necessarily have to be in our favor or grow in a positive direction. If we look at today's data, we can see that 25 per cent of the oil imported to the Czech Republic is Azerbaijani oil. Naturally, this suggests that trade balance is in favor of Azerbaijan. I think it is quite logical.

President Ilham Aliyev: I agree with you and can add that the volume of trade between us does not reflect the potential of the two countries. If we look at the dynamics, we can see that it has grown several times in the past year.

I said in our meeting today that we want to see Czech companies in Azerbaijan and are ready to create the conditions necessary for their successful activities both as investors and contractors.

Azerbaijan is implementing many infrastructure projects, while Czech companies have a great experience and reputation. And we want to see them among our partners. I am sure that this will be one of the excellent results of this visit.

Correspondent of Azerbaijani Television Yunis Orujov: I have a question for the President of the Czech Republic.

Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan has been ongoing for over 20 years. As you know, the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh poses a serious threat to peace and security in the region. What are the prospects for a settlement of this conflict from the perspective of the Czech Republic?

President Vaclav Klaus: Let me answer your question in the following way. Of course, this issue was generally discussed during our meeting. As for the conflict proper, it was also discussed during my visit to Baku last year. We have discussed the current situation again.

With your permission, let me openly declare: I understand the position of Azerbaijan very well. Naturally, I would be vigorously and categorically opposed to a part of my country being under occupation. Unfortunately, I do not have a miraculous solution to bring about a settlement that I could offer.

Correspondent of Pravo Newspaper Svec: With your permission, my question is to both Presidents. Did you discuss the Syria issue in your meeting? We know that it is currently on the international peace and security agenda. In particular, I would like to ask President Aliyev about your position on the Syrian issue?



President Ilham Aliyev: Of course, this issue has also been discussed. As I mentioned, we have extensively discussed international affairs. We have a fairly open and unequivocal position on the situation in Syria. This position was expressed during the vote in the UN Security Council. Azerbaijan, as a new member of the UN Security Council, unequivocally supported the proposal of the Arab League and played an active role in the adoption of the resolution on Syria. At the same time, we stated our support for Kofi Annan's plan, and this support is very broad. We do hope that the situation in Syria will soon be resolved and the killing of innocent people will be stopped.

Correspondent of Azerbaijan State Telegraph Agency (AzerTAG) Albina Atlikhanova: I have a question for the President of the Czech Republic. Mr. President, the Czech Republic is a member of the European Union and one of the initiators of the EU's "Eastern Partnership" idea. What is your assessment of Azerbaijani-Czech relations from the standpoint of cooperation within the European Union-Azerbaijan framework? Thank you.

President Vaclav Klaus: First of all, I want to note that the European Union's "Eastern Partnership" program is a positive project. We are one of the initiators of the project. At the same time, I want to note that the Czech side has widely discussed Azerbaijan's participation in the program. We welcome the position of Azerbaijan, which has a positive approach to cooperation in this framework. If we pay attention, we can see that the name of this program contains the word "partnership". This means that the objective of the program lies precisely in partnership and in creating all necessary conditions for it. From this perspective, we see that this partnership coincides with the position and interests of Azerbaijan. We know the position of Azerbaijan on this issue. We are sure that Azerbaijan will continue to take decisive steps in this direction. We support the position of Azerbaijan in this field.

On the same day the President of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, Milan Stech, and his wife Ivana Stechova have hosted a luncheon in honor of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban Aliyeva in Prague.

The President of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, Milan Stech, and his wife



Ivana Stechova, met President Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban Aliyeva.

Then members of the Senate were introduced to President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban Aliyeva.

Then a luncheon was hosted in honor of the President of Azerbaijan and his wife.

Speaking at the luncheon, President of the Senate Milan Stech stressed the importance of developing the relations between Azerbaijan and the Czech Republic in various areas, including inter-parliamentary cooperation. He pointed to the successful development of Azerbaijani-Czech economic relations. The President of the Senate said his country attached great importance to the cooperation with Azerbaijan and highly appreciated Azerbaijan's role in the region.

President Ilham Aliyev also made remarks at the luncheon. The President said he had visited Prague two years ago to attend the "Eastern Partnership" summit and was now paying a state visit to the country. Stressing that the visit actually shows the level of bilateral relations, the President of Azerbaijan said:

- Mr. President, you are absolutely right that our relationship has entered into a very active and dynamic phase over the past few years. The state visit by President Klaus to Azerbaijan last year and my state visit to the Czech Republic demonstrate how important this relationship is for both countries. These days we are witnessing a dynamic development of these relations. We also have good recollections about the visit of Mr. Sobotka to Baku.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite you, Mr. President, to Baku. We are having a very active political dialogue and I would like to say that political relations between our countries are at the highest level.

You have also pointed to the economic potential of our countries. Despite the rapid growth of the economy and trade, the potential of both countries is still higher than our trade. We invite Czech companies to work in Azerbaijan. We invite them to be our partners, investors and contractors. We have already discussed the economic aspect of our cooperation. I am sure that this visit will give a great impetus to the further development of mutually beneficial economic ties.

We are very pleased that Azerbaijan is number one economic partner in the South Caucasus for the Czech Republic. We believe that given our economic and political agenda, the Czech Republic is one of the important countries for Azerbaijan. I am pleased that our energy cooperation is developing successfully and there is a potential for the development of this sector.

Today we signed documents covering cultural, tourism and humanitarian spheres. This suggests that these areas do not remain out of sight. So our relations and communications are very broad and promising.

Visiting the Senate today, I note how important the contacts between the parliaments of both countries are. As a former member of the Azerbaijani parliament, I can say that the MPs of our countries have established very successful contacts. I remember when Azerbaijan was elected a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) 10 years ago, members of the Parliament of the Czech Republic gave us tremendous support.

President Aliyev pointed to the importance of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly's Baku session held several days ago.

At the end of luncheon, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban Aliyeva signed a book of honorable guests of the Senate.

The President and his wife were informed about the activities of the Czech Senate. It was noted that the Senate is located in one of Prague's historic buildings. Its architecture imparts special beauty to the city.



During his visit President Ilham Aliyev met with the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, Miroslava Némčová.

The sides indicated during the meeting that the relations between Azerbaijan and the Czech Republic were developing successfully in various areas, including inter-parliamentary ties. It was emphasized that there was a good foundation for the development of relations in political, economic and humanitarian spheres, culture and education.

The parties also pointed to the importance of cooperation between Azerbaijan and the Czech Republic within European parliament institutions and the Azerbaijan-European Union format. The sides emphasized the role of inter-parliamentary friendship groups in the broadening of relations, indicating that the legislatures of both countries were contributing to the development of bilateral relations.

After the meeting, President Ilham Aliyev signed the Book of Honorable Guests of the House of Deputies of the Czech parliament.

As part of a state visit to the Czech Republic, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has reviewed the ancient Charles Bridge in Prague.

The President was informed that one of the historical monuments of the Czech capital that has attracted particular attention of tourists is the Charles Bridge over the Vltava River, which separates Prague into two parts. The bridge was built by architect Peter Parler on the orders of King of Bohemia and Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV in 1357-1400. It is 516 meters long and 10 meters wide. The bridge connects the eastern and western parts of the capital. Until 1841, it was the only means linking the part of Prague rich in castles with old quarters across the River Vltava.



It was noted that the Charles Bridge, located at the crossroads of Eastern and Western Europe, has historically been of great importance. The towers built on both sides of the bridge ensured its security. The tower on the east side of the bridge provides entrance to the old town and is considered one of the most beautiful buildings of medieval Europe. The tower is decorated with coats of arms of the rulers of the territories subordinated to Emperor Charles IV. On the second floor of the tower there are statues of the patron of the bridge, St. Vitus, as well as Charles IV and Wenceslas IV. The other tower built in the western part of bridge is also beautiful. In 1700, about 30 large and small sculptures were erected at the edges of the bridge in the Baroque style. These sculptures make the bridge even more attractive.

The President of Azerbaijan was told that artisans demonstrate their crafts and entertain people during the day on the crowded bridge. This ancient grand structure always causes people's admiration.

On the same day President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Klaus and his wife Livia Klausova have hosted an official dinner reception in honor of President Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban Aliyeva.

Saluting President Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban Aliyeva again, the President of the Czech Republic spoke about the importance of President Aliyev's visit to Prague from the standpoint of continuing the dialogue that was started after his own visit to Baku a year ago and discussing the pressing international issues, opportunities and prospects for bilateral cooperation.

President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Klaus said:

- Dear Mr. President!

I am aware that this is your first visit to Prague as President. I remember our meeting on the side-



country regained independence.

lines of the “Eastern Partnership” summit organized within the framework of our country’s presidency in the European Union. I am confident that this visit of yours will give a strong impetus to the development of Czech-Azerbaijani relations.

Our relations have a solid foundation. Our economic cooperation commenced back in communist years. Czech industrial goods are known quite well in Azerbaijan and in your industrial sector. Despite this, the development of direct relations has only been possible in the last 20 years, after your

It is very commendable that our relations are expanding at all levels. This has been facilitated by the opening of our representative offices in both Prague and Baku, the hard work of our ambassadors and the presence of a direct air link between the two capitals. It is also worth pointing to the growing number of high-level mutual visits and the strengthening business relations. The peak of that, of course, have been the mutual visits by Presidents. As an example we can refer to my visit to Baku last year and your current visit.

In May of last year, we had the opportunity of witnessing the rapid and dynamic development of your beautiful country. We have become familiar with the magnificent projects you have prepared and already implemented. Czech companies are very interested in contributing to your economic development. There are already examples of successful cooperation in the industrial sector, infrastructure development, technology and equipment, supply of consumer goods. We can generate new opportunities on this basis. I would like to note that Azerbaijan has turned into one of the most significant consumers of Czech goods and a strategic partner.

Dear Mr. President!

We want Azerbaijan, a country located in a very complex political region, to develop in a stable and peaceful environment. We want the long-standing and aggravating conflict to be resolved in peace. The Czech Republic has always supported all international activities and initiatives to this end and will continue to do so in the future.

The President of the Czech Republic expressed his confidence that the state visit of his Azerbaijani counterpart to Prague would give a strong impetus to the development of bilateral relations and that the Azerbaijani delegation would have good impressions about the visit.

After the Czech President’s remarks, the national anthem of the Republic of Azerbaijan was played.

Then remarks were made by President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev.

The President said he was pleased to visit the friendly Czech Republic, a country with diverse history and culture. He said bilateral relations had entered a new phase of development.

Noting that the talks held during the Czech President’s visit to Azerbaijan in May 2011 had contributed to elevating bilateral relations to a new level, President Ilham Aliyev said:

- Thanks to the efforts we have made in recent years our relations have broadened. An intergovernmental commission was set up and held its first meeting last year. Trade between our countries increased several times in 2011 in comparison with 2010. The participation of Czech banks in the important projects under way in Azerbaijan and Azerbaijan’s role in the energy supplies of the Czech Republic are an indicator of our economic ties. There are good prospects for a fruitful cooperation in energy, trade, industrial, transportation, information technologies, agriculture, tourism and other sectors. I am sure that my visit, the agreements reached and the documents signed in the areas of culture and tourism today will further bolster our relations.

Next year we will celebrate the 20th anniversary of our diplomatic relations. I do hope that we will mark this remarkable date with new achievements in the various spheres of Azerbaijani-Czech relations.



Our countries cooperate closely within international organizations such as the UN, the OSCE, the Council of Europe. Azerbaijan's election as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council is opening up opportunities for the development of our multifaceted cooperation. Our country's first mission in this prestigious organization will serve respect for the norms and principles of international law and restoration of peace and justice in the world.

Relations with the European Union and Euro-Atlantic institutions are an important component of Azerbaijan's foreign policies. Our soldiers are guarding stability in Afghanistan.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Czech Republic for its contribution to the development of Azerbaijan's relations with the European Union and NATO. Having turned into a regional economic center, Azerbaijan is also a reliable energy partner and is ready to keep on contributing to European energy security. The Joint Declaration on the Southern Gas Corridor signed between the European Commission and Azerbaijan in January 2011 is a graphic example of that. We are interested in delivering our energy resources to world markets through all directions and are working on different projects now.

Azerbaijan is in favor of peace, stability and security in the region. But as you know our historical lands of Nagorno-Karabakh and seven adjacent districts have been under Armenian occupation for over 20 years. As a result of Armenia's policy of ethnic cleansing on this territory, over a million Azerbaijanis have become refugees and IDPs. There are four UN Security Council resolutions, decisions and resolutions of the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, NATO and other international organizations regarding the conflict. It is our firm stance that the conflict should be resolved only in line with international law and on the basis of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity.

The President of Azerbaijan expressed his gratitude for the hospitality shown during the visit and wished prosperity to the Czech people. After the President's remarks, the national anthem of the Czech Republic was played.

On 6 April 2012, President Ilham Aliyev visited the Vitkov National Memorial in Prague.

Located in the old part of Prague, the National Memorial on Vitkov Hill was built in 1929-1938. The statue of military commander Jan Zizka, who won a difficult battle in 1420, has been erected on the hill, which is the highest point of the city.

National anthems of Azerbaijan and the Czech Republic were played.

President Ilham Aliyev laid a wreath at the statue.



Then the head of state signed the commemorative book of the Vitkov National Memorial. When reviewing the museum, the President of Azerbaijan was informed that the memorial reflects the heroic history of the Czech Republic. The bigger part of the museum's exhibits are dedicated to the liberation struggle of the Czech people. The memory of the representatives of the Czech intelligentsia who marched in the vanguard of the liberation movement is deeply revered here. Visitors of the museum are told about the lives of the heroes.

The exhibition also includes a variety of documents, photographs of historical moments and other

exhibits. Every year the museum is visited by tens of thousands of tourists who are provided with detailed information about the liberation struggle of the Czech people.

On the same day the state visit of President Ilham Aliyev to the Czech Republic has ended.

A guard of honor was arranged in honor of the President of Azerbaijan at Stara Ruzyne Airport of Prague where flags of Azerbaijan and the Czech Republic were hoisted. Seeing off President Ilham Aliyev were senior state and government officials of the Czech Republic.

04-05.05.2012

Working visit to the United States of America

On 4 May 2012, President Ilham Aliyev arrived in the United States of America on a working visit to attend the event, marking the 20th anniversary of Azerbaijan's membership in the United Nations, and the high-level meeting of the UN Security Council

During his visit President Ilham Aliyev met with the Foreign Minister of Argentina, Hector Timerman, in New York.



The sides expressed their satisfaction with the development of bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Argentina and pointed to a good potential for the development of cooperation in political, economic and other areas.

The meeting also noted the importance of an upcoming visit by Argentine business people to Azerbaijan from the standpoint of expanding the economic cooperation. The sides expressed their confidence that bilateral relations would continue to expand in the future too.

President Ilham Aliyev met with the US Transportation Commander, Gen William Fraser.

Gen William Fraser expressed his satisfaction with the development of relations between Azerbaijan and the United States. The commander praised Azerbaijan's role in the fight against terror and in the peace-keeping effort in Afghanistan and expressed his hope for a continuation of this cooperation.



President Ilham Aliyev said this collaboration was successful and effective and expressed his confidence that the cooperation within the framework of the anti-terror coalition would be successfully continued.



A reception on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of membership of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the United Nations and the election of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Security Council for 2012-2013 has been hosted on behalf of President Ilham Aliyev in New York.

The ceremony was attended by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, influential politicians and public figures of the United States.

The event has attracted attention with its significance in terms of analyzing the contribution of cooperation between Azerbaijan and the United Nations to resolving major international problems and discussing its results.



President Ilham Aliyev met with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon who attended the ceremony.

Invited guests of the ceremony welcomed and congratulated the President of Azerbaijan on the 20th anniversary of Azerbaijan's membership in the UN and its election to the UN Security Council. This shows again that the Azerbaijani state has strong international positions.

The event has also demonstrated the trust and support Azerbaijan has secured in the international arena by establishing fruitful cooperation with all international organiza-

tions, including the UN.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of Azerbaijan's membership in the UN. On 2 March 1992, the 46th session of the UN General Assembly passed a resolution admitting Azerbaijan to the organization. The flag of Azerbaijan, 181st member of the organization, was hoisted outside the UN headquarters in New York. The Azerbaijani representative office in the organization started its activities on 6 May. Over this period, cooperation with the UN has contributed to Azerbaijan's integration into the world community and strengthened the country's international positions. At the same time, it has created opportunities for exposing the aggressive policy of Armenia.

President Ilham Aliyev addressed the ceremony.

Remarks by President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

- Ladies and gentlemen!

Distinguished guests, dear friends!

I am very grateful to you for accepting our invitation and being here with us tonight. I am very honored to organize such a grand reception and see you all here.

I see people I have known for many years, many friends, including new ones. I am sure we will remember this day for a long time. Today, we are celebrating two important events in the modern history of Azerbaijan. Twenty years ago Azerbaijan became a member of the UN. And last year our country was elected a member of the UN Security Council.



Today we are marking these two remarkable events. Several days ago Azerbaijan took over presidency in the Security Council.

I want to thank everyone who voted for us, showed confidence in us, especially those who supported us at the most important moment in the election. The competition was very tough and fair. Azerbaijan won the most votes. This is an assessment of the efforts we made in the years of independence. It is a symbol of support for our young republic which has changed dramatically in the past 20 years, has set very ambitious goals and is striving to achieve them. Twenty years ago we became an independent country. Our people have a great history, culture, customs and traditions. But we were not independent. Twenty years ago we got the opportunity of building our nation and state, living in peace and friendship with our neighbors and friends.

The changes that have occurred over 20 years have shown that Azerbaijan has made great progress. We have made great changes in the political system, carried out fundamental political reforms. Today, Azerbaijan is a modern, democratic and open country where all political freedoms – the freedom of the press, the freedom of expression, a free Internet, the freedom of religion – are guaranteed.

Azerbaijan is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country. We are proud of that. This is the legacy we have inherited from the past. Regardless of the political system, Azerbaijan has always been a place

where religions and peoples came together and lived like one family. We are very proud of the fact that over the 20 years we have not only preserved this important legacy of the past, but have also strengthened the spirit of cooperation, brotherhood and partnership.

We also conduct many international events promoting the idea of multiculturalism and coexistence of peoples of different backgrounds and religions, we are building a modern country.

We have implemented major economic projects. This has been a very important part of our agenda, because we had to move from a planned to a market economy. In 20 years the share of the market economy in our GDP has exceeded 80 per cent. Today, we can really feel the results of development and economic reforms. In less than 10 years our GDP has tripled. Industrial production has also increased three times. The poverty level has dropped from about 50 to 7.6 per cent.

The unemployment rate is 5.4 per cent. We have not been affected by the Dutch disease and have diversified our economy in order not to depend on the energy sector.

We will continue our economic reforms because we are seeing their benefits for the population. We are very pleased that international financial institutions support and appreciate the work ongoing in Azerbaijan. Even in the years of the financial recession the key financial institutions such as Standard & Poor's, Fitch and Moody's upgraded our credit rating.

Today our economy is more competitive than in previous years. Our economic diversification is already a reality. We are now developing the ICT sector, creating a space industry. In short, we are building a modern and growing economy. Our goal is to become one of the developed countries of the world. We have set the goal of further doubling the already tripled GDP over the next 10 years and become a high-income country.



We are also working to solve social problems. One of the key social problems is the plight of our refugees and IDPs.

Azerbaijan has been suffering from Armenian aggression and occupation of its lands for 20 years now. A fifth of Azerbaijan's internationally recognized territory is still under occupation. The UN Security Council has passed four resolutions on the subject. Unfortunately, they have yet to be executed. Armenia is flouting them. These resolutions demand an unconditional and immediate withdrawal of Armenian forces from our territories.

The Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh is a major threat to regional stability. It is a great injustice for the region and a flagrant violation of international law. Twenty years ago Azerbaijan joined the UN as a sovereign country. Nagorno-Karabakh is historical Azerbaijani territory. It has always been a part of Azerbaijan. From a legal standpoint it is an integral part of Azerbaijan. Of course, we want to restore our territorial integrity, we want our refugees and IDPs to return to their homes.

I can talk a lot about the problems and achievements of our country. But the most important thing is that 20 years ago we fully capitalized on the opportunity that presented itself. We have strengthened our independence, transformed the economy, established political institutions and built partnerships with our friends.

Speaking in the beautiful city of New York today, I want to stress that we attach great importance to bilateral relations with the United States. These relations have a long history and cover many areas. We actively cooperate in matters of political development, economy, energy security and security in general, anti-terror operations. Azerbaijan is a reliable partner of the United States. In 20 years these relations have turned into a strategic partnership for both sides. I am confident that the future of our relations will also be very successful. We are currently working on important regional issues. As a leading country of the region, we have a strong economy. Azerbaijan, a member of the Security Council, is ready to play a role in global affairs.

Of course, our regional initiatives in the political, economic, energy and other areas create a new situation. Our energy initiatives are changing the regional energy map and leading to prosperity and predictability in the region. We want to live in peace with our neighbors and strengthen cooperation with our friends. Several months ago, the international community and the UN family supported us greatly by electing Azerbaijan to the Security Council. Today I want to thank all the countries that supported us. To be elected, we passed 16 rounds. The competition was strong. It was strong but fair.

We are proud to have received the support of 155 countries.

I want to express my gratitude to all the countries that voted us again. It is a symbol of friendship and support, an evaluation of the work we have done at home and globally. It also means tremendous responsibility. In the coming two years we will be sharing this responsibility with our partners in the Security Council. I can assure you that Azerbaijan will be an active and constructive member of the Security Council. After our election I made a statement congratulating our people and noting that Azerbaijan would uphold justice and international law in the Security Council. I want to assure our friends again that we are committed to these principles and will do everything possible to contribute to peace and international cooperation, stability and development.

Thank you, dear friends. Thank you for being with us. I send you my best wishes. Thank you.

A high-level UN Security Council meeting chaired by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has been held in New York.

On Azerbaijan's initiative, the meeting discussed the issue of "Threats to international peace and security posed by acts of terror".



By becoming a nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council in October 2011, Azerbaijan attained one of its biggest foreign political successes in the 20 years of independence. Receiving the votes of 155 countries in the election and achieving historic success, Azerbaijan started to fulfill its mandate in the Security Council on 1 January 2012.

Azerbaijan's participation alongside permanent members of the UN Security Council – the USA, China, Russia, the UK and France – in the world's top international organization is clear evidence of international support for the path our country has chosen. It is also evidence of the importance the international community attaches to the policies pursued by President Ilham Aliyev and an expression of international confidence in our country.

President Ilham Aliyev arrived at the UN headquarters in New York to attend the high-level meeting of the Security Council.

During the UN Security Council meeting chaired by President Ilham Aliyev, the President of Azerbaijan said the subject of the meeting was "Threats to international peace and security posed by acts of terror".

President Ilham Aliyev expressed his gratitude to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon for attending the meeting.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon congratulated President Ilham Aliyev on Azerbaijan's presidency in the Security Council and welcomed his chairmanship at the meeting. The UN Secretary General noted that the international community was waging a continuous fight against terror. He said terrorist organizations in various parts of the world are still a source of great threat. "The fact-finding mission sent to Libya last year revealed that terrorist organizations operating there get help from outside," Ban Ki-moon said. He added that the main goals were to strengthen the fight against terrorism and pave the way for the protection of human rights. The UN Secretary-General stressed the

need for a common concept in the fight against terror.

German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle congratulated the President of Azerbaijan on the occasion of presidency in the Security Council. "Our joint activities have weakened the sources of terrorism," Guido Westerwelle said pointing to the successful results achieved in Iraq and Afghanistan in this respect.

He said Germany would always support the implementation of the UN Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Togo, Elliott Ohin, congratulated the President of Azerbaijan on the country's presidency in the Security Council. He said terrorism was the biggest threat to peace and security. Elliott Ohin spoke about the damage terrorist organizations have inflicted to the African continent.

A member of the Obama administration and the US Permanent Representative to the UN, Susan Rice, said the world had yet to get rid of terrorism, adding that the fight against it must be continued. Indicating that innocent people were being killed as a result of terrorist activities of "Al-Qaeda", Susan Rice said the USA was fighting terrorism anywhere in the world. The US government receives help from its allies and friends in this regard.



Thanking President Ilham Aliyev for presidency at such an important meeting, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Morocco, Youssef Amrani, said that it follows from the special importance Azerbaijan attaches to anti-terrorist operations.

The Special Representative of the Russian President for the fight against terrorism and organized crime, Alexander Zmeyerovskiy, said there could be no justification for terrorism and it could only be fought through international cooperation.

The Deputy Minister of Multilateral Affairs of Colombia, Patti Londono, thanked President Ilham Aliyev for his chairmanship at such an important meeting and recalled her visit to Azerbaijan several months ago. She said the fight against terror was a priority issue for her country.

A representative of the People's Republic of China expressed his gratitude to Azerbaijan, a country presiding in the UN Security Council in May, for the initiative to hold the high-level meeting on the issue of "Threats to international peace and security posed by acts of terror". He praised the cooperation between Azerbaijan, which has been a member of the UN for 20 years, and the international community. The representative of China said Azerbaijan was contributing a lot this cooperation. Noting that Azerbaijan has made great efforts to protect and enforce the UN principles, the Chinese representative said his country's supports these efforts.

The representatives of Pakistan, the UK, India, the Republic of South Africa, Guatemala, France and Portugal indicated in their remarks that Azerbaijan was chairing a UN Security Council meeting for the first time in its history and expressed their congratulations on this occasion. They said terrorism, which poses a threat to international peace and security, is the biggest disaster for the world and expressed their support for UN measures in this area.

President Ilham Aliyev addressed the high-level meeting of the UN Security Council.

Remarks by President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

-And now, as President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, I will make my statement.

Terrorism poses a serious threat to international peace and security, to the promotion of human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy, to the establishment of political independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and, finally, to socioeconomic development of all member-states.

Azerbaijan strongly condemns all forms and manifestations of terrorism. We believe that all acts of

terror acts heinous crimes which should be condemned and those guilty of them punished. We must never allow terrorists to justify their acts. No act of terror, whatever the reason, can be justified. Terrorism has a changing face and nature, in many cases it is associated with aggressive separatism, extremism and organized crime.

In places of armed conflict, particularly in territories under foreign military occupation, the conditions usually emerge for some bargains between terrorism and those who are in this space.

Azerbaijan has been subjected to terrorism in various ways. Azerbaijan has become a direct target of terrorist activities organized from the outside. The Republic of Armenia has carried out dozens of terrorist attacks against Azerbaijan's civilian population and infrastructure. As a result, more than 2,000 Azerbaijanis have been killed.

Armenia has perpetrated these acts of terror with direct participation of its law-enforcement bodies and using international terrorist groups. During the active phase of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh and in order to carry out a policy of ethnic cleansing, Armenia extensively used acts of terror against the civilian population alongside military aggression. These brutal acts reached their climax with the extermination of the population of the town of Khojaly in February 1992. Then, 613 innocent people were killed, including women, children and the elderly. The Armenians killed over 100 women and 63 children. Armenia has also fought against the civilian population by committing acts of terror on public transport, in places of critical infrastructure away from the zone of military action, by planting a bombs in the Baku subway in 1994 and perpetrating other acts.

While we have mostly neutralized the terrorist threat on the part of Armenia, the risks are still high. There are still explicit statements and opinions that a number of terrorist acts, including attacks on Azerbaijan's civilian infrastructure, such as water reservoirs, dams and a network of oil pipelines, are a legitimate military tactic. This may clearly lead to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of civilians. Elements of international terrorist organizations are integrated into Armenia's security and defense sectors. When one sees a country trying to show commitment to European and universal values and introducing members of international terrorist organizations as heroes and erecting monuments to them, this causes a feeling of regret.



The policy of ethnic cleansing carried out against Azerbaijanis has led to the occupation of 20 per cent of our internationally recognized territory. More than a million people were driven out of their homes and became refugees and IDPs. The UN Security Council has passed four resolutions demanding a withdrawal of Armenian troops from occupied territories. But unfortunately, Armenia has been flouting these resolutions for nearly 20 years.

From the standpoint of a link among terrorism and separatism, extremism and organized crime, including drug trafficking, money laundering and arms smuggling, the occupied Azerbaijani territories are a source of great concern. In addition to the terrorist threats on the part of Armenia, Azerbaijan still faces risks and dangers posed by international terrorist groups. The proximity of our country to sensitive regions makes these threats even more imminent to us.

Azerbaijan, of course, takes extensive measures at the national level and actively contributes to international efforts to prevent terrorism.

Azerbaijan, which heralds the indivisibility of security, is an active contributor to the international anti-terror coalition.

Although the international community has made great strides in the prevention of terrorism, there is still much to do to stop and fight it. The absence of a clear definition of terrorism in international law hampers the international efforts to prosecute not only individual terrorists and terrorist organizations, but also the states encouraging and financing terrorist activities. From this standpoint, Azerbaijan stresses the importance of reaching an agreement on a comprehensive convention on international terrorism, which will be an effective tool in the fight against terrorism.

A clear definition of terrorism and the convention on international terrorism could contribute to the solution of a number of outstanding issues, including the rejection of the organization, financing, encouraging, instructing and supporting terrorist activities in other direct or indirect ways. Such an agreement should be based on an expanded and open discussion of the major causes of terrorism. To address issues of social and economic development and education, we should clearly pay the necessary attention to this area in the ongoing international efforts, including those taken through the UN. The limited opportunities of education coupled with economic difficulties can in many cases serve as factors laying the foundation for terrorist propaganda in the guise of a religious interpretation. The fight against terror cannot be used to justify attacks on a particular religion or culture. Today we are living in the conditions of limited religious awareness, and in some cases this is blown out of proportion, maliciously used to fuel conflicts on ethnic, religious and cultural grounds. Islamophobia has been at an unacceptable level in some countries in recent years, which confirms the importance of joint efforts and dialogue in the prevention of such defamatory and erroneous concepts.

Azerbaijan seeks to contribute to the dialogue of civilizations. Our country carries out many activities serving a better understanding between people of different religions. Azerbaijan is a multiethnic and multi-religious country.

Representatives of all nationalities and religions live in our country in peace and mutual understanding. The multicultural dialogue in our country can be used as an example of peaceful coexistence between people of different religions and backgrounds.

Azerbaijan is a country of tolerance and we appreciate this heritage. Today we strive to step up our efforts to create a spirit of partnership and brotherhood between all peoples and religions.

If we talk about economic development, it is the most important aspect of combating terrorism, ensuring good governance and creating better conditions for people. In the past 10 years Azerbaijan has made great progress in economic reforms. Our country's independence is not very long. We regained our independence only 20 years ago. But these have been the years of reform, change, development and progress. In less than 10 years our economy grew threefold. Poverty has declined from 50 to 7 per cent. One million jobs have been created. Many social projects and programs are carried out. International financial institutions are praising us. Three major international organizations – Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's – have recently upgraded our credit rating. This is a good development indicator, especially in the years of economic recession. Therefore, factors such as poverty reduction, creation of jobs, formation of a perfect legal framework, the rule of law, the fight against corruption, etc. serve the development of the country and mobilize its efforts in the fight against terrorism.

I am sure that we must consolidate all our efforts in the fight against terrorism. The present image of terrorism and its relation to other threats to international peace and stability require a closer cooperation between states, a more effective, coordinated, balanced and systematic approach by the UN. Also, conflicts between states, foreign military aggression and aggressive separatism create favorable conditions for terrorism. So the international community should seek to resolve conflicts on the basis of generally accepted norms and principles of international law, in particular in matters relating to the territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized borders of states, assist countries in the restoration of sovereignty over their territories.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the UN for their support of Azerbaijan's candidacy. In October last year, Azerbaijan was elected a nonpermanent member of the Security Council for the first time in its short history.

This is tremendous responsibility which we are ready to take on. Azerbaijan will defend the ideals of justice, international law and peaceful cooperation among all countries. We very much look forward to working together with regional countries. Our initiatives are aimed at enhancing regional cooperation in a spirit of friendship, partnership and good neighborliness.

We will definitely make a contribution during our presidency in the Security Council. I can assure all our friends in the UN and all member-states that Azerbaijan will become a reliable and friendly partner for all countries. We want to expand our cooperation and partnership and are very grateful for this support.

Our country has a great history, culture, customs and traditions. But we, as an independent country, are only 20 years old.

These years have been the years of change, development and promotion in the world. The support for our candidacy on the part of 155 countries is, on the one hand, evidence of the fact that we have introduced ourselves to the world. At the same time, it shows the support and confidence of the international community in us, which places a lot of responsibility on us. I can assure you that we are ready to take on this responsibility. We will live up to the confidence of those who believed in us and will do everything possible to create a more predictable and secure world for all of us.

Thank you very much.



During the visit a dinner reception has been hosted in New York on behalf of the UN Secretary General and the country presiding in the UN Security Council.

The reception was attended by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

Addressing the reception, President Ilham Aliyev said:

- Dear ladies and gentlemen, welcome to our reception!

We are very grateful to you for accepting our invitation. This morning we have discussed issues of international importance. I express my deep appreciation to you for this contribution to our partnership.

Today we will continue our discussions on matters of mutual interest. I am sure that our discussions will be held in a spirit of cooperation and constructiveness. I want to thank all the parties who supported us again because it is a significant event for us, I would even say it is one of the most important events in our history. We have been elected to the Security Council and have now taken over presidency. I am very pleased to be here in this role and to share these happy moments with our friends.

Welcome again and with your permission I would like to give the floor to Secretary General.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon congratulated Azerbaijan again on being elected to the UN Security Council and starting presidency in the organization and wished Azerbaijan every success.

On 5 May 2012, President Ilham Aliyev met with Minister Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany Guido Westerwelle.

Guido Westerwelle said during the meeting that the relations between Azerbaijan and Germany were at a high level.

Indicating that his country was interested in expanding bilateral relations with Azerbaijan, the minister said Azerbaijani-German cooperation in all spheres was based on strategic interests.

President Ilham Aliyev expressed his satisfaction with the development of cooperation between Azerbaijan and Germany.

The President pointed to the presence of good opportunities for a further expansion of the many years of friendship and cooperation.





President Ilham Aliyev met with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Togo Elliott Ohin in New York.

The sides discussed issues relating to the opportunities for establishing relations between the two countries.

On the same day President Ilham Aliyev met with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in New York.

At the meeting, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon mentioned the importance of President Ilham Aliyev's working visit to New York a propos Azerbaijan's presidency of the UN Security Council. He characterized inclusion of the "Threats posed by terror acts to international peace and security" topic onto the UN Security Council agenda by Azerbaijan as a successful step and added that this topic is currently a pressing issue around the world.

UN Secretary General also touched upon the importance of the "National Action Program on increasing effectiveness of protection of human rights and freedoms in the Republic of Azerbaijan", signed by President Ilham Aliyev in 2011, and emphasized the contributions rendered by this document for development of democracy.

Ban Ki-moon expressed his confidence that democracy would continue to develop in Azerbaijan under President Ilham Aliyev's tenure.



President Ilham Aliyev expressed his gratitude to UN Secretary General for praising Azerbaijan's initiative to include the war on terrorism topic onto the UN Security Council agenda. He noted that Azerbaijan had been very active in war on terrorism and counter-terrorism coalition from the first days. President also talked about the wide-scale reforms, carried out in political and economic fields and big projects implemented for establishment of democracy in Azerbaijan, since it regained independence.



Ban Ki-moon also inquired about President Ilham Aliyev's views of the Armenian-Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict regulation process.

President Ilham Aliyev reiterated the state's position on resolution of the conflict, created as a result of the aggressive policy of Armenia against Azerbaijan.

15.05.2012

Working visit to the Russian Federation

On 15 May 2012, President Ilham Aliyev left for the Russian capital Moscow on a working visit to attend an unofficial meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of State.

President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin welcomed President Ilham Aliyev and other attending Presidents. In his opening remarks, President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin thanked the Presidents of the CIS member-states for accepting the invitation to attend the meeting. Speaking next was President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov of Turkmenistan, the country currently presiding the CIS. During the meeting, the sides exchanged views on the development of cooperation in various areas and integration within the CIS.



As part of a working visit to the Russian Federation, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev met with President of Kyrgyzstan Almazbek Atambayev at the Grand Kremlin Palace in Moscow.



During the meeting the sides expressed their satisfaction with the development of bilateral relations between our countries in different directions and the activities of the intergovernmental commission. It was emphasized that mutual visits contribute significantly to the development of bilateral relations. The sides pointed to good opportunities for a further development of bilateral cooperation and stressed that the relations between the two countries and peoples were based on the principles of friendship and brotherhood.

On the same day President Ilham Aliyev has met with President of the Republic of Moldova Nicolae Timofti. The sides expressed their satisfaction with the development of bilateral relations in various spheres and pointed to the extensive opportunities for cooperation between Azerbaijan and Moldova in energy, investment and other fields. The Presidents expressed their confidence that bilateral relations would continue to develop.



19-22.05.2012

Working visit to the United States of America



On 19 May 2012, President Ilham Aliyev arrived in the United States of America on a working visit to attend the NATO Summit.

The guard of honor was arranged at the O'Hare international airport of Chicago in honor of the President. The President was welcomed by US officials.

During the visit President Ilham Aliyev met with President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili. The sides expressed their satisfaction with the development of Azerbaijani-Georgian relations in various spheres and exchanged views on the prospects for cooperation between the two countries.



On the same day President Ilham Aliyev met with President of the Republic of Turkey Abdullah Gul.

The sides expressed their satisfaction with the successful development of friendly and fraternal relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey in all areas and voiced their confidence that these relations would continue to expand in the future too. The Presidents exchanged views on the expansion of cooperation between the two countries.



On 20 May 2012, President Ilham Aliyev met with Prime Minister of Slovenia Janez Jansa.

The sides expressed their satisfaction with the development of bilateral relations in recent years and noted the importance of Azerbaijani-Slovenian economic ties, in particular those in energy, investment areas and joint participation in various projects. The parties pointed to a good potential for a further expansion of cooperation between the two countries within the European Union.



President Ilham Aliyev met with Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina Bakir Izetbegovic in Chicago. The sides expressed their satisfaction with the development of relations between the two countries and noted that the bilateral cooperation was yielding good results in various areas. The sides also stressed the importance of developing the ties further. During the meeting the parties exchanged views on other issues of mutual interest.

President Ilham Aliyev met with Prime Minister of Montenegro Igor Luksic.

During the meeting the sides stressed that the relations between the two countries were developing successfully. It was noted that the strengthening of ties in the political sphere was giving an impetus to the expansion of cooperation in other areas, including economy. The sides emphasized that the cooperation in the areas of energy, tourism, transport infrastructure and others had good prospects and expressed confidence that the relations between the two countries would continue to grow.



A meeting of heads of state and government has been held as part of the NATO Summit in Chicago, USA.

The meeting was attended by President Ilham Aliyev.

The 25th NATO summit has been held in the USA after a 13-year break. The meeting, joined by heads of state and government from 28 countries and representatives of international organizations, discussed the strategy for the pullout of international forces from Afghanistan by the end of 2014 and the subsequent handover of control over the situation in the country to national security forces.

In his opening remarks at the meeting, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said that the meeting would discuss the future of the state of Afghanistan and the Afghan people.

Speaking about the role of the activities of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, the NATO Secretary General said it had played an active part in the fight against terror. At present, the NATO forces in Afghanistan are handing over their lead responsibility to the national police and the International Security Assistance Force.



In remarks at the meeting, US President Barack Obama praised the work of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan and said that in line with the decision adopted at the alliance's Lisbon summit two years ago, the process of handing over lead responsibility from NATO to national security forces was ongoing. He said the Afghans were already in control of 75 per cent of their territory.



President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev made remarks at the meeting. The President said Azerbaijan had been making effort from the very first years to establish peace and security in Afghanistan. Indicating that Azerbaijan was one of the most active partners of the alliance in this respect, President Ilham Aliyev said the country's soldiers were still involved in a peacekeeping mission in Afghanistan. Besides, Azerbaijan's contribution has also included various trainings for Afghan

servicemen in different areas. President Ilham Aliyev said that Azerbaijan would continue providing assistance to Afghanistan until 2014 and beyond if necessary.

After the meeting the heads of state and government posed for a joint photograph.

On 21 May 2012, President Ilham Aliyev has met with Prime Minister of the United Kingdom David Cameron in Chicago. The sides expressed their satisfaction with the level of bilateral relations in various fields and voiced their confidence that the ties would expand further.

It was noted during the meeting that the energy cooperation between the two countries was yielding good results. The sides emphasized that the efforts taken jointly with bp had led to successful steps towards creating the Southern Corridor and that this process was ongoing.

The sides also discussed the situation in Afghanistan and noted that great importance was being attached to the cooperation in building peace and security in this country. The parties exchanged views on a number of regional issues.

25-26.06.2012 Working visit to the Republic of Turkey

On 25 June 2012, President Ilham Aliyev left for a working visit to attend the 20th anniversary summit of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation in Istanbul, Turkey.

At the Istanbul Ataturk Airport, the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev was welcomed by top state and government officials of Turkey.



On the same day President Ilham Aliyev met with Prime Minister of Albania Sali Berisha in Istanbul. The sides discussed the current state and prospects for bilateral ties and pointed to the presence of good opportunities for the development of cooperation in energy, investment and tourism sectors. It was indicated that Albania was interested in cooperating with Azerbaijan in the field of oil and gas infrastructure.

Prime Minister Sali Berisha said that efforts were being made to open the Embassy of Albania in Baku and invited the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev to visit his country.

On 26 June 2012, a meeting of President Ilham Aliyev and President of the Republic of Turkey Abdullah Gul held at the international congress center Lutfi Kirdar.

The sides noted that the summit to mark the 20th anniversary of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) organization would contribute to the development of cooperation between participating countries. Expressing satisfaction with the rapid development of ties between the two countries in all spheres, the heads of the fraternal countries stressed the need for enhanced efforts to further deepen this cooperation.

Endorsing the current level of economic ties between the two countries, the Presidents noted the importance of the documents relating to the development of this sphere. The Presidents also exchanged views on the settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh.

On the same day the summit on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) held in Istanbul. President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev attended the summit. President of Turkey Abdullah Gul met President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and other heads of state and government.

The summit participants posed for an official photo.





countries, development of the private sector, trade, culture and tourism. All this is made possible by the will of the BSEC member-states. The organization, which unites Black Sea countries located in the heart of Eurasia, also plays an important part in the restoration of the historic Silk Road and the transit of energy resources.

The Turkish President said the main challenge facing the organization now is to identify new targets of economic cooperation for the next 10 years. Abdullah Gul wished the summit success.

President Tomislav Nikolic of Serbia, a country presiding in the BSEC, spoke about the significance of the jubilee summit at a time when the world is dominated by economic recession. He said important steps towards developing economic ties among member countries were taken during Serbia's presidency in the organization. The main goal of the organization is to establish relations with international organizations at a high level.

The Serbian President also touched upon the importance of close contacts of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation with influential international organizations, including the European Union and the European Commission. He expressed his satisfaction that presidency of the BSEC was to be transferred to Turkey on 1 July.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev addressed the summit.

- Dear Mr. President!

Dear ladies and gentlemen!

First of all, I want to express my gratitude to the President of Turkey, my dear brother Mr. Abdullah Gul, for the high level of organization of this summit and the warm hospitality extended to us. I am very glad to be in brotherly Turkey again.

Azerbaijan highly appreciates the activities of the BSEC. I think that in 20 years our organization has evolved into an important international organization. We can say that the history of the organization overlaps with the history of our country's independence. Last year we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the restoration of our independence. For 20 years Azerbaijan has taken an active part in various international organizations, our work has also been active in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization.

Over the years our country has covered a long road. The main direction of our organization in the economic sphere has been economic cooperation. Azerbaijan has conducted radical economic reforms, has successfully implemented major economic and infrastructure projects in recent years. Over the past eight years our GDP, i.e. our economy, has grown three times, poverty reduced five times, more than a million jobs were created. Public debt constitutes 7 per cent of the GDP. Even the economic crisis that has swept the world and Europe has not had a big impact on Azerbaijan. In recent months, three of the world's leading rating agencies have raised the sovereign rating of Azerbaijan. The initiatives and specific projects put forward by Azerbaijan have greatly facilitated regional cooperation. We have a very fruitful economic cooperation with most member-countries of the organization. Our trade is growing. Azerbaijan is closely involved in the regional cooperation of Caspian, Black and Mediterranean seas. I repeat, all our initiatives are becoming a reality.

In particular, the implemented and ongoing projects in the energy and transport sectors have practi-

cally redrawn the region's energy and transportation map. The commissioning of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline in 2006 and of the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline in 2007 opened new corridors in the region. Of three our pipelines two transport our resources to Black Sea ports and one to a Mediterranean port. Azerbaijan has also become a transit country for energy resources. So this cooperation is deepening. I repeat, Azerbaijan will continue to be active in the cooperation among countries of the Caspian, Black and Mediterranean regions.



At the end of this year we expect to complete another major project. The commissioning of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway will revive the ancient Silk Road. This project will link not only the three countries involved but also, in a broader sense, the Asian and European continents. I am very pleased that we are successfully completing this project. I remember saying at a BSEC summit in Istanbul five years ago that the construction of the railway would soon begin. I can now say that all the work will be completed by the end of this year and starting next year the international corridor Baku-Tbilisi-Kars will become operational.

This is a specific project. I believe that even closer integration of member states and joint economic initiatives will strengthen our organization and increase our economic strength.

I would also like to touch upon regional security issues. Regional cooperation is on an upward trend, so we should pay great attention to security. Unfortunately, the situation in this area is not as we would have liked. In particular, with regard to Azerbaijan, our internationally recognized territorial integrity has been breached by Armenia for many years. As a result of Armenia's aggression and the policy of ethnic cleansing, 20 per cent of our lands are still under occupation, more than a million Azerbaijanis are refugees and IDPs in their native land. All reputable international organizations have expressed their position on this issue. The UN Security Council has passed four resolutions on the issue, demanding an unconditional withdrawal of Armenian forces from occupied lands. Unfortunately, these resolutions remain unfulfilled, the occupation continues, the war continues, which of course causes an escalation of tensions in the region.

First of all, the cause of the conflict must be eliminated, the occupation must end. After this, stability will be established in the region and new wonderful conditions created for economic cooperation.

I reiterate that we are interested in deepening this cooperation. The projects initiated by Azerbaijan in the region are contributing to our common cause. I hope that our organization will become even stronger in the coming years, that the projects discussed today will become a reality and unite our countries even closer together.

I want to thank my dear brother Abdullah Gul again for the hospitality. I am sure that the summit will be successful and produce excellent results.

Thank you.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev met with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the Dolmabahce Palace. The sides expressed their satisfaction with the successful development of friendly and fraternal relations between the two countries in all the spheres.



It was stressed that the Trans-Anatolian gas pipeline project (TANAP) would contribute to the energy security of Europe and to the expansion of energy cooperation between the two countries. The sides also expressed their confidence that Azerbaijani-Turkish relations would continue to develop.

A ceremony of signing documents was held in Istanbul and attended by President Ilham Aliyev

and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Anatolian Gas Pipeline between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Azerbaijan was signed by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The agreement was also signed by the Minister of Industry and Energy of Azerbaijan, Natig Aliyev, and the Turkish Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Taner Yildiz.



The initial memorandum on organizational matters pertaining to the TANAP Project Company between BOTAS and SOCAR was signed by the Minister of Industry and Energy of Azerbaijan, Natig Aliyev, the Turkish Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Taner Yildiz, SOCAR President Rovnag Abdullayev and Deputy General Director of BOTAS Mehmet Konuk.

The Host Government Agreement between the Turkish Government and the Trans-Anatolian Gas Pipeline Company was signed by the Turkish Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Taner Yildiz, and SOCAR President Rovnag Abdullayev on behalf of TANAP Company.

After the signing ceremony, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan made statements for the press.

Statement by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan

- My dear brother, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev!

Dear participants, dear journalists!

Ladies and gentlemen!

Let me warmly salute and welcome you all!

Azerbaijan and Turkey are two countries linked with each other through strong fraternal and family bonds. As the late President Heydar Aliyev used to say, may his soul rest in peace, we, Turkey and Azerbaijan, see each other as "one nation in two states" and are developing in this manner.

The agreements we have just signed will make our relationship strategic and worthy of the features of our sister countries, and will raise our relations to the highest level. Along with the deep kinship and neighborly relations which we constantly develop, we have relations in the energy sector with Azerbaijan, which are of strategic importance.

As part of our energy cooperation, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline projects have been successfully implemented and asserted themselves on the global scale. These two historic project bind us together. In this sense, I want to emphasize the following: we actively support the Southern Gas Corridor project on the transportation of natural gas of the Caspian Basin and Central Asia to Europe via alternative routes through our country – both to ensure our own energy security and to contribute to the energy security of Europe. In this regard, we also attach great importance to diversifying sources and routes, which is one of the main components of our energy strategy.

The implementation of the Southern Gas Corridor project is important in terms of a reliable supply of Azerbaijan's energy to Europe. As a result of our discussions last year, we signed an intergovernmental agreement with our Azerbaijani brothers on 25 October 2011 and on 24 December 2011 a preliminary agreement on the sale of 6 billion cubic meters and transit of 10 billion natural gas to be produced under Shah Deniz-2 project to Europe via Turkey.

Today we took another historic step – we have signed "The Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Anatolian Gas Pipeline", the so-called TANAP, and "The Host Government Agreement". TANAP is a very important project of historic significance. It will enable the transit of Azerbaijani gas to Europe via Turkey. So today we can see that the development of Turkish-Azerbaijani energy cooperation is of



great importance in terms of energy security not only for our country but also for Europe. I want to stress that we are very pleased and proud to be with you on this historic day.

Dear friends, the agreements signed today are a major step towards finalizing the legal framework of the project. This agreement will not only deepen the strategic cooperation between our countries, it will also create a natural link between Azerbaijan and Europe via Turkey. By implementing the project, our countries will make a very valuable contribution to

diversifying energy sources of the European Union and take on an important commitment on European energy security.

In other words, all the projects that form the East-West energy corridor are strategic moves aimed at strengthening security, peace and economic development in the region. Besides strengthening political and economic ties of regional countries, these projects also strengthen their relations with the West. So these projects go beyond just commercial investment frames.

The TANAP project will be operational with the start of gas production from Shah Deniz-2. But the main theme is the transit of natural gas to be produced from other Azerbaijani fields in the future. Besides, gas from the opposite Caspian coast will be transported through TANAP via Azerbaijani territory. We strongly believe that this project, which will require investments of billions of dollars, will make a great contribution to the welfare of regional nations and future generations.

We also believe that this project will further connect our destinies and strengthen the energy component of our relations which are already perfect in all areas. With this belief I do hope that the agreements signed today will benefit us all. My greetings to all of you again.

Statement by President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

- Dear Prime Minister, my dear brother!

Dear ladies and gentlemen, dear friends!

First of all, let me say that I am very glad to be on the brotherly Turkish soil. I am honored to be with you on this historic day. I can say with great pride today that Turkish-Azerbaijani relations are at the highest peak. Last year we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the restoration of our independence. Azerbaijan has been an independent state for 20 years. Over these 20 years Turkish-Azerbaijani relations have always been at a high level. These relations have become increasingly stronger and deeper. Underlying this relationship are affection, brotherhood and friendship between our peoples. The great son of the Turkic world, great leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk said, "Azerbaijan's sorrow is ours, Azerbaijan's joy is ours too." These unforgettable historic words keep showing the way for both Turkey and Azerbaijan today.

I am very glad that we have seen only the happy days in recent years. Our joint initiatives and projects have united us and our people, brought about a new situation in the region. Turkish-Azerbaijani brotherhood and friendship have made these projects a reality. Of course, each project has commercial, economic and technical issues. But if they were not built on a solid foundation, I am sure we would be unable to achieve this success in the energy and other fields. Our relations are multifaceted, they cover all areas. I do not know of any other two allies on the world's political scene like Azerbaijan and Turkey. We work together on regional issues, always hold political consultations. Our economic cooperation plays an important role for the region.

Turkish-Azerbaijani unity is a factor that of stability in the region. With regard to the energy issue, our joint major projects have added new shades to the world's energy map. The region is impossible to imagine without the projects we are implementing together. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipelines largely changed the energy map of Europe in 2006 and in 2007. Today we are launching a new project, TANAP, which is historically important. I am sure TANAP will be as successful. As was the case with Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum, TANAP will be implemented in time and with quality.



transit possibilities via Turkey. In the future this project will contribute a lot to European energy security. We have no disagreement on this issue.

As you know, after the commissioning of the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline, Turkey began receiving gas from Azerbaijan. TANAP will enable the transit of large volumes of Azerbaijani gas to Turkey. We have huge reserves of gas.

Shah Deniz alone has gas reserves of 1.2 trillion cubic meters. Considering Azerbaijan's other fields, our proven gas reserves constitute 2.6 trillion cubic meters. So I am sure that the project we are starting now will be securing our interests over decades to come, perhaps a hundred years. We will provide for energy security and also resolve issues of opening new markets for Azerbaijan.

Our energy cooperation is not limited to this project. Last year my dear brother Prime Minister and I laid the foundation of a large project in Petkim in Izmir. The investment to be made in Petkim and TANAP projects will total \$15-20 billion. Again, if our relations were not based on friendship and brotherhood, then, of course, there could be no talk of major investment. Going back to the main issue: underlying our work is the mutual affection of our peoples, our common interests and love of each other. I am sure that these projects will further strengthen our ties. There are even larger projects in store. As for TANAP, I have no doubt that Turkey and Azerbaijan will take the lead and implement it in a timely manner, in five years. And we will be happy to conduct an opening ceremony of TANAP.

Thank you.

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said: On my own behalf and on behalf of my nation I would like to express our gratitude to my brother, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, for the sincere and valuable words about what our fraternal countries can do as one nation.

Then Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev answered journalists' questions. In reply to a question from a correspondent of the News Centre of the Turkish Show TV channel regarding prospects of the TANAP project, Prime Minister Erdogan said that initially it would be possible to purchase 6 billion and then 10 billion cubic meters of natural gas. The main goal is to bring this figure to 50 billion cubic meters, he said.

Asked about the developments in Syria, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan expressed his country's position on the current state of Syrian-Turkish relations.

AzerTAG correspondent Aygun Aliyeva: My question is for Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Azerbaijan is investing heavily in the Turkish economy. As noted, the groundbreaking ceremony for STAR oil refinery of Petkim was held last year. This project has already begun. How do you assess the prospects for cooperation in the field of investment?

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan: I can say that the position of Azerbaijan, of my dear brother, particularly concerning Petkim is highly commendable. Petkim has become one of the most important investment projects. Of course, Azerbaijan did not limit itself to the first step.

After that, my brother Ilham and I flew in a helicopter over the town of Aliaga. Now, as a result of reconstruction and further investment, a completely different city is emerging there. Extensive measures are taken there – from a port to new refining enterprises. While taking these steps, it is important to note one more thing: just as Azerbaijani gas is used in Azerbaijan, it is used here. This

raises another question. Look – Aliaga, Petkim, a refinery, ports, etc. All this, dear friends, is a fine manifestation that we are one nation.

But this is not all. I want to thank my brother Ilham for the construction of schools in various parts of our country. This contributes to the development of our education, which reinforces our fraternity.

President Ilham Aliyev: Dear brother, I want to thank you for your kind words. I want to indicate that Turkish-Azerbaijani relations stand out on a global scale. The basis of this relationship is, of course, the fact that we are one nation. You have recalled the words of the great son of the Azerbaijan people, my father Heydar Aliyev. Indeed, these historic words come from the heart. Most importantly, these words are the roadmap for us today. We want our cooperation to advance further. The projects we are implementing will strengthen our unity. Our unity is necessary for both our peoples and states and for the region. Today, the Turkish-Azerbaijani cooperation and alliance is a reality, a great stabilizing factor in the region. Of course, we must strive to support each other in any field.

Turkey was the first country to recognize Azerbaijan's independence. It performed its fraternal duty and showed the way for other countries. The Azerbaijani people will never forget that. In the most difficult moments for us Turkey was beside us. Azerbaijan is also, as always, close to Turkey. This unity, this cooperation and this brotherhood keep flourishing and growing. Evidence of this is the TANAP project. There have been similar projects in the past and there will be more in the future. As for TANAP, we see it as a purely Turkish-Azerbaijani project. It is no coincidence that this project is implemented by Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan has secured its own energy security. We have the sources and resources. We see Turkey's energy security as our own. And this is natural. We do not separate ourselves from you. Our interests, intentions and policies are common. Such projects further strengthen these ties. I described this date as historic for a reason. Today we are opening a new page in the great book of history, we are signing new pages so that Turkey and Azerbaijan, our peoples could benefit from this in the coming years and decades.

I thank you again for the hospitality, for your kind words about me and about our country. I want to note again that we must implement this project in five years. Let all the structures dealing with this project aim to achieve it and please us again five years later.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan: I am also very grateful to our friends who have put in their effort, our friends ministers, all our leader friends. We need to work hard to complete this job in less than five years.

06-07.08.2012

Working visit to the United Kingdom



On 6 August 2012, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev left for a working visit to the United Kingdom.

During his visit President Ilham Aliyev met with the Chief Executive Officer of bp, Robert Dudley, in London. The sides expressed their satisfaction over the many years of successful cooperation between Azerbaijan and bp.

During the meeting the parties exchanged views regarding the second stage of the "Shah Deniz" and other ongoing projects. The sides expressed their confidence that the cooperation between Azerbaijan and bp would be further developed.

On 7 August 2012, President Ilham Aliyev met with British Prime Minister David Cameron. Prime Minister David Cameron met President Ilham Aliyev. The President of Azerbaijan and the British Prime Minister posed for official photographs.

The sides pointed to a high level of Azerbaijani-British bilateral relations. It was indicated that the United Kingdom and Azerbaijan successfully cooperated in a number of areas, including the energy



and non-oil sectors, and pointed to great prospects for these ties. The parties also discussed the relations between Azerbaijan and Great Britain in the area of international security.

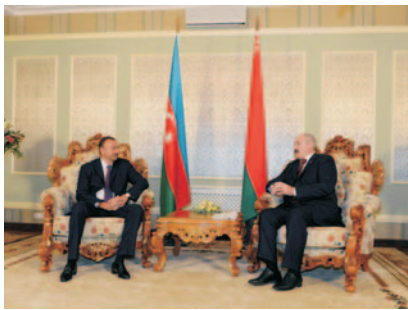
David Cameron gave a high assessment to Azerbaijan's support for NATO and the international coalition in Afghanistan. The parties also exchanged views on regional and international matters.

28-29.08.2012

Working visit to the Republic of Belarus

On 28 August 2012, President Ilham Aliyev arrived in Belarus on an official visit. An official welcoming ceremony of the President of Azerbaijan was held at the Minsk National Airport.

The guard of honor was arranged in honor of the President of Azerbaijan at the airport decorated with state flags of the two countries. President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko welcomed President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev.



National anthems of Azerbaijan and Belarus were played by a military orchestra. The chief of the guard of honor reported to President Ilham Aliyev. Representatives of the state and government of Belarus were introduced to President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and members of the Azerbaijani delegation to President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko. The guard of honor marched in front of the Presidents under the accompaniment of a military march.

President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko held a face-to-face meeting at the Zaslawye residency in Minsk. The sides expressed their satisfaction with the development of bilateral relations between the two countries in the political, economic and humanitarian spheres.

The Presidents stressed the importance of President Ilham Aliyev's official visit to Belarus from the standpoint of a further strengthening of cooperation. The sides expressed their confidence that this cooperation would continue to expand in the future too.

An official dinner reception hosted on behalf of President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko in honor of President Ilham Aliyev. During the reception, President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko presented President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev with the highest award of his country – the "People's Friendship" Order of Belarus.

Addressing the ceremony, President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko said he was glad to see the head of the Azerbaijani state in the country again. Alexander Lukashenko said that regular meetings at the highest level had become a good tradition, while the Belarusian- Azerbaijani partnership based on fraternal ties between the two nations was also supported by friendly relations between the heads of state.



"The relations between Azerbaijan and Belarus are stable, mutually beneficial, extremely friendly and trusting," Alexander Lukashenko said and added that the two countries were strategic partners and the President of Azerbaijan has played an important part in that.



Appreciating Azerbaijan's support for his country, the President of Belarus said that President Ilham Aliyev was a worthy successor of nationwide leader Heydar Aliyev. "Ilham Heydar oglu, from my point of view, is an undisputed leader and patriot of Azerbaijan," President Alexander Lukashenko said. He noted that for a significant personal contribution to the establishment and development of friendly relations and strategic cooperation between the two states, the President of Azerbaijan was being decorated the highest award of Belarus – the "People's Friendship" Order of Belarus, and presented the Order to President Ilham Aliyev.

Expressing his appreciation to President Alexander Lukashenko for the high award and kind words, President Ilham Aliyev said that he regarded the award as an assessment of his work. President Aliyev said that Azerbaijan-Belarusian relations are based on a solid foundation of mutual sympathy and centuries of cooperation between the two nations.



The President expressed his appreciation to Belarus for its active support of Azerbaijan's candidacy during the UN Security Council vote.

"Today, we are building a modern relationship between Belarus and Azerbaijan based on friendship, strategic partnership, mutual support, sincerity and sympathy," President Ilham Aliyev said. He added that trade between the two countries was growing, there were new initiatives in the industry, energy and humanitarian cooperation. The head of state reiterated his appreciation for the hospitality.

On 29 August 2012, as part of his official visit to the Republic of Belarus, President Ilham Aliyev has visited a memorial for victory in World War II of 1941-1945 in Minsk's Victory Square. The guard of honor was arranged in the square in honor of the President of Azerbaijan.

President Ilham Aliyev laid a wreath at the memorial. National anthems of Azerbaijan and Belarus were played. The guard of honor marched in front of the President of Azerbaijan under the accompaniment of a military march.



President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko held a brief conversation at the Minsk National Airport. Touching upon the results of President Ilham Aliyev's official visit to Belarus and the talks held, President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko said:



- New ideas and initiatives emerge during our meetings. This has been the case during this visit too. I am very grateful to you for agreeing to receive our delegation in Baku in October and, in general, the joint commission that will look through all the proposals generated during our meetings. And as you said, we will then clearly state the direction in which to move.

Stressing that his country's trade with Azerbaijan is expanding on the basis of mutual interests, the Belarusian leader said:

- We will be happy to give preference to Azerbaijani goods in Belarus with all equal opportunities. We do not ask for any preferences. I think there is probably a lot of sense in this if we do not have any obstacles hampering trade, etc.

President Ilham Aliyev: Thank you, Alexander Grigoryevich. First of all, I would like to thank you for the hospitality and the warm welcome I and members of my delegation have enjoyed. I am very satisfied with the results of my visit. We have spent a lot of time together, discussed very important issues, in particular, of course, the bilateral format, and we see great potential for the future. Of course, what has been done is impressive, because in a short time we have achieved tremendous success in trade, manufacturing and energy sectors. Most importantly, we have identified new ways of developing business and mutually beneficial trade.

Noting the importance of the discussions about ways of expanding economic cooperation, President Ilham Aliyev said:

- This includes new productions in Azerbaijan, the construction sector, agriculture, new areas such as pharmaceuticals.

Yesterday, we discussed the entire potential. In other words, there are many areas that are not yet very involved in our bilateral relations but have a great future. I think the experience of implementing projects is quite unique, the time between decision-making to implementation is the shortest. Most importantly, there is a great mutual desire to develop relations in all directions. So I am going back with a lot of optimism and big plans. On arrival all the necessary instructions will be given to the government to implement all these projects on time and in a quality manner.

President Alexander Lukashenko: We want to rely on Azerbaijan in the Caucasus, and I will ask you not only to give us this opportunity - it is profitable, but also to access the markets of other countries together.

President Ilham Aliyev: We are also interested in this, because over time our domestic market will be almost fully provided with domestic products. That is, we have set such a task, therefore, accessing foreign markets will, of course, be very relevant for us. If we want to develop further – which, of course, we do – we need to think about the export potential and markets. And joint ventures with Belarusian producers will be export oriented. I applaud your decision on the priority cooperation with Azerbaijan in the Caucasus. There are all the prerequisites for that: our relationship and the fact that Azerbaijan accounts for about 80 per cent of the economy of the entire Caucasus. It is the largest country with vast resources and great potential. So we can do a lot together. I think the focus on the markets of third countries will be one of the new areas of our cooperation.

17-19.09.2012

Working visit to the Republic of France



On 17 September 2012, President Ilham Aliyev arrived in the Republic of France for a working visit. The guard of honor was arranged in honor of President of Azerbaijan at the Paris Orly International Airport decorated with state flags of the two states. The first lady of Azerbaijan Mehriban Aliyeva was presented with flowers. President Ilham Aliyev was taken to his residency from the airport.

GDF Suez, cooperation on "Absheron" gas field, as well as the provision of the population of Azerbaijan with the drinking water responding to the international standards.

President Ilham Aliyev met with the Chief Operating Officer for Onshore and Offshore and Senior Vice President of "Technip", Philippe Barril. The sides discussed the successful operation of "Technip" in Azerbaijan's petroleum sector and the company's role in the development of the Shah Deniz-1 and other projects. The parties also exchanged views on other directions of cooperation and new projects between Azerbaijan and "Technip".



President Ilham Aliyev met with Chief Executive Officer of Total, Christophe de Margerie in Paris. The sides exchanged their views on the exploitation of "Absheron" and "Shahdeniz" fields, as well as cooperation in the implementation of pipeline projects, and perspectives of development in the relations between Azerbaijan and Total.

On 18 September 2012, the opening ceremony of new halls of the Paris Louvre museum dedicated to Islamic art was held. The ceremony was joined by President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, his wife Mehriban Aliyeva and President of the French Republic Francois Hollande.

Addressing the ceremony, Director-General of the Louvre Henri Loyrette noted that France attaches great importance to the preservation of all cultures, including Islamic art. From this standpoint, the

Louvre Museum is currently playing an important part in intercultural dialogue. The new halls provide the opportunity for familiarization with important features of Islamic civilization.



Speaking at the ceremony, President of France Francois Hollande said Paris was proud to establish a department of Islamic art at the Louvre museum and to demonstrate its rich collection. The French President said the main objective of the project, which emerged as an idea in 2003 and was initiated in 2008, was to demonstrate the versatility and universal significance of the Louvre and show the attitude of France to the Islamic civilization. Expressing his gratitude to President Ilham Aliyev and other partners for their support in implementing the project, Francois Hollande said: "I want to express my deep gratitude to those who have shown good will and provided

assistance at the required time, in particular the President of the Azerbaijan Republic and other distinguished guests. They are among our many partners. They are friends of France. They have provided significant assistance in implementing this project. I do hope that this goodwill gesture will be continued in the future."

The French President indicated that by contributing to the dialogue among civilizations, the project provides visitors of the museum with the opportunity to become familiar with the East and determine a correlation between European and Islamic cultures.

Then the guests reviewed the "Islamic art" section of the Louvre. It was noted that the creation of this section was a special milestone in the history of the museum. This section contains works of architecture, art and other cultural expressions of Islamic civilization. The "Islamic art" section of the museum consists of items related to the cultures of various Muslim countries. Over 5,000 works of art are exhibited here, including various pottery items made from glass, ceramics and metal, carpets, clothes and miniatures, as well as over a thousand unfinished and damaged creative works. The section of the museum which also displays artifacts related to Azerbaijan has works of art relating to the states that existed in different periods of Islamic history.



It was mentioned that, along with France, an important part in the opening of new halls had been played by Azerbaijan, Kuwait, Oman and Morocco.

After reviewing the exhibits on display at the "Islamic art" section of the museum, the visitors posed for photographs. Then, President Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mrs. Aliyeva were photographed in the museum courtyard.



On the same day a meeting of President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the French Republic Francois Hollande was held at the Elysee Palace.

The sides exchanged views on issues related to various areas of cooperation between Azerbaijan and France. It was noted that these relations are developing successfully in the political, economic and cultural spheres. The heads of state highlighted the active role of French companies in the Azerbaijani economy and the importance of French investment in Azerbaijan.

The sides noted that there are good prospects for cooperation in this area. The meeting also discussed the current state of negotiations on the settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and steps to be taken in this direction.



During his visit President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev met with former President of France Nicolas Sarkozy. The sides noted that bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and France were successfully developing in various spheres and expressed their confidence that these relations would continue to expand.

On 19 September 2012, President Ilham Aliyev met with businessmen members of MEDEF, the Movement of the Enterprises of France, in Paris. The President of Azerbaijan was met by the president of "MEDEF International", Jean Burelle. The president of

"MEDEF International", Jean Burelle, said:

- Mr. President, it is an honor for me and my friend and colleague Christian Mons to chair this meeting. We express our gratitude to you for taking the time. We know that the agenda of your visit to your favorite city of Paris is extremely tense. There are about 60 representatives of various companies here who have come to hear your views on the economic development of Azerbaijan, the contribution French companies can make to this progress and the role they can play in your country. We are very interested to hear you.

My colleague Christian Mons will conduct the "question-and-answer" session. After my brief introduction, if you don't mind, we will listen to you and then Christian Mons will start the "question-and-answer" session. Please share your thoughts with us. Thank you again for taking the time.

You had a meeting with President Hollande yesterday. You also took part in the opening of rooms at the Louvre museum dedicated to Islamic art. In addition to the economy and gross domestic product, we know that friendship and culture are also a great asset of our countries. There is a kind attitude towards us. We know that you love France.

Thank you again for taking the time. We will be together for one hour. Mr. President, I give the floor to you. Thank you.

The President of Azerbaijan made remarks at the meeting.

Remarks by President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

- Thank you very much. First of all, thank you for the invitation. It is very nice to see old friends here in Paris. I remember our previous meetings at MEDEF. These contacts have greatly facilitated effective economic partnership between leading companies of Azerbaijan and France. I am very happy to come back to Paris.

As you said, I met with President Hollande yesterday. We had a frank and open discussion on many issues and, of course, on the successfully developing bilateral political ties. This meeting has once again confirmed that our political relations are of strategic nature.

We are friends and partners, we actively cooperate both bilaterally and in the international arena. In particular, following Azerbaijan's election to the Security Council, the relations between our two countries on international issues and on issues of mutual interest in the region and the world have become more active.

As you noted, along with political relations, we have also discussed our relations in the cultural sphere. These ties are also developing very well. As you mentioned, I attended the opening of the Islamic art section of the Louvre museum yesterday. Today we will participate in the opening of the Azerbaijani Culture Center in Paris. This is the first culture center to open outside of Azerbaijan. Last year we laid the foundation of a French school in Baku. I could mention many other activities – exhibitions, cultural exchanges, concerts and other important activities that create further conditions for cooperation.



Overall, our political communication, the open and sincere relations play an important part in economic cooperation. We are, therefore, very pleased to have established strong cooperation not only in the political sphere, but also among our nations, in the cultural sphere. As for economic cooperation between our countries, there is rapid development of mutual trade, now the figure is \$4.6 billion and it keeps growing. In the future, we would like to witness greater diversification of trade relations. I think that is a good potential for expanding our ties beyond the energy sector.

Azerbaijan's energy policy goes beyond regional borders. Today, we work with our European partners on the energy security of Europe, and French companies such as "Total" and "GDF-Suez" are our long-term partners. We are working together on the implementation of future plans and projects.

Azerbaijan has large reserves of oil and gas, and the already diversified pipeline infrastructure. We are working on a new system of pipelines. This system will enable us to export our available and future gas in different directions. Economic diversification and diversification of energy supply routes are extremely important to us. We are pleased that our interests coincide with those of our European partners in the energy policy. With regard to natural gas, Azerbaijan will become a major partner of Europe. With regard to oil, the share of Azerbaijani oil in the energy balance of some European Union member-states exceeds 30 per cent. Most of it is produced from a relatively new source. Proven gas reserves in Azerbaijan exceed 2.5 trillion cubic meters. As I said earlier, we are working on a new system of pipelines. We would be happy to see French company as partners in this project, in particular in the TANAP project, which will significantly change the energy map of the region and Europe.

If we look at the economic indicators, I think have achieved economic diversification. This manifests itself in a number of figures, in particular for the first six months of this year. The gross domestic product in the non-energy sector grew by more than 10 per cent. In general, the Azerbaijani economy grew three-fold in the last eight years. Living standards have improved, poverty declined from nearly 50 to 7 per cent, the unemployment rate is 5.4 per cent. Our foreign debt stands at nearly 7 per cent of the GDP. In a country of 9.3 million people, we have created over a million jobs. Unemployment, as was the case 5-10 years ago, is not a serious problem. International financial institutions are closely monitoring our achievements and challenges. We are pleased that even during the financial crisis the three leading rating agencies – "Standard & Poors", "Fitch" and "Moody's" – raised Azerbaijan's credit rating. The latest ranking of the Davos Economic Forum placed Azerbaijan in 46th place in the world for competitiveness. This is the highest indicator among countries of the region, among all our neighbors.

In the future, we will pay even more attention to the non-energy sector. I think we have achieved all the goals in the energy sector and have already launched the projects we are implementing now. Our goals in the next 10 years are modernization, diversification, industrialization of the economy, investment in agriculture and information technology, in particular space technology. In fact, French companies are assisting us in this area. This will be our goal in the next 10 years.

As I noted, we have achieved a threefold GDP increase and created a modern infrastructure in the last eight to nine years. In the next 10 years, a decade of sustainable development, our goal is to double the non-energy GDP. I think this will be possible in the next 10 years. I believe we can do this thanks to our experience in the field of transformation and effective communication with the world's leading companies.

French companies have been successfully operating in our country for many years. In the energy sector they operate as an investor, and in others as contractors. Of course, we would like to see French companies in the non-energy sector as an investor. I think there is a good potential for that as the economy develops and new opportunities emerge. Azerbaijan is becoming a regional center – not only political but also economic. Azerbaijan plays a balancing role in the region. I think that an assessment of Azerbaijan's investment opportunities will be of interest to French companies. At the same time, we would like to see them as contractors. I can think of many French companies that work actively with us. Yesterday, at a meeting with President Hollande, I mentioned that prior to this visit my assistant gave me a brochure on the activities of French companies in Azerbaijan. I think that a book with the names of the companies will be published in a few years. This is our plan. I am satisfied with the level of our political and economic cooperation. We have a very sincere, predictable and steady cooperation.



Azerbaijan is an open country. I think that doing business in our country is promising. Currently, the private sector accounts for 80 per cent of Azerbaijan's GDP. There are very liberal economic policies. The World Bank's "Doing Business" report has placed Azerbaijan among leading countries. The country has a favorable investment environment. For the volume of direct foreign investment per person, Azerbaijan ranks first among former Soviet republics.

We expect that \$20 billion will be invested in Azerbaijan, in our economy this year. Currently, the proportion between foreign and domestic investment has changed, as 70 per cent of the investment is local. This means that the competitiveness of our companies is growing.

In fact, Azerbaijan has launched major investment projects abroad. In the region, we primarily invest billions in the Turkish economy. In the next five years this figure will reach nearly \$20 billion. In Georgia, we are investor No 1. The largest taxpayer in Georgia is our State Oil Company. We also plan to invest in EU member-states and the former Soviet Union. We are also diversifying our financial reserves, which is very important.

Given the history of relations between Azerbaijan and French companies, we can operate even in third countries as co-investors in the coming years.

I don't want to take too much of your time talking about Azerbaijan. I know that many of you have visited our country and have your own impressions. And those who haven't been to Azerbaijan, I invite you to our country to explore business opportunities and strengthen our partnership. Thank you.

Jean Burelle:

- Mr. President. We and any other country of Western Europe struggling with debts are pleased to listen to you here in Paris today and hear your presentation and views on Azerbaijan's achievements and economic situation. Having heard a few minutes ago that the national debt of your country forms 7 per cent of the GDP, I wished it could be so in France too.

There are some questions we want to ask you. My colleague Christian Mons will start the "question-and-answer" session now.

Please, Christian.

Christian Mons: Mr. President, thank you for your participation. There are more than 50 executive directors and general managers representing French companies at this table. They, that is we, are here to ask questions primarily about your country's progress. Our companies represent energy, transport, infrastructure, water management, service, tourism, banking and other sectors. They would like to ask you brief, specific and, at the same time, as always, precise questions. If you agree, I will start with the questions and answers with Mr. Borrell from "Total". He would like to ask you a question.

Michael Borrell: Thank you very much. Mr. President, I don't have a specific question I want to ask. I just wanted to comment in front of my colleagues on a few questions we discussed at the meeting with you on Monday. First of all, on the natural gas sector. In your remarks you noted the achievements in the energy sector and future goals. I think that this, as you pointed out, is a good indicator of the investment environment in the country.

On our part I can say that we are satisfied with our participation in Azerbaijan's oil sector and are proud of it. We had the opportunity to have a discussion on the "Absheron" field the discovery of which we announced together with you in September last year. Together with our partners present here – "GDF-Suez" and SOCAR – we made a statement on the financial cost of the well on "Absheron". As you know, the key condition for its development on the desired scale and in the desired timeframe is the enhancement of drilling opportunities in the Caspian Sea. We are working on the well together with SOCAR. I do hope that new drilling rigs will be used in production.

We also talked about the issue you mentioned, i.e. the gas produced in the region and how to deliver it to the European market. I think that our 10-per-cent interest in the “Shah Deniz” project demonstrates that we have a big role. We worked as an operator, then worked on the “CP” and its extension together with SOCAR, on the creation of what you rightly described as a strategically important infrastructure for the TANAP project, which will pass through Turkey to European markets. Then these two competing pipelines will deliver gas either to Italy or even higher up to Austria to become part of the European gas market. The main condition is partnership in this area.

We also had the opportunity to discuss further development of our partnership with SOCAR, our future activities on- and offshore. I think you have encouraged us for rapid progress in these talks. Thus, we continue to move towards the goals you have laid down in the petroleum sector.

I think, as I noted in the three bullets of my commentary, partnership with SOCAR and other companies in Azerbaijan is key to our success. The investment share of “Total” in Azerbaijan is a clear demonstration of your words about the attractiveness and stability of the investment environment in your country, of the confidence that allows us to invest billions of dollars in our long-term projects. This gives us a sense of confidence that they will pay off over a long period of time. And you can carry on convincing people that they should continue their efforts to cooperate with SOCAR and Azerbaijan, be reliable partners, increase their joint revenue both with our own and with your experts and companies. Thank you.

Christian Mons: Thank you. Mr. Christian Gazin from “Bouygues Travaux Publics”.

Christian Gazin: Mr. President, I represent the construction department of “Bouygues Travaux Publics”. We are engaged in the construction of various buildings, infrastructure, railway and civil facilities.

We are particularly interested in the development of the Baku underground. We cooperate with local company “Akkord”. We are currently working on the blue line of the underground. I would also like to say that there is a larger company in France which sometimes is in competition with us. We have decided to set up a French group with this company in Azerbaijan, which will also include local companies. Our company has 30 years of experience in underground construction in the capital of Egypt, Cairo.

Now we are involved in several other projects. My question is as follows: What would you say about the future of the Baku underground, the blue line in particular?

President Ilham Aliyev: Thank you. We have a major plan on the development of the Baku underground. Some time ago I chaired a large conference and we adopted a state program on development of the Baku underground. So far we have 23 underground stations. Most of them were built in the Soviet era. But in the last few years we open a new station each year. However, our plans are broader.

The major development plan envisages the construction of an additional 50 stations by 2030. This means that we have to work hard and will need good partners. Incidentally, French company “SYSTRA” is working on a large development plan of the Baku underground. This project will be funded entirely by the state, from the state budget. To this end, we allocate major funds each year. The only issue is that we need good contractors. We have our own company which is building underground for Azerbaijan.

It has bought a new drill installation which makes work easier. But given the scale of the work, the pace and the goal we must achieve by 2030, we will need international contractors. I am glad that you plan to work with local companies, which is very important to us. Because in the process of economic transformation we also work with foreign companies and want local companies to become international.

Working with a company like “Bouygues Travaux Publics” will be a good experience and track record for local companies. If they ever decide to work outside of Azerbaijan, they can refer to a joint project with “Bouygues Travaux Publics”. In general, I support this approach and wish you success.

There is still much to do on the underground. This will become one of the most important infrastructure projects to be implemented in Baku in the coming years. Thank you.

Christian Mons: Thank you for your answer, Mr. President. Mr. Bonneau from "Vinci Construction" wants to add a few things to your commentary.

Chairman and executive director of "Vinci Construction" Alain Bonneau: Good morning, Mr. President. I just heard about the underground project. I came to Baku to attend the World Tunnel Congress, met with many people working in the field of underground, in particular with the chief of the Baku underground. I would like to confirm what was said by Mr. Gazin. That is, if you agree, a new French construction group would be interested in the construction of underground lines. We talked a lot about this.

It is important for us to obtain good agreement, and I think we need to work with local companies, with Azerbaijani companies with good experience. As you noted, Azerbaijan already has long underground lines and we are ready to help you with upgrades and other projects. Thank you.

Christian Mons: Representatives of two leading water management companies are present here. If you don't mind, they want to ask you two questions. First, the Europe director of "Veolia Eau", Jean-Luc Debrand, and the executive vice-president of "Suez" on international development, Mr. Eric Gebel.

Jean-Luc Debrand: Mr. President, considering the major investment programs in water supply and sewage systems our company is involved in, there is a need for qualified professionals in the field of management. My first question is this: is it possible to establish a partnership with the government of the Republic of Azerbaijan to create such a school or training center?

My second question: will the ministry in charge of the water and sewage infrastructure turn to specialized French companies to meet these needs?

President Ilham Aliyev: We have major plans on water supply and sewage projects. We have always had this problem.



Unfortunately, the water supply of Baku and other cities of Azerbaijan have never been sufficient. The system established in the Soviet times was not adequate. It should be noted that this system is outdated and creates many difficulties. Therefore, we decided to implement a major program on the supply of clean water. The water quality must meet World Health Organization standards, all our cities must be provided with water. Of course, Baku in the first place because it is the largest city of Azerbaijan and the whole of the Caucasus.

The program is very broad, responsibility for it lies with our public company "Azersu". As I know, they collaborate with "CDF-Suez" and have recently held discussions. I hope that specific steps will be taken soon to implement the project. Our goal is to supply water to all the cities of Azerbaijan by the end of 2013. In parallel, we will create a modern sewerage system. But it will probably be impossible to do that by the end of next year. This job may take several more years.

The issue associated with Baku is more complex. We have to do a lot not only financially, but also technically. Most of the work will be financed from the state budget again. We have loans from banks to help complete the project quickly. It will be one of the most important infrastructure projects in the coming years. Because all other infrastructure projects have either been implemented or such projects as the construction of new power plants, gasification of Azerbaijan and even the construction of main and rural roads are currently underway.

In the next five years, water supply and sewage will be of high priority. We will implement this project stage by stage. As I said, the first stage by the end of 2013 and the second by the end of 2016.

Therefore, we appreciate the cooperation with French companies. We have already discussed with representatives of "CDF-Suez" their experience in other countries and how they carried out these projects. I understand your company also cooperates with Azerbaijan, and quite successfully. I wish

you success. We will continue working on this project. I do hope that this problem will not be there in the coming years. Thank you very much.

Christian Mons: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. Gebel, is there anything you want to add?

Eric Gebel: No, I just want to assure you that we want to turn "Azersu" into a world-class company in the shortest possible time. We have cooperated with "Azersu" for two to three years now and are close to becoming the first company to have achieved an improvement of water supply of Baku. This is a serious issue for us and we are sure that in the next two to three years we will create a competitive environment.

President Ilham Aliyev: Thank you. I just wanted to add that after our meeting I told "Azersu" to work more closely with you and start the project. I also want to remind all our friends what I said what about water supply at the meeting two days ago. The tasks are very simple problem: we need water supply 24 hours a day, 100 per cent coverage and water meeting World Health Organization standards. These are three main and simple tasks. By achieving these results, I think we can resolve this problem forever. It will have a serious impact on people's lives, health and overall development of our country. Because Azerbaijan is developing very fast. The process of modernization is so fast that we can no longer accept the current water supply situation.

But I repeat that this problem has always existed in our country.

In the first years of our independence there were other serious issues that had to be resolved. Perhaps that was why this issue was not a priority. It was also very expensive. Until we started to invest in our country ourselves, the talks with international financial institutions held for over 10 years did not yield solid results. After we incorporated water projects in our budget and state financing programs, international financial institutions also expressed interest and became more active. Now there is a good coordination of projects funded by the state and banks, and this creates an environment for collaboration.

Christian Mons: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Can I ask you a question on behalf of the majority of French companies here? It is mostly a political question, but it is related to the economy. It would be interesting if you could inform us of the date of your country's entry into the World Trade Organization. You spoke about this earlier, but we would like to hear about your plans.

President Ilham Aliyev: We are working on that. We are in the process of bilateral consultations with partner countries, and this process is continuing successfully. At the same time, I would like to note that there are two opinions as to when Azerbaijan will become a member of the World Trade Organization. First, as soon as possible. This view is quite reasonable because it will enhance our competitiveness in the market. And this, we hope, will have a positive impact on consumer prices. At present, Azerbaijan is a country integrating into a number of international organizations and is close to becoming part of the World Trade Organization. The other approach is somewhat different – not in terms of the content, but in terms of the timing. Because, as I said, we are working hard on diversification. We have a state program to encourage private enterprise. For example, funds in the amount of 300 million Euros are envisaged for small and medium enterprises in rural areas next year. The state will provide them low-interest loans. We provide major subsidies to agriculture. Our farmers buy fuel at half the price. They buy fertilizer with a discount of 50-70 per cent. Except for the land tax, they are exempt from all taxes. If they plant corn, they are given 100 Euros per hectare. These subsidies allow us to significantly reduce our dependence on imported agricultural products.

Today, we can meet our needs for some items by 80-85 per cent. Our goal is to provide ourselves with agricultural produce by the end of 2015. This has contributed to the creation of one million jobs, mostly in rural areas.

So, I want to touch upon the second approach. The second approach is that if we join the World Trade Organization today, it could have a negative impact on entrepreneurship in rural areas. This may cause problems related to employment. Some of our products may stop being competitive. So I would say that the main idea is to continue the process of improvement, diversification, investment, private sector development not only in agriculture but also in the heavy industry, and to become a member of the World Trade Organization at a time when our economy is in better condition. We are

trying to find our way between these two approaches. Thus, we are in talks. Most likely, our membership will not happen in the near future.

Christian Mons: It was a very clear explanation.

President Ilham Aliyev: Thank you.

Christian Mons: Thank you very much. I think we can now move on to other questions. We have a little more time. If you wish, if you agree, we can talk about tourism and sport. We all know how beautiful your country is. It will be very interesting for "Gregory International", which is better informed about tourism and sports infrastructure projects.

Representative of "Gregory International": Good morning, Mr. President. Our company specializes in the construction of golf courses and athletic fields. We operate only on an international scale. We visited your country and witnessed a large growth potential. My question is very simple. I would like to know whether you have approved a project on the construction of a golf course and what sports facilities are to be built in the future?

President Ilham Aliyev: Yes, there are projects on the construction of golf courses and they are already being implemented. Two sites are under construction, not in Baku but 150-200 km from the capital, in the mountains and in a green area. There are plans to build two golf courses. But these are private investments, not public.

As for public investment, we invest a lot in sports infrastructure. The biggest sports or concert hall, "Chrystal Hall", was built specifically for the "Eurovision" song contest. We had very little time and it was built in nine months. It is a beautiful sports facility with 17,000 to 20,000 seats. We are also upgrading our stadia. In the last 10 years 34 Olympic sports centers were built in Azerbaijan, which has contributed to our successful performance at the London Olympics.



Thus, sport will continue to be one of the main areas of investment in the focus of attention. We will do even more for that. We are currently in the final stages of building a new ski resort in the Caucasus Mountains. It is also realized through public investment. Most likely, the center will be open for skiing this season. It will be one of the most beautiful and comfortable ski resorts because we have studied the experience of all ski resorts, including those in France, Switzerland and Austria. We used their positive sides to create maximum comfort for people, athletes and

everyone who likes this sport. So we will see an even greater number of projects in this area and are ready to work with partners. Currently, we plan to build an Olympic Stadium with a capacity of 60,000-80,000 people. The construction is likely to begin in the near future.

We have a lot of plans. You said you have been to Baku and are probably aware of our plans. I hope you will take part in some of the projects. Thank you.

Christian Mons: Thank you, Mr. President. Another question is about legislation. Mr. Nalet from "Lactalis" wants to ask you about customs procedures for dairy products and customs legislation. He has the floor.

Nalet: Good morning, Mr. President. Before talking about these procedures, I must note that what you have said about your country's agricultural sector and its development was very interesting. I represent "Lactalis Group" here. Two leaders in the production of dairy products are present in this room: my colleague from "Danone" is seated on the opposite side of the table.

We are the leader in the production of dairy products in France. We are represented in Azerbaijan by a small staff of 30 people.

We import products from the region and from France. It is the requirement of the day to create a

business in your country, be partners with the Azerbaijanis and implement what is carried out in other European countries here.

We think there is a great need for that. The range of products offered by shops must be expanded. We wish to develop it and would like you to help us, the companies present here, not only in terms of trade but also in laying the groundwork for long-term and sustainable development, as we do in other countries.

President Ilham Aliyev: Thank you. I fully support your activities in Azerbaijan. I have already expressed my opinion on this issue and want to repeat that our plan is to provide ourselves with all consumer goods. Of course, we have a free market economy.

There are wide ranging products and people can buy them depending on their financial situation. But we must achieve 100-per-cent domestic production of everyday consumer goods, the main products. This would be useful both in terms of keeping the prices low and in terms of employment.

As for dairy products, we currently provide approximately 80-85 per cent of the country's demand for milk domestically. I attended the opening of most new and large dairy enterprises. I must say that these enterprises operate on the basis of modern and state-of-the-art technologies and their products are of very high quality.

It is hard to give recommendations, but I would like major manufacturing companies to set up facilities in Azerbaijan. This is the best way to go in terms of cooperation, business relationships and mutual benefit. The time when we were dependent on imported food is already in the past. The situation is quite different now. A few years later the situation in terms of local production will be even better. The country's market is also growing. Some goods produced in Azerbaijan have a good potential for exports to regional markets because we have free trade agreements with some of our neighbors, so we have no problems with the export of our products.

Many agricultural products that are not consumed in our country are exported in fresh and processed form to regional markets. As you know, these regional markets are large and broad.

So it would be safe to recommend our partners to assess the possibility of creating joint manufacturing facilities. Depending on your interest, these can be enterprises fully owned by you or created in cooperation with local manufacturers. The creation of quality manufacturing facilities meeting modern standards in Azerbaijan is something we are also interested in.

Christian Mons: Thank you, Mr. President. Now the floor is given to Mr. Limousi from "EADS Astrium" who will ask a question about the space industry.

Limousi: Good morning, Mr. President. I represent "EADS Astrium". I am very glad that you mentioned the business relating to the artificial satellite and space. We have recently provided "Azerkosmos" with proposals on satellites for control over the surface of the Earth. I would like to have full support of the government of Azerbaijan in this issue. Because this is largely a non-commercial issue depending on the government. I would like to find out when you plan to start signing the agreements on this issue and what your assessment of France's position is?

President Ilham Aliyev: We have major plans related to the creation of space industry and to this sphere. This was sometimes perceived with surprise internationally, some didn't expect us to invest in this area. But if we are to become a competitive country, develop and transform it into a modern state, it would be difficult to do it without new technologies, especially space technologies.

We look forward to the launch of our first satellite. There has been some delay in this matter. We expected it happen last year, but it was postponed. It will be done by French company "Arianespace". At the same time, as you noted, we are working on projects related to new satellites. I fully support the collaboration between the French company and "Azerkosmos". French companies have extensive experience in this field and are considered leading companies in the world. Currently we are working on putting our satellite into space, then we can work together on other areas. We plan to speed up our efforts in this direction.

We can't waste any time in areas that are of strategic importance. We are working to achieve these goals. In many ways we set ourselves ambitious and short-term plans and goals. But all this is not impossible. If we hadn't worked so hard and fast, we couldn't have tripled our GDP in eight years. This is a project aimed at the immediate future. I fully support your cooperation with "Azerkosmos" and am sure that you will build a relationship of cooperation in this sphere.

In fact, Azerbaijan's cooperation with your company has been very successful – the purchase of "Airbus" aircraft. We are now considering other new projects. This cooperation has a good historical basis. Also, we earlier bought "Eurocopter" helicopters and ATR planes from French manufacturers. Our airline is mainly based on French-made aircraft. Thank you.

Christian Mons: Thank you, Mr. President. Sorry there are so many questions. We understand that you have limited time.

President Ilham Aliyev: If there are many questions, we can extend our time.

Christian Mons: A lady wants to ask you about the security of the important infrastructure.

Representative of "MBDA": Mr. President, I represent another company of "EADS" – "MBDA". Our company specializes in the protection and security of important infrastructure. We have visited Azerbaijan several times and met with representatives of various ministries. I wonder how you see the cooperation between "EADS" and your country. We can consider cooperating with companies, including the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan, because this company has very important infrastructure, and with "Total". My second question is somewhat similar to the questions asked by my colleagues. I will say it briefly. I am here for two reasons. I am also the chairperson of the CIS committee of the French group of companies "GIFAS", which specializes in space industry and aeronautics. My colleague spoke about the space industry, but we have many other areas where we can work together, for example, aeronautics. I also represent many small companies interested in working with you. I would like to know whether it is possible to arrange a visit to your country at the level of "GIFAS", so that French companies could find new partners there.

Christian Mons: Very interesting suggestion.

President Ilham Aliyev: Yes, it is. I can say that I fully support these issues. We are interested in working with a variety of large, small, medium-sized companies and investors, particularly in areas that are new to us, such as the aerospace industry. We don't have much experience in these areas. Therefore, we feel the need for greater international cooperation. I am sure that our plans relating to the development of this industry will open up opportunities for most large, small and medium-sized companies.

Therefore, visits by various companies as part of large teams to become familiar with our plans and meetings with people would be a good idea for aligning their plans with ours.

As for the security of the infrastructure, it is a very important issue. In previous years, security was not up to standard. In fact, I would say that security was at such a simple level that it was limited to the construction of a fence. But important infrastructure is significant not only because of the energy sector, but also in other areas. Because we often witness accidents, earthquakes, floods. In fact, the devastating earthquake this year and the floods two years ago caused severe damage to our country. But no country is immune to such threats and acts against important infrastructure. We are creating a new system of energy infrastructure and reservoirs. It is a modern system similar to what you use in France. We are in the process of creating such systems.

Another plan is to create a system in the next few years that would enable 100-per-cent protection from negligence and error. So I think there will be many opportunities for collaboration in this area. Thank you.

Christian Mons: Thank you, Mr. President. Please, Mr. Burelle.

Jean Burelle: Our time is running out. My friend and colleague sitting next to me, Eric Fournier, who represents the Foreign Ministry's department for regions of the European continent, has a question.

Eric Fournier: Mr. President, I express my deep gratitude to you for your time. You have perfect plans for the future. Yesterday you also witnessed a lot of attention to your region on the part of our President. We would like to see your region stable, we feel the need to work with all investors to establish peace and tranquility in the region. Your messages today show that French companies have confidence in the stability of the region. If there were no confidence in stability, then perhaps there would be no investment. I think we have very good plans in this regard. As part of these plans, as we informed your minister, Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius intends to visit your country next year. I think we can start to work together with such perfect plans. Thank you for your support.

President Ilham Aliyev: Thank you. I totally agree with you. We know from the history of our country that there have been periods of instability. And if there is no stability, it is impossible to think of development. Unfortunately, at the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan faced a very difficult situation. We were in a very difficult political situation – a political crisis, the Armenian aggression, the occupation of our territories, civil war. Our economy was in full recession, there was stagnation, inflation was at nearly 1,000 per cent. The economy was so weak we had to start everything not even from scratch, but from a lower, deeper level. But through political reform and stability we managed to overcome those difficulties. In 1997, economic stability was achieved, then the economy started growing. Of course, foreign investment plays a significant role. But investors can't venture into a country where there is no stability. For this reason, we thank our partners, including French companies, for believing and supporting us in finding a way out of that difficult situation.

Today, Azerbaijan is not only a stable country, it is also a stabilizing factor in the region. We are involved in all major regional projects. We have initiated most regional energy, transport and political projects. Last year, we won the votes of 155 countries to be elected a member of the UN Security Council, which indicates that we have asserted ourselves in the world.

We have a clear vision for the future. We see a future Azerbaijan as a modern and developed country fully integrated into the international community, where all the freedoms, including economic, are provided and there are high standards of living. Perhaps the leader of any country would want this for his state and citizens. We have a very good chance to achieve this.

I would like to repeat what I said earlier. Bilateral relations between France and Azerbaijan are very important. Over all these years we have witnessed mutual cooperation and understanding at a high level. Our yesterday's meeting with President Francois Hollande confirmed again that the work done up to now opens the door for new cooperation. Therefore, the role of companies may be greater than before. Because now Azerbaijan has greater potential than 10 years ago. We will continue our reforms and there will be even more projects for our companies in the future.

Jean Burelle: Mr. President, we have reached the end of our meeting organized at breakfast. Your successes in the past suggest that your future plans will also be successful. We will look forward to seeing you in Paris or in Baku with the participation of delegations led by Christian Mons.

Thank you for taking the time and for your valuable answers.

President Ilham Aliyev: Thank you very much.

On the same day the opening ceremony of a Culture Center established with support from the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and the Azerbaijani Embassy in France was held in Paris. The ceremony was joined by President Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban Aliyeva.



It was indicated that the Azerbaijani Culture Center established in the heart of Paris, near the Eiffel Tower, is one of the most important steps to promote our country in the capital of world culture. This cultural event is of particular importance. It serves to promote Azerbaijan at the highest level as a country that has entered the global agenda as a platform of intercultural and inter-civilizational dialogue. The Center, which exhibits items of the ancient and rich history and culture of our country, also opens up opportunities for supporting the activities Azerbaijan has

been carrying out in the cultural life of Paris. The Azerbaijani Culture Centre also embodies the immense interest in our country.

Carried out by First Lady of Azerbaijan and President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation Mehriban Aliyeva, a significant portion of the activities to promote our country abroad is connected with the cultural life of Paris. The new culture center will open opportunities for stepping up work in this area, managing it from a single center and organizing activities in a more efficient manner.

It was indicated that the building of the Center is a historic site built in 1904. Covering an area of 3,000 square meters, it will serve as an Azerbaijani culture center and will open up opportunities for organizing various humanitarian activities associated with our country.



President Ilham Aliyev raised the national flag of our country in the courtyard of the Center. It was noted that the Center has all the conditions for hosting meetings and events. The rooms are fitted with the necessary equipment. The main feature of the Center is that it demonstrates items of Azerbaijani culture. The Center has exhibition halls displaying items that reflect the history of Azerbaijan. Starting from archaeological findings to ancient coins, weapons to copperware – everything reflects the long and rich history of Azerbaijan.

It was mentioned that Azerbaijani carpets are placed among the most precious jewels at the Center. Examples of all national carpet schools are on display, reflecting a wide range of centuries-old carpets and rugs. Information is provided on the history and development of Azerbaijan's carpet-weaving schools. Azerbaijani miniatures provide detailed information on the country's miniature school – the art of painting that emerged in Azerbaijan, a country of the East, in ancient times. The Center also displays various jewelry items, samples of all folk arts, the art of wood carving, etc. It also focuses on Azerbaijani national costume. Of particular interest are dolls and bronze statues which represent the national spirit.

It was indicated that the Azerbaijani Culture Center has a library with a large collection of Azerbaijani literature translated into French. The library, which has an extensive collection on the various areas of Azerbaijani culture, allows visitors to obtain information about our literature, art, music and other forms of art.

It was noted that works of young artists are on display at the Center. Therefore, the establishment of this Center is very important for informing the French public about contemporary art in Azerbaijan, a country in development. It is also an indicator of the assessment Azerbaijan is giving to contemporary art.



President Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban Aliyeva were informed that the Center also focuses on promoting Azerbaijani music. A mugham room has been set up and an exhibition of ancient musical instruments organized. The Center will also operate courses on Azerbaijani cuisine.

President Ilham Aliyev watched the views of Paris from the top floor of the Center. The head of state signed the

guest book of the Azerbaijani Culture Center. Then a picture was taken.



In Paris a reception was held dedicated to the opening of the new Center of Azerbaijani Culture created with the support of Heydar Aliyev Foundation and Embassy of Azerbaijan in France.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban Aliyev attended the reception. The head of state delivered a speech at the reception. State officials, well-known public, political and cultural figures, as well as other reputable guests of Azerbaijan and France participated at the reception with the presentation of delicious dishes of our national cuisine.

The event was concluded with a concert.

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

- 02.04.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the Minister of Transport of the Russian Federation, Igor Levitin
- 02.04.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Foreign Minister of Lithuania, Audronius Ažubalis
- 02.04.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Foreign Minister of Finland, Erkki Tuomioja
- 02.04.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Co-Chairman of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly, Kristian Vigenin
- 02.04.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighborhood Policy, Mr Štefan Füle
- 03.04.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov
- 04.04.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Prime Minister of the Republic of Ukraine, Mykola Azarov
- 09.04.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Chairperson of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of Russia, Valentina Matviyenko
- 09.04.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received outgoing Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of France to Azerbaijan, Gabriel Keller
- 11.04.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the credentials of newly appointed Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Federal Republic of Brazil to Azerbaijan, Sergio De Souza Fontes Arruda
- 13.04.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the Secretary General of the World Customs Organization, Kunio Mikuriya
- 14.04.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the former President of Lithuania, the former Chairman of the Lithuanian Seimas, a member of the European Parliament Vytautas Landsbergis
- 16.04.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the Indian Minister of Trade and Industry and Co-chairman of the Azerbaijan-India Joint Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation, Jyotiraditya Scindia
- 17.04.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received bp Group Chief Executive, Robert Dudley
- 17.04.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the General Secretary of the Cooperation Council of Turkic-speaking States, Halil Akinci

- 18.04.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Director General of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, Jose Graziano da Silva
- 18.04.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Volodymyr Lytvyn
- 19.04.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the Head of Emir of Dubai's Administration, Executive Director at Investment Corporation of Dubai, Muhammad Ali Shaibani
- 23.04.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel, Avigdor Lieberman
- 23.04.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Governor of Kurgan Oblast of the Russian Federation, Oleg Bogomolov
- 25.04.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by First Deputy Chairman of the Senate of Jordan, Abdur-Ra'uf Rawabdeh
- 25.04.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, Philippe Lefort
- 26.04.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria, Boyko Borisov
- 27.04.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister for Science, Industry and Technology of Turkey, Nihat Ergun
- 11.05.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Foreign Minister of Sudan, Ali Ahmed Karti
- 11.05.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received outgoing Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of India to Azerbaijan, Debnath Shaw
- 13.05.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the President of the International Cycling Union, Patrick McQuaid
- 14.05.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Chairperson of the National Assembly of Bulgaria, Tsetska Tsacheva
- 14.05.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group Igor Popov (Russia), Robert Bradtke (USA), Jacques Faure (France), as well as the special representative of the OSCE chairman-in-office, Andrzej Kasprzyk
- 17.05.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the credentials of newly appointed Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Azerbaijan, Sherzod Fayziyev
- 26.05.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, Philippe Lefort

- 31.05.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the the special envoy of the Russian President for CIS affairs, the Head of the Federal Agency for the Affairs of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation, Konstantin Kosachev
- 04.06.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu
- 04.06.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the Foreign Minister of the Principality of Andorra, Gilbert Saboya Sunyé
- 04.06.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Ukraine, Kostyantyn Gryshchenko
- 05.06.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Commander of the Land Forces of the Republic of Turkey, Hayri Kivrikoglu
- 05.06.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by former Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany, Hans-Dietrich Genscher
- 05.06.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation of the British House of Lords comprising Lord Sheikh Mohamed Iltaf, Lord Kamlesh Kumar Patel, Lord Duke Hugh John Maxwell, Lord Risby Richard John Grenville
- 06.06.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton
- 06.06.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the special envoy on energy issues in the Caspian region of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Rene van der Linden
- 18.06.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the former World Bank Regional Director for South Caucasus, Asad Alam, and the newly-appointed Regional Director, Henry Kerali
- 20.06.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the chairman of the Russian State Duma Committee for CIS affairs and relations with compatriots, Leonid Slutskiy
- 27.06.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Foreign Minister of the Republic of Portugal, Paulo Portas
- 28.06.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the President of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Gjorge Ivanov
- 28.06.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Estonian parliament speaker, Ene Ergma
- 28.06.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the former President of the Republic of Croatia, Stipe Mesic
- 28.06.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister on Economic Affairs, Ruz Nuri Shaways

- 02.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Chairperson of the Second Constitutional Committee of the Columbian Senate, Alexandra Moreno Piraquive
- 02.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the Chairman of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Bulgaria, Evgeny Tanchev
- 03.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the President of the General Confederation of Trade Unions, Mikhail Shmakov, and the Secretary General of the Confederation, Vladimir Shcherbakov
- 03.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Foreign Relations and Worship of the Republic of Argentina, Hector Timerman
- 04.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the credentials of newly appointed Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of France to Azerbaijan, Pascal Meunier
- 04.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received outgoing Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Azerbaijan, Mohammad Bagir Bahrami
- 06.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Chairman of the Russian State Duma Committee for CIS Affairs and Relations with Compatriots, Leonid Slutskiy
- 06.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received outgoing Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Lithuania to Azerbaijan, Kestutis Kudzmanas
- 08.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, Sergey Naryshkin
- 09.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the OSCE Secretary General, Lamberto Zannier
- 09.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the credentials of newly appointed Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of India to Azerbaijan, Vinod Kumar
- 09.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Italy Marta Dassu and Deputy Economic Development Minister of this country Claudio De Vincenti
- 10.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group Igor Popov (Russia), Robert Bradtke (USA), Jacques Faure (France), as well as the special representative of the OSCE chairman-in-office, Andrzej Kaspzyk
- 10.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain, Gonzalo de Benito

- 10.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the Chief Executive Officer of the Swiss company Holcim, Bernard Fontana
- 12.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Labor and Social Protection of Turkey, Faruk Celik
- 12.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hamid-Reza Haji Babae
- 13.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received outgoing Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Cuba to Azerbaijan, Marcelo Caballero Torres
- 16.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the Prime Minister of the Republic of Georgia, Vano Merabishvili
- 16.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Prime Minister of the Republic of Montenegro, Igor Luksic
- 18.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by President of the Chamber of Deputies of the United Mexican States, Oscar Martín Arce Paniagua
- 18.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Radislaw Sikorski
- 18.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Transport, Navigation and Communications of the Republic of Turkey, Binali Yildirim
- 18.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by the Chief of Defense General Staff of the Republic of Italy, Biagio Abrate
- 18.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a member of the House of Commons of the British Parliament and former Secretary of State for Defense, Liam Fox
- 18.07.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Executive Director of the American Jewish Committee, David Harris
- 13.08.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received outgoing Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Korea to Azerbaijan, Lee Jiha
- 13.08.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received Ambassadors and Heads of diplomatic missions of Muslim countries in Azerbaijan on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan
- 14.08.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Economy of the Republic of Turkey, Zafer Caglayan
- 15.08.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, Dmitriy Rogozin
- 15.08.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the President of the International Chess Federation (FIDE), Kirsan Ilyumzhinov

- 16.08.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received outgoing Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the State of Israel to Azerbaijan, Michael Lavon-Lotem
- 17.08.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received outgoing Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Arab Republic of Egypt to Azerbaijan, Saber Mansour
- 30.08.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the President of TeliaSonera, Lars Nyberg
- 02.09.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by the European Union Commissioner for Energy, Gunther Oettinger
- 03.09.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the credentials of newly appointed Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Azerbaijan, Richard Morningstar
- 04.09.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Chairman of the European and Eurasian sub-committee of the Committee for External Relations of the House of Representatives, Dan Burton
- 05.09.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Vice-President and Head of the Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Sayed Hasan Mousavi
- 05.09.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the credentials of newly appointed Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the State of Israel to Azerbaijan, Rafael Harpaz
- 06.09.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, Arturas Melianas
- 06.09.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization, Taleb Rifai
- 07.09.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen
- 07.09.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the participants of the Council of CIS Interior Ministers meeting under way in Baku.
- 08.09.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Chairman of the Subcommittee on Reference and Research on the Foreign Relations Committee of the US House of Representatives, Dane Rohrabacher
- 10.09.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received Ambassadors of the OSCE member-states in Gabala

- 13.09.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the credentials of newly appointed Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Korea to Azerbaijan, Choi Suk-inn
- 13.09.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received outgoing Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Turkey to Azerbaijan, Hulusi Kilic
- 13.09.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation of the Netherlands, Maxime Verhagen
- 13.09.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, Philippe Lefort
- 13.09.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by founder and Chief Executive Officer of the American Analytical Center "Stratfor", George Friedman
- 17.09.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister for Economic Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Hatta Rajasa
- 21.09.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by President of FIFA, Joseph Blatter
- 21.09.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People's Representatives Congress of People's Republic of China, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Li Zhaoxing
- 24.09.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Governor of Volgograd region of the Russian Federation, Sergey Bozhenov
- 24.09.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the credentials of newly appointed Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Turkey to Azerbaijan, Ismail Alper Coskun
- 24.09.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the credentials of newly appointed Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Bulgaria to Azerbaijan, Maya Hristova

27.09.2012 President Ilham Aliyev received the former President of the European Commission, Jacques Santer, the former Secretary of State for Transport of France, Thierry Mariani, the former Prime Minister of Turkey, Mesut Yilmaz, the former Minister of Defense of the Netherlands, Willem van Eekelen, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia and member of the European Parliament, Ivo Vajgl, the former Minister of Economic Development of Slovenia, Mitja Gaspari, the former Federal Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure of Germany, Kurt Bodewig, Prince of Denmark Christian zu Schaumburg-Lippe and chairman of the board of the Institute for European Affairs, Jurgen Gramke, who have come to Baku to participate at the "Building Bridges" international conference



DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY OF THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, H.E. Mr. ELMAR MAMMADYAROV IN SECOND AND THIRD QUARTER OF 2012

VISITS BY THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, H.E. Mr. ELMAR MAMMADYAROV

26.04.2012 Working visit to the United Kingdom

On 26 April 2012, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Elmar Mammadyarov paid a working visit to the United Kingdom.

During his visit Foreign Minister met with UK Minister for Europe David Lidington. The sides stressed at the meeting development of Azerbaijan-UK relations in all spheres and discussed prospects for development of these relations. The parties also discussed Azerbaijan's role in ensuring regional and international security, opportunities for Azerbaijan-UK cooperation within international organizations and exchanged views on Azerbaijan's integration into Europe.

On the same day Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the Azerbaijani-British parliamentary group members. During the meeting E.Mammadyarov informed the group members about Azerbaijan's geo-strategic importance for Europe. E.Mammadyarov told British parliamentarians about Azerbaijan's energy policy, the country's role in ensuring energy security of Europe, as well as on projects implemented in the region with the participation of the country. After, Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs.

9-10.05.2012 Working visit to the Arab Republic of Egypt



On 9 May 2012, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Elmar Mammadyarov paid a working visit to the Egypt to attend the ministerial meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement in Sharm el-Sheikh. At the ministerial meeting Azerbaijani Foreign Minister made the following statement:

"Azerbaijan's primary mission was and remains to help maintain justice and equality in international relations, to ensure respect for norms of principles of the international law and the right and freedom of sovereign nations."

"When the inherent right of a sovereign state for independent foreign policy is attacked, when aggression against sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of a sovereign nation takes place, the international community cannot afford to stay neutral. In that regard, we are pleased to see the unanimous support by the NAM member states for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the internationally recognized borders of Azerbaijan as it is enshrined in four United Nations Security Resolutions."

"It is an unequivocal adherence by member states to the principles and purposes of the Movement in a practical way. This support is a crystal-clear manifestation of the fact the international community will not reconcile with the results of the aggressive use of force by Armenia against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan."

"Fifty years after its establishment, the NAM is playing today an important role in maintaining the international peace and security and addressing a wide range of issues from regional security to social and economic development. As an inclusive forum for broad political consultations and practical cooperation, the NAM has enabled member countries to make consistent efforts towards a more just and prosperous world order."

"Today the international community is continuing to face huge difficulties posed by different economic and financial crises, environmental problems, and regional conflicts that are often coupled with aggressive expansionist policies, terrorism, separatism, trans-national organized crime and extremism. All these bring about new tasks in our joint endeavor of the development of the South and re-emphasize the need for greater solidarity, dialogue and cooperation within the Non-Aligned Movement."

"We are committed to the letter and spirit of the principles and purposes of the Movement. Azerbaijan carries out independent foreign policy and is not party to any military alliance. Azerbaijan is a rapidly developing country with a Government that puts a special emphasis on democratization, fostering the respect for human rights and social justice. Azerbaijan attaches a great importance to its relations within the NAM and is contributing to the promoting principles, purposes and agenda of the Movement. We are intensifying our bilateral relations with the NAM countries. Azerbaijan has initiated development aid projects for several member nations of the Movement. We are considering expanding those activities in future," he said.

At the end of the meeting the NAM adopted a final document, which reaffirms the importance of resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict within Azerbaijan's territorial integrity at a ministerial in Egypt. One of the items of the document confirms that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict poses a threat to stability and security in the region. The NAM member countries reaffirmed the importance of the conflict resolution based on three internationally recognized principles - through negotiations, respect for Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and non-use of force.

11-13.06.2012 Working visit to the Kingdom of Netherlands

On 11 June 2012, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Elmar Mammadyarov paid a working visit to the Kingdom of Netherlands.

During his visit Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met with the Vice President of the Council of State of the Kingdom of Netherlands, Piet Hein Donner.



Mr. Donner sincerely welcomed Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister and expressed his satisfaction with Azerbaijan's comprehensive development. Mr. Donner also briefed Foreign Minister about the Government of the Kingdom of Netherlands and its administrative structure, parliament and courts' activities.

Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov emphasized his satisfaction with the level of economic relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Kingdom of Netherlands. Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister mentioned the importance of strengthening current relations and establishment of cooperation in various fields in the future. At the meeting other issues were also discussed.

On the same day Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation Maxime Verhagen. E.Mammadyarov gave Verhagen general information about Azerbaijan and stressed the importance of cooperation between the two countries in the field of energy, non-oil sector, alternative and renewable energy, in the prevention

of emergency situations. Azerbaijani Foreign Minister invited Verhagen to pay a working visit to Azerbaijan and offered to organize during a business forum of business circles of Azerbaijan and the Netherlands the visit.

Mr. Verhagen with great pleasure accepted the invitation and noted that Azerbaijan is recognized internationally as a reliable partner and the Netherlands is interested in developing economic relations with Azerbaijan. Mr. Verhagen stressed the importance of expanding ties in these areas.



After, Azerbaijani Foreign Minister met with the head of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Dutch Parliament, Nebahat Albayrak, and members of the Commission de Roon, Ormel and Ten Broeke.

Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov said that Azerbaijan is interested in expanding ties between the parliaments of two countries and called on representatives of the Parliament of the Netherlands to work more closely with the delegation of Azerbaijan within the PACE. Deputies stressed the importance of developing inter-parliamentary relations and increasing in

future efforts in this direction. Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov answered the deputies' questions in connection with the activity of Azerbaijan in the UN Security Council.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands Uri Rosenthal in connection with an official visit to the Netherlands of Mammadyarov gave a working lunch in the palace of Johan de Witthuis, which is the special guest residence of government. Rosenthal said that the Dutch society is positive towards Azerbaijan, that in the energy security Azerbaijan is a reliable partner for Europe. He also stressed that the Eurovision 2012 song contest was organized at a high level.



On 12 June 2012, Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met with Prime Minister of the Netherlands Mark Rutte. During the meeting they discussed the economic and political relations between the two countries and exchanged views on the future prospects for relations. Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov conveyed greetings of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev to Mark Rutte and invited the Prime Minister to visit Azerbaijan.

Thanking for the invitation, the Prime Minister conveyed his congratulations on the successful holding in Azerbaijan of Eurovision 2012 Song Contest. The meeting focused on the processes taking place in Azerbaijan and the region as well as issues of interest to the parties.



On 13 June 2012, Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met with Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Ahmet Uzumcu, Azerbaijani.

Mr. Uzumcu thanked E.Mammadyarov for attending the OPCW during his brief visit to the Netherlands and support to the organization's activity. Mr. Uzumcu called Azerbaijan as a reliable partner of the OPCW and expressed his satisfaction with the country's active participation in the organization. The sides also discussed prospects of cooperation in the future.

On the same day, Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met with International Court of Justice President Peter Tomka.



Mr. Tomka informed E.Mammadyarov about the structure and jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, about the cases, which are currently under consideration and the transformation carried out in the court system. Mr. Tomka thanked Azerbaijan for the support of the Court. The Minister, in turn, noted that Azerbaijan as a democratic country with respect for the rule of law is a proponent of settling international disputes and conflicts on the basis of international legal principles and standards, supports the activities of the International Court of Justice as a full member of the UN. Other issues of mutual interest were discussed during the meeting.

During his visit to the Netherlands, Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov attended the solemn opening ceremony of a new embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The embassy, consisting of three buildings, is located in an area of 2,000 square meters in the Hague. The main building has all conditions for work - halls and rooms for various events and meetings, video room, equipped with the necessary equipment for film screenings and workshops, office rooms for diplomatic personnel and the residence of the ambassador.

At the beginning of the event, participants laid flowers at the bust of Heydar Aliyev, set in the lobby of the embassy. Opening the event, Azerbaijani Ambassador to the Netherlands Fuad Isgenderov gave brief information about the activities of the embassy. In his speech, Secretary General of the Dutch Foreign Ministry Ed Kronenburg on behalf of the Government of Netherlands congratulated Azerbaijan on an official opening of the new administrative building of the Embassy of Azerbaijan in the Netherlands.



Mr. Kronenburg, noting that his country attaches great importance to relations with Azerbaijan, has congratulated the people of Azerbaijan on Republic Day and expressed his hope that the 20-year history of relations between the two countries will continue.

Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov stressed that relations between Azerbaijan and the Netherlands are on the rise and the opening today of a large diplomatic complex, which is owned by Azerbaijan in this country is a manifestation of this development.

The event was attended by senior officials of the Dutch Government, members of the royal family, representatives of Parliament, ambassadors of foreign countries accredited in the Netherlands, heads of international organizations, presidents and judges of international courts located in the Hague, heads and scientists of higher education of academies and universities in the Netherlands, heads of leading business companies and NGOs in the country, businessmen, representatives of the local press and activists of the Azerbaijan Diaspora. The event was widely covered by local press.

25.07.2012

Working visit to the Republic of Colombia



On 25 July 2012, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Elmar Mammadyarov paid a working visit to the Republic of Colombia. During his visit Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Colombia, Maria Angela Holguin Cuellar.

Maria Angela Holguin welcomed the delegation led by Elmar Mammadyarov, emphasized the importance of this visit and highly appreciated it. Minister Holguin expressed her satisfaction with Colombian economic mission to Azerbaijan in October, 2011 and noted that there are vast potential for the development of cooperation on trade, agriculture and energy

fields between two countries and said that the existing bilateral high political relations would create an effective basis for other areas.

Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov expressed his gratitude for the invitation and the hospitality and informed his counterpart about Azerbaijan's foreign policy priorities. Minister Mammadyarov underlined that Azerbaijan is interested in strengthening the relations with Latin American countries. At the meeting with Colombian Foreign Minister Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister presented the letter of the President of Republic of Azerbaijan H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev addressed to the President of the Republic of Colombia and extended the invitation on behalf of Azerbaijan's President to his Colombian counterpart to officially visit Azerbaijan.

Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov emphasized the importance of strengthening of legal basis between two countries and signing the agreements on avoidance of double taxation and mutual promotion and protection of investments. At the meeting the settlement process of Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, the opportunities for cooperation within UN Security Council as well as the ways to develop bilateral cooperation on humanitarian, education and sports fields were also discussed.



On the same day the meeting was held between delegations led by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Elmar Mammadyarov and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Colombia, Maria Angela Holguin Cuellar. At the meeting the consultations between the business representatives from both sides were held and the ways to develop cooperation between two countries were discussed. Foreign Ministers Elmar Mammadyarov and Maria Cuellar held a briefing for media representatives.

After, Minister of Foreign Affairs Elmar Mammadyarov met with a group of Senators led by deputy Chairman of Columbian Senate, Edqar Espindola Nino.

Edqar Nino recalled with great satisfaction his visit to Azerbaijan and the meetings held with Azerbaijani officials. He expressed his confidence that Minister Elmar Mammadyarov's official visit to Colombia would contribute to the dynamic development of relations between two countries. Deputy Chairman noted that Columbian Senate understands the grief and sorrow of the Khojaly Genocide and in this regard Senate adopted the relevant decision. Senator also stressed the importance of opening diplomatic and trade representations in both countries soon and said that these steps would stimulate the cooperation in economic, trade, energy, cultural and other fields between our countries.



Then Edqar Nino the chairperson of the second constitutional committee of the Columbian Senate, Alexandra Moreno Piraquive expressed confidence that Columbian Senate will remain faithful to friendship and cooperation relations with Azerbaijani Parliament. After mutual speeches, Minister Elmar Mammadyarov and Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Colombia, Ilgar Muxtarov was awarded with Order of Merit for democracy efforts in the rank of Grand Commander by Columbian Senate national defence and security committee for their contribution to the development and strengthening of cooperation between Colombia and Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister expressed his gratitude for this high Award presented by Senate and noted that there is existing political will to boost the relations between Azerbaijan and Colombia in various fields. Minister also mentioned that the parliamentary diplomacy plays important role in bilateral relations and Azerbaijan is satisfied with high level inter-parliamentary relations between two countries.

At the end of the visit Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met with a Colombian Minister of Mines and Energy, Mauricio Cárdenas Santa María. During the meeting the sides expressed their intends to cooperate in the energy sector.

Stressing the country's rich history and experience in this sphere, Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov proposed the training of specialists in the Azerbaijani Oil Academy for the Colombian side. He also said that Azerbaijan cooperates with several Latin American countries and at present, the possibility of such cooperation with Colombia is under consideration. In turn, the Colombian minister expressed his intention to visit Azerbaijan in the near future.

26.07.2012 Working visit to the Republic of Argentina



atives from both sides.

On 26 July 2012, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Elmar Mammadyarov paid a working visit to the Argentine Republic. During the visit the official opening ceremony of Azerbaijan-Argentina Business Forum was held in San Martin Palace of Buenos-Ayres city. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship Hektor Timerman, Minister of Agriculture, Cattle-breeding and Fishing Norberto Yahuar, Secretary of State for Intern Trade of the Republic of Argentina, Guillermo Moreno and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Elmar Mammadyarov delivered talks at the business forum, which was attended by more than 250 business representa-

Foreign Ministers E.Mammadyarov spoke about recent economic successes of Azerbaijan and Argentina, intensification of cooperation between two countries and vast perspectives of cooperation. Presentations on the current economic situation of both countries and the possibilities of potential cooperation between two countries were made. Also, at the Business Forum representatives from Azerbaijan and Argentina held business meetings.

On the same day the Azerbaijani and Argentine foreign ministers signed an intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in trade-economic sphere. It was stressed that the mutual establishment of embassies in the two countries, mutual visits conducted during the last period, strengthening a political dialogue between the parties, as well as a business forums have opened up broad opportunities to expand cooperation between Azerbaijan and Argentina. The ministers also discussed international and regional issues, including the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict settlement.



The views on cooperation within international organizations were exchanged. The opportunities of strengthening the relations in trade-economic, scientific spheres, the implementation of joint projects in such areas as energy, agriculture, agribusiness, pharmaceuticals, ICT and construction were discussed. The parties stressed the importance of signing the discussed documents on expanding the legal framework of cooperation between the two countries, particularly in promoting and mutual protecting investments, avoiding double taxation and cooperating in science, culture, tourism, communications, IT and justice. The ministers held a joint press conference after the signing ceremony.

The importance of Foreign Ministers E.Mammadyarov's visit to Argentina and the discussions in terms of intensifying bilateral cooperation were stressed. It was also emphasized that the intergovernmental commission on economic cooperation to be established on the basis of the agreement will be an important factor in developing the cooperation between the two countries and coordinating specific projects.

After, Foreign Ministers E.Mammadyarov also met with Argentine Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fishing Norberto Yahuar and Minister of Federal Planning, Public Investment and Services Julio De Vido. He informed the ministers about Azerbaijan's development strategy, the projects in the energy sector and infrastructure development, as well as large projects undertaken by Azerbaijani companies in other countries.



During the visit Foreign Ministers E.Mammadyarov met with a President of Argentina Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. The President of Argentina asked to convey greetings and best wishes to President Ilham Aliyev and noted that she is pleased to accept the invitation to visit Azerbaijan.

The President of Argentina expressed satisfaction with the dynamic development of cooperation between the two countries in recent years and stressed that Argentina is interested in cooperating with Azerbaijan in all spheres.

Foreign Ministers E.Mammadyarov, in turn, informed the president of Argentina about the high economic achievements of Azerbaijan in recent years, development strategies, the role of regional development and cooperation and strengthening of the international authority of the country.

Foreign Ministers E.Mammadyarov stressed that Azerbaijan is interested in expanding cooperation with Latin American countries. E.Mammadyarov said the cooperation with Argentina is of particular importance for Azerbaijan and the first diplomatic representation of Azerbaijan in South America was opened in Buenos Aires.

The Azerbaijani foreign minister thanked President Kirchner for the decision, taken in connection with the establishment of the Embassy of Argentina in Baku.

27-28.07.2012

Working visit to the Oriental Republic of Uruguay

On 27 July 2012, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Elmar Mammadyarov paid a working visit to the Oriental Republic of Uruguay.

During his visit Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met Uruguayan President Jose Alberto Mujica Cordano. The President expressed satisfaction with a first official visit of the Azerbaijani delegation to Uruguay. Mr. Cordano expressed confidence the visit would contribute to developing cooperation between the two countries.

Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov conveyed Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev`s greetings and best regards to Mujica Cordano. Minister also handed over President Ilham Aliyev`s letter to the Uruguayan leader inviting him to Azerbaijan.

President Jose Alberto Mujica Cordano asked E.Mammadyarov to deliver his greetings and best regards to President Ilham Aliyev and thanked for the invitation. The Foreign Minister briefed the President of Uruguay on the country`s development strategy, transnational projects implemented with the initiative and participation of Azerbaijan, as well as the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and its grave consequences.

During the meeting, they noted Azerbaijan and Uruguay enjoy wide potential for development of bilateral relations, in particular in the fields of energy, agriculture, pharmaceuticals and information technologies. They also discussed regional and international issues.

On 28 July 2012, Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met with Uruguayan Vice President and President of the General Assembly and Chamber of Senators Danilo Astori.

The meeting discussed a number of issues, including Azerbaijan`s position in international policy, settlement of Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as current situation of Azerbaijan-Uruguay relations. Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov stressed the importance of expansion of the interparliamentary cooperation, and creation of friendship groups.

Later, the Foreign Minister met with Uruguay`s President of the Chamber of Representatives Jorge Orrico. Mr. Orrico praised the first official visit of the Azerbaijani delegation to Uruguay. Minister



E.Mammadyarov underlined the special role of interparliamentary cooperation in development of ties between the two countries. He described the creation of friendship group with Azerbaijan in the Uruguayan parliament as an “historic event” in bilateral relations.



The meeting ended with signing the Act on creation of Uruguay-Azerbaijan friendship group in Uruguayan Parliament. The document was signed by President of the Chamber of Representatives Jorge Orrico, Chairman of Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Deputies Jaime Trobo and on behalf of the permanent commission on international relations of the Senate Carlos Baraibar, while from Azerbaijani side minister Elmar Mammadyarov and ambassador Mammad Ahmadzade. The friendship group includes Felipe Carballo, Jose Carlos Mahia, Raul Olivera, Jaime Trobo, Jose Carlos Cardoso, Mario Silveira, German Cardoso, İvan Posada and senator Tabare Viera.

On the same day Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met Uruguayan counterpart Luis Almagro. Mr. Luis Almagro said the visit of the Azerbaijani delegation is the first official visit in the history of relations between the two countries and expressed hope reciprocal visits will contribute to the development of bilateral relations.

Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov informed Almagro on historic roots and bloody results of Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as resolutions adopted on this issue by the international organizations, and Azerbaijan`s position in the settlement of the conflict. Minister E.Mammadyarov stressed “the settlement of the dispute will make a contribution to peace and stability in the region.”

The meeting discussed expansion of political, economic and humanitarian relations between the two countries, organization of reciprocal visits and cooperation within international organizations. The two FM's have also exchanged views over regional and international issues, especially Azerbaijan`s role in global energy security, regional cooperation and integration.

In the end of the meeting, the two FM's signed an agreement exempting visas for persons that had diplomatic, official and service passports. They also signed an agreement on cooperation between the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy and Artigas Foreign Service Institute of Uruguay.



Following the meeting, the ministers attended Uruguay-Azerbaijan business forum held in Santos Palace, Montevideo. Addressing the forum, the FM's noted existing opportunity for economic cooperation between the two countries.

30.07.2012

Working visit to the Republic of France



On 30 July 2012, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan Elmar Mammadyarov met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of France, Loran Fabius in the framework of his working visit to France.

At the meeting the current situation of relations between Azerbaijan and France and the prospects for the development as well as international and regional issues were discussed. Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister presented the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mr. İlham Aliyev's letter addressed to the President of the Republic of France Mr. Fransua Oland and

kindly asked him to deliver the letter.

Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov underlined the 20th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and France and invited his French counterpart to visit our country.

In his turn Loran Fabius accepted the invitation with pleasure. French Minister expressed satisfaction with dynamic development of existing cooperation in political, economic, energy and humanitarian fields between two countries and called Azerbaijan as an important economic partner for France. Loran Fabius also mentioned that the Government of France highly appreciates the efforts of Azerbaijani side for making possible the construction of French Lyceum in Baku and expressed his confidence that this Lyceum would contribute to strengthening of friendly relationship between two nations

Minister Elmar Mammadyarov expressed his hope on intensification of the efforts of France to resolve the conflict. At the meeting officials discussed the issues related to Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict resolution and the topics from UN Security Council agenda.

02.08.2012 Working visit to the Republic of Peru

On 2 August 2012, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Elmar Mammadyarov paid a working visit to the Republic of Peru.

During his visit Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met with the Minister of Foreign Trade and Tourism of the Republic of Peru, Jose Luis Silva Martinot.



Jose Martinot briefed Elmar Mammadyarov about economic and trade relations of Peru and he said that his country is interested in establishment of economic relations with Azerbaijan. Peruvian Minister informed on establishment of vast cooperation with both, the European and Latin American countries and emphasized favorable investment environment in his country. He also expressed Peru's readiness to create appropriate opportunities to attract Azerbaijani investigations.

Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister expressed the importance of holding business forums, organization of various level visits to broaden economic and trade relations between Azerbaijan and Peru as well as increasing the level of economic cooperation between two countries.

Elmar Mammadyarov noted that Azerbaijan has experience on cooperation with countries of different continents, including Latin American ones and establishment of cooperation on energy field would be useful for both sides. At the end of the meeting Elmar Mammadyarov invited Jose Martinot to pay an official visit to Azerbaijan. Peruvian Minister accepted the invitation with pleasure and said that he would visit Azerbaijan with a delegation of businessmen.

After, Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met with a Peruvian Minister of Energy and Mining, Jorge Merino. During the meeting the sides expressed they intend to cooperate in the energy sector. Minister E.Mammadyarov informed Mr. Merino on regional energy projects, as well as Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline.

On the same day Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met with the President of Congress of the Republic of Peru, Victor Isla Rojas.

Victor Rojas expressed his satisfaction to see E.Mammadyarov in the Parliament of Peru and mentioned that this visit would contribute to the development of bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Peru. President of Congress noted that last year the delegation of congressmen from Peru returned from Azerbaijan with positive impressions and after the trip they proposed to establish a friendship group with Azerbaijan in the Parliament of Peru.

Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister said that one of the aims of his visit is to discuss the opportunities for establishment of cooperation in economic, trade, energy, cultural fields between two countries. Elmar Mammadyarov expressed his confidence that inter-parliamentary cooperation would play an important role in



this direction. Minister E.Mammadyarov highly appreciated the proposal to establish a friendship group with Azerbaijan in the Parliament of Peru and informed that he will also suggest establishing a friendship group with Peru in the Parliament of Azerbaijan.



At the end of the visit Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Peru, Rafael Roncagliolo. Rafael Roncagliolo expressed his satisfaction with E.Mammadyarov's visit and noted that his country is interested in cooperation with Azerbaijan as a dynamic developing country of Caucasus region. Peruvian Minister called Azerbaijan as the "door" to the Caucasus and he emphasized the importance of establishment of legal-basis for the expansion of bilateral relations.

Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister briefed his Peruvian counterpart about the meetings held during his tour in Latin America and stressed Azerbaijan interest in development of cooperation with Peru like other countries of the continent.

Minister E.Mammadyarov presented to his Peruvian counterpart the letter of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mr. Ilham Aliyev addressed to the President of the Republic of Peru and kindly asked him to deliver it. E.Mammadyarov mentioned that the development of relations in political level will provide a solid foundation for economic cooperation. He also stressed the importance of holding business forums, organization of mutual official visits and cultural events.

Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister informed Rafael Roncagliolo about Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict and the negotiations processes for the settlement of this conflict. At the end E.Mammadyarov invited Rafael Roncagliolo to pay an official visit to Azerbaijan. In his turn Peruvian Minister accepted the invitation with pleasure.

14-15.08.2012

Working visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

On 14-15 August 2012, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Elmar Mammadyarov paid a working visit to Makkah, Saudi Arabia to attend the Fourth Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Summit Conference. During the Conference Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met with the King of Saudi Arabia, Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al-Saud.



The issues of concern for the Muslim world were discussed at the session. Resolutions on Syria, Palestine, Myanmar and Mali were adopted. At the end of the Summit the Final Communiqué reflecting the position of the members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation was adopted as well. In the adopted Communiqué the OIC members condemned Armenia's aggression against Azerbaijan and called for Armenia's withdrawal from the Azerbaijan's territories.

On the same day Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met with the Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan, Yerzhan Kazykhanov. The issues of the existing bilateral relations and the ways of developing the existing cooperation between two countries were discussed at the meeting.

E.Mammadyarov briefed Yerzhan Kazykhanov about the Azerbaijan's activities in the United Nations Security Council, as well as about the cooperation with the Non-aligned Movement. Yerzhan Kazykhanov congratulated Elmar Mammadyarov with the successful activity at UN Security Council. The issues that were on the agenda of the Islamic Summit Conference were also discussed by the two ministers.

17-19.08.2012**Working visit to the Republic of Austria**

On 14-15 August 2012, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Elmar Mammadyarov paid a working visit to Salzburg, Austria to participate Trilogy conference on the topic "Would economic growth be socially oriented and environmentally sustainable?"

During the visit Minister E.Mammadyarov met with the Governor of Salzburg Gabi Burgstaller. The sides discussed the possibility of cooperation between the regions of Azerbaijan and Salzburg. Noting the great potential for cooperation in the cultural sphere with Salzburg, which is the musical center of Austria, Azerbaijani Foreign Minister proposed to discuss the possibility of organizing joint cultural events and mutual visits of artists.

Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov invited Mrs. Burgstaller to visit Azerbaijan. Governor of Salzburg gladly accepted the invitation.

Later, Azerbaijani Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met with Austrian Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger. The two ministers stressed the successful development of relations between Azerbaijan and Austria, discussed the prospects of further development of cooperation in the economic, energy and cultural spheres.

The sides expressed satisfaction with the activities of Austrian companies in Azerbaijan. The ministers stressed the intensity of mutual meetings for development of inter-parliamentary relations and the importance of encouraging increase in the number of these meetings. A need for the exchange of meetings at various levels and in other areas was noted.

The Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs invited the Azerbaijani counterpart on an official visit to Austria. E.Mammadyarov said that Days of Culture of Azerbaijan are planned to be held in Austria, adding that Azerbaijani cultural center will be operational in the near future in this country. E.Mammadyarov informed the Austrian counterpart on the current state of the negotiation process to settle the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh.

30-31.08.2012**Working visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran**

On 30 August 2012, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Elmar Mammadyarov paid a working visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran to participate at the Non Aligned Movement Summit.

During the visit Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met with Walid al Muallim, Foreign Minister of Syria on the initiative of the Syrian side. The Ministers exchanged views on the non-permanent membership of Azerbaijan at the United Nations Security Council. Both parties expressed mutual support to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their countries. The Foreign Minister reiterated Azerbaijan's position in relation to the current events at the Middle East, including Syria.



After, Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met with Yerjan Kazikhanov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The relations between the two countries constituted the focus of discussions. Both sides noted that the recent Summit of Turkic Speaking Countries was a success. The sides also talked about the issues pertaining to the Caspian Sea and agreed to further and enhance the cooperation within the framework of international organizations.

Then, Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met with Rustam Ghashemi, Oil Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The two parties discussed the perspectives of cooperation and stressed the existence of potential of bilateral cooperation. Minister Mammadyarov raised the issue of detention of two Azerbaijani poets Shahriyar Hajizade and Farid Huseyni and noted that their continued detention impacts upon bilateral relations negatively.

On the same day Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met with the Speaker of Iranian Parliament Ali Larijani. At the meeting the relations between the two countries, the perspectives for cooperation were the focus of

discussions. Mr. Larijani noted that Azerbaijan is rapidly developing and is becoming a strong country. The Iranian Speaker added that his country is interested in cooperation with Azerbaijan and that official Tehran supports the territorial integrity and independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan.



Minister Elmar Mammadyarov briefed Ali Larijani about the current state of the settlement process of Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict and emphasized the importance of withdrawal of Armenian occupying forces from Azerbaijani territories. Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister underlined that the most important issue for Azerbaijanis to liberate Azerbaijani territories. He also expressed his confidence that Azerbaijan will restore its territorial integrity sooner or later.

At the meeting Minister Elmar Mammadyarov raised the issue of detention two Azerbaijani citizens, Shehriyar Hahjizade and Farid Huseynov. Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister brought the concerns of our government and nation to Iranian Speaker's attention and stressed his hope that this issue will be resolved soon.

At the end of the Summit of Non-Aligned Movement held in Tehran on August 30-31 of this year a Final Document was adopted. Item 391 of this document is dedicated to Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. The item is as follows:

391. The Heads of State or Government expressed their regret that the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan remains unresolved and continues to endanger international and regional peace and security. They reaffirmed the importance of the principle of nonuse of force enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and encouraged the parties to continue to seek a negotiated settlement of the conflict within the territorial integrity, sovereignty and the internationally recognized borders of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

26-28.09.2012

Working visit to the United States of America

On 26-28 September 2012, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Elmar Mammadyarov paid a working visit to the United States of America to participate at the 67th session of the UN General Assembly.

On September 26, 2012 Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov made the following speech at the UN Security Council high-level meeting on peace and security in the Middle East:

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate Germany for its successful presidency of the Security Council this month and thank you for convening this meeting with a timely topic. We are also grateful to the Secretary General of the United Nations Mr. Ban Ki-moon and the Secretary General of the League of Arab States Mr. Nabil Elaraby for their briefings.

Today's meeting is taking place in an important period in the sense that the Middle Eastern region experiences historic changes that testifies to the desire and determination of the societies to shape their destiny. The transformation process have yielded encouraging trends towards ensuring respect for human rights and guaranteeing economic and social well-being for everyone. At the same time, there is an obvious need for in-depth analysis into the root causes and eventual implications of this complex process for regional and global security architecture.

While international response to those developments in the Middle East has varied in its essence and intensity, the primary role in maintaining adequate international reaction belongs to international and regional organizations, particularly to the United Nations and the League of Arab States.

It should be noted that not all regional organizations may boast of their ability and political will to understand the root causes of security problems and to contribute effectively to their resolution. The League of Arab States has proved to be one of those regional organizations that are able to take the lead in promoting peace, security and stability in its region.



In that regard, we were pleased to see that the cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States was motivated by the common objective of enhancing peace and security and helping the States of the region through this difficult period of their history. Their participation and presence have been instrumental in carrying out important tasks in such areas as conflict prevention and resolution, crisis response and management, fight against terrorism and organized crime.

Against the background of regional fragilities that go hand in hand with the challenges of the transformations experienced in the region, maintaining high profile and further active involvement by the United Nations and the League of Arab States have acquired increased importance. Therefore, mutually reinforcing cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States has become ever more essential for maintaining peace and security in the region and working out sound strategies to assist the States in transition.

The role of the League of Arab States as an insider to the region is particularly valuable in terms of bringing out the regional specificities to the global scale, and interacting with the United Nations, its specialized agencies and field presences. The United Nations and the League of Arab States should further galvanize their efforts for the achievement of best results for the States and peoples of the region.

In that regard, we commend the appointment of the Joint Special Representative for Syria of the United Nations and the League of Arab States as an important step forward in the cooperation between the two organizations and reiterate our full support for his activity.

Mr. President,

The international community must continue to be consistent in its efforts to facilitate solutions to regional crises and conflicts based on the norms and principles of international law as well as on the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, as required by the UN Charter. This approach is strongly supported by Azerbaijan with regard to the resolution of protracted conflicts in different parts of the world.

While recognizing historic opportunities that recent waves of transitions bring about for the Middle East, we should not neglect the long standing security problems, solution to which is no less important prerequisite for maintaining peace, stability and sustainable development in the region.

All stakeholders in the Middle East should regard the latest developments as a unique chance and an urgent call to make courageous steps for achievement tangible results in the Middle East peace process. The comprehensive, just and lasting settlement is long overdue in this conflict, which undermines the security, stability and well-being of the entire region, and has an impact that stretches well beyond the regional boundaries. We consider it essential of having cooperation between the Security Council and the League of Arab States on this issue of paramount importance for all of us.

We cannot but once again express our deep concern over the recent escalation provoked by blasphemy against Islam. We strongly condemn all assaults against religions. At the same time, attacks on civilians, in particular diplomatic personnel, cannot be justified under any circumstances.

Mr. President,

We truly would like to believe that irrespective of all the challenges and difficulties, the pursuit of peace and progress in the Middle East will never be abandoned, and endeavors of its peoples to build stable, secure and democratic States will be continuously bolstered by the international community.

In this context, we are confident that the continued engagement by the United Nations and the League of Arab States, and strengthened cooperation between them, consistent with Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, will effectively contribute to peace and security in the region. As the member of Security Council and observer to the League of Arab States, Azerbaijan will continue its utmost efforts to that end.

In conclusion, I would like to express our full support of the draft Security Council presidential statement, aimed at helping develop effective cooperation between the two organizations.

Thank you.

During his visit Minister of Foreign Affairs Elmar Mammadyarov met with his Greek counterpart Dimitris Avramopoulos.



Minister Elmar Mammadyarov briefed about economic reforms and the achievements gained in diversifying national economy. The Minister noted the importance of arranging bilateral trade missions in order to improve bilateral economic ties between Azerbaijan and Greece. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece Dimitris Avramopoulos expressed his country's interest in developing bilateral ties, in particular in broadening cooperation in energy and tourism, with Azerbaijan.

The Greek Minister noted that Azerbaijan enjoys a strong and diversified economy and therefore has weathered economic crisis well. He also informed about measures taken by his Government to diversify the Greek economy.

Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met Apisai Telemia, Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Environment, Trade, Labour and Tourism of Tuvalu. The meeting involved discussions over establishing cooperation in tourism and agriculture between the two countries. Tuvaluan Minister Apisai Telemia asked Azerbaijani side to explore opportunities to invest in those areas in Tuvalu.



Minister Elmar Mammadyarov highlighted that Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy offers educational opportunities for youth and young diplomats from Tuvalu.

Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met with his Liberian counterpart Augustine Ngafuan. The Ministers stressed the need to explore opportunities to develop economic cooperation and noted certain measures to be taken in that respect.



Liberian Minister underlined that his country needs strong partners to develop its transitional economy and emphasized the special importance of cooperating with Azerbaijan. As large oil fields have been explored in Liberia, Minister Ngafuan expressed his country's interest to benefit from Azerbaijan's rich experience in oil exploration. He also invited Minister Elmar Mammadyarov to visit Liberia.

Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met with Albanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Edmond Panariti. The Ministers held discussions about ways to develop cooperation in economy and other sectors between the two countries.

Minister Elmar Mammadyarov emphasized that high level mutual visits contribute greatly to bilateral relationships and stressed the need to strengthen cooperation in contractual-legal field between Azerbaijan and Albania. Minister Edmond Panariti appreciated the recent visit by Chairman of Azerbaijani Milli Mejlis to Albania and expressed hope that the visit would contribute to the bilateral ties.





Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Nebojsa Kaluderovic, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Montenegro. The Ministers exchanged views about the prospects of developing bilateral ties, in particular cooperation in tourism and agreed to broaden contractual-legal cooperation between their countries.

Minister Elmar Mammadyarov extended an invitation to his Montenegrin counterpart to pay a visit to Azerbaijan and Minister Kaluderovic accepted the invitation with pleasure.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Elmar Mammadyarov met with Secretary General of the OSCE Lamberto Zannier on the sidelines of the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly. They discussed Azerbaijan-OSCE cooperation and exchanged views over Minsk Group's activity toward resolving the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met with Ahmed Ben Said Jaffare, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Comoros Islands on the sidelines of the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly. The Minister of the Comoros Islands informed that recent heavy rains have seriously damaged the island's economy by affecting agriculture and infrastructure of the country. Taking the opportunity, he invited Azerbaijani companies to consider the opportunity to take part at infrastructure projects in the Comoros Islands.



Recalling the appeal of the OIC regarding the situation in the Comoros Islands, Minister Elmar Mammadyarov expressed Azerbaijan's readiness to assist the country. He also underlined that Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy offers educational opportunities for students and young diplomats of the Comoros Islands.



Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met with his Slovenian counterpart Karl Erjavec. The Ministers discussed ways how to develop bilateral relationships between Azerbaijan and Slovenia and expressed mutual interest to broaden the ties. They also agreed to expand contractual-legal cooperation, arrange mutual visits and hold business forums and increase regular contacts between public and private institutions with a view to exploring opportunities of cooperation in various sectors.

Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore Kasiviswanathan Shanmugam. Ministers agreed to consider the signing of bilateral official documents and expanding the contractual-legal cooperation with a view to developing overall cooperation between the two countries in various spheres. They also expressed the importance of arranging mutual visits and strengthening the cooperation within the international organizations.



Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov met Khalil Akinci, Secretary General of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States. They discussed the relations between Azerbaijan and Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States and exchanged views on measures aimed at gaining observer status at UN and other international organisations. They also talked about ways to increase economic integration among member states, create consultation mechanism on the level of diplomatic missions at different regions and cooperate within international organisations.



Foreign Minister E. Mammadyarov met with his Serbian counterpart Ivan Mkric on 27 September on the sidelines of the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly. The Ministers held discussions about the current state of bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Serbia as well as prospects of further developing these ties. They expressed satisfaction with bilateral political relations and agreed to take steps to broaden commercial cooperation, intensify mutual visits and sign relevant bilateral documents.

Foreign Minister E. Mammadyarov met Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Vesna Pusic of the Republic of Croatia. The Ministers explored opportunities to move bilateral relationship ahead and agreed to take steps to sign legal documents on areas of mutual interest. Minister Vesna Pusic expressed his country's interest to attract Azerbaijani investment into projects being implemented in Croatia. Minister Elmar Mammadyarov highlighted Azerbaijan's interest to expand relations with Balkan countries, including Croatia and emphasized that before taking relevant steps, it is important that opportunities of joining infrastructure projects are explored.



He went on to underline the importance of mutual visits between relevant authorities of the two countries to assess the opportunities of bilateral cooperation in tourism and energy.

Foreign Minister E. Mammadyarov met with Philippe Gordon, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs. They discussed different aspects of Azerbaijan-United States bilateral relationship and exchanged views about how to take these ties even further ahead in the future. Phillip Gordon thanked Azerbaijan for its support to the NATO's Afghanistan mission and expressed hope this support would continue in future.

During the meeting, they also exchanged views about talks aimed at resolving the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan as well as current issues on the agenda of the UN Security Council.

Foreign Minister E. Mammadyarov met with co-chairs of OSCE Minsk Group. They discussed the stalemate in peace talks due to Armenia's refusal to withdraw its occupying forces from Azerbaijan's occupied territories. Minister Elmar Mammadyarov also stressed that Armenia uses all excuses and means in order to maintain the status quo in the region. The Minsk Group co-chairs reaffirmed the statements of their Presidents on the unacceptability of the current status quo.

Minister Elmar Mammadyarov reiterated that regional peace, security and stability will be threatened as long as the Armenian armed forces stay in Azerbaijan's occupied territories.

Foreign Minister E. Mammadyarov met with Rashid Meredov, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the Republic of Turkmenistan on the sidelines of the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly. They exchanged views over how to improve ties between the two countries. The discussions focused on the ways to enhance educational, media, economic, energy and humanitarian ties.

Minister Elmar Mammadyarov proposed the signing of an agreement on cooperation between diplomatic educational institutions of the two countries. Turkmen Minister suggested signing of agreement on cooperation between official media agencies of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan.



Foreign Minister E. Mammadyarov met with Ralf Everard Gonsalves, Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and Grenadines. Recalling his recent visit to Azerbaijan and meeting with President Ilham Aliyev, Prime Minister said his country is interested to develop relations with Azerbaijan. He noted there is a potential to establish and improve economic ties between the two countries and invited Azerbaijani companies to take part at large scale infrastructure projects at St Vincent and Grenadines. Minister Elmar Mammadyarov underlined

Azerbaijan's interest in developing ties with the Caribbean region and stressed the importance of arranging mutual business missions to enhance these ties.



Foreign Minister E. Mammadyarov met with Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates on the sidelines of the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly. They noted with satisfaction the current state of bilateral relations and discussed how to move these ties ahead. The Ministers agreed to cooperate and render mutual support within international organisations.

The meetings also involved exchange of views over the issues on the agenda of the UN Security Council.

Foreign Minister E. Mammadyarov met with his Pakistani counterpart Hina Rabbani Khar. The Ministers exchanged views about current state of bilateral relationship and the prospects of these ties. They stressed the need to intensify mutual visits and expand contractual-legal cooperation as a means of enhancing bilateral relations.

They also noted that it is important that the two countries cooperate and render mutual support within international organisations. The meetings also involved discussions about issues on the agenda of the UN Security Council.



Minister Elmar Mammadyarov invited his Pakistani counterpart to visit Azerbaijan and the Pakistani Foreign Minister accepted the invitation with pleasure.



Foreign Minister E. Mammadyarov met Ambrose George, Minister of Information, Telecommunications and Constituency Empowerment of the Commonwealth of Dominica on the sidelines of the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly. The Ministers held discussions about bilateral relations and ways to further develop these relations. They both expressed interest in enhancing these ties and in that regard stressed that opportunities will need to be explored to improve ties.

Foreign Minister E. Mammadyarov met with his Sudanese counterpart Ali Ahmed Karti on the sidelines of the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly.

Foreign Minister of the Republic of Sudan thanked Azerbaijan for its continuing support to his country during discussions at UN Security Council and briefed about the agreement reached between Republic of Sudan and South Sudan. Minister Elmar Mammadyarov stressed the importance of bilateral cooperation and cooperation within international organisations with Sudan and reaffirmed that Azerbaijan will continue to support Sudan in restoring peace and stability.



Sudanese Foreign Minister said that in view of Azerbaijan's growing international prestige and his country's intention to strengthen bilateral ties with Azerbaijan, Republic of Sudan has decided to open embassy in Baku early next year. Minister Elmar Mammadyarov welcomed this decision and underlined that the opening of embassy would further contribute to bilateral relationship.



Foreign Minister E. Mammadyarov met with Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the sidelines of the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly.

The meeting involved discussions about Azerbaijan-EU cooperation as well as the pressing issues on the international agenda.

On 28 September 2012, Minister of Foreign Affairs Elmar Mammadyarov met with his Israeli counterpart Avigdor Lieberman.



The Ministers held discussions about current state and prospects of Azerbaijan-Israeli relationship. They noted the importance of mutual visits to improve the bilateral ties.



Foreign Minister E. Mammadyarov met Foreign Minister of Lesotho, Mohlabi Kenneth Tsekoa. The Ministers signed a communique on the establishment of diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and Lesotho. They also exchanged views over the establishment and development of bilateral relationship. Minister Elmar Mammadyarov stressed the importance of mutual visits to improve ties and invited his counterpart to pay visit to Azerbaijan. Foreign Minister of Lesotho accepted the invitation.

Furthermore, Minister Elmar Mammadyarov briefed about the activities of Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy and invited Lesotho diplomats to attend diplomatic courses organised by Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy.

Foreign Minister E. Mammadyarov met with Foreign Minister of the Republic of Colombia, Maria Angela Holguin Cuellar. The Ministers discussed the current state of bilateral relations and the ways how to improve these ties.



They noted with satisfaction the current state of bilateral relations. Minister Elmar Mammadyarov highlighted that Azerbaijan is interested to bolster its ties with Latin American countries and emphasized the role of mutual visits in developing bilateral ties.

The Colombian Minister said her country intends to deepen its relationship with Azerbaijan and that she will pay a visit to Azerbaijan early next year. She also pointed out that Colombia will be opening its embassy in Baku in the near future.

During the meeting the Ministers signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Technical Cooperation between the Governments of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Colombia.



The 18th meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of GUAM was held on the sidelines of the 67th session of the UN General Assembly.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia G. Vashadze, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine K. Grishenko, Ambassador of Moldova to the United States I. Muntianu and Secretary General of GUAM Valeri Chechelashvili.

The participants discussed the following agenda items:

- The exchange of views on the protracted conflicts within GUAM region and their impact on international peace, security and development as per Item 35 of the Agenda of the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly;
- Council of Foreign Ministers agreed to put forward a draft resolution on "Cooperation between the UN and GUAM" at the next session of the UN General Assembly;
- Council of Foreign Ministers welcomed the decision by Chairman of GUAM Parliamentary Assembly to hold the next meeting in Baku on 19-20 December 2012;
- Council of Foreign Ministers welcomed initiatives to cooperate on new areas such as fight against cyber threats, nuclear security, safety measures during events;
- Council of Foreign Ministers recommended GUAM Working Group on Transport to arrange senior level meeting of transport executives with a view to adopting Concept document on development of GUAM transport corridor;
- Council of Foreign Ministers agreed on draft program of the cooperation between GUAM and Japan.



On the same day Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov attended the meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) on the sidelines of the 67th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. The meeting focused on the discussion and exchange of the views about the increasing of the efficiency of the organization and measures to be taken.

Minister Elmar Mammadyarov wished success to Turkey as it presides the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and new Secretary General of the organization. Foreign Minister E.Mammadyarov stressed the importance of the preparation of action plan for the implementation of the agenda noting that the implementation of the BSEC Economic Agenda adopted in the last meeting could increase the economic opportunities of the organization.

Minister E.Mammadyarov underlined that the protracted conflicts in member countries makes negative impact on economic integration trends and added that BSEC highly appreciates the dialogue and cooperation with international organizations.

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

- 13.04.2012 Meeting with the outgoing Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of France to Azerbaijan, Gabriel Keller
- 23.04.2012 Meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel, Avigdor Lieberman
- 08.05.2012 Meeting with the outgoing Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of India to Azerbaijan, Debnath Shaw
- 08.05.2012 Meeting with the newly appointed Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Azerbaijan, Sherzod Fayziyev
- 11.05.2012 Meeting with the delegation led by Foreign Minister of the Republic of Sudan, Ali Ahmad Kharti
- 14.05.2012 Meeting with the delegation led by Chairwoman of the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria, Tsetska Tsacheva
- 25.05.2012 Meeting with the Ambassador of the Republic of Finland to Azerbaijan, Petri Salo
- 25.05.2012 Meeting with the delegation led by Deputy Economy Minister of the United Arab Emirates, Mohamed Bin Abdul Aziz Al Shehhi
- 04.06.2012 Meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Principality of Andorra, Gilbert Saboya Sunye
- 04.06.2012 Meeting with the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu
- 04.06.2012 Meeting with the newly appointed Charge d'Affaires of the Republic of Argentina to Azerbaijan, Jorge Roballo
- 07.06.2012 Meeting with the delegation led by Head of Azerbaijan-Hungary Inter-parliamentary friendship group, Marton Dondoshin
- 13.06.2012 Meeting with the Ambassador of New Zealand to Russia and also accredited to Azerbaijan, Ian Hill
- 14.06.2012 Meeting with the newly appointed Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of India to Azerbaijan, Vinod Kumar
- 14.06.2012 Meeting with the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Ireland's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Eamon Gilmore
- 21.06.2012 Meeting with the newly appointed Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of France to Azerbaijan, Pascal Meunier
- 28.06.2012 Meeting with the delegation led by Estonian parliament speaker, Ene Ergma
- 28.06.2012 Meeting with the Advisor to the Romanian President for Strategic Affairs, Security and Foreign Policy, Lulian Chifu
- 28.06.2012 Meeting with the delegation led by Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of Australia to Eastern Europe, the Balkans and Caucasus Russell Trudy

- 03.07.2012 Meeting with the delegation led by Minister of Foreign Relations and Worship of the Republic of Argentina, Hector Timerman
- 03.07.2012 Meeting with the delegation led by Chairperson of the Second Constitutional Committee of the Columbian Senate, Alexandra Moreno Piraquive
- 05.07.2012 Meeting with the delegation led by General Director of Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority, Mohammad Daim Kakar
- 06.07.2012 Meeting with the Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy and NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia, James Appathurai
- 06.07.2012 Meeting with the outgoing Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Azerbaijan, Mohammad Bagir Bahrami
- 06.07.2012 Meeting with the outgoing Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Lithuania to Azerbaijan, Kestutis Kudzmanas
- 09.07.2012 Meeting with the Secretary General of the OSCE, Lamberto Zannier
- 09.07.2012 Meeting with the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Italy, Marta Dassu and Deputy Economic Development Minister, Claudio De Vincenti
- 11.07.2012 Meeting with the outgoing Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Azerbaijan, Dragoljub Ljepoja
- 12.07.2012 Meeting with the delegation led by Deputy Chairman of Lower Chamber of the Mexico's Senate, Francisco Arroyo Vieyra
- 12.07.2012 Meeting with the delegation led by Minister of Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hamid-Reza Haji Babae
- 16.07.2012 Meeting with the Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization, Mohammed Yahya P. Maroofi
- 17.07.2012 Meeting with the outgoing Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Cuba to Azerbaijan, Marcelo Caballero Torres
- 18.07.2012 Meeting with the delegation led by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Radislaw Sikorski
- 18.07.2012 Meeting with the delegation led by Executive Director of the American Jewish Committee, David Harris
- 19.07.2012 Meeting with the delegation led by President of the Chamber of Deputies of the United Mexican States, Oscar Martin Arce Paniagua
- 19.07.2012 Meeting with the delegation led by Representative of British Parliament, Bob Blackman
- 23.08.2012 Meeting with the outgoing Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the State of Israel to Azerbaijan, Michael Lavon-Lotem
- 23.08.2012 Meeting with the outgoing Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Arab Republic of Egypt to Azerbaijan, Saber Mansour

- 23.08.2012 Meeting with the outgoing Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Korea to Azerbaijan, Lee Jiha
- 24.08.2012 Meeting with the delegation led by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Seyyid Abbas Eraqchi
- 05.09.2012 Meeting with the newly appointed Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Korea to Azerbaijan, Choi Suk-inn
- 05.09.2012 Meeting with the newly appointed Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the State of Israel to Azerbaijan, Rafael Harpaz
- 05.09.2012 Meeting with the newly appointed Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Azerbaijan, Richard Morningstar
- 08.09.2012 Meeting with the delegation led by Chairman of the Subcommittee on Reference and Research on the Foreign Relations Committee of the US House of Representatives, Dane Rohrabacher
- 10.09.2012 Meeting with the newly appointed charge d'affairs of Kyrgyz Republic to Azerbaijan, Ayjigit Buranov
- 10.09.2012 Meeting with Ambassadors of the OSCE member-states
- 13.09.2012 Meeting with the outgoing Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Turkey to Azerbaijan, Hulusi Kilic
- 13.09.2012 Meeting with the delegation led by the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, Philippe Lefort
- 14.09.2012 Meeting with the outgoing Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Kuwait to Azerbaijan, Hasan Yusif al-Zavivi
- 14.09.2012 Delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation of the Netherlands, Maxime Verhagen
- 21.09.2012 Meeting with the delegation led by Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People's Representatives Congress of People's Republic of China, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Li Zhaoxing
- 21.09.2012 Meeting with the newly appointed Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Turkey to Azerbaijan, Ismail Alper Coskun
- 21.09.2012 Meeting with the newly appointed Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Bulgaria to Azerbaijan, Maya Hristova

XƏBƏRLƏR – NEWS – HOBOCTH

THE SECOND SESSION OF THE EURONEST PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

3 April 2012, Baku

On 3 April 2012, the opening ceremony of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly's second session has been held in the building of the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has attended the session.

Opening the session, Parliament Speaker Ogtay Asadov said:

- Dear Mr. President!

Dear session participants!

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen!

I would like to sincerely welcome you all to the second plenary session of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly and wish all the colleagues in attendance effective and successful work.

The fact that Baku is hosting the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly's first session to be held outside the European Union is a historic event for our parliament. The Milli Majlis of Azerbaijan has been receiving so many representatives of the European Parliament and partner states for the first time. I do hope that the exchange of opinion, the recommendations and decisions to be made at the session will help us achieve the goals of our organization.

Dear colleagues, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. Ilham Aliyev is attending the second session of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly.

The floor is given to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. Ilham Aliyev.

Remarks by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

- Dear ladies and gentlemen!

Dear friends!

I would like to welcome all the guests to Azerbaijan and wish this session of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly every success. I am very pleased that Azerbaijan is hosting the first session to be held outside the European Union and would like to thank our partners for making this decision. I am sure that the decisions to be made and the issues to be discussed here will be highly important.

Some members of Euronest are visiting Azerbaijan for the first time. They will have the opportunity to learn Azerbaijan better and familiarize themselves with our country. Of course, this session will further enhance the spirit of cooperation between Azerbaijan and European Union institutions. Our cooperation has been developing for years. Azerbaijan cooperates with the European Union in various spheres. We have been a member of the Council of Europe for over 10 years now. I am proud to say that I was the first head of an Azerbaijani delegation in the Parliamentary Assembly.

Of course, there are many issues on our agenda and they cover a number of areas.

Our cooperation has a good history and a good future. Because our high-level and regular contacts, the high-level visits and visits by members of parliament further strengthen the cooperation between the European Union and Azerbaijan.

We are conducting political reforms together. Azerbaijan is committed to the political reform. We have

achieved major strides in all areas of life in the years of independence; we have established stable political institutions. We have all the institutions. We have a multiparty system. We have a parliament composed of representatives of many parties; we have the freedom of expression and assembly, a free Internet. I am very pleased that the number of Internet users in Azerbaijan is growing every month. More than 50 per cent of our population is Internet users, they use broadband Internet.

Political reforms will certainly be continued in the future. For many years during our independence, we laid the foundations of our statehood and political system, so this cooperation with European institutions is highly important. The Euronest format is very important. There is cooperation between former Soviet republics and European Union member-states here, they are working together as a team. The fact that this session is held in Baku is very positive. The issues to be discussed during this session will further bolster the spirit of cooperation within Euronest. There are not too many organizations of this nature.



Azerbaijan cooperation closely with members of the “Eastern Partnership” program, in particular GUAM member countries. We have been a member of GUAM for over 10 years. This organization includes Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Our bilateral and multilateral relations with these countries are very good. At the same time, our cooperation with European colleagues is creating a favorable environment. I am sure that this session, being held outside the European Union, will also bring about a good spirit of cooperation. We will do our best to create favorable conditions for cooperation. I am sure that session participants will also have a good opportunity to get to know Azerbaijan. In other words, seeing believes. You will see Azerbaijan’s realities, the way Azerbaijan has changed, its reforms, the challenges facing us, the wishes and aspirations of the Azerbaijani people and, in general, our future plans.

As far as the 20 years of our independence are concerned, Azerbaijan’s development has been very good with the exception of the early years. The first years were marred with chaos; the situation in the country was very complex. But we knew all along that we were on the right path. We have managed to transform our country from a formerly Soviet and communist republic into a modern state and to outline plans for the future. Of course, political reforms must be supported with economic transformation. We are currently pursuing these reforms in parallel.

Because it was impossible to transform a republic that was part of an empire and lived in a totalitarian state into a free and modern country without a strong economic foundation. It was for this reason that there was a deep political, economic and financial recession in Azerbaijan at the time. The economy was not sustainable. Oil production in Azerbaijan, a country that pioneered the world’s oil production in the 19th century, was in decline. We needed resources to prevent this negative scenario. Thanks to the strong will and courage of the Azerbaijani people, we have transformed our country and identified explicit plans for the future. As I mentioned earlier, a political system was established and economic reforms got under way.

These reforms are still ongoing and will be continued. We have diversified our economy and created a strong economic foundation. Over the last eight years our economy has tripled, the GDP has increased 300 per cent. This is at least a regional record. We have also reduced the level of poverty. This is important too. Because GDP growth can only succeed if there is a proper division of resources.

As regards the economic and social sphere, the reduction of unemployment has been our top priority. Over the last eight years, we have reduced the level of poverty from 49 to 7.7 per cent. More than a million jobs were created in Azerbaijan in the course of eight years. At present, the rate of unemployment is 5.3 per cent.

Billions have been invested in our economy. We are pursuing the policy of open doors. We have opened our doors wide to friends and investors. Azerbaijan is currently in first place among formerly Soviet republics for the volume of direct foreign investment per capita. Last year alone more than 21 billion dollars was invested in our economy, including about 30 per cent foreign. This is evidence of

major interest in Azerbaijan on the part of foreign investors. I am very pleased that we are witnessing investment inflow not in the energy sector, but in our non-oil economy. This is the result of our diversification policy. We are using our immense natural resources for the prosperity of our people and country, we are diversifying our economy.

If we look at last year's statistics we can see that our GDP did not grow too much. But the non-energy sector formed 10 per cent of the GDP.



Our plans for the coming decades are also quite clear. I disclosed them a few months ago. In the next decade we plan to double our gross domestic product. In other words, we will further double the already tripled GDP in the coming years. Thus, Azerbaijan will turn into a high-income country. This is our goal. Our goal is to become a developed country. I think we have all the opportunities to do that. We have a stable political system, our society clearly understands the country's development directions. We have a strong economy. We have a stable social policy, natural resources, a modern infrastructure, a favorable geographical location,

qualified professionals and knowledgeable young people. Therefore, we have no right to waste the opportunity to become a developed country.

Our cooperation plans with European institutions are of tremendous importance for us because I believe that the European Union is one of the best examples in the modern world, perhaps even the best. Political and economic freedoms there represent a single entity. We can see progress. Despite the problems associated with the financial recession in some European countries, we know that this crisis is of temporary nature and I am sure it will soon be resolved. We in Azerbaijan are doing our best to further strengthen our country. As I have mentioned, economic reforms have already produced results.

Our future plans are supported by leading international financial institutions and the work we are doing receives good feedback. The Davos World Economic Forum has put Azerbaijan in first place in the CIS for economic competitiveness. The rating agency "Standard & Poors" has further raised our credit rating. As you may know, this is not a very widespread phenomenon these days. Our economic achievements are recognized and supported by relevant international financial institutions. Therefore, we are very optimistic of the future. We know our goals and how to achieve them. We have both the political will and financial resources to do that. We are fully committed to a market economy.

After the break-up of the Soviet Union, the share of the market economy in our GDP was equal to zero. Now it accounts for 83 per cent. In essence, in addition to our strategic energy resources, it has been an important factor in conducting a broad policy of privatization and creating the private sector. We have also encouraged the development of the non-oil sector. While remaining committed to the market economy, we could not forget social justice. In some cases the principles of a market economy create difficulties for a number of categories relying on government assistance. Therefore, social issues are very important for us. We have implemented numerous social programs. The number of people living below the poverty line has been reducing every year. Seven per cent of Azerbaijani population is still in need of government support. More than half a million of our citizens receive monthly benefits. At the same time, we are conducting a very modern pension reform. At present, the average pension accounts for 40 per cent of the average wage. I think this is very close to European criteria.

In general, I think that the fiscal and budget criteria existing in the European Union are successfully applied in Azerbaijan. We have practically no budget deficit. Our foreign debt constitutes about 7 per cent of the GDP. This is a very good indicator. We are also trying to benefit from the experience of developed European countries. We are creating a modern social infrastructure. More than 2,000 schools have been built in Azerbaijan in the last several years. Over 400 schools will be reconstructed and built this year alone. More than 400 new hospitals and 34 Olympic Centers have been established in the country.

One of our social and political problems is the problem of refugees and IDPs who have been af-

ected by the Armenian aggression and the occupation of our lands. As a result of this aggression, more than a million Azerbaijanis have become refugees and IDPs. About 50,000 Azerbaijanis have been evicted from Nagorno-Karabakh. Over 700,000 Azerbaijanis have been driven out of seven districts adjacent to Nagorno-Karabakh, while 250,000 Azerbaijanis have been exposed to the policy of ethnic cleansing and ousted from Armenia. A total of one million people are refugees and IDPs now. This figure was registered in 1994. About 20 years have passed and if we consider the positive demographic situation in Azerbaijan, these people are now over a million. Of course, this is a heavy political, economic and social burden. These people have the right to return to their homes. Our internationally recognized territory has been under Armenian occupation for 20 years now. As a result of this aggression and the policy of ethnic cleansing, 20 per cent of our territory has been occupied. As I mentioned earlier, more than a million of our fellow countrymen are refugees and IDPs. International organizations have passed numerous resolutions regarding the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. The UN Security Council has passed four resolutions demanding an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian forces from Azerbaijani lands. The European Parliament and the Council of Europe have adopted similar resolutions. Similar decisions have been adopted in the summits of the OSCE and other international organizations. Unfortunately, the Armenian government is turning a blind eye to these decisions, failing to fulfill them and continuing to occupy Azerbaijan's internationally recognized territories.

Nagorno-Karabakh is native Azerbaijani land. We know history very well. We know that the resettlement of the Armenians to Nagorno-Karabakh started in the 19th century. This region is a historical part of Azerbaijan. The word "Karabakh" is an Azerbaijani word. It doesn't mean anything in Armenian. It is absolutely clear that this is the case from a historical standpoint. From a legal point of view, Nagorno-Karabakh is an inalienable part of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan joined the UN with Nagorno-Karabakh being its integral part. Azerbaijan's territorial integrity is recognized by the international community. This further reinforces our position. So the issue is completely clear from historical and legal standpoints. As regards the essence of negotiations, I regret to say that the OSCE Minsk Group was established 20 years ago – to be more precise, 20 years and one week ago. It was established with the aim of resolving the conflict. Unfortunately, 20 years have passed but the conflict remains unresolved. Our lands are still occupied. The districts adjacent to Nagorno-Karabakh are in ruins. Our cities have been razed to the ground, the mosques and cemeteries of our ancestors have been desecrated.

All this is reflected in OSCE evaluations and reports. The OSCE has sent missions here twice: a fact-finding and a field evaluation mission. The final report confirmed the said destruction. It reflects the actions of the Armenian occupying forces with regard to local civilians. Twenty years ago we experienced the most tragic event in our modern history – the Khojaly genocide. A total of 613 civilian residents of Khojaly, including 106 women and 63 children, were slaughtered, more than 100 of our citizens went missing. The Khojaly genocide is an act of barbarism and a manifestation of fascism. It is the biggest tragedy of the late 20th century. Today, the parliaments of different countries are discussing it. Two parliaments have recognized the Khojaly tragedy as an act of genocide. I am sure that this issue will be reflected in the decisions of other parliaments too.

A solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict appears obvious. Azerbaijan's internationally recognized territorial integrity must be restored. The Armenian occupying forces must vacate our occupied territories. The four UN Security Council resolutions must be fulfilled. The people ousted from Nagorno-Karabakh must be able to return to their homes and live in peace, friendship and cooperation. Azerbaijan has a multiethnic and multi-confessional society. There has never been a stand-off on ethnic or religious grounds in our history. We are proud of our diversity and to say that representatives of many ethnicities live in Azerbaijan like one family. This is very important, it is one of Azerbaijan's biggest assets. This is confirmed in the reports of international organizations. It is no coincidence that Azerbaijan is a venue for various international activities on inter-religious dialogue. We have conducted very important international forums on multiculturalism. I think other countries, countries that are home to representatives of different ethnicities, can also benefit from this example. Politicians in some countries argue that multiculturalism is dead, it is no longer viable. Such statements are very dangerous. We are very concerned about that. Because there is no alternative to multiculturalism. The alternative to multiculturalism is self-isolation, xenophobia and confrontation on religious and ethnic grounds. Therefore, it is important to prove using the example of Azerbaijan and a number of other countries with a similar situation that we must live in a multicultural country and world.

If we talk about Azerbaijan, we should not forget two other areas: energy and transit policies. We

have very clear policies in these fields. Our initiatives create a very positive regional environment. We have started to implement a number of projects. These projects create a very positive cooperation format. We are trying to take full advantage of our geographical location. We are a country located at a crossroads of Europe and Asia. We have created a modern logistical and transit network. We have implemented all our plans thus far. At present, there are five international airports in Azerbaijan. We are building the biggest seaport on the Caspian Sea. It will be commissioned in a year or two.

We are building highways linking us with neighboring countries. We are implementing a strategic railway project that will link Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. It is called the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars project and we hope to commission it in less than a year. It will not only provide us with favorable conditions to fully capitalize on our transit opportunities, but will also create good logistical opportunities for our partners. We view it as a modern Silk Road. It will link Europe with Asia. I am sure that our friends and partners will take advantage of it. I want to reiterate that Azerbaijan is at the top of this project, we have assumed this workload and a serious financial burden. This project is powering ahead.

As for our energy policy, obviously we are pursuing our policies in accordance with national interests. As I mentioned earlier, Azerbaijan pioneered the world's oil production. We were also the first country in the world to produce oil offshore. Unfortunately, after the break-up of the Soviet Union, our main oil reserves were depleted. We were not self-sufficient with gas. It was a Soviet legacy. We had to work hard to encourage foreign companies to come here and create a cooperation format that had been used in many countries for years. This not only enabled us to safeguard and secure our national interests, but also turned Azerbaijan from a country experiencing a shortage of energy into a state providing relevant energy assistance and an important regional supplier of oil and gas. Today our oil accounts for about 30 per cent of the energy balance of some European countries. We are actively investing our resources beyond Azerbaijan. Billions of dollars are invested today – especially in Europe and, of course, in the region. Therefore, as a result of our successful policies and the construction of oil and gas pipelines, we have created a corridor. We have linked the Caspian Sea with the Black Sea and, for the first time ever, with the Mediterranean Sea through pipelines. We have made our infrastructure available to other littoral countries. They transport their oil through Azerbaijan. So we are a transit country now.



In the past six years we went a long way in transforming Azerbaijan from a country dependent on gas into a self-sufficient one exporting its resources. This has been possible thanks to the efforts of our people and our resources. We now export natural gas to neighboring countries. In essence, by implementing these important projects we are turning into a reliable supplier of gas to Europe. We have vast resources. Azerbaijan has confirmed gas reserves of 2.6 trillion cubic meters. This is only a confirmed figure, of course. We will continue exploration and discover new reserves. We already have four gas pipelines and, as I said,

they facilitate exports in different directions. We have completed the policy of diversification because it is important not only to consumers but also to producers, in particular those that don't have access to the open sea. We now work closely with the European Union to realize the Southern gas corridor. An important Joint Declaration on the Southern gas corridor was signed last year. It describes Azerbaijan as an important supplier of gas to Europe and a country at the top of the Southern gas corridor.

All this serves our national interests. We have become a country with significant financial capabilities. We used to receive financial resources from others before, while now we are a donor country ourselves. Our financial resources will only increase in the coming years.

We know what our industry is made up of. We were consumers ourselves a few years ago. We are aware that when a consumer relies on one source, it is not very good. We knew it was not enough to have only one export route. So we built several oil and gas pipelines. Diversification facilitates competition, a good cooperation spirit, comfort and political relations. An important component of our energy policy consists in the fact that we know our energy potential. We will never use it for anything other than business. I think this is very important. Because energy security has become an important factor of national security of countries. This especially applies to countries that don't have sufficient energy resources and depend on one supplier. So we think there should be a balance of interests of transit and producer states. We are working on this. This forms the core of our energy policy, of

our philosophy, so to speak. We have set ourselves the goal of benefiting the energy supplies and cooperation with our partners, not using them as a means of pressure. I believe our consumers can confirm that. Azerbaijan is a reliable partner.

We are invited to participate in the privatization of energy companies, including those in Europe. Our oil company enjoys a great authority and has a huge potential. Of course, we will try to establish an even better partnership. For this reason we are pursuing a new comprehensive energy policy. This policy is based on friendship and brotherly support. I think if we can cope with that, future energy markets can be more predictable.

Azerbaijan's initiatives and projects have already changed the energy map of the region and are changing the energy map of Europe. Azerbaijan is a stable, friendly and reliable partner. Of course, the energy sphere, one of the components of our comprehensive cooperation with the European Union, is very important. But there are also other spheres.

I met with leaders of the Euronest group yesterday. We discussed these important issues. One of the issues discussed was that Azerbaijan is not only a country of oil and gas. Your visit will confirm that, you will see that yourselves. I told our friends yesterday that we go about our daily lives. We don't want to talk about oil and gas all the time. Oil and gas fields are located offshore and we need to talk about the present day. Our European friends usually see Azerbaijan as an oil and gas state. This is natural. We need to change this. How? Through cooperation! To do that, we need to invite people, stay in touch and discuss the important issues facing us. We also need to determine for ourselves how to further develop this strong partnership.

In conclusion, I would like to say that as far as our foreign political priorities are concerned, interested circles can see the way we cooperate with friends and partners and what role Azerbaijan plays internationally. As for our regional role, it is obvious that our initiatives have turned into regional and global projects. Our geographical location, opportunities and economic situation show that none of these projects can be implemented without Azerbaijan's participation – be it economic, political or energy projects.

Azerbaijan is playing an increasingly important role internationally. We have a great authority and support in the world. We are trying hard and will continue to do that to become friends with as many countries as possible. I think our efforts and the work we have been doing for years manifested themselves through the international community supporting Azerbaijan's candidacy. Just a week after that we celebrated the 20th anniversary of our independence. Azerbaijan has become a member of the UN Security Council. It was not an easy competition, but it was fair. A total of 155 countries supported us, believed in us and regarded Azerbaijan as a reliable friend and partner.

This was an attitude to the work we have done. I can say that this was possible thanks to our extensive relations. We have very close relations with these 155 countries. All this is an indicator of great trust and confidence in us.

Of course, it also means tremendous responsibility. We are very proud of that. After 10 years of independence we are already one of the 10 non-permanent members of the UN Security Council. This is the result of our policies. But it also placed additional responsibility on us. We appreciate that we must work with our partners to discuss important international issues. Of course, Azerbaijan is a friendly state that will protect justice, democracy, ideas of human rights and international law. After we joined the Security Council I stated that we will support international law and justice. We have done and will continue to do that.

I am sure we will get to know each other better during the Euronest session that you will learn more about Azerbaijan. I wish all of you every success. I do hope that you will return to your respective countries with good impressions. Thank you very much.

THE 28TH REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR EUROPE OF THE UN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION

19 April 2012, Baku

On 19 April 2012, the 28th regional conference for Europe of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization started the work at the Hilton Baku hotel.

The opening ceremony of the conference was joined by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev.

High-level representatives from over 50 countries around the world have come to Baku to discuss the issue of food security, one of the troubling issues in the modern world. The conference is also attended by observers representing a number of international organizations, which demonstrates tremendous interest in this event.

The main objective of the regional conference is to approve a working program and budget of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization for 2012-2013 and identify regional priorities in the development of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in 2014-2015. The ministerial "roundtable" section of the conference will discuss issues of food security.

Expressing his gratitude to the President the Azerbaijan for the high-level of organization of the conference and for attending its opening ceremony, the Director General of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, Jose Graziano da Silva, said.

- Your Excellency Mr. President Aliyev. With your permission I would like to welcome you to the 28th Regional Conference for Europe on behalf of all the participants: welcome to our event! Thank you very much for attending this conference.

I have been attending such a wonderful conference in Baku for the first time. I have seen firsthand that Baku is a very beautiful city. I am very impressed. It is great that this regional conference is attended by 10 ministers, secretaries of state, deputy ministers and delegations from 46 countries.

Azerbaijan has made great strides in reducing poverty and managing its natural resources, in particular oil and gas. You have turned agriculture into one of the most important sectors of the economy. In recent years, the GDP in Azerbaijan has risen several times. I appreciate all your work and efforts in this direction.

At the end of this conference, Minister Ismat Abasov and I will sign a document that will lay the foundation of a new stage of a fruitful cooperation between FAO and Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan is an active member of FAO. In addition, Azerbaijan has played a very important part in the accession of new countries and other regional players to FAO. I am sure we can further deepen the partnership between us and contribute to the development of this region together.

President Ilham Aliyev addressed the opening ceremony of the conference.

Remarks by President Ilham Aliyev

- Dear Director General!

Dear ladies and gentlemen!

First of all, I would like to welcome all of you to Azerbaijan – welcome to our country!

The fact that a regional conference for Europe of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is being held in Azerbaijan is a remarkable event. It is a very important event for our country.

The relations between FAO and Azerbaijan already have a long history. We are an active member of this authoritative international organization. Various projects and programs are implemented. The FAO

support for Azerbaijan is very important to our agricultural reform.

I am sure that this cooperation will continue to rapidly develop and Azerbaijan will further expand its activities in FAO. Thus, this collaboration will enter a new phase.

The essence of this conference is also very important. The conference agenda includes some very important issues. Of course, we would like to provide complete information about Azerbaijani realities, the reforms carried out in our country in recent years and their results.

Azerbaijan's agricultural reforms began in the mid-1990s. Very serious and I can even say radical reforms were launched on the initiative of President Heydar Aliyev. I would also like to note that the agricultural reforms may have given a impetus to other sectors. The overall reforms in Azerbaijan began in the mid-1990s.

In 1991 we regained our independence. The early years of independence were very difficult for our country. Our country was faced with great difficulties and disasters in both economic and political spheres. The economic sector, the economy as a whole was paralyzed. Industrial production was in decline and inflation was measured by thousands per cent.

In general, further development of our country, in particular our economic development was in jeopardy. The agricultural reforms started at that crucial time, in the mid-1990s, and successfully ongoing to the present day led us out of that predicament.

Today, these reforms are continuing. As Mr. Director General has said, agriculture is a priority area for us, especially at this stage, because we are diversifying our economy.

Azerbaijan is an ancient oil region. At present, Azerbaijan's rich oil and gas resources are providing for our own energy security and the energy security of our friends. We use the obtained revenue rationally. The state has invested extensively in the non-oil sector.

In general, I can say that the process of investment is powering ahead in Azerbaijan. Last year \$15 billion was invested. I think this year's investment will further increase. Domestic investment already exceeds foreign. A major portion of the investment goes into agriculture, into our districts. We are continuing the reform. The state currently provides farmers with great help. The representatives of Azerbaijan will probably speak about this at the conference. Farmers are provided with subsidies, fuel and fertilizer on favorable terms. A state-owned company "Agroleasing" has been set up. The process of purchasing equipment and leasing it out to farmers is improving. Agricultural services are established. I can say that there is a very positive experience here because there are both public and private agricultural service companies. The public and private partnerships facilitate further agricultural reforms.

We are importing the world's most advanced technologies to Azerbaijan. These technologies are introduced to all sectors, including agriculture. I want to reiterate the importance of cooperation with international organizations, especially FAO. Because we are modernizing our country. Azerbaijan is conducting a policy of extensive modernization. Agriculture is one of the most important sectors for us. During a meeting with Mr. Director General earlier today, we exchanged views about this, and I said there are two priority areas for us in the non-oil sector – one is information and communication technologies and the other is agriculture.



Agriculture is very important for everyone. Azerbaijan is no exception because almost half of its population lives in rural areas, in villages. The establishment of a modern infrastructure in the villages and the provision of advanced services are also a priority for us. In 2004, we adopted our country's first program on the development of districts. It was successfully implemented. As a result, more than a million new jobs were created in Azerbaijan. The vast majority of these jobs were created in the agricultural sector.

In general, the pace of economic development in the

country is very high. Over the past eight years, our gross domestic product has tripled, budget expenditure has risen nearly 20 times and poverty reduced five times. Eight years ago, 49 per cent of our population lived in poverty. Currently, this figure is 7.6 per cent. Of course, most of the poor lived not in the capital, but in the districts. Therefore, our economic reforms and major investment in the districts had a positive impact on several issues. We have achieved several goals. First of all, creation of jobs, poverty reduction, suspension of migration from districts and villages to cities, especially the capital. Also progressing very fast has been the process of creation of local industries with their import-substituting products. We set the goal of becoming self-sufficient in staple foods. Very serious steps were taken in this direction. Currently, we have substantially, by almost 80-90 per cent, achieved self-sufficiency with staple foods. At the same time, we are generating a strong export potential. We are now using a variety of stimulating factors and accessing new markets in order to further improve it. I can say that all new processing plants in Azerbaijan meet international standards, which enables us to export our products to any markets.

Currently, the main export markets for us are neighboring countries. This is a traditional market. But we are also accessing European Union countries with our goods. I am sure this work will go even faster in the near future. The reforms are ongoing. I want to reiterate that these reforms serve the development of our country and economic diversification.

Today, Azerbaijan has extensive financial resources. These resources are channeled into the development of the non-oil sector. Thus, our economic sustainability is ensured.

Food security issues hold an important place on the global agenda. Azerbaijan has already become a donor country. In the first years of independence we received assistance from international organizations and are grateful for it. That assistance enabled us to develop our country.



We are now becoming a donor country in various fields, including the area FAO is dealing with. We want to work with FAO in this area, work in a coordinated manner. Because I think Azerbaijan's experience is very useful. We have moved from a planned to a market economy in a very short time. When we regained independence in 1991, the share of the market economy in our GDP was equal to zero. Now, the private sector accounts for more than 80 per cent of our economy. We have the experience of partnership between the government and the private sector. In a short period of time we covered a very difficult journey from poverty to development. As I said, in the last eight years our GDP has tripled, i.e.

increased by 300 per cent. But we have even more ambitious plans and goals for the next decade. I have already stated that our GDP should further double over the next decade. And this has to happen primarily due to the non-oil sector.

So I believe that we have a positive experience, these reforms must be carried out. First and foremost, they must be conducted in the field of agriculture. We have given the land back to the farmers. For many years we were part of the Soviet Union. As you know, everything, including the land, was owned by the state. The courageous reforms have yielded excellent results. In Soviet years Azerbaijan imported staple foods from other republics. Now we mostly provide ourselves and have even created an export potential. So I think this positive experience might be useful. Also, we are interested in deepening the cooperation with FAO in various projects.

We are ready to play an even more active role in fighting famine because famine is the biggest calamity of the 21st century. It is unacceptable for people to die of famine today, at this very moment. We must join our efforts and wage a serious fight against this calamity. Azerbaijan is ready for that. I think that we, as a respected member of FAO, are ready to take concrete steps in this area. I am sure that this issue will also be discussed at this conference.

I want to draw your attention to another issue. Of course, in recent years we have conducted major reforms in agriculture and we will continue them. New lands are also included into the circulation. The soil is taken care of at a modern level. A lot still remains to be done in this area. I don't think we have

achieved everything we wanted. There are shortcomings, problems and difficulties and we know ways of resolving them. But a certain part of our territory has been under occupation for nearly 20 years. Armenian aggression and the policy of ethnic cleansing against Azerbaijan have led to the occupation of our lands, i.e. 20 per cent of Azerbaijani lands recognized as such by the international community.

The entire infrastructure has been destroyed there. At the same time, the lands suitable for agriculture are left without use. If an end is put to the conflict, if Armenia fulfills four UN Security Council resolutions and withdraws from the occupied lands of its own accord, the lands currently under occupation will be included into the circulation. This will provide even better opportunities for agriculture and normal life.

We will continue to cooperate with all international organizations, including FAO. The positions of FAO in the world are strengthening. This organization enjoys a great authority and is noted in the UN family for its specific programs.

Azerbaijan is also an active member of the UN. In October 2011, when we celebrated the 20th anniversary of our independence, Azerbaijan was elected a member of the UN Security Council. I think this is our greatest victory, the biggest diplomatic success in the years of independence. It is a great achievement for a young republic to become a member of the world's number one body. It is gratifying that our candidacy was supported by 155 countries. This shows that over the past 20 years Azerbaijan has managed to gain recognition in the world as a reliable partner, a friend, a country defending justice. We have now begun to work in the UN Security Council and are noted for a principled position.

Next month we will take over presidency in the world's number one institution. We will continue to uphold international law and justice in the Security Council. For a complete triumph of justice in the world there should not be famine.

Famine, I repeat, is perhaps the biggest injustice. I want to say again and am absolutely sure that Azerbaijan will achieve further progress in these reforms, that our cooperation with international organizations, with FAO will be even deeper.

Dear friends, in conclusion I would like to express my hope that our guests and friends will be able to see our city. This is a very important conference. This conference is being held in Baku. Its agenda includes some very important issues. But most of you have come to Azerbaijan for the first time. So I hope you will have the opportunity to see our Baku, get acquainted with its culture, learn more about Azerbaijan and become our friends.

I would like to wish you success again. Mr. Director General, I want to thank you and all your colleagues and wish your conference every success. Thank you.

THE 23RD CRANS MONTANA FORUM**29 June 2012, Baku**

The official opening ceremony of the Crans Montana Forum was held at the Heydar Aliyev Center in Baku.

The ceremony was joined by President Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban Aliyeva.

This year's 23rd Crans Montana Forum is attended by the Presidents of Georgia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, public figures from foreign countries, MPs, intellectuals and business people.

The key objective of the event is to encourage the world forum on inter-cultural dialogue due in 2013 and the Baku process on inter-cultural dialogue and to promote Azerbaijan as a center of this dialogue.

The Crans Montana Forum is an international organization established with the support of Swiss officials in 1986. This organization enjoys tremendous international authority and closely cooperates with the UN, the European Union, the Council of Europe, as well as UNESCO, ISESCO and other international organizations.



The founder and president of the Forum is Ambassador Jean-Paul Carteron. Azerbaijan takes an active part in the organization created to support international cooperation and dialogue. The activities of our country, located at a crossroads of civilizations and contributing to intercultural dialogue, are receiving good assessments on an international level, including the Crans Montana Forum. A graphic example of that is the fact that President Ilham Aliyev received the highest award of the organization, Prix De La Fondation, while Azerbaijan's First Lady and President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation Mehriban Aliyeva was awarded the Gold Medal at the Crans Montana Forum in Brussels in 2011. The decision to hold the Crans Montana Forum in Baku this year is evidence of Azerbaijan's growing international reputation and its transformation into a center of intercultural dialogue and international events.

President Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban Aliyeva met with the forum participants and senior officials from various countries.

In opening remarks, the founder and president of the Forum, Ambassador Jean-Paul Carteron, welcomed the participants of the 23rd annual meeting in Baku. Expressing his gratitude to President Ilham Aliyev for the wonderful conditions put in place, Jean-Paul Carteron said prominent representatives from various countries around the world were gathered in Azerbaijan. Speaking about Azerbaijan's development which started under the leadership of Heydar Aliyev in 1993 and was successfully ongoing now, he said:

- I personally believe and am very pleased to note that the extensive development of your country began in 1993, when President Heydar Aliyev assumed power in Azerbaijan. At that time I also saw that he was a very wise and far-sighted person. I am very glad, Mr. President, to have this opportunity. We will hold such an authoritative, important and representative meeting at this new building, the Heydar Aliyev Center, and have discussions in the next two days.

Mr. President, dear First Lady, I am well aware of your activities.

These are high-level activities. During your visit to Brussels I told you and the First Lady that the work you are doing is producing truly wonderful results. We can see the developments unfolding in Azerbaijan today. We know that your country is turning into a significant player. You are opening up more and more to the world in social, cultural and humanitarian respects. I am honored and proud to welcome the First Lady here. Leading the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, she does work which in many respects exceeds the work undertaken by the government and removes all the difficulties. Naturally,

the aim is solely in doing good deeds. It is important that there is a will and consent here. We know that the Heydar Aliyev Foundation is doing a lot, including the spheres of education and culture.

We know that Azerbaijan is one of the energy suppliers to the European Union. We witness history being made, the economic importance is growing, and there is a torch in our hands. This torch, this flame is growing stronger. Mr. President, it is with these feelings that I declare that these activities are carried out thanks to your work. Thank you for that.

Today, we will also present an award to Azerbaijan's First Lady, Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva. I think it is very important. I want to emphasize that we treat your activities with great respect and sympathy. At the same time, we note the presence of the other people here. We know that the road to success, to the achievement of humanitarian goals is not easy. By achieving incredible results, Azerbaijan is on the right track. Mr. President, this concludes my speech.

Then President of Azerbaijan delivered a speech.

Remarks by President Ilham Aliyev

- Dear ladies and gentlemen!

Your Excellencies!

I would like to welcome you all to our country. I would like to thank the Crans Montana Forum and its chairman, Mr. Carteron, for coming to Azerbaijan and Baku today to participate in this forum.

I know that many of you have come to Azerbaijan for the first time, that this is your first such forum in Azerbaijan. I am sure you will feel this spirit of development in our society and see clearly what work is carried out in Baku and Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan and Baku have become a venue of political and economic dialogue. Azerbaijan and Baku have become a venue for prestigious international forums. And we are very excited about that.

Baku hosts discussions, debates and forums on a variety of interesting political topics. All this is the result of our policy and, at the same time, the historical heritage of our country. Because historically, over the centuries, Azerbaijan has been a place where representatives of different cultures and nations live in peace. Therefore, the organization of such events, meetings and joint work of representatives of different nations and cultures in our country, such discussions and debates has become a natural phenomenon for us. We always give preference to developing multiculturalism, the factor of multiculturalism through our work, we seek to reinforce it because in today's globalizing world there is no alternative to it. So I want to reiterate that the co-existence of people of different ethnic backgrounds and cultures here has been a natural phenomenon for Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan is a country with a long history. I am sure our guests will have the opportunity to visit our historical sites, see and feel Azerbaijan's historical monuments.

We have been an independent country for only 20 years. Last year we celebrated the 20th anniversary of our independence. For us and our people independence is the biggest happiness, the greatest value. Our people lived with the dream of freedom and achieved this independence. Now Azerbaijan has been a member of the international community for 20 years and is developing successfully. These 20 years have seen major political and economic changes. Previously, Azerbaijan was not independent and free because we lived in a totalitarian state.

Therefore, after gaining independence, we experienced changes and political transformation. State building was very important and created great opportunities for us. But there were also many difficulties. But despite that, after becoming independent we managed to create a strong state and significantly transform the economic and political spheres. We are developing and strengthening the democratic process now. We attach great importance to the rule of law and human rights. All political structures and parties continue to operate successfully in Azerbaijan.

At the same time, we certainly have attached great importance to economic transformation. Because without economic development and a strong economy, political reform is impossible. Therefore, we

carried out these reforms in the political and economic planes in parallel. Political and economic reforms have complemented each other and today Azerbaijan shows that we have chosen the right path and done the right thing.

Over the last 10 years Azerbaijan's economic development has been the fastest in the world. Our economy has grown three-fold. Industrial production has tripled. At the same time, we have attached great importance to social issues.

Because painful economic reforms have caused popular discontent in some countries. This did not happen in Azerbaijan. Our poverty rate has dropped five times over the past eight years – to 7 per cent. We have also demonstrated that the development towards a market economy does not have to occur at the expense of social issues.

Azerbaijan is a stable economy. Our unemployment rate is 5.4 per cent. The external debt amounts to only 7 per cent of the GDP. Our exports are several times higher than imports. Economic transformation and changes have enabled us to conduct further reforms and create a totally new situation. Azerbaijan is a country that lives and develops at its own expense.



At the same time, Azerbaijan is developing its very important foreign policy. In my opinion, this is a very important issue for any country, especially for a country that was not independent for a long time, over centuries. So issues of regional cooperation are very important to us. We have started several projects to strengthen regional cooperation that will benefit our people and our neighbors. We believe that regional cooperation is impossible without regional security. So our growing influence in the region is a stabilizing factor that has laid this foundation.

One of the main problems after the restoration of independence was the occupation of our lands by Armenia. This dealt a severe blow to us. This dealt a severe blow to the security and cooperation in the entire region. Nagorno-Karabakh is internationally recognized historical territory of Azerbaijan which Armenia has occupied. Armenia has conducted a policy of ethnic cleansing on these Azerbaijani lands. In general, 20 per cent of our land is currently under Armenian occupation. There are UN resolutions, the Helsinki Charter. The UN Security Council has adopted four resolutions demanding that Armenia withdraw its troops from Azerbaijani territories. But it has yet to comply with the resolutions.

Similar resolutions have been passed by the Council of Europe, the OSCE and other international organizations. They also remain unfulfilled. The non-fulfillment of these resolutions for many years calls into question the value of international organizations' work in this field.

Nagorno-Karabakh is located practically at the heart of Azerbaijan. All the resolutions pertaining to the settlement require an end to the occupation and a return of forced migrants to their homes. OSCE fact-finding missions have revealed that all historical and cultural monuments on our lands in Nagorno-Karabakh have been destroyed. But I am sure that Azerbaijan will restore its territorial integrity. Because Azerbaijan's territorial integrity is recognized by the UN. Nagorno-Karabakh is an integral part of Azerbaijan recognized as such by all international organizations. Nagorno-Karabakh is not recognized by any state as an independent country.

We are making great diplomatic effort in this area. We are strengthening our economy. I am sure that all of these factors will enable us to restore our sovereignty and territorial integrity. The conflict must be resolved only on the basis of norms and principles of international law, on the basis of the Helsinki Final Act. This act states that the principle of territorial integrity and the principle of self-determination should not be in conflict, while the right of peoples to self-determination should be resolved within the framework of the principle of territorial integrity.

All these issues are our top priorities. We have a completely clear foreign policy. This is how we build our activities in the field of international cooperation from political and economic standpoints.

As you know, Azerbaijan has recently been elected a nonpermanent member of the UN Security

Council. Now Azerbaijan has a say in matters of global security. Last month Azerbaijan presided over a Security Council meeting, the world's top international organization.

I would like to thank all the countries that supported our candidacy. This suggests that over the past 20 years our country has earned recognition as a reliable partner. We have received the votes of 155 countries to become a nonpermanent member of the Security Council. We will justify the confidence of the countries that have supported and believed in Azerbaijan. After the election I said in a speech that Azerbaijan adheres to the principles of justice and international law. I also noted that in most cases international law and justice are violated. We don't want this to be true. Azerbaijan will not allow it. Because all these violations pose problems to the international community. If resolutions and documents adopted to resolve conflicts do not work, if the decisions of international organizations are not executed by some countries, we must think about what we can do to make these international institutions and their decisions effective.

There are cases where the decisions of international organizations, such as the Security Council, are carried out in a matter of hours. Unfortunately, this did not happen in our case.

One of the key challenges on the global agenda is today is ensure peace, security and cooperation. As a member of the Security Council Azerbaijan understands that we must be very active in this matter. In general, our main goal is to expand cooperation. We can achieve our goal through cooperation and mutual support. This policy of ours applies to international and energy issues. You know that Azerbaijan has ample reserves of oil and gas. Our policy on energy security is clear and precise. I am sure that the discussion on energy security will be very interesting. I think that everything that prevents energy security should be discussed.

Azerbaijan is in favor of effective relationships with investors, with parties making investment, with companies on the basis of mutual interest, and we are doing so. In addition, we support the opening of new areas of energy policy. By implementing this policy, Azerbaijan has set itself the principles and objectives of achieving economic prosperity and mutual support.

Energy factors should never be used for political purposes or any other ends. Our country uses energy resources very responsibly. All the projects on our agenda have been successfully implemented since the 1990s. We have implemented several oil and gas pipeline projects. Today they enable the transit of our energy in different directions.

Azerbaijan's energy constitutes 25-30 per cent of the total energy balance of some European countries, and this figure is growing. Azerbaijan used to be known primarily as an oil country.

Thus, oil was first discovered in Azerbaijan. First oil was first extracted onshore also in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan is now known in matters of global energy security as a country with large reserves of gas.

Clear evidence of this is the agreement on the construction of the Trans-Anatolian gas pipeline recently signed between Turkey and Azerbaijan. With the realization of this project we will open a corridor between the Caspian, Black and Mediterranean seas. This is an energy project for us and our neighbors.

This corridor has already been used as transport infrastructure. Historically, it was a corridor that was used to create links between Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. At the same time, it will contribute to the revival of the Silk Road. All these projects will also benefit Azerbaijan's neighbors. We will thus change the energy map of the region and the continent as a whole. Of course, given the energy projects on our agenda, we know our potential, the potential of supplies and the growing demand of European consumers. Besides, the demand for natural gas will keep increasing, especially after the closure of nuclear facilities. After 2020, it will be particularly important. As a country with great energy resources, Azerbaijan will be playing a huge role in European energy security. We are currently working on these issues. We know how important diversification is. It is important for all countries – both producers and consumers. Proper relations among producers, consumers and transit countries are crucial to success. I am sure that our new project will be a success because we have a strong will. We know this. Also, we have the necessary financial strength. Technically we are also capable of much. We have excellent relations with our traditional neighbors in the region, with our allies. So far, not a single project we have started has failed. So we will just keep on working.

I know we will have interesting discussions today and tomorrow. The forum agenda is broad and covers important issues. I am sure your thoughts will generate new ideas and approaches during the discussion. We will work together on these ideas for the future. Once again: welcome to Azerbaijan! I wish you every success. Thank you.



Addressing the forum, President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili said he was proud to be in Baku again. Linking the international forum in Baku, being held at the beautiful building of the Heydar Aliyev Center, with Azerbaijan's rapid economic development and its international authority, he said:

- I first came to Azerbaijan in the early 1990s. The country was living a chaotic and irregular life. There were many poor people. It was also a war time and the burden of the war was heavy. The country seemed to have no hope. There was no hope of development.

Azerbaijan had natural resources back in the Soviet years too. But the country wasn't rich, it was poor. So it is wrong to link everything to natural resources alone. For example, there are countries that have natural resources. We don't see proper distribution of natural resources in these countries. Although these countries are rich in natural resources, we do not see progress there. These countries don't cooperate with regional neighbors in this area, they are not successful in this field. Through proper distribution of energy resources, Azerbaijan has made great strides the economic sphere.

In addition, great development of the social sphere, culture and education has been achieved. New schools have been built and commissioned. This is an example for the entire region because these issues are resolved even in the outermost villages in Azerbaijan. Besides, Azerbaijan is very well represented internationally, in the international arena.

Mikheil Saakashvili recalled the humanism displayed by President Ilham Aliyev when Georgia faced a difficult situation due to a lack of energy and fuel, and thanked the President of Azerbaijan again. The Georgian President touched upon issues of globalization and his country's socioeconomic reforms. "Regional cooperation reflects regional security," Mikheil Saakashvili said. In this context, he mentioned the projects being implemented and noted the international importance of the ongoing construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway. The President of Georgia described the high level of organization of the Eurovision song contest as yet another success of Azerbaijan.

Expressing his gratitude to President Ilham Aliyev for the high level of organization of the Crans Montana Forum, President of Montenegro Filip Vujanovic said:

- Azerbaijan's achievements have made a great impression on me. I learned a lot about Azerbaijan during my official visits. I had many meetings with the government of Azerbaijan and saw how close Azerbaijan is to international principles. I saw that Azerbaijan respects its history, protects the newly-found independence and is a very stable economy. The country has many achievements. Azerbaijan has a very clear vision for the future.



Azerbaijan cooperates well with other countries. Also, I very much support and respect your decisions to develop relations with the European Union. I welcome the fact that, if necessary, you support regional countries so much.

As a representative of Montenegro, I would like to express my gratitude to the leadership of Azerbaijan. In particular, I appreciate the efforts of President Ilham Aliyev. I would like to thank you for the excellent relations and cooperation with our country. To establish such a wonderful cooperation between countries that are not so close to each other geographically is very difficult. I would like to thank you for that.

Stressing that the primary goal of any government is to improve the well-being of its people through economic development, the President of Montenegro described his country's experience in expanding cooperation between public and private sectors. Referring to the responsibility of the state in

protecting social justice and preservation of the environmental balance, Filip Vujanovic stressed the importance of cooperation of all countries in these matters. He said the elimination of unemployment, the development of culture and education were important in the new economic model of the 21st century. To form a developing society Montenegro keeps all these issues in the spotlight.



The President of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgi Ivanov, said that globalization was changing the world, which affects all areas. He touched upon the problems of migration in the world and noted the importance of caring about the welfare of the people against the backdrop of poverty and conflict. Georgi Ivanov also described the stages of his country's development, spoke about priorities regarding membership in NATO and relations with the European Union. Emphasizing

that Macedonia attaches great importance to the energy cooperation with Azerbaijan, the President of Macedonia said:

- We know that Azerbaijan is a country with ample reserves of oil and gas. And we are very glad to cooperate with Azerbaijan in this field. As you know, Macedonia, just like Azerbaijan, is an important state of its region and plays the part of an important energy corridor. Therefore, we, like Azerbaijan, attach great importance to the diversification of energy routes.

Then the floor was given to the Crown Prince of the Emirate of Fujairah of the United Arab Emirates, Mohammed bin Hamad bin Mohammed Al Sharqi. He said:

- Your Excellency, Mr. President Ilham Aliyev, dear friends!

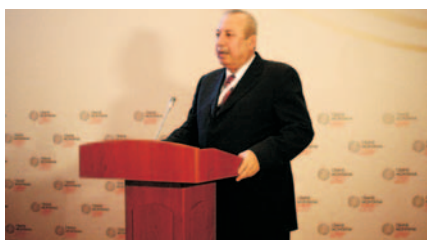
First of all, let me thank President Ilham Aliyev for the effort to organize this important event.



The issue of energy security is an important factor in ensuring human security.

I would like to sincerely thank Mr. Ilham Aliyev for the hospitality. I am very happy to meet you in this beautiful city and country. I am very pleased to represent the United Arab Emirates at this wonderful forum.

"There is a great potential for development in the 21st century," the representative of the United Arab Emirates said, adding that "energy security in the modern world is a true human value and we must maintain and develop it."



The Deputy Prime Minister on Economic Affairs of Iraq, Ruz Nuri Shaways, expressed his confidence that this representative forum in Baku would contribute to the expansion of cooperation among countries of the world. He also spoke about his country's oil reserves, the procedure for handling the oil revenue and the attention being paid to the non-oil sector. Expressing his gratitude to President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, Ruz Nuri Shaways said:

- I would like to thank His Excellency President Ilham Aliyev. I would also like to thank Azerbaijan for supporting the democratic process in Iraq. Azerbaijan has been active in this field since 2003. Thank you very much again for your hospitality. In general, I am very pleased to be among friends in the beautiful city of Baku. I would like to thank Jean-Paul Carteron for the efforts to organize the forum. I am very proud to be at the Heydar Aliyev Center. The architect of this building is an Iraqi woman. I would like to emphasize that.



The Estonian Parliament Speaker, Ene Ergma, spoke about the economic development processes in many countries after the break-up of the Soviet Union. Expressing her admiration with the changes ongoing in Azerbaijan, she said:

- This is my first time in Baku. I have also seen Soviet times. I apologize for these words, but we didn't want to come to Baku then. We thought it was an oil city and there is nothing interesting here. But we see today that if people have a responsible approach to life, they can change anything. We

can see what can be achieved if the wealth bestowed upon you by the Almighty is used rationally. President Aliyev said that energy cannot be used to exert political pressure, for political ends. It is very true because we have to use energy for economic growth. If countries improve their economies, we can reduce poverty. These are interrelated issues. I completely agree with everything you said. Europe needs energy not from one but from many sources. You mentioned that you have created a variety of corridors, implemented projects on various energy corridors. I really appreciate it.

E. Ergma noted the importance of the Crans Montana Forum, saying that this event in Baku was a good platform for discussing different aspects of globalization.

Then discussions began. Describing the progress made by Georgia in the past years, President Mikheil Saakashvili said his country had established a successful cooperation with Azerbaijan. He said Azerbaijan and its capital Baku were rapidly developing:

- Look at Azerbaijan now. Who could have imagined such a development? The speaker from Estonia has also noted this. Yes, in Soviet times no-one thought of coming to Baku often. Everyone thought it was an oil city, etc. Even five years ago Baku was different. Three years ago Baku had a different appearance. Baku is a city changing by the hour. It is no longer a matter of months and years. As you know, we complement each other. This synergy, this unity, this cooperation between us, between Georgia and Azerbaijan, support us very much.

A broad exchange of views was held on the relations between Estonia and the European Union.

A question was then asked of President Ilham Aliyev.

- How does the President of Azerbaijan see the economic structure of the country for the next 15 years?

President Ilham Aliyev: Thank you very much. In fact, this is one of the issues in our focus. You know that our rapid economic development began with the energy sector. As you know, over \$100 billion dollars was invested in the Azerbaijani economy and favorable conditions created for investment. We have used the revenue from energy projects very efficiently. We didn't allow our country to be exposed to the Dutch disease. Some analysts had been saying that Azerbaijan too would be affected by the Dutch disease. But that did not happen. We have established the State Oil Fund which accumulates this revenue. Our assets are also accumulated there. We can manage our assets and liabilities, the Oil Fund is managed on the basis of parliamentary debate. That is, MPs decide how much should be taken out and what it should be spent on. Besides, we spend this money mostly on development projects. We spend it on improving the livelihoods of people in the districts, in the countryside. One of the most important programs was adopted in 2004 – the state program on the development of districts. It has enabled us to create over a million jobs in a country of 9 million people. As I noted earlier, eight years ago our poverty rate was 49 per cent, now it is 7. So we have a clear vision for the coming decades. What do we see Azerbaijan like in 2020-2030? Our main goal is to double the GDP which has already tripled in the last eight years. In particular, we have set this goal in the non-oil and gas sector. Another goal is to develop the ICT and modern industries. We want to transform Azerbaijan into a country with high income per capita. Even when the price of oil fell from \$140 to 40 a few years ago, our economy was strong because we had a policy of diversification.



Besides, three reputable rating agencies – Standard & Poor's, Fitch and Moody's – have raised Azerbaijan rating. This means that international financial institutions also have confidence in our future. We plan to develop the ICT sector, industrial parks, space industry. We want to make sure that our civil servants set about work in the future without first thinking what the price of oil is.

The President of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgi Ivanov, said his country was optimistic of the cooperation with the European Union.

ISESCO Director General Abdulaziz bin Othman Al-Twajri, asking President Ilham Aliyev about the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, said:

- His Excellency Mr. President has rightly said that the UN Security Council has passed many resolutions requiring occupiers to vacate Azerbaijani lands. His Excellency Mr. President is thinking about ways of putting an end to this occupation.



Because the occupation of 20 per cent of Azerbaijani lands runs counter to international law. Because it causes a major impact on regional stability, prevents the return of many Azerbaijanis to their native lands. Of course, it deals a blow to people's dignity, causes poverty. Why do you think international organizations do not execute these resolutions? What else needs to be done to end this occupation? As noted, there are four Security Council resolutions. Why don't we all

raise our voice? Why don't we demand that these resolutions be implemented and occupied lands liberated? After all, it is international hypocrisy to adopt resolutions in the highest international circles and then not fulfill them.

So I would like to see this forum end its work by adopting a declaration. This declaration should support Azerbaijan's cause. Your Excellency, I would appreciate it if you could express your thoughts on how we can find solutions to this dilemma.

President Ilham Aliyev: Thank you very much for your question, Mr. Al-Twajri.

Indeed, this is a very serious and big problem not only for Azerbaijan, but for the whole region. It poses a major threat, it is an obstacle for South Caucasus countries that prevents joint development. Also, the occupation of Azerbaijani territories and the presence of hundreds of thousands of refugees and IDPs is a very big problem. Of course, despite this, Azerbaijan has achieved a lot in recent years. We are very proud of this. I think the implementation of these resolutions should be in the interests of Armenia. I am convinced that Armenia will not benefit from this occupation. First, it is an injustice from a historical standpoint. We know from history that the Armenians were settled in Nagorno-Karabakh from neighboring territories in the early 19th century. The word "Karabakh" is of Azerbaijani origin. The Nagorno-Karabakh administrative unit was established as part of Azerbaijan after the revolution, in Soviet years. It had no administrative borders with Armenia. This area is located right in the heart of Azerbaijan. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, separatists in Armenia and Karabakh unleashed a war against Azerbaijan, expelled all the Azerbaijanis from Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding districts and are still holding both Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent districts under occupation. At the same time, they have conducted ethnic cleansing, I have already mentioned that.

Armenia should start implementing the resolutions of the UN Security Council and other international organizations. This is in its own interests. We will never tolerate a second Armenian state on Azerbaijani territory. That is how the resolutions should be executed. It is clear why the problem remains unresolved. The international community, the countries that have adopted the resolutions in the Security Council have not put enough pressure on the occupier. Of course, there should be pressure. The occupation is obvious, no-one denies it, everyone knows about it. The occupation must end.

Recently we heard a number of positive judgments in this regard, in particular from the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs.

They stated that the status quo is no longer unacceptable. This is a positive judgment.

How can we change the status quo and who should change it? Armenia should start vacating the occupied territories.

After that, a link can be created, our refugees can start being resettled there and practical measures taken. But Armenia does not do that. The opinions on the unacceptability of the status quo are a positive signal. Another positive sign is that the mediators have noted the possibility of resolving the conflict only in peace. We agree with that. But Armenia views the “peaceful way” as a chance to delay the negotiations and keep our lands under occupation as much as they want. They think that the negotiations can go on for another 20 years.

As you know, the OSCE Minsk Group was created and has operated for many years. I regret that this unusual situation has emerged. If you recall, the resolution on Libya was executed in several hours. The resolutions on Azerbaijan, on Nagorno-Karabakh remain unfulfilled for 20 years. What does this mean? This is double standards. Why, what's the reason? I can talk about the reasons for a long time. One reason is double standards, another is the Armenian lobby.

This lobby strongly supports Armenia's aggressive policy against Azerbaijan. As for other reasons, they also play a role, but the main reasons are the ones I mentioned. I think the solution to this issue in line with international law is in favor of Armenia because it does not benefit from this occupation. Everything is destroyed; there is no life, emptiness there.

Furthermore, according to statistics, thousands of Armenians left the country in the first five months of this year. So Armenia's population is shrinking. One reason for this is the aggressive policy against the neighboring country, attacks and international propaganda against Azerbaijan. I would not like to talk about other aspects of Armenian policy towards its neighbors but I would say that it is an unfriendly policy. This country should use its independence to normalize ties and relations with neighbors. The imbalance of power between Armenia and Azerbaijan is enormous. After 5-10 years it will further increase. This difference will be enormous, incomparable. This is an issue of national interests. This is not an issue of Armenian leaders who come and go. This is an issue that should meet the national interests of the Armenian people. We will do everything possible to restore our territorial integrity and sovereignty.

A representative of Tunisia participating in the forum enquired about the measures carried out in Azerbaijan in the field of education and job creation:

- I have a question for President Ilham Aliyev. Mr. President, thank you for your hospitality. I would like to congratulate you on the work you are doing in this beautiful country. My question is related to the creation of jobs and education. I am from Tunisia. I would like to say that we lived with the “Arab spring” philosophy for a long time. It seems to me that one of the main reasons for our revolution was the failure of our education system; our graduates could not find a job. What is your strategy for the creation of jobs for university graduates?

President Ilham Aliyev: Thank you. This is an important issue for Azerbaijan. We have a strategy in the field of education.

Education is a priority for us because all the successes we achieved in the years of independence, in recent years are the successes of our people. Of course, oil and gas are not enough. I identify with the feelings of our colleagues, especially those who do not have oil and gas. Usually, however, some countries rich in oil and gas do not develop the gap between the rich and the poor is growing. Azerbaijan is not such a country. In general, Azerbaijan is not one of the world's biggest oil and gas producers. Therefore, we attach great importance to the non-oil sector. I have always said that young people with no education can create big problems for the country. We are sure that it is important for the country to have qualified professionals, people who belong. We have educated people. Education is available to all our population. Also, according to a presidential decree, our young people can receive education in European universities.

This is supported by the Oil Fund. Thousands of Azerbaijani students study abroad. This is how the education system is organized in Azerbaijan. In the future we will have even better conditions so that our citizens don't need to go abroad to study. I think such forums also contribute to education. Because they are attended by our intellectuals, our young people engaged in political science. I

think many of our youngsters are interested in what is happening in this building, they also want to participate in this forum.

I think this does not have a direct impact on the political situation or unemployment. Perhaps it did in Tunisia but I think the reason for the revolution there was more to do with issues of social justice than jobs. I think young people wanted to have a bigger share in the national wealth. There was a revolution because they could not get this share.

In the early years of independence we were a very poor country. We were one of the poorest republics of the former Soviet Union. People armed with Kalashnikovs walked through the streets, there was chaos. It was about 20 years ago.

So social justice and equitable distribution of wealth can prevent any revolution and negative processes. As president, I can say that these issues are more important even than the increase of the GDP three times because thanks to these issues we get closer to the people. Therefore, education, social justice, fight against corruption, economic development and equal opportunities for all are very important. These principles have led to the development of the country. This is the main direction and the main guiding principle for the future.

Thank you very much.

Speaking about specific development facts and the path traversed by Montenegro in the past few years, President Filip Vujanovic said his country had established close cooperation with Azerbaijan. He said:

- Montenegro is ready to become a country that has good economic relations with Azerbaijan. Our Azerbaijani friends, companies and businessmen from Azerbaijan will see that Montenegro is a country where investors enjoy favorable conditions and make profit. Therefore, our support for these relationships, our common history, our efforts, etc. has led SOCAR to invest in Montenegro. I think this is a good basis for future projects between Azerbaijan and Montenegro. I assure you that this investment will take a worthy place in our Boka bay. As you know, this is one of the most advanced places in Montenegro.

There are wonderful facilities there. I think this is a good example for other companies from Azerbaijan to invest in Montenegro. I think this is a good basis for a future development of our economic relations. I am sure that the high-level political relations between Azerbaijan and Montenegro will play a major role in the development of economic relations between our countries.



Then a broad exchange of views was held on ways of using the oil revenue generated in Arab countries, the work being done and planned to develop Pakistan and Iraq.

After the official ceremony, President Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban Aliyeva hosted a dinner reception for the forum participants.

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

5 July 2012, Baku



On 5 July 2012, an official welcoming ceremony of the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, who came to the Republic of Azerbaijan on an official visit, was held.

The guard of honor was arranged in honor of the distinguished guest in a square decorated with the flags of Azerbaijan and the European Union. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev welcomed the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy.

After the official welcoming ceremony, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy held a meeting in an expanded format with the participation of delegations.

President Ilham Aliyev said the visit by President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy to Azerbaijan was an important indicator of partnership and friendship between Azerbaijan and the European Union. Indicating that the relations between Azerbaijan and the European Union covered a number of issues, President Ilham Aliyev expressed his confidence that the visit by President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy to Azerbaijan would be successful. President Ilham Aliyev said the visit would enable the President of the European Council to get to know Azerbaijan better.



President Ilham Aliyev gave a high assessment to the relations between Azerbaijan and European institutions, as well as the European Union, which is one of Azerbaijan's key energy partners, and expressed his confidence that the visit by the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, would give a further impetus to strengthening the partnership between Azerbaijan and the European Union.

The President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, said he was pleased to come to Azerbaijan. Pointing to good relations between Azerbaijan and the European Union, he said that along with economic and energy cooperation, there was a good potential for the development of relations in various other areas.

The President of the European Council said the visit would open up extensive opportunities for a further development of bilateral relations.

After the meeting in an expanded format, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy made statements for the press.

Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

- Dear Mr. President!

Dear guests, ladies and gentlemen!

Mr. President, let me welcome you to Azerbaijan again. I am grateful to you for accepting my invitation to pay a visit to Azerbaijan.

We have held extensive discussions on issues of mutual interest today. The relations between European institutions and Azerbaijan are developing very successfully. Last year we celebrated the

20th anniversary of the restoration of our independence. All these years are remembered for active cooperation between Azerbaijan and European institutions. At present, these relations have successfully evolved into a new form of partnership. We are working on a number of issues of regional scale – political development, economic cooperation, energy and regional security. I note also that Azerbaijan has good bilateral relations with countries of the European Union.

These relations are based on strong mutual interests, respect and friendship. We have discussed a broad agenda of relations between Europe and Azerbaijan. We have reviewed the political developments and reform taking place in Azerbaijan. I told Mr. President that Azerbaijan is committed to a policy of political reform and democratic development. We are working to strengthen the rule of law, protect political freedoms and human rights. I think that Azerbaijan has achieved significant development in the years of independence. All fundamental freedoms – the freedoms of religion, assembly, the press – are provided in Azerbaijan. There is a free Internet.

Of course, the relations between Azerbaijan and European institutions in this respect will be continued, enabling us to apply Europe's positive experience in this field.

We have also discussed issues of regional development and security, in particular the situation over the settlement of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. I briefed Mr. President on the current status of the issue.

Azerbaijan is committed to the process of negotiations. But we want to see specific results as soon as possible. Azerbaijan's internationally recognized territories have been under Armenian occupation for 20 years.



Armenian armed forces have occupied not only Nagorno - Karabakh but also seven other Azerbaijani districts. Armenia has implemented a policy of ethnic cleansing, as a result of which we have about a million refugees and IDPs and 20 per cent of our land is still under occupation. International organizations have passed a number of resolutions on the issue, including four UN Security Council resolutions, decisions of the European Parliament, the Council of Europe, and the OSCE. Unfortunately, none of these resolutions has been executed.

I have brought to Mr. President's attention that we were very encouraged by the statement of leaders of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries on the unacceptability of the status quo. I think this is a very meaningful and timely statement. We do hope that after such an important statement we will actually see the status quo changing. The change of the status quo means a start of the liberation of occupied lands. This will lead to a positive development in the region.

Immediately after the liberation of the Armenian-occupied lands, all communications can be opened and regional cooperation initiated. This will benefit all countries.

We have great hopes for the efforts of mediators and hope that this issue will soon be resolved. Azerbaijan's internationally recognized borders will be restored; our people will exercise their basic right to return to their homes. This fundamental right of Azerbaijani IDPs has been violated.

We have also discussed energy security issues and these discussions will be continued. I would also like to say that Azerbaijan has initiated key energy projects in the region. It was us who opened the energy corridor to transport hydrocarbon resources of the Caspian Sea to European and world markets. Today, Azerbaijani oil accounts for nearly 30 per cent of the energy balance of some European Union member countries. This means that we are ensuring the energy security of our partners in Europe.

The development potential of Azerbaijan's oil industry is very high. We have a number of oil pipelines and, accordingly, a great potential for the future. Azerbaijani oil will play an important part in the energy security of our friends in the coming decades. Also, the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan is actively investing in Europe. There are plans to continue this cooperation and favorable bilateral agreements in the future.

Azerbaijan has already become a major exporter of gas. We have discovered major gas fields. Three main fields – Shah Deniz, Umid and Absheron – contain the bulk of Azerbaijan's gas reserves. But I am sure that we will witness the discovery of more fields in the coming years. The internationally confirmed level of gas reserves in Azerbaijan is 2.6 trillion cubic meters. We have also diversified our gas transit network. We have recently signed a historic agreement with Turkey on a Trans-Anatolian gas pipeline project in which Azerbaijan's share is 80 per cent. This means that we have undertaken primary responsibility for project implementation and financial commitments. We have assumed leadership of the TANAP project and I am sure it will be a factor in the successful outcome.

Thus, the energy projects we have initiated, funded and implemented thus far have been successful. This is a very important issue for us, for our partners. This is a diversification issue. Speaking of diversification, we certainly mean the diversification of sources. This is the case now. Azerbaijani gas is a new source of energy for the world, for Europe.

The European market is very attractive to us because it is huge. It is a liberal law-governed market. This brings us to the important issue of a balance of interests between producers and consumers. Of course, we cannot forget about transit countries either. I think the coincidence of these interests will contribute to the successful implementation of energy projects. These projects will last for decades, maybe a hundred years or more.

Azerbaijan has established itself as a reliable partner from economic, energy and political standpoints. I am sure that the energy component of our cooperation will be successful. But, of course, this is not the only issue of mutual interest.

We have many plans also in terms of economic cooperation, mutual investment, political collaboration, regional security and development. In other words, Mr. President and I spent one and a half hours discussing these issues today. Many other issues should also be discussed. This shows how important these relations and the issues discussed are for us.

Mr. President, very warm welcome to our country again. I am glad that you have found time to come and see Azerbaijan and meet with us. I wish you a successful visit. Thank you.

Statement by President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy

- Mr. President, I am very pleased to pay my first visit to Azerbaijan at a time of a rapid development of your country. Although I am here for a brief stay, I have already seen many signs of rapid modernization.

From this standpoint, I would like to congratulate you and the people of Azerbaijan held on having hosted the Eurovision song contest in May. This contest, one of the most popular events in Europe, has brought Azerbaijan much closer to the European public.

Our first meeting took place when I was Prime Minister of Belgium. My visit as President of the European Council is not only a continuation of our previous meetings in Astana, Brussels and Warsaw, but also the opportunity to demonstrate the relationship between the EU and Azerbaijan again.

Today we had a fruitful discussion. We discussed many bilateral and regional issues. I would like to mention three issues. First, let me stress that we appreciate the relationship between the EU and Azerbaijan and the way we have benefited from this cooperation. Based on our past achievements, we must work together to make a good use of our future potential. In my opinion, it serves the interests of the European Union, Azerbaijan and the entire region.



We are witnessing an intensification of our relations in various fields. Our bilateral political contacts at all levels, as well as contacts between people and business communities, are expanding. We appreciate your support in many important international issues. Our energy cooperation, an important parameter of positive bilateral relations, is rapidly developing.

The ongoing negotiations on the Southern gas corridor and the

Trans-Caspian pipelines are of strategic importance to Azerbaijan and the European Union.

I welcome the recent signing of an agreement between Turkey and Azerbaijan on the Trans - Anatolian pipeline. This further strengthens Azerbaijan's commitment and our commitment to implement the Southern gas corridor.

At the same time, there is still a great potential for a further expansion and diversification of our relations. A lot still can and should be done. In particular, we must make headway in our talks on a new association agreement, as well as trade and investment.

Mr. President, I encourage you to make better use of the opportunities provided to Azerbaijan by the "Eastern Partnership". After the Warsaw summit we have made significant progress. We are on track to achieve the goals of the "roadmap" for the next "Eastern Partnership" summit due in Vilnius in 2013.

Secondly, Azerbaijan is a secular society and your commitment to the principle of coexistence of different religions is very important in today's world. The European Union and the region need a stable, progressive and tolerant Azerbaijan committed to democratic reform and modernization.

I have brought to the attention of President Ilham Aliyev the importance of developing civil society. In our history it has been the main factor for development. So it may be in Azerbaijan. At the same time, the implementation and continuation of reform, promotion of human rights will ensure long-term success and prosperity of Azerbaijan. It is also important to the strengthening of relations between the EU and Azerbaijan.

From this standpoint, I welcome the release last week of nine people arrested during a rally on 2 April 2011. This is a positive step for Azerbaijan and it is aimed at improving civil and political rights. But further steps should also be taken.

Third, progress in the Nagorno-Karabakh settlement should remain a top priority. Every day that passes without a solution is a wasted opportunity for us all. To achieve a settlement, there should be trust, confidence and respect. I can repeat the message I voiced in Yerevan yesterday.

Serious armed incidents that have occurred recently on the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan and on the frontline are very worrying. I have been saddened by human losses. Military force cannot resolve the conflict. A peaceful settlement of the conflict through negotiations can change the status quo in the region towards a secure and prosperous future. If a secure and stable regional environment is created, it will benefit all.

I repeat the statements made some time ago by the European Union and more recently by OSCE Minsk Group co-chair at a G20 summit in the Mexican town of Los Cabos: Azerbaijan and Armenia should make a decision to reach a sustainable and peaceful solution to the conflict based on Madrid principles. The presidents of both countries should fully implement the commitments undertaken within the OSCE Minsk Group. Both sides must abide by the ceasefire, exercise restraint and renounce hostile rhetoric in official pronouncements.

The European Union is ready to support the effort towards building trust and reconciliation. We have the opportunities and experiences for that. The appointment of Ambassador Lefort as new European Union Special Representative for South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia shows the growing commitment of the European Union to resolve the conflict and a contribution to all aspects of the settlement package. Mr. President, thank you very much again for receiving me in Baku. I am very pleased that we have reaffirmed our joint commitment to raise the partnership between the European Union and Azerbaijan to a higher level.

Thank you. Let us continue our work.

THE OFFICIAL VISIT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN TO THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN 12 July 2012, Baku



On 12 July 2012, an official welcoming ceremony of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomaliy Rahmon, who came to the Republic of Azerbaijan on an official visit, was held.

The guard of honor was arranged in honor of the distinguished guest in a square decorated with state flags of the two states. President Ilham Aliyev met President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomaliy Rahmon.

The chief of the guard of honor delivered a report to President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomaliy Rahmon. National anthems of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Azerbaijan were played.

After the official ceremony, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomaliy Rahmon had a face-to-face meeting. The sides expressed their satisfaction with the development of relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Tajikistan in various spheres and pointed to a good potential for a further development of ties. President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomaliy Rahmon stressed the importance of the visit to Azerbaijan for a further strengthening of bilateral relations. The Presidents exchanged views on bilateral, regional and international issues.



After the one-on-one meeting, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomaliy Rahmon held a meeting in an expanded format with the participation of delegations.

Addressing the meeting participants, President Ilham Aliyev said:

- Dear Emomaliy Sharifovich! Distinguished guests!

Please allow me to warmly welcome you to Azerbaijan. Welcome!

Thank you very much for accepting our invitation to pay an official visit to our country. We attach great importance to your visit and to the relations between our two countries in general. They have a good history and excellent prospects. We have exchanged views on important issues of bilateral political and economic relations and outlined ways of resolving specific problems. Specific instructions will be given to relevant bodies today in order to fill your visit with positive content.

I do hope that your visit will be successful. The documents we will sign will create a good foundation for the development of our relations. Our peoples have a history of close and fraternal relations. They are underpinned by mutual interests of our states. We cooperate actively in international affairs and in international institutions; we support each other and will continue to do so. And, of course, we consider your country as a friendly and brotherly state. We hope to continue active cooperation on all fronts. So your visit is particularly important to our relations. I am sure it will give a new impetus to our relations and we will cooperate in the future as two friendly and brotherly states for the benefit of our countries and peoples. Welcome again!

Expressing his gratitude for the warm welcome, President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomaliy Rahmon said:

- Dear Ilham Heydarovich, Dear Azerbaijani friends,

First of all, let me once again express our sincere gratitude for the invitation to pay an official visit to your country. We are grateful to you and through you to the Government and people of Azerbaijan for the hospitality.

We attach great importance to this visit and perceive it as a logical extension of our regular contacts which started with high level mutual visits in 2007.

Dear Ilham Heydar oğlu, in this context we are very pleased to remember your fruitful visit to Tajikistan, which gave a powerful impetus to the development of mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation in all areas. Tajikistan cherishes the friendly, meaningful and constructive inter-state relations with the Republic of Azerbaijan and focuses on their further development.

Today, Tajik-Azerbaijani relations are multifaceted and encompass key areas of cooperation. Our countries, being members of the UN, the OSCE, the CIS, ECO, the OIC and other international and regional organizations, have a considerable scope of objectively shared interests, which should translate into specific joint projects and programs in areas where our capabilities complement each other. In this context, these and other universal and regional mechanisms of cooperation serve as a conducive platform for coordination between the two countries and mutual support on global issues of common concern. Thank you very much.



After the meeting of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomaliy Rahmon in an expanded format with the participation of delegations, a ceremony of signing of Azerbaijani-Tajik documents was held.

“The Joint Statement of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the President of the Republic of Tajikistan” was signed by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomaliy Rahmon.

“The Agreement on Cooperation between Baku State University and the Tajikistan National University” was signed by Minister of Education of Azerbaijan Misir Mardanov and Minister of Education of the Republic of Tajikistan Nuriddin Saidov.

“The Memorandum of Cooperation between the National Olympic Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the National Olympic Committee of the Republic of Tajikistan” was signed by Vice-President of the National Olympic Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan Chingiz Huseynzadeh and Chairman of the Committee of Youth, Sports and Tourism Affairs of Tajikistan Maliksho Nematov.

“The Agreement on cooperation in the area of agriculture between the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Tajikistan” was signed by Minister of Agriculture of the Azerbaijan Republic Ismat Abasov and Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Tajikistan Kasim Kasimov.

“The Protocol on cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan” was signed by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan Elmar Mammadyarov and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan Hamrokhon Zarifi.

“The Agreement on cooperation in the field of protection of copyright and related rights between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan” was signed by Chairman of Copyright Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan Kamran Imanov and Minister of Culture of the Republic of Tajikistan Mirzoshohruh Asrori.

“The Agreement on cooperation in the field of youth work and sports between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan” was signed by Minister of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Azerbaijan Azad Rahimov and Chairman of the Committee of Youth, Sports and Tourism Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan Maliksho Nematov.

“The Agreement on mutual recognition and equivalence of documents on education, scientific degrees and academic titles between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan” was signed by Minister of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan Misir Mardanov and Minister of Education of the Republic of Tajikistan Nuriddin Saidov.



“The Program on economic cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2013-2015” was signed by Minister of Economic Development of the Republic of Azerbaijan and co-chairman of the intergovernmental commission Shahin Mustafayev and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan Hamrokhon Zarifi.

Then the ceremony of signing of Azerbaijani-Tajik documents, a ceremony of presenting awards to President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon was held.

After the awards ceremony, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon made statements for the press.

During the official visit President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev hosted an official reception in honor of President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon.

Noting that discussions on bilateral relations and regional matters were held with the President of Tajikistan, President Ilham Aliyev said that important documents covering many areas were signed during the visit.

“Tajikistan and Azerbaijan as independent countries are successfully building their own future,” the head of state said, adding that both countries had covered the road of development and progress in 20 years. Noting that the relations between the two peoples have further strengthened over the years, which has given an impetus to the development of bilateral relations, President Ilham Aliyev said:

- Today we conducted a comprehensive discussion to strengthen our economic ties and gave appropriate orders. There are good prospects, and we see that they are quite realistic. I am sure that the instructions given to appropriate bodies will yield good results and enable us to increase our trade a few times. The projects covering energy, industry, investment, etc. will bring our countries closer together and strengthen regional ties. As to regional issues and regional cooperation, I must say that Tajikistan plays an important part in promoting peace, security and regional cooperation in Central Asia, while Azerbaijan does so in the Caspian region and the Caucasus. We also discussed transport issues. I am confident that the transport initiatives being implemented in the region will enable our countries to realize their economic potential in full.



President Ilham Aliyev said that the talks have confirmed that Tajikistan and Azerbaijan shared positions on many issues of regional and global politics. “We actively support each other in international organizations, always vote for each other,” the President said, citing as an example Tajikistan’s support during Azerbaijan’s election as a member of the UN Security Council. President Aliyev stressed that the visit was an indicator of good relations between the two countries and peoples.

President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon expressed his gratitude for the hospitality. Noting that a very useful and constructive exchange of views on many important aspects of bilateral relations was held during the visit, Emomali Rahmon said that areas and ways of developing, strengthening and

expanding the mutually beneficial cooperation between Tajikistan and Azerbaijan were specified in the light of the experience gained since the signing in 2007 of the Fundamental Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation and two dozen other instruments.

The President of Tajikistan said:



- Today, Azerbaijan holds one of the most important places in Tajikistan's foreign political strategy. We are interested in further strengthening the Tajik - Azerbaijani cooperation and diversifying the spheres and directions of mutually beneficial development. The existing legal framework, the spirit of mutual trust and mutual sympathy between the two countries and their leaders has created favorable conditions for the implementation of these plans and aspirations. The agreements reached during this visit will enable us to interact more ac-

tively and substantively and be optimistic about the future of the Tajik-Azerbaijani cooperation and partnership. To do this, we just need to exert maximum effort.

President Emomalii Rahmon expressed the wish for the cooperation between the two countries to reach an even higher level – the level of long-term close partnership.

THE OFFICIAL VISIT OF NATO SECRETARY GENERAL TO THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

7 September 2012, Baku



On 7 September 2012, President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen.

President Ilham Aliyev said that the visit of NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen to Azerbaijan would be fruitful from the standpoint of discussing the current state of and prospects for cooperation. The President stressed that the cooperation between Azerbaijan and NATO in various fields was developing successfully. Re-

calling with satisfaction his latest visit to NATO headquarters and meetings with diplomats there, the visit to New York during Azerbaijan's presidency in the UN Security Council and his participation in the NATO summit in Chicago, President Aliyev noted the importance of the discussions related to the development of cooperation. Underscoring the importance of Azerbaijan's participation in the peacekeeping mission in Afghanistan, its role as a transit country in the transportation of goods to Afghanistan and a successful cooperation within the framework of the "Partnership for Peace" program, President Ilham Aliyev expressed his confidence that Azerbaijan would continue to contribute to the cooperation with NATO.

NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen congratulated the head of state on a high level of organization of the "Eurovision" song contest in Azerbaijan and the successes of Azerbaijani sportsmen in the 30th Olympic Games in London.

Noting that the rapid development ongoing in Azerbaijan had made a good impression on him, the Secretary General expressed his satisfaction with the growing reputation of our country in the international arena. Anders Fogh Rasmussen praised Azerbaijan's participation in the peacekeeping mission in Afghanistan directly and through transit.

The sides exchanged views on a further development of relations between Azerbaijan and NATO, regional security and stability, energy cooperation and other issues of mutual interest.

After, President Ilham Aliyev and NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen held a joint press conference.

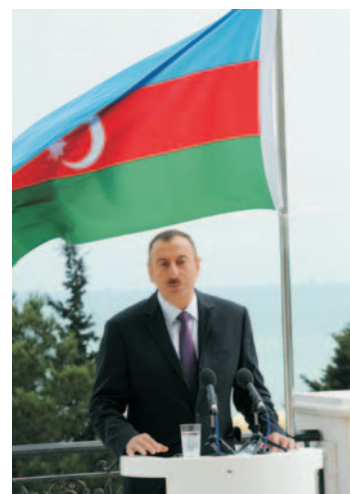
First, the President of Azerbaijan and the NATO Secretary General made statements for the press.

Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

- Dear Mr. Secretary General!

Distinguished guests! Ladies and gentlemen!

I want to welcome you to our country again. I am very glad that you are paying a visit to Azerbaijan. We attach great importance to your visit to our country. It is a symbol of our partnership and friendship. I also recall our meeting in Brussels in February. We had a very frank and open discussion on issues of mutual interest. This active dialogue between NATO and Azerbaijan is very important for regional stability and cooperation. Azerbaijan is a reliable partner of NATO. I also recall a meeting with the ambassadors of the North Atlantic Council and their comments after our discussions. All those comments formed a positive attitude associated with our country. This indicates that we have very good relations with member-states and at a bilateral level. The relations between Azerbaijan and NATO member-states are very broad, predictable and friendly. This, in turn, further enhances the current relations between NATO and Azerbaijan.



We are working on many issues. One of these issues is the situation in Afghanistan. Azerbaijan has participated in the peacekeeping operation and contributed to the International Security Assistance Force mission from the first day. We have doubled the number of our troops in Afghanistan. We also make a contribution by supporting the deployment, transit and logistics, including the use of air space. Today, over 30 per cent of nonmilitary cargo sent to Afghanistan is transported via Azerbaijan. We are ready to continue our work. As Mr. Secretary General noted today, this work will be continued after 2014. We are ready to participate in the development process beyond 2014. We also participate in training and nonmilitary assistance programs. We have helped the trustee fund of the Afghan national army and made a statement for further assistance. In other words, this is a very sincere and open cooperation based on common values.

We will do everything possible to ensure that our Afghan friends are able to eliminate all the difficulties arising in front of them.

Today we also discussed the situation in the region, regional security and the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Azerbaijan aims for an early resolution of the conflict based on the principles of international law and territorial integrity. We are very grateful to NATO for its support of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. This is reflected in the documents of the Chicago summit, as well as the previous Lisbon and Bucharest summits.

Azerbaijani lands have been under occupation for practically 20 years. We must put an end to this injustice, remove this regional threat.

One of the topics we discussed was energy security. Azerbaijan is working closely with NATO member-states on this issue. We have discovered vast energy reserves; have a modern transportation infrastructure, pipelines. We plan to build a new TANAP pipeline through which we can transport our resources to European markets.

As a reliable partner in the field of energy security, Azerbaijan is ready to continue its efforts and strengthen this partnership. I am sure that this partnership will be continued, and considering the fact that we are already working with member-states on issues of energy security, it will be successful. The share of Azerbaijani oil in the energy balance of some member-countries exceeds 30 per cent. I am sure that there will come a time when our gas will also play a major role in gas consumption in Europe, for our friends and neighbors.

Mr. Secretary General! I want to sincerely welcome you to Azerbaijan again. This is your first visit to our country. We are very happy that you are paying this visit. This visit will allow us to build even better relations and a better cooperation between NATO and Azerbaijan. Thank you.

Statement by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen

- Mr. President!

I express my deep gratitude for your kind words and warm welcome. I am very satisfied with my first visit to Baku. This indicates that NATO is committed to the South Caucasus region and will remain as such. Azerbaijan is an important partner for NATO. Our relations are developing steadily and positively. We appreciate the strong support of your troops in Afghanistan. They are providing exemplary service. You can be proud of them.

We also appreciate your political support for NATO through the use of air space and transit routes. We are grateful for your significant financial contribution to the training of Afghan security forces. Together we came to an agreement to continue our support to the Afghan side after the mission of International Security Assistance Force in 2014. I was pleased to hear from President Aliyev that Azerbaijan will participate in this process. This is vital to the stability in Afghanistan and the region.



NATO supports Azerbaijan in the areas of defense and security reforms. We want you to keep up the momentum in these important areas. We also assist in the removal of numerous unexploded shells and clearing hundreds of acres of land from them. This is the largest project among similar ones in the world and it serves the interests of the people. So our dialogue and cooperation have strong frames. We are determined to continue our success, enhance the practical experience of our armed forces which they acquired over the years of joint operations in Afghanistan, joint removal of security challenges faced by all in the globalizing world in the 21st century. In other words, Azerbaijan is a valuable partner for NATO and NATO is for Azerbaijan. We have the opportunity to build a strong, long-term partnership, and I am sure we should try to use this opportunity. Thank you.

Then the Head of State and the NATO Secretary General answered questions from journalists.

AFP: Mr. Rasmussen, after the pardoning of Ramil Safarov, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan told the Armenian Security Council meeting: "Azerbaijan has only itself to blame now." Then the Armenian terrorist organization ASALA made threats against citizens of Azerbaijan. As Secretary General of NATO, what is your attitude towards the Armenian President's appeals for terror?



NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen: Naturally, NATO allies condemn terrorism in all its forms. We call on all responsible political leaders to refrain from encouraging terrorism. As for the local, regional situation, there is a strong need for reducing tension, promoting cooperation and peace. I am very concerned about the situation. We hope to see a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. NATO defined its position on the Nagorno - Karabakh conflict at the Chicago summit. NATO is not an organization that is directly involved in the search

for a solution to this conflict, we support the Minsk process. Based on this, we hope to see a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev: Allow me to add a few words. I would like to say a few words on the issue of Ramil Safarov. In response to the reaction, let me say that the decision on Ramil Safarov was made in accordance with the European Convention and the pardon decree of the President is in line with the Constitution of Azerbaijan. Therefore, from a general point of view the situation is quite clear. Those who try to accuse Azerbaijan of violating the convention or don't know the reality seek to mislead public opinion. I also want to note that Armenia should not use this as an excuse for inflicting damage to the peace process with Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan is committed to the peaceful settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the basis of international law. The statement made by the Presidents of Minsk Group co-chairs countries encouraged us very much. The statement said that the status quo is unacceptable. This status quo must be changed. Armenia is trying to maintain the status quo.

The Kazan meeting in July last year was the latest attempt to find a peaceful solution. At present, the peace process is in a state of stagnation. I think that the international community and, above all, the Minsk Group should not allow Armenia to use this as an excuse for completely "freezing" the negotiations.

On the issue of Ramil Safarov, I want to say again that the decision was made in accordance with the norms and rules of international law. I just want to remind the Armenians. The man who committed an act of terror at the Orly airport in France in 2001, which led to the death of citizens of European countries and America, was extradited from France to Armenia. Although he was not a citizen of Armenia, the President pardoned him. I would not want to draw a parallel between the terrorist and our officer. Our officer has already served nine years of arrest. He was



punished and the decision on his pardon is right from a legal point of view. The decision was made by the President and it is right. Azerbaijan has returned its officer to his homeland.

"Azad Azerbaijan" TV: Mr. Secretary-General, as you know, Azerbaijani lands, including Nagorno-Karabakh, have been under Armenian occupation for almost 20 years. This conflict has led to the destruction of Azerbaijani villages and towns. More than a million of our citizens are still in the situation of refugees and IDPs. However, the negotiations within the OSCE for a peaceful settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict have not yielded the desired result. What contribution can NATO make to a just settlement of the conflict?

Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen: As I mentioned in my previous response, NATO as an organization is not directly involved in the search for a solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We support the process that is carried out by the Minsk Group and aims to settle this complex conflict peacefully. We stated our position in a declaration at the Chicago summit. We want to encourage the reduction of tension, cooperation and peace in the region.

President Ilham Aliyev: I want to take this opportunity to thank NATO for its position. As I noted earlier, it was reflected in the documents adopted at the Chicago and previous summits. We highly appreciate this position. I want to reiterate that an early settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict would serve the interests of all countries. It is in the interests of Azerbaijan, as it will allow us to return those affected by the occupation to their native lands. It is in the interests of Armenia, as the reduction of tension and normalization of relations between neighbors will serve their interests. So we hope that the position of Armenia will change, that they will resume active and constructive negotiations with Azerbaijan in order to find a solution to the conflict as soon as possible.

THE MEETING WITH AMBASSADORS OF OSCE MEMBER-STATES

10 September 2012, Gabala



On 10 September 2012, President Ilham Aliyev received Ambassadors of OSCE member-states in Gabala.

Welcoming the diplomats, President Ilham Aliyev said:

- Dear Ambassadors, welcome!

First of all, I express my appreciation to you for coming to Gabala. I know you are very busy, that you have a lot of meetings in Baku today and tomorrow. I hope that your meetings will be successful. You will see first hand the situation in Azerbaijan, which you often hear about from the media. This is a great opportunity to meet people, see the development and achievements of the country.

Last year we celebrated the 20th anniversary of our independence. Over this period, Azerbaijan has achieved obvious progress in all areas. Azerbaijan's election to the UN Security Council last year is vivid evidence of the support provided to us by the international community. Over the 20 years we have shown ourselves to the world, have said our word. The support we have received from 155 countries is the result of our work.

We are conducting a policy of political and economic reforms, trying to carry them out in parallel. We have achieved development in this area. Azerbaijan has been a member of the Council of Europe for over 10 years.

We have assumed a number of commitments on political transformation. In hindsight, looking back to where we were, we can see that there was no political system and market economy then. Until 1991, we were part of the Soviet Union. You know what a system it was. Now the country has political institutions, democratic freedoms, and freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and freedom of the press. I think this has played an important part in the development of our people. We have free Internet, 60 per cent of our population are Internet users. All the villages are provided with broadband Internet. The program will be completed within one and a half years at the latest.

We have made significant changes in the economic sphere. The share of the private sector in our economy is over 60 per cent. For several years we were the fastest growing country in the world. This allowed us to triple our gross domestic product and reduce poverty from 49 to 7 per cent in the past nine years. The unemployment rate fell to 5.4 per cent. We have created 1 million jobs in a country with a population of over 9 million people. We have also diversified the economy.

International financial institutions support our reforms. Azerbaijan is in 46th place in the global economic competitiveness ranking of the Davos Economic Forum. For several years we have been the leading CIS country. Despite the financial and economic crisis, the rating agencies Standard & Poors, Moody's and Fitch have recently raised Azerbaijan's credit rating. Living standards are improving by the day. We are implementing numerous social infrastructure projects and economic transformation is already a reality. At the same time, we have eliminated our dependence on energy sources. We have got rid of the dependence which existed when we started the reforms. Currently, the share of the energy factor in the GDP is declining, the proportion of the non-oil sector is growing. In the first six months of this year, our non-oil economy grew by more than 10 per cent. This shows that economic transformation and diversification have been successful.

When we started the implementation of energy projects, some were claiming that we would face the threat of the Dutch disease, that oil would become a curse for Azerbaijan. But thanks to the wise management of financial resources received from energy projects, judicious distribution of wealth among the population and the implementation of strategic projects, we have managed to reduce the dependence on the energy factor. Despite this, energy security will remain an important part of our economic and political life. Now there is an ever greater need for our energy.

We are implementing important energy projects aimed to promote extensive cooperation with our friends, predict the global energy market, ensure a fair competition between producers, and balance the interests of producers, transit countries and consumers. I am sure that today and tomorrow you will have the opportunity to see our development, the challenges we are facing.

The main issue of concern not only for us but also the whole world is the ongoing occupation of Azerbaijani lands. I would not want to go into the details of the conflict and the reasons that led to it. You know that well enough. But I would like to draw your attention to two issues. Azerbaijan is a victim of Armenian aggression.

This is an undeniable fact. Armenia continues to hold 20 per cent of Azerbaijan's internationally recognized territory under occupation. As you know, Nagorno-Karabakh is an integral part of Azerbaijan. From a historical point of view, this territory was inhabited by the Azerbaijanis. From a legal point of view, Nagorno-Karabakh is part of Azerbaijan. There was a Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region in the Soviet time, not even an autonomous republic. It had no administrative borders with Armenia. Thus, Nagorno-Karabakh is located inside Azerbaijan.

When the conflict broke out, the ethnic composition of the people living there was in the ratio of 75:25 per cent. All the Azerbaijanis were ousted from Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenia conducted a policy of ethnic cleansing in seven surrounding districts as well, although the Armenians had never lived there before. As a result, we have more than 750,000 IDPs displaced from the districts surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh, 40,000 from Karabakh itself and more than 200,000 from Armenia. These figures, of course, relate to the beginning of the conflict, the time of ethnic cleansing.

And these figures are growing due to the fact that the IDPs population has registered demographic growth. The districts adjacent to Nagorno-Karabakh have been destroyed. The OSCE has sent two missions to the region. The first was a fact-finding mission, the second was an evaluation mission. Both confirmed that everything has been destroyed. Our cities have been turned into ghost towns where no-one lives. The entire infrastructure has been destroyed; all the cemeteries, mosques and buildings have been razed to the ground. This has been done by Armenia, by people who came to this land afterwards. This is a real picture of the conflict.

The international community is actively involved in resolving the issue. We have comprehensive legal framework to address the issue. There are four UN Security Council resolutions. None of them has been executed.

Decisions of the OSCE Lisbon Summit and other decisions – we all remember them. This issue was also discussed in the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and other international institutions, the Chicago NATO summit. The conflict must be resolved on the basis of international law and the Helsinki Final Act. The Meindorf declaration signed by the President of Armenia, myself and President of Russia Dmitry Medvedev also indicates that the conflict must be resolved on the basis of the decisions and resolutions of international organizations. These decisions and resolutions are unequivocal.



The Helsinki Final Act is also referred to in connection with the conflict settlement. The Helsinki Final Act explicitly points to a balance between the principles of territorial integrity and self-determination. The right of people to self-determination should not infringe the principle of territorial integrity. In addition, the Armenians have already completed self-determination once, created an Armenian state, and even that state is located on an area that was historically populated by the Azerbaijanis.

In 1918, the day after its formation, the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic agreed for the city of Erivan to become the capital of the Armenian state. Many people don't know that, but it is true. We will not tolerate a second Armenian state on Azerbaijani lands.

This is impossible. Armenia must understand that their maximalist approach, the requirement of inde-

pendence for Nagorno-Karabakh is impossible. No-one will support that. The so-called "election" held in Nagorno-Karabakh recently was not recognized by the international community, no-one will recognize Nagorno-Karabakh.

Azerbaijan will never recognize Nagorno-Karabakh. Therefore, the best option for Armenia is to return to the proposals submitted by the OSCE Minsk Group in late 2009.

Azerbaijan supports them. You know what these proposals are: all the occupied territories must be returned to Azerbaijan, refugees and internally displaced persons must return to their lands and their security ensured. Only then will it be possible to establish relations with Armenia. The future status of Nagorno-Karabakh will be determined when both sides are ready.

We have accepted the formula which Armenia rejected. Since then, the process of negotiations has been at a standstill for more than a year. The statement by presidents of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries, particularly on the unacceptability of the status quo, inspired us very much. We fully support that statement. But Armenia is trying to maintain the status quo and does not want to sit at the negotiating table. All of their provocative actions and statements have one goal – to delay a settlement. They must understand that they can't maintain the status quo as they have done for many years. The balance of power is changing. Azerbaijan is no longer what it used to be 20 years ago. Azerbaijan is a country that can defend itself. The best way out for Armenia is to understand that its future depends on the development of the region. They have to learn to live with their neighbors and end the occupation. Everything boils down to occupation. Sometimes Armenian leaders claim that Azerbaijan has severed all ties with Armenia. But how can you expect us to cooperate with a country that has occupied our lands?! How do you see cooperation with an aggressor that has destroyed all the historical monuments of our country, occupied our territory and intends to continue this occupation?! This is impossible.

The occupation must end. The process of liberation of our lands from occupation must start as soon as possible. As soon as the process of liberation starts, we will be ready to consider important steps towards normalization of relations and decline of tensions. But this process must start first. We need to move from words to deeds. It is in the interests of all countries, in our interests and, I am sure, in the interests of Armenia. All people should live in peace and tranquility; international law must be restored as soon as possible.

I want to reiterate that the provision of Nagorno-Karabakh with independence is categorically out of the question. The sooner the Armenian side understands this and abandons its maximalist, unrealistic and illegal approaches, the more useful it will be for them and for the peace process. I will conclude my remarks. I can talk about this conflict for a long time, but I think it would be more appropriate to continue our conversation in the form of an exchange of views. Thank you.

After, the representative of Norway to the OSCE, Robert Kwil, thanked President Ilham Aliyev for meeting with the delegation and for the opportunity to see other regions of Azerbaijan. The Ambassador noted that in continuation of the tradition of annual visits of OSCE Ambassadors to one of the member-countries of the organization, it was decided to visit Azerbaijan this year. This is caused by Azerbaijan's role in the organization and the attention to the activities of the OSCE Minsk Group over the peaceful settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. "But our mission also intends to hold an exchange of views with you on issues of security and economy," said Robert Kwil, adding that some of the Ambassadors attending the meeting wanted to address President Ilham Aliyev.

The representative of Ireland to the OSCE, Eoin O'Leary, stressed the importance of the upcoming discussions and exchange of views during this visit.

Russia's permanent representative to the OSCE Andrey Kelin said:

- Thank you very much, Ilham Heydar oglu!

I visited Azerbaijan about a year ago and am witnessing tremendous changes. Yesterday we had the opportunity to take a walk on the boulevard along the Caspian coast. We saw many Russians strolling along the boulevard.

They felt very calm. For me as Ambassador it is great to see that. You know how much importance

the country I represent attaches to security and stability in the Caucasus, including their preservation. We will continue our work in the framework of the Minsk Group and show our support for you in this regard. At the same time, I should note that we have come here at a very difficult time.

Two days ago we were in Yerevan and felt some tension in the statements of President Sargsyan. This is related to the well-known recent developments. I would like to say that goodwill gestures are extremely important for the normalization of the situation at such moments. And the last thing I want to mention: in the OSCE, which involves 56 countries, we interact not only on political issues, but also in other issues of mutual interest relating to terrorism, narcotics and security. It is extremely important to speak with one voice on these issues because these are non-political conceptual documents that can benefit everyone. And it is very important to us. Thank you.

President Ilham Aliyev:

- Thank you. I would like to begin by expressing concern about the growing internal tensions in Armenia.

Azerbaijan has not made any steps that may run counter to international practices or its liabilities – written or verbal. We know that the extradition and pardon of Ramil Safarov triggered a hue and cry in Armenia. I have already expressed my attitude towards this. Let me state again: everything starting from Safarov's extradition to his pardon was done in accordance with the European Convention and the Constitution of Azerbaijan. He served almost nine years in prison. Therefore, Armenia should not use this situation as an excuse for disrupting the peace talks.



As I mentioned in my opening statement, peace talks have been at a standstill since our last meeting in Kazan in June 2011. OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs have been visiting the region, but the main topic of our discussions now is not related to the essence of the negotiating process, it aims to reduce tensions and potential threats. For the first time since the creation of the OSCE Minsk Group we are witnessing stalled negotiations. Over the past years several stages of negotiations and a number of proposals

have been unsuccessful. The last set of proposals that started as the Prague process and developed into the Madrid principles, which Azerbaijan did not reject although some Armenians claim the opposite, was, I would say, the last proposal, the last chance for a settlement. Armenia currently uses this episode as a pretext. They are trying to maintain the status quo as much as they can. They always say that they want a peaceful solution. We also want to resolve the problem peacefully.

Our 20-year cooperation with the OSCE Minsk Group clearly shows that we are in favor of a peaceful solution. In addition to a peaceful solution, we want to free our lands. But Armenia wants only a peaceful solution, they only want peace.

We want peace and our lands back. These lands are ours from both historical and political standpoints. So they try to thrust out the issue of Ramil Safarov. They raise unnecessary hype within the country. I understand the internal problems of the Armenian President over my order of pardon. But this is his problem, not a problem of the region. Each president may face internal problems in the country. But this can't justify unethical conduct and frustration of the peace process. Therefore, they should be a little more mature and perceive reality as it is.

Without drawing parallels, I would like to recall one historical fact. In 2001, the Armenian president pardoned a terrorist named Karapetyan, who committed a terrorist act on a runway operated by Turkish Airlines at the French Orly Airport. The attack killed several people – I think one American, four Frenchmen and eight Turks.

Also, 50 people were injured. Karapetyan was not a citizen of Armenia, but after serving several years in prison, he was extradited to Armenia, and Sargsyan's predecessor and close ally, Kocharyan, immediately pardoned him. We did not see any statements of international organizations and politicians on this issue then. I do not draw parallels between a terrorist who killed eight and injured 50

people, and our officer. But this is true. So the Armenians have no right to present themselves as an offended side. I think that it was the right decision from every point of view. It is now necessary to send a message to Armenia itself: do not use this as an excuse for disrupting the negotiations, do not use this to foment tension. Azerbaijan does not create tension, they do. They need to calm down, come back to the negotiating table to try to find a solution to the conflict as soon as possible.

The U.S. Representative to the OSCE Ian Kelly said he supports the activities of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs and stressed that it was highly important. He said President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton were also personally involved in the activities of the Minsk Group. The Ambassador praised the efforts of the President of Azerbaijan aimed at building trust and supporting humanitarian ties.

During the meeting, the Ambassadors of Austria, France, Switzerland and Turkey to the OSCE expressed their views on cooperation between Azerbaijan and the OSCE, the country's achievements in 20 years of membership in the organization, progress on all aspects of the Azerbaijan-OSCE cooperation, the geostrategic location of the republic, the peaceful settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and increased efforts in this direction.

Ambassadors also exchanged views on the successful development of relations between their respective countries and Azerbaijan, mutual investment, the implementation of various projects, the planning of high-level visits and other issues of interest.

THE SECOND MEETING OF THE AZERBAIJANI-TURKISH HIGH-LEVEL STRATEGIC COOPERATION COUNCIL

11 September 2012, Gabala



On 11 September 2012, Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan arrived to the Republic of Azerbaijan for a working visit. During the visit President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan held a face-to-face meeting.

The sides discussed the cooperation between the countries in political, economic, trade, transport and military industrial fields, as well as the prospects for resolution of the Armenian-Azerbaijani, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The second meeting of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council has been held in Gabala with the participation of President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Welcoming the meeting participants, President Ilham Aliyev said:

- Dear Prime Minister, my dear brother!

I warmly welcome you to Azerbaijan! The second meeting of the Azerbaijani-Turkish Strategic Cooperation Council is being held in Azerbaijan, in Gabala. We held the first meeting in Izmir, it was very successful. And now we are here.

Over the past period our ties have developed rapidly. Very important events have taken place since our meeting in Izmir. We have met many times, signed the TANAP project. In other words, the decisions made in Izmir are being implemented. Our strategic alliance is developing and strengthening, it covers all spheres.

The agenda of today's meeting is also very broad. Both sides are represented by ministers who will also have their say. Our ministers are in close contact and communication with each other. I often meet with your ministers in Baku, our ministers also meet with you.

In short, our two fraternal countries are confidently and successfully continuing their cooperation and I am sure that today's meeting will be the "road map" for our future activities. I am confident that this meeting will also be successful and create new opportunities for the development and unity of our countries. Once again, welcome to Azerbaijan!

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said:

- I also want to thank you on my own behalf and on behalf of our delegation.

Dear brother, Mr. President, honorable ministers, members of delegations. Every time we visit Azerbaijan, we feel very much at home. And love in this home help both our countries, both nations to become stronger and continue their way.

Ten years ago we set down this path with a turnover of about \$1 billion. And now it has reached \$3.5 billion. Of course, we are not satisfied with this. Inshallah, very quickly, in the shortest possible time, we will bring this figure up to \$5 billion. Recently our Minister of Economy Zafer Caglayan was in Azerbaijan and met with you. We have set this goal. Speaking with my dear brother about the meeting of the joint commission a little earlier, we discussed this. We want to hold meetings of the



joint commission before the end of this year in order to continue this work at an accelerated pace. Our military, political and cultural cooperation continues as part of our serious interaction on the international arena. Along with this, our cooperation in the energy sector has reached its peak now. We signed the TANAP agreement in Istanbul. After that we will start engaging the mechanisms. Inshallah, TANAP will soon enable us to receive Azerbaijani gas and transport it to Europe.

And this, of course, will lead to changes and further development. Knowing this, we are taking these steps. I do hope that this second meeting of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council after Izmir will also be very rewarding. Our ministers have already held the necessary meetings. I hope the outcome of this meeting will be as useful and beneficial.

Please accept greetings, love and respect on behalf of all my friends again.



After the second meeting of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council in Gabala, the ceremony of signing of Azerbaijani-Turkish documents was held with the participation of President Ilham Aliyev and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan signed "The Protocol of the second meeting of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey".

"The Protocol on cooperation between Baku State University and the Institute of Yunus Emre on a Turkic Project" was signed by Azerbaijani Ambassador to Turkey Faig Bagirov and coordinator of the Institute of Yunus Emre for Turkic Affairs Yasin Tunc.

"The Protocol on cooperation between the "Azerbaijan TV and Radio Broadcasting" CJSC and the Office of Radio and Television of Turkey" was signed by Chairman of the "Azerbaijan TV and Radio Broadcasting" CJSC Arif Alishanov and General Director of the Office of Radio and Television of Turkey (TRT) Ibrahim Sahin.

"The Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Transport, Navigation and Communications of the Republic of Turkey on the development of combined freight transport" was signed by Minister of Transport of Azerbaijan Ziya Mammadov and Minister of Transport, Navigation and Communications of Turkey Binali Yildirim.

"The Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey on the exchange of diplomats" was signed by Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan Elmar Mammadyarov and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey Ahmet Davutoglu.

"The Protocol between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Turkey on regulating the activities of the Azerbaijani-Turkish joint venture of seed growing and research" was signed by Azerbaijani Ambassador to Turkey Faig Bagirov and head of the Turkish Cooperation and Development Department Serdar Cam.

"The Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Turkey on coordination between search and rescue services" was signed by Minister of Emergency Situations of Azerbaijan Kamaladdin Heydarov and Minister of Transport, Navigation and Communications of Turkey Binali Yildirim.

"The Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Turkey on cooperation in the field of technical regulation, standardization, conformity assessment, accreditation and metrology" was signed by Minister of Economic Development of Azerbaijan Shahin Mustafayev and Minister of Economy of Turkey Zafer Caglayan.

After the signing ceremony at the end of the second meeting of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation

Council in Gabala, a joint press conference of President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan was held.

First, President Ilham Aliyev and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan made statements for the press.

Statement by President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

- Dear Prime Minister, dear brother!

Distinguished guests! Ladies and gentlemen!

Dear brother, I sincerely welcome you to Azerbaijan, to our country! I welcome all our Turkish brothers.

Today we held the second meeting of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council. As you know, the first meeting was held very successfully in Izmir last year. The decisions made at the first meeting are successfully implemented. Today we, first of all, assessed the work done, analyzed it and exchanged views on additional steps to further our cooperation.

In general, I can say that Turkish-Azerbaijani relations are developing successfully in all areas and cover all spheres. The agenda of today's meeting is also very broad. We had a broad discussion on a number of important issues and I want to say again that there is no disagreement between us – our views overlap on international affairs and on bilateral ties.



Today, both during our one-on-one meeting and in the expanded negotiations we exchanged views on the political situation and global affairs. Our countries support each other in all areas and in all international organizations. Today our ministers informed us about the work done, we discussed new initiatives for joint activities in the future. We speak with one voice and support each other in all international organizations. This support is very important for us, for the region and the world. Today, Turkish-Azerbaijani relations are important not only for the development of bilat-

eral relations, they also play a stabilizing role in promoting peace, stability and security in the region. Our role in the world is growing, and mutual support further enhances the value of our countries.

With regard to international issues, of course, we discussed the consequences of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the efforts made in the negotiations. I informed my dear brother about the current status of negotiations. As you know, the injustice and the expansionist policy towards Azerbaijan are still ongoing. Nagorno-Karabakh, which is internationally, recognized Azerbaijani land, and surrounding districts have been occupied by Armenian aggressors for 20 years. All norms of international law and justice have been breached, historical justice has been violated. We aim to resolve this issue peacefully. But the unconstructive and hypocritical stance of Armenia does not allow us to achieve this.

Azerbaijan's position is unequivocal: international law, Azerbaijan's territorial integrity must be restored; the issue can be resolved only on the basis of the principle of territorial integrity. I take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the Turkish state and government on behalf of the Azerbaijani people for their stance on this issue.

Of course, we talked about the new prospects for our economic relations today. Our turnover is growing rapidly. Although the volume of our trade is not yet satisfactory, the dynamics is very positive. If we can maintain and increase this pace, our turnover will be measured by even greater numbers in the near future.

Our energy cooperation is traditional. I can say that the cooperation in the energy sector of the economy, as always, is a priority. The meeting in Izmir was followed by important developments. We

have signed the TANAP project, which has reverberated greatly in the world. This is an important step towards reforming the global energy policy. The international attention to the TANAP project shows that Turkey and Azerbaijan, as always, took joint initiative and assumed responsibility at the right time to launch this major project. I do hope that we will implement the TANAP project, as agreed, in the next five years. Thus, Azerbaijan will become an important supplier of gas to Turkey. Besides, Azerbaijani gas will be transported to Europe via Turkey.

Another important project is related to the transport sector. This project has also secured a place among major projects – the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway. The ministers provided information today, we talked about future projects. This project is our joint initiative. But today we see again that other countries, our partner countries are showing interest in this project and want to join it. We welcome that. This is a project linking Turkey with Azerbaijan and Georgia, and also Georgia with Azerbaijan. It has already become international.

We also discussed issues of military-technical cooperation. Cooperation in this area is based on the principles of brotherhood and friendship. Joint initiatives have been put forward. I can say that there is great progress in this area in recent years.

We have discussed issues of communication and information technologies. In other words, there has been a meeting of cabinets of the two countries. At least as far as Azerbaijan is concerned, a third of our Cabinet of Ministers is in attendance today. This is in itself an indicator that our bilateral agenda is quite broad, meaningful, sincere and positive.

I am very pleased that we have discussed all the issues in an atmosphere of friendship and brotherhood. I want to reiterate that underlying our relations are the mutual feelings of the two peoples, mutual support of the two states.

This support exists. I want to say again that this support plays a positive role in regional issues.

Dear brother, I cordially welcome you to Azerbaijan again. I wish you good health and success. I am sure that the documents we have signed today will be implemented by our next meeting.

Statement by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan

- I would like to thank my dear brother too!

My greetings and respect for honorable ministers, distinguished participants of the meeting, esteemed representatives of the press.

Conducting the second meeting of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council in Gabala today, we really feel a sense of joy and satisfaction. On behalf of all my colleagues I express my heartfelt gratitude to my dear brother for this hospitality. I am particularly grateful for the opportunity to get to know the city of Gabala, which is of great historical importance for Azerbaijan.

We discussed really important issues of political, military, cultural and economic nature today.

We held a bilateral meeting, our ministers have also held meetings. As you know, we have taken very important steps in the energy sector, and our ministers met with each other again.

At the same time, this joint meeting resembles a joint session of the Cabinet of Ministers of the two countries. We have held a Cabinet meeting together with the President. We have assessed the period after the Izmir meeting, discussed what we can do in the future, what steps we can take.

Our foreign trade turnover, which was \$1 billion 10 years ago, has now reached \$3.5 billion. In the past seven months, the figure was \$2.6 billion. If we work even more persistently and assertively, I believe we will be able to reach a level of foreign trade of \$5 billion, which was initially scheduled for 2015, by the end of this year.

The volume of trade of \$5 billion will provide us with a turnover of \$10 billion in 2015. Later, in 2020, we will bring it to \$20 billion, because there is a growing and developing Azerbaijan, and there is a



growing and developing Turkey. By developing cooperation between the brotherly and friendly countries and approaching this process from the position, as stated by the late creator President Heydar Aliyev, “one nation in two states”, we can and we will bring this figure up to a higher level. There are no obstacles in our way. We have defined steps in all the spheres. As I said earlier, my dear brother and I signed the TANAP project at Dolmabahce in Istanbul.

The process started then and, Inshallah, the mechanisms will start operating in the near future. Of course, this project will leave a special mark in history. It is a process of discovering Azerbaijani gas for Turkey and Europe. With each passing day I become more and more convinced that this project will attract international interest to the region. We do realize our responsibility. We also have the TASMUS project, which is of great importance in the implementation of joint steps in the matters of electronic communication of defense industries. Our respective ministers are working hard in this area.

Our countries share warm bilateral relations. In addition, our cooperation in the international arena, in all international institutions is at a level that can truly lead by example.

Now, as you know, Azerbaijan is a nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council, which is very important for us. After Azerbaijan completes its mission in the UN Security Council, Turkey will become a candidate for membership in this organization in 2015-2016. Turkey's nonpermanent membership in this structure will also serve to strengthen our cooperation.

The cultural relations between our countries are developing. In addition, we are taking steps in organizational development, and this will be continued. Both sides have the desire to continue this cooperation. The implementation of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway project is powering ahead.

Along with this, we have thoroughly discussed many details. By building the Nakhchivan-Igdir railway, we, Inshallah, will speed up the work that will link Turkey and Azerbaijan by railway. The establishment of communication between Nakhchivan and Igdir will start a very important process between Turkey and Azerbaijan.

I will conclude my statement, and my dear brother has made the necessary statements, by saying that in general, our thoughts overlap. The second meeting of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council will further accelerate this process. Inshallah, we will hold the third meeting in our country again next year. We conduct such meetings not in capitals but in different parts of the country. This is an excellent opportunity to introduce our regions.

Thank you. I also want to thank you on behalf of all our friends for your hospitality.

Then, President Ilham Aliyev and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan answered questions from journalists.

Turkish channel NTV: Prime Minister, a new terrorist attack has been committed in Sultanqazi. What is your assessment? Can you share the latest information? And one more question. The decision has been made in Syria to hold elections. Bashar al-Assad has said that if he loses the election, he will leave this time. What do you think about his statement?

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan: First, regarding the terrorist attack in Sultanqazi. Based on the information received, we already know the group that claimed responsibility for the terrorist attack. Reports have been circulated. It was an attack on a police station. One person has been killed. Four police officers were wounded. Two other citizens have been wounded. I was informed that the condition of the wounded is not severe. I pray to Allah to grant them recuperation, May Allah bless the soul of our martyr, I wish patience to his close ones. As you know, the incident was the result of a bomb explosion by a suicide bomber. The identity of the person who committed the crime has been established. At present, all security structures and the police are investigating his connections.

As to your second question, the election to be held in Syria does not inspire confidence. The results

of the election to be held in an environment where there is no trust are known in advance. There is civil war in Syria now. The results of the election to be held under such conditions are already known. As you know, they held elections before. The majority of the Syrian people did not vote in the elections because there was no sound basis. As long as there is no sound basis there, elections will have no value. Decisions have been passed in Geneva. The Syrian regime has not fulfilled the Geneva decisions. If it had fulfilled them, it could have moved further. The reason why Kofi Annan resigned is known. Currently this post is held by Mr. Landar Brahim. But he is already aware of the difficulty of the task ahead. Under such circumstances there is no healthy democratic basis. And as long as there is no sound basis, it is impossible to recognize the results of elections held in such an environment.

"Khazar" TV correspondent Turkan Verdiyeva: Hello, dear Prime Minister. An important role in the economic cooperation between the two countries is played, in particular, by investments. As part of today's meeting of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council, what is your outlook for the prospects of major Turkish investments in Azerbaijan in response to Azerbaijan's steps in this direction?

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan: At present, there are already excellent initiatives in this issue. It is thanks to them that investments in Azerbaijan have reached \$10 billion. The goal is to increase this amount to \$20 billion as soon as possible. Work in this direction is under way. Of course, there is more collaboration. We even say that it is necessary to go further, to open the way for Azerbaijani and Turkish investment into third countries. We want to continue this work successfully.

Correspondent of Anatolian agency Hasan Oymez: I have a question for Mr. President. We are at a stage when cooperation between the two countries is gradually increasing. Is anything being done for this cooperation to reach the culminating point of abolition of visa requirements for the citizens of the Republic of Turkey on the border? Can we get this news from you? In addition, is the TANAP project being rescheduled to an earlier date than planned? Work was done on two alternative projects for Azerbaijani gas to reach Europe from Turkey. Is there clarity on this issue?

President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev: As you noted, we have multifaceted relations. They cover all areas. We try to resolve all issues in all areas and do so in a timely manner. Regarding visas, you are well aware that some time ago the Turkish state canceled visa regulations for citizens of all Turkic states. Thus, the citizens of all Turkic states are free to travel to Turkey and we are very grateful for this decision. As for Azerbaijan, this issue was discussed today. The decision was made to come to this gradually.

There are certain categories of people – businessmen, scientists, well-known people, to whom we can apply simplified regulations. In general, some of our mechanisms and internal procedures have not been completed yet.

Once these procedures are completed, the citizens of Turkey will be able to come to Azerbaijan without a visa. We are working on this issue. This issue was discussed. The Turkish side understands the position of Azerbaijan on this issue. We will work together to take important steps to resolve this issue.

As for the TANAP project, as I said in my opening remarks, it is a purely Azerbaijani-Turkish project. For many years, we discussed various options and projects for the supply of Azerbaijani gas to Europe. Unfortunately, none of them was implemented. In this situation, two fraternal countries took full responsibility, including financial.

The advantage of TANAP is that we will realize this project together. This project is open to third parties too. The remaining interest may be transferred to partner companies. Thus, TANAP can be given an international status.

The main thing is to deliver Azerbaijani gas to Turkey and further to Europe in larger volumes. Once this gas reaches Europe, the question of the ways in which it will enter Europe will be purely technical and economic. Geography dictates that our gas will flow to Europe through either Bulgaria or Greece. Currently, SOCAR and partners are considering all options. Preference will be given to the most acceptable, secure and cost-effective option. But I also want to note that European Union countries are building interconnecting pipelines. After entering Europe from any location, Azerbaijani gas can cover broad European space. I do hope that this project will be completed in 2017. Thank you.

Correspondent of Public Television Elchin Mirzayev: My question is for Mr. Erdogan. Prime Minister, at a time when negotiations over the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict are still ongoing, some circles, without paying attention to that, have been tabling the issue of opening the border between Turkey and Armenia. I would like to know your position on this issue.

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan: Thank you. Regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict: until this problem has not been resolved, of course, by the OSCE Minsk Group, and until the issue of one or two districts has been resolved, there can be no talk of us opening the doors, etc. We have been saying this all the time we have been in power. We can't take such a step. The aim of all the steps we are taking is as follows: the Armenians must leave the lands that are now occupied.

Although international organizations have been stating that these are Azerbaijani lands, they have yet to be returned to their true owners. We are clearly expressing our position. Our position, the decisive steps we are taking in relation to Armenia will remain unchanged. As a party interested in this process, we will always stand by Azerbaijan.

NATO INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF AZERBAIJAN – SUMMER SESSION



**“Crisis Response: International Communities’ Approaches,
Capacities and Resources”
1 – 7 July, Baku**

Date: 1-7 July 2012

Venue: Crescent Beach Hotel, Baku Azerbaijan

Experts: 12 Experts from 8 countries

Keynote speaker: Mr. Araz Azimov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan

Guest speaker: James Appathurai, NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia

Participants: 40 participants from 17 countries

NISA Summer Session took place in Crescent Beach Hotel (Baku) from the 1st till the 7th of July 2012. NSS officially started on the 2nd of July. The opening ceremony was hosted by Mr. Gaya Mammadov (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and Mr. Daniel Chiobanu (Ambassador of Romania to Azerbaijan, contact point Embassy of NATO to Azerbaijan). Ambassadors pointed out the positive experience of Azerbaijan-NATO partnership, the perspectives of cooperation and the importance of NISA Summer Session as an event promoting public awareness on NATO Activities.

After opening ceremony, with participation of diplomats, officials, experts and media the academic part of the session **(Panel I) “Theoretical approaches to crises”** started with the lecture of Dr. Mitchell Belfer (Professor, Head of International Affairs Department, Metropolitan University, Prague). Dr. Belfer, touched the issues of Legitimate war: why only states have a right to declare it and what will be the future of warfare in post-polar world.. Dr. Elnur Sultanov (Department of International Relations, Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy) continued the lecture discussing the issues of violence and conflict, and which factors motivates confrontation. Following that, Dr. Amy Zalman (Department of International Studies, City University of New York) pointed out the preconditions of global crises and the positive and negative backgrounds of crises.

Panel II, “An armed conflict: theoretical and practical overview” took place on July the 3rd. The speakers of the panel Dr. Mitchell Belfer (Professor, Head of International Affairs Department, Metropolitan University, Prague), Ms. Itir Bagdadi: (Director, Izmir University of Economics Gender and Women’s Studies Research and Application Center) and Dr. Rashad Karimov: (Presidential Administration of the Republic of Azerbaijan) had talked about the causes and conditions of ancient and modern warfare, the ethical and moral approaches to this problem and generally overviewed wars and armed conflicts that happened during 20th century. Speakers approached the ongoing armed conflicts, in the frame works of unconventional war and challenging the issue of causes and outcomes. Participants took active part in discussions and asked question on ongoing turmoil in the Middle East and other Hotpoint regions.

Later on that day, participants listened to the **“Financial crisis” (Panel III)**. Mr. Brian Sturgess: (Managing Editor of World Economics journal, UK) gave information on how financial crisis in Euro zone started and what will be after math. Mr. Sturgess also touched particular cases of Greece, Portugal, Ireland and Italy. Dr. Keith Boyfield: (The Adam Smith Institute and the Centre for Policy Studies, UK) touched the specificity of financial relations between western world and the rest of the countries. Dr. Boyfield particularly emphasized on the case of China, reviewing the growth of Chinese economy in the frameworks of international global crises.

Panel IV, Regional Crises and Regional Organizations took place on July 4th. Speakers Mr. Brian Sturgess: (Managing Editor of World Economics journal, UK) Dr. Itir Bagdadi: (Director, Izmir University of Economics Gender and Women's Studies Research and Application Center) expressed their concerns on the issues of regional development and regional conflicts, extracting from the global frameworks. Mr. Brian Sturgess on the example of the development of Central Asian countries, showed his concerns about the future of the Eastern development in the economical frameworks. Ms. Bagdadi with example of frozen conflicts in the South Caucasus – with example of which, she highlighted the importance of individual approach to global issues.

Panel V. Nuclear Energy and Non-Proliferation. Mr. Kęstutis Jankauskas (Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Lithuania on the North Atlantic Council) concentrated on the issue of energy consumption and nuclear energy issue in Eastern Europe and highlighted the importance of nuclear non-proliferation, bringing example of recent catastrophe in Japan. However, Mr. Jankauskas expressed his point that NATO is not against the development of clean nuclear energy – but is in the favor of doing it with the most experienced and contemporary means possible. Mr. Bakhtiyar Aslanbayli (Baku State University) has generally talked on the issue of energy depletion and importance of alternative energy development. Mr. Aslanbayli brought variety of examples of alternative energy consumption, but pointed out the still ineffectiveness of this means. Dr. Amy Zalman (Department of International Studies, City University of New York) talked generally about the theoretical approaches to universal problems of energy consumption and reviewed the future of humanity in the frameworks of energy consumption.

Panel VI, Environmental Crisis, Nuclear Energy and Non-Proliferation took place on July 5th. Mr. Tariq Rauf: Coordinator, (IAEA Low Enriched Uranium Bank International Atomic Energy Agency. Head of Verification and Security Policy Coordination (IAEA) had largely touches the specifics of IAEA's activities, their control over the nuclear non-proliferation. Mr. Tariq's lecture was met with great interest by participants and participants asked questions on particular states. Dr. Randal Baker (Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy) concentrated his speech on general understanding of the environmental crisis – is it really happens or it is just natural consequences of Earth phases. Dr. Keith Boyfield: (The Adam Smith Institute and the Centre for Policy Studies, UK) had shared his personal experience in the field of environmental protection in some countries of Africa, Asia and Middle East.

Panel VII. Meeting with NATO Secretary General's Special Representative to South Caucasus and Central Asia – Mr. James Appathurai. At the second part of that day, NISA Summer Session continued with the prolonged meeting with Mr. James Appathurai and H.E. Mr. Khazar Ibrahim (Head of Azerbaijani's Mission to North Atlantic Council) Mr. Appathurai and Mr. Khazar touched the issues of NATO-Azerbaijan Partnership, the ongoing reforms in NATO – particularly Smart-Defense program and future of ISAF project. Number of question had been addressed to Mr. Appathurai and Mr. Khazar.

Panel VIII: NATO Model Simulation Game. The Simulation Game was conducted on July 6th. The exercises were aiming at involving of participants in decision making process within international organizations in solving of international and regional disputes, revolts and conflicts. The participants replicated the role of decision makers within the NATO in capacity of national officials and international experts.

**AZƏRBAYCAN RESPUBLİKASININ DİPLOMATİK XİDMƏT ORQANLARI
RƏHBƏRLƏRİNİN DÖRDÜNCÜ MÜŞAVİRƏSİ
21-23 sentyabr 2012-ci il, Bakı**

**THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE HEADS OF DIPLOMATIC SERVICE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN
21-23 September 2012, Baku**

**ЧЕТВЁРТОЕ СОВЕЩАНИЕ РУКОВОДИТЕЛЕЙ ОРГАНОВ
ДИПЛОМАТИЧЕСКИХ СЛУЖБ АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ
21-23 сентября 2012 г., Баку**

On 21 September 2012, the fourth session of the heads of Azerbaijani diplomatic services was held at the new educational facility of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy.

President Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban Aliyeva attended the opening ceremony and the session. Flowers were presented to First Lady and President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation Mehriban Aliyeva.



The head of state cut the ribbon symbolizing the opening of the educational facility of the Academy.

The president of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, Khafiz Pashayev, informed the President that a special role in the country's foreign political successes belongs to diplomacy.

The strengthening of national independence, promotion and protection of Azerbaijan's fair cause among nations of the world represent a great and honorable duty of the diplomats. One of the centers playing an

important part in the training of young diplomats and protecting Azerbaijan's position in the international arena is the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy. Established by a presidential decree dated 6 March 2006, the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy is focused on specialized training of diplomatic personnel and research in the field of international relations. Since its launch in 2007, the Academy has trained 400 young diplomats. In 2009, the Academy expanded the curriculum and introduced the master's program "International relations and diplomacy". In 2011, it opened bachelor programs in "Business administration" and "International relations". A total of 250 students are currently enrolled at these specializations. The Academy also provides education to 35 students from 19 foreign countries. The steady expansion of its activities and a significant



growth of international relations have necessitated provision of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy with a new facility. In this regard, following a decree of President Ilham Aliyev, the construction of a new facility of the Academy began in the Narimanov district of Baku in 2009. The new facility is based on a project of the American company "EYP" using a special design meeting the highest standards. The facility is based on the experience of the world's well-known universities and the latest technological advances.

While reviewing the premises, the President was told that four buildings had been constructed – the institutes of business and international relations, a student center and a library. For the first time in Azerbaijan, the ventilation system of an educational facility is based on geothermal energy. To this end, a separate geothermal power system has been established at the Academy.



The area around the facility has been landscaped and a modern lighting system installed.

President Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban Aliyeva reviewed the statue of nationwide leader Heydar Aliyev erected at the center of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy.

Then the President and his wife reviewed the three-story building of the Academy's institute of business.

It was noted that the system at the academy is fully automated. Therefore, the arrival of students, their participation in classes and performance are automatically transmitted to the computer. Students enter classrooms using student cards. The business faculty has 20 electronic rooms for 40 and 80 people. Their peculiarity is that for the first time in Azerbaijan teachers' notes on whiteboards are transferred to student computers using the "smart-board" system through Wi-Fi or Bluetooth technology. So students can see teachers' notes on their computers. The video system installed in classrooms allows students to watch the training process online using the Academy's web site. There are group classrooms for six people, which enables student groups to acquire scientific knowledge.

It was indicated that after admission to the Academy by the State Student Admission Commission, students go through the Academy's own competition. Thirteen students of the Academy receive presidential scholarships. Sixty students admitted in the past two years scored over 600 points. These and other excellent students are exempt from the tuition fee.



It was emphasized that teaching at the Academy is conducted in English, which is why 35 teachers, including 15 professors, have been invited from renowned foreign universities. Each professor has a personal work room. There is also a room for general meetings and competition halls. On the upper storey of the building there is an open-air lounge for the leisure of students and teachers and various events and receptions.



While touring the four-storey library, President Ilham Aliyev was informed that the Academy has the largest foreign language library in Azerbaijan. It has 120,000 books in English. The books have been delivered by the British company "Blackwell Publishing". The students using the library can find and order any literature through electronic kiosks. Another important feature of the library is the availability of one million e-books, which enables students to read books in electronic format, copy and print them. The library also has separate reading rooms, halls where books can be used by groups of students, and a cafeteria.

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva presented the library with 150 copies of the book "Azerbaijan through the eyes of foreigners" published with the support of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation.

Then the President and his wife reviewed the Institute of International Relations of the Academy. It was noted that classrooms are fitted with the necessary training equipment.

Then, President Ilham Aliyev examined the student center.

It was indicated that there is a café for 300 people and a 300-seat conference room on the first floor. The conference room is equipped with modern facilities to conduct high-quality audio and video recordings. The center has a room describing the history of Azerbaijani statehood and diplomacy, as well as music and art clubs.

President Ilham Aliyev reviewed the stands reflecting the activities of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy and its premises and examined the achievements of the institution.

During familiarization with the automatic control center, the head of state was informed that the entire territory of the Academy is monitored by surveillance cameras. There is also an automatic system to control ventilation and other equipment.

After reviewing the new facility, Academy President Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban Aliyeva attended the fourth meeting of the heads of Azerbaijan's diplomatic service.

In opening remarks at the meeting, Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov said:

- Dear Mr. President,

First of all, I would like to thank you on behalf of everyone for participating in such a wonderful and great event – the opening of a new building of the Diplomatic Academy. This really means great support for us.

Dear Mr. President.

Dear participants of the meeting.

The successful foreign political strategy founded by great leader Heydar Aliyev and developing today has led to the enhancement of the authority of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the international arena, recognition of our state as a reliable partner and active membership in international organizations. It has also enabled Azerbaijan to initiate activities and projects that are relevant to the region and the entire the international community.

First of all, I would like to provide information on the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the period since the previous last meeting of the heads of the diplomatic service.

At present, there are 55 embassies, five representative offices in foreign countries, missions in 18 international organizations and nine general consulates of the Republic of Azerbaijan. There are 53 embassies, three general consulates, 12 honorary consulates and representative offices of 20 international organizations in Azerbaijan. All this has opened up opportunities for promoting our national interests in these countries. For example, new embassies began to operate in Brazil, Argentina, South Africa, Serbia, Libya, Estonia and Croatia, and a general consulate in Batumi.

Embassies of Hungary, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Argentina, Brazil, the Czech Republic, Morocco and the Netherlands, as well as honorary consulates of a number of other countries have started to operate in Azerbaijan.

A significant increase in the role and credibility of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the system of international relations, the strengthening of ties with friendly and partner countries, as well as the establishment of new diplomatic missions have set new challenges and goals for the diplomatic service.

Naturally, the resolution of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict remains a priority issue in our comprehensive activities. The liberation of our lands occupied by Armenia, the return of the refugees and IDPs displaced from their homes as a result of the policy of ethnic cleansing and, most importantly, the restoration of our sovereignty and territorial integrity remain priority issues of exceptional impor-

tance in our cooperation with other countries in bilateral and multilateral formats.

In recent years, we have stepped up activities to expose the occupant policy of Armenia and the hideous and hypocritical efforts of the Armenian lobby which supports this policy. The parliaments of the United Mexican States, the Republic of Colombia and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan have officially recognized the Khojaly genocide perpetrated against our people with the direct participation of the present leadership of Armenia. We carry on efforts to inform the international community of the atrocities committed by the Armenians against the Azerbaijanis and to urge the legislative bodies of other countries to recognize the Khojaly genocide.

On 3 September 2010, the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation signed an agreement on the state border, thus delineating the frontier separating the two states.

The fact that during the election of a nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council for 2012-2013 on 24 October 2011 Azerbaijan won the support of 155 countries after 17 rounds and won the vote is an indicator of great trust and confidence in our country. Such a victory in the international arena after 20 years of independence demonstrates the success of the country's domestic and foreign policies identified by the head of state. Azerbaijan is the first country of the South Caucasus and Central Asia and second in the CIS to be elected a nonpermanent member of this influential organization. I would like to note that of all the CIS countries Ukraine was elected before us, but Ukraine has been a member of the UN since 1945.

In May 2012, the Security Council held a high-level meeting on combating terrorism which was chaired by the President of the Azerbaijan Republic. Membership in such an influential structure has opened up opportunities for the strengthening of Azerbaijan's international authority.

In addition, in 2011, during the 36th session of UNESCO, Azerbaijan was elected a member of several substructures of the organization and occupied high posts.

In 2011, the Republic of Azerbaijan was elected a member of the Non-Aligned Movement at the 16th Ministerial Conference of the organization held in the Indonesian city of Bali. As a result of our successful activities in the Non-Aligned Movement, the second largest international organization after the United Nations, the final document of the organization's summit held in Tehran on 30-31 August which Azerbaijan attended as a member state for the first time contained a paragraph whereby heads of state and government of member-states supported the resolution of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict on the basis of sovereignty, territorial integrity and internationally recognized borders of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

High-level cooperation with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation has been continued. Within the framework of this organization, our fair position on the Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan, the restoration of sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of our borders was supported by member-countries again and a number of documents unanimously adopted on this occasion.

We have continued efforts to develop cooperation and partnership with Europe and Euro-Atlantic structures.

In an effort to expand diplomatic activities with Latin America and Asia, high-level relationships have been established. Mr. President, the Embassy of Azerbaijan in the Commonwealth of Australia will start functioning in the near future.

Dear Mr. President!

Diplomatic personnel surrounded by your attention and care are well aware of the responsibility for their honorable work. You can rest assured that diplomats will spare no effort and skill for the proper execution of your orders on the implementation of foreign policies aimed at ensuring the national interests of our country.

Thank you.

Speech by President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev at the fourth meeting of the heads of diplomatic service

- Dear Ambassadors.

Ladies and gentlemen.

Dear guests.

It is a wonderful and memorable day in the history of our country today. We are celebrating the opening of a new building of the Diplomatic Academy. At the same time, we are opening a traditional meeting with the Ambassadors.

The establishment of the Diplomatic Academy has been a significant event in the history of our country. I am very pleased that the Academy has achieved rapid development in a short time and earned great authority in the country, region and the world.

The activities of the Academy on training professional personnel are evident. I am sure the Academy will further expand its operations in the coming years. We talked with the rector of the Academy about that today.

The Academy has a beautiful building now. I can say that of all the buildings constructed for educational institutions in recent years this one is remarkable for its beauty, design and functionality. Of course, there are all the conditions for studying and working here. I am sure that the young people studying here will continue to protect the national interests of Azerbaijan.

There are new proposals and plans on the development of the Academy. I believe that on this basis we should further expand the activities, directions and functions of the Academy.

It is no coincidence that the traditional meeting with Ambassadors is held in the new building. The first event in this building is linked to this topic. This is natural because Azerbaijan's foreign policy is a flexible, dynamic and rapidly developing policy that brings our country great success. My contacts with the Ambassadors are, of course, of regular nature. We meet at the time of appointment, we meet on a regular basis. Also, they receive relevant instructions and orders through the Foreign Ministry. In short, the number of our Embassies in the world is growing fast.

Of course, this is one of the key contributors to our successful foreign policy. In the future, we will increase the number of diplomatic missions so that Azerbaijan could defend its interests even more successfully.

Ambassadors are professional diplomats. There are many young people among them and there are also experienced diplomats. They are well aware of their duties and, I think, in general, they do a good job. The duties of the Ambassadors are well known and understood. But, I repeat, life is changing fast, international relations are changing, new issues and challenges arise in the international



arena. Of course, we need to regularly amend our foreign policies. But we should remember that our strategic course remains unchanged. Azerbaijan's foreign policy was defined by great leader Heydar Aliyev. Today, this strategic course is pursued in this and all other areas.

The main problem related to our foreign policy is, of course, the settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. This is the main issue facing not only our foreign policy, but also the country as a whole. As you know, the issue has remained unresolved for many years, justice and international law are violated and this injustice continues.

Azerbaijan does and must do everything possible to resolve the issue. Diplomatic efforts must be and are stepped up. Other factors must also play a role in resolving this issue, and important steps are taken in this direction.

If we look at the years of independence, we can see that the gap between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the 20 years has become even bigger. In subsequent years this gap will only grow, Azerbaijan's advantage will become even more visible.

Diplomatic efforts are continuing. Embassies work consistently in this direction. A growing number of countries are friends with Azerbaijan. International organizations have passed a sufficient number of fair resolutions, i.e. those securing our interests on Nagorno-Karabakh.

Four resolutions of the UN Security Council, OSCE decisions, resolutions of other international organizations – the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the European Parliament, the Council of Europe, the Non-Aligned Movement, NATO decisions. So the legal framework is wide, strong and indestructible. To resolve the conflict, it is first necessary to create strong legal framework.

Armenia's position on this matter is very weak, while ours is very strong.

I have repeatedly expressed my views on the historical aspect of the issue, given appropriate instructions, including those to our scientists, to publish books with substantive arguments on the historical aspect of the issue. Work in this direction is ongoing, our research and writings reflect the truth and are based on historical facts. The historical side of the issue is also very significant, because the Armenians through their Armenian lobby have been trying for many years to form an opinion in the world that Nagorno-Karabakh is allegedly ancient Armenian land and that the Armenians had lived in this land for centuries. This is absolutely false and distorted information. We are exposing these lies and presenting the truth, while also strengthening the historical basis for a settlement.

As you know, Nagorno-Karabakh is native Azerbaijani land. Place names of all settlements in Nagorno-Karabakh are of Azerbaijani origin. The vast majority of names not only in Nagorno-Karabakh but also in modern Armenia have Azerbaijani origin.

Our people lived and worked in this land for centuries and must continue to live there. We will achieve that.

Other aspects of the issue are also of great importance for the settlement. In particular, the economic issues. Today the gap between Armenia and Azerbaijan is quite large. Our economy is incomparably ahead. Our military spending alone is twice the entire budget of Armenia. Our economic opportunities are expanding. The number of our economic partners is increasing, our export potential is growing. The economy has become diversified, the first six months of this year show that growth in the non-oil sector exceeds 10 per cent. The results of the first nine months will be announced in the near future.

So we have managed to achieve what we wanted. By efficiently using our energy, we have diversified our economy. The non-oil economy is developing successfully. Armenia is in a hopeless situation from an economic point of view. If there is no foreign aid, loans and donations from the Diaspora, the Armenian economy will collapse. Even according to their own official statistics, the breakdown of Armenian exports has recently been disclosed. It has some very funny export items – frogs. It might be inappropriate to talk about this in this audience but it is a reality. So the internal resources of the country are running out. The economy is falling apart. The industry is paralyzed.

The demographic situation is deplorable. About 100,000 people leave the country every year, and this process continues. It is impossible to stop it as long as Armenia continues to lay territorial claims to its neighbors.

Meanwhile, we are developing successfully. Azerbaijan's reputation in the world is growing. Our election to the UN Security Council is a historic victory, not only diplomatic, but in general. I would say it is the biggest political and diplomatic victory in our history. This victory, which coincided with the 20th anniversary of our independence, shows the successful development of our country. It also shows that we have dealt a major blow to the Armenians and foiled the Armenian lobby's attempts to create a false opinion about Azerbaijan. We have changed it and today Azerbaijan is supported by 155 countries. When we were elected to the Security Council, I said we would defend justice and international law. And from day one we have been faithful to these principles. Today, I constantly exchange views on the

subject in meetings with my colleagues. Azerbaijan's fair and strong position is always emphasized. Membership in the Security Council will give us the opportunity to give the world complete information about ourselves, introduce ourselves as a young, dynamic, modern and developing country. Of course, Armenia is helpless in the face of these victories. In fact, it admits defeat. Because diplomats will know that Armenia also applied for membership in the Security Council. But then, after weighing up all the circumstances, they understood that they would suffer a bitter and ignominious defeat. Because Azerbaijan certainly has stronger positions. Armenia quietly withdrew from the race. It has to retreat in other races too. It can't compete with us.

We will increase our power. I repeat: historical, legal, economic factors reinforce our position. A growing number of countries want to be friends with us. I appreciate the role of embassies because we have made great progress in the bilateral format, especially in the last few years.

The demographic situation, in general, will determine a lot in the future. For some reason, this factor has not been taken into account much. But we can see that the opportunities, authority and the power of influence in many cases depend on the size of the population. We have a positive dynamics. I expressed my opinion on this matter at a Cabinet meeting. We must make sure that the Azerbaijani population grows even faster. If there are still people in the Armenian government who are not detached from reality, they should understand that in the short- and long-term competition with Azerbaijan they will only suffer defeat. Now, if they agree to the option on the negotiating table and withdraw their troops from the occupied territories, they will secure a future for their people. Because in the future they will face great dangers. The world is changing, you are aware of the processes occurring in the region. There may come a time when each country will have to defend its interests on its own. Azerbaijan is ready for that because we have been fighting alone for 20 years. In some cases we secure our interests against much bigger forces, we do not back down to anyone.



Some recent regional developments suggest that policy initiatives cannot be implemented here without respect for our interests. We have passed the biggest tests with dignity. Even when the forces that did not share our position and took the opposite view took a common stance, the position of Azerbaijan prevented the developments that would have run counter to our interests. So not only are we ready to fight alone, we already do fight on our own, assert ourselves in the world and define our own future. Armenia, of course, is a country that has no future whatsoever without foreign aid. I repeat that regional developments could lead to a situation where Armenia will not have much

of a choice. Therefore, they had better give up false claims and vacate our lands. Then peace and cooperation can set in and Armenia can also join regional issues.

We have our say in the region and our position will become even stronger. We can never allow Armenia to join any political, economic, energy and transport projects. We have isolated them and make no secret of that. In the future, our isolation policy must be continued. It is paying off. If our partners constantly sending us messages on a negotiated settlement really want to see peace in the region, Armenia should vacate the occupied lands. Because otherwise a different solution of the issue is not ruled out. We have never ruled it out. International law gives us that right. But Azerbaijan's peaceful policy, its growing responsibility for regional processes and the fact that Azerbaijan is already a stabilizing factor in the region are deterring us from these radical steps. So a speedy solution to the issue must be in the interests of each party.

We want the issue to be resolved. We want peace in the region. Mediators want that too. But we also want our lands back. This is the difference. We don't take the "peace at any cost" approach. The "freezing" of the issue impossible. Armenia, naturally, wants the issue to be "frozen", the status quo to stay on, the talks to be held but, as they say, without any result.

During the talks we have thought several times that we had come close to an agreement. But Armenia's hypocritical position and false promises prevented an agreement. So it is no secret for us that Armenia is trying to "freeze" and delay the settlement as much as it can.

The statements by presidents of co-chair countries that the status quo is unacceptable, that it must be changed are, of course, reassuring. But we expected specific action to follow such statements. We expected that the aggressor would finally be given serious signals that enough is enough, that if it doesn't leave these lands, Azerbaijan would resolve the issue in another way.

Therefore, when the priority of a peaceful settlement is always announced, Armenia gets the wrong message that it shouldn't worry, the issue will be resolved peacefully and can be delayed. This is a wrong approach. I have repeatedly told our partners about this. We, too, want peace, but I want to say again that first of all our citizens must return to the occupied lands.

I want to repeat that this is our main issue, a national issue, and we will keep stepping up our effort. We are on the right track.

Every day brings us closer to victory. To achieve victory every citizen of Azerbaijan, especially diplomats, should work hard every day.

Another important foreign political issue directly related to this problem is the recognition of the Khojaly genocide. I think we have pursued a successful policy in this area and in a short time the parliaments of three countries recognized the massacre in Khojaly as an act of genocide. Khojaly memorials are erected in other countries. Since the 1950s, the Armenians, of course, through the Diaspora, have been raising the "Armenian genocide" issue in different countries and some countries recognized it.

We have been dealing with this issue for several years and already have excellent results. So I think this policy should be continued. Our ambassadors and diplomats should raise the issue whenever possible. The legislative bodies of the countries where they operate should raise the issue of the Khojaly genocide. We must strive to get this genocide recognized at various levels. We must always pursue this case at both regional and municipal levels. Of course, if it is done at federal level, it would be even better. The results certainly inspire us and show that it is possible. In general, the dynamic development of our country and the formation of a very positive view about Azerbaijan show that it is possible, a lot is possible. We simply need to work, have a specific program, give and execute orders.

So I am sure that Mexico, Pakistan, Colombia will be joined by other countries in the future and the Khojaly genocide will be recognized by more states. There will come a time when the perpetrators of this genocide will be brought to book.

I repeat that the tasks related to foreign policy are known and clear to ambassadors. I want to express my views on several issues again. We need to strengthen the bilateral format as it brings us great success. Especially given the growing number of countries willing to establish close relations with Azerbaijan. Our foreign diplomacy is very active. My numerous visits abroad strengthen this excellent base, the visits of my colleagues to our country and our talks intensify the bilateral format. So our main line in foreign policy is bilateral relations. I can say that in our bilateral relations, no matter how big or small a country is, we have formed equitable relations. This is very important. And it should be so. Because equitable relations in the bilateral format are the only possible relations. Our approach is that our policy is well-intentioned, is aimed at cooperation, deepening of cooperation in all areas. Of course, these relations should be based on mutual respect, mutual interest and non-interference in each other's affairs. I can say that our relations with all countries – ambassadors know this, let the public know this too – rest on this foundation. Therefore, the number of our embassies will grow in the future, so the bilateral format will further expand. Of course, we have to establish active ties with the 155 countries that supported us in the election to the UN Security Council. I can say that we don't have active relations with all the 155 countries, so they provided their support in advance. Now we need to strengthen these relations.

Our role in the Non-Aligned Movement will become even more active. We have recently joined this organization, and given the support of 120 countries for the resolution of the Non-Aligned Movement, the resolution of prestigious organization such as NATO – which also provides for a settlement on the principle of territorial integrity – we can see that at least three quarters of the world community see a settlement only on the basis of the principle of territorial integrity.

We have to push forward our economic agenda in the bilateral format. Of course, I repeat, life goes

on and Azerbaijan is amending its investment policy. We have started to invest abroad. Of course, this process began with regional countries. But the demand for our investment in the world is growing. In particular, countries affected by crisis feel a great need for financial resources. We can offer these resources on acceptable terms. Thus, investment, loans and new forms of economic cooperation are already in use. Ambassadors have to be more active in this. We encourage the activities of Azerbaijani companies abroad. At the latest meeting with entrepreneurs I gave specific instructions on this matter, so I don't want to repeat them. But Azerbaijani companies – both public and private – must access foreign markets as investors and contractors.

Ambassadors must also facilitate the operation of Azerbaijani companies. It should be so. Developed countries always try to create good conditions for their companies in other countries. We, too, must follow this path. Because the economic direction is relatively new, the ambassadors must pay constant attention to that.

The number of Azerbaijani Diaspora organizations is increasing and the quality of their work improving. The demonstrations, protests, activities, conferences regularly conducted worldwide show that we have created strong Diaspora organizations.

Embassies have to be in close contact with Diaspora organizations. In most cases they are. But I want this to be the case everywhere. It further enhances our strength, attaches the Azerbaijanis living abroad to their homeland. On the one hand, we provide the Azerbaijanis living abroad with more support. They also know that a strong Azerbaijani state is behind them. For us, the activities of Diaspora organizations are very important, especially in relation to the Armenian-Azerbaijani issue. This direction must always be in the spotlight.

Of course, our ambassadors should be in close contact with the governments, liaise with the ministries of the countries where they work. I also think that relations with non-governmental organizations should be even more active. This should not be forgotten. Media relations should develop more actively. Because unfounded allegations against Azerbaijan are still made at the instigation of the Armenian lobby. We know where they come from. Of course, the first source of such dirty scribble is the Armenian lobby. The Armenian lobby, Armenians of the world have chosen Azerbaijan as target number one. This is a reality.

Because they know that Azerbaijan is the biggest threat for them.

For us, too, the Armenian lobby is the biggest enemy. I want to say that I am not afraid to talk about this. Because this is a reality, it is true. Their dirty money, so to speak, pushes some politicians, some public figures to such an unacceptable way. We must constantly fight this. Secondly, the reason for the articles full of false information about Azerbaijan is the independent policy of our country.

Our independent policy is not to everyone's taste. But we did not set out such a task. We set the goal of strengthening our independent policy and securing the interests of the Azerbaijani people. In some cases, in an effort to guide us or soften our stance on an issue, certain circles stage campaigns against us. We saw this during the "Eurovision" and before. But the reality is that these campaigns have no effect. No-one can influence our will, the policy of Azerbaijan. Our history of independence has repeatedly shown this. All these efforts are in vain. None of them can affect our policy. At the same time, these circles want to tarnish the positive image of our country. Therefore, our ambassadors, diplomats should always communicate with these media and explain their misguided policies. In some cases such articles are published on ignorance. So the relations with foreign media should be more active, more complete information should be given about the country – how Azerbaijan develops, how it addresses economic, social issues, how it secures freedoms.

In some cases, when I explain to foreign visitors that there is free Internet in Azerbaijan, they express surprise. Not every country has free Internet. For example, some countries are considering limiting the Internet or introducing censorship. We have free Internet. The number of Internet users has reached 65 per cent. So how we can limit the press if we have free Internet and a growing number of users? All our media are free. The freedom of assembly is guaranteed. Any political force can conduct its activities in designated places. There were such cases in the recent past. But no-one comes to such events. Therefore, some political forces want to conduct such rallies in the Fountains Square or other central locations so that a TV channel could come, film and show it. We know that.

So there is every freedom. There is freedom of conscience. Some countries should learn from Azerbaijan. Countries that artificially increase Islamophobic tendencies should come and learn from us how to build interfaith relations. We are not doing it as an experiment. This is our way of life. This is how it should be. It should be this way. There can never be not only conflicts but also differences on religious or ethnic grounds. We will not tolerate that. Therefore, the freedom of conscience is guaranteed.

There is no limitation to political activities.

Azerbaijan has a free society. And foreigners coming to Azerbaijan, if they are not biased, can see that. These realities must be communicated to the people of other countries, so that there is complete information about Azerbaijan. I think there is still much to do in this direction.

As regards our foreign policy, it is fairly open. With regard to our membership and activities in international organizations, nothing is hidden from the public in this area. We are active in all the organizations of which we are members, we protect our interests and honor our obligations. And we can't have any obligations to the organizations we are not members of. It is an axiom. If we are not a member of any organization, how we can take on a commitment? No organization, no international organization can impose any conditions on us. Because this is unacceptable. We do not accept this. In bilateral contacts I personally openly state that we accept equal treatment. It can't be otherwise. We do not owe anything to anyone. We don't depend on anyone. We don't ask anyone for help. We just know that no-one will help. When we needed help, did anyone stand behind our backs? No. When our economy was in ruins, Armenia occupied our lands and ousted a million Azerbaijanis, did anyone help us? No-one did. So I haven't had such illusions for a long time. Therefore, we are in favor of equal treatment with all the countries and international organizations. We join international organizations of our own accord. If we see that our interests are violated or there is a biased position towards Azerbaijan, we can leave the organization voluntarily. We have repeatedly seen this bias. I personally have. I have witnessed a biased position, double, triple and quintuple standards. Nothing has changed.

Nothing has changed in this issue since the early 2000s to the present day. Simply Azerbaijan has changed.

Azerbaijan has grown stronger. Azerbaijan has become a country it is impossible to put pressure on or blackmail. One can speak evil, spread slander, but it doesn't affect us. Because the reality is quite different. The reality is that Azerbaijan is an independent, modern, secular and dynamic welfare state. Look at our economic indicators. Just a page of them is enough to say what we have achieved in the social sphere. Pensions make up 40 per cent of the wage. These are the EU criteria. We have achieved this. Perhaps many analysts don't know this. The calculations of the Davos Economic Forum on economic competitiveness put Azerbaijan in 46th place in the world and in first in the CIS. In addition, we are in a leading position in the "Doing Business" program. During the crisis, the credit ratings of all European economies have fallen, while ours are rising.

"Standard & Poor's", "Fitch" and "Moody's" – there are no better credit agencies. And all three have raised our rating. Have we done it at the expense of oil?

Earlier, envious people, spiteful critics and those who wanted to denigrate our success said that Azerbaijan develops because of its oil. But there are countries that have 10 times more oil than us. What is the situation like there? Why are their ratings falling? Why are there social upheavals there? It is not about oil. It is about choosing the right political and economic trends, about unity between the people and the government. Because without this no reform can be possible.

This is why we have a say in the economic sphere. We managed to reduce poverty several times.

I remember the time when I worked in the State Oil Company and when our contracts with foreign companies were being signed. Some analysts used to say that Azerbaijan would run into the Dutch disease, its economy would be lop-sided, it would collapse after the oil runs out. What happened? Our poverty rate has dropped from 49 to 7 per cent in eight years. If it really were the case, this would never have happened, the economy wouldn't have grown three times. By listing all this I want to say that we can pursue independent policies and we do just that. Even at the most difficult time

when our economy was in a dire situation we did not deviate from our path. And we certainly won't now. Azerbaijan is the leading country of the region.

Azerbaijan's economy accounts for almost 80 per cent of the economy of the South Caucasus. We have the energy diplomacy.

I haven't said anything about that yet but it is also a diplomatic tool we use.

We have a favorable geographical location. But without the infrastructure this geographical location means nothing.

We are creating the infrastructure. The railway that will link Asia with Europe is built on our initiative.

Now is not the time to uncover many issues, but this time will come. We faced a lot of pressure when he wanted to implement the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway project. So much pressure was exerted from regional countries: you can't do this, if you do this, Armenia will be gone. The issue of the blockade and isolation of Armenia will be fully ensured. But despite everything, we did it.

Now it is not only us who wants to use this road, but also those who once opposed it. If we had shown weakness then or stepped back in order to please someone, all this would not have happened. There was pressure, there were ordered articles and smear campaigns, but we eventually secured the interests of the Azerbaijani people and state. Therefore, our geographical location is such that not a single transportation project can be implemented in this region without our consent. And transport issues in the region, particularly on the issue of Afghanistan, will now be resolved in a new plane. And the role of Azerbaijan is gradually increasing.

As for our energy diplomacy, I can say today that the share of Azerbaijani oil in the energy balance of some European Union member-countries is close to 35-40 per cent. Azerbaijani gas is expected in the European region and we are working on that.

The collapse of a number of European projects which had been the subject of debate for 10 years forced us to propose our own project. In a short period we initiated the TANAP project. We did all the prep work. All the documents were signed with Turkey.

Today, a growing number of countries want to join TANAP. European countries officially support this project. If we hadn't initiated the project, what would the situation be now? We gave it a name and chose the route. We also assumed the main financial burden. At present, our share in it is 80 per cent. But we are receiving proposals to yield a bit to partner companies. I don't rule that out. So Azerbaijan has shown initiative again, and what will this give us?

This will enable Azerbaijan to be a reliable supplier of energy over the next 100 years. At least 100 years. There is probably no need to explain to this audience what that means. Our strength will increase. Our financial strength, political power, influence will grow, and we will be reckoned with even more. Any country, anyone wants this. Naturally, we also want this. We have achieved all this through our hard work.

Today, Azerbaijan is a young state. But look how many friends and partners we have in the world. We pursue our energy diplomacy. We pursue our cultural diplomacy. Look how many cultural events are held abroad. We promote our culture, history and art in the world's capitals. Of all former Soviet republics, Azerbaijan was the only one to have conducted major events to mark the 20th anniversary of its independence in the world's capitals. It was our initiative, concerts, presentations and exhibitions were held in the capitals of leading countries. This area should be in the spotlight because it unites people and creates full understanding of the country.

We are a young independent country. Some countries believe that in 20 years Azerbaijan has secured a place on the world map. This is really the case on the political map of the world. But we have been on the world map for centuries. Our ancient culture, history, arts are our national treasure. We must promote this heritage, introduce it to the world. The work of the embassies in this respect is very significant. Work has now begun to establish culture services of embassies. This is also a successful initiative. Again, this initiative was made only by Azerbaijan. So these innovations, reforms and new insights lead us forward.

Today the political and economic situation in Azerbaijan, our foreign policy is such that sometimes I am told: maybe you should slow down a little, you shouldn't go so fast. Because the beauty of Baku and other our cities annoys some people. We are moving forward very fast. Perhaps there is some logic in this - not to annoy others. But I think to myself: look where we are, Azerbaijan has reached a level of development when others tell us to slow down a bit. Because when you go very fast, other countries get annoyed.

But at the same time I am absolutely sure that we can't slow down. We must go forward because there are many issues that lie ahead. The world is developing fast. We can't wait a month, even a week. We need to jump the gun in foreign policy, in the economy, in the field of technology.

One of the benefits of this beautiful Diplomatic Academy is that the most modern technology is applied here. Our young people will receive education using these technologies. New technology, the development of the space industry. Some people wonder: how can a country like Azerbaijan have space industry? And why not? We have talented people, financial resources and vision. Therefore, we will not slow down. We will go ahead and achieve what we want.

I am sure that we will restore our sovereignty, and the day will come when the Azerbaijani flag will fly in Shusha and Khankandi. Thank you!

During the first day of the conference Ministers of Defence, National Security, Internal Affairs and State Border Service Safar Abiyev, Eldar Mahmudov, Ramil Usubov and Elchin Guliyev respectively delivered speeches to the conference participants.



The speeches highlighted fulfilled projects and achievements in respective areas of function of the ministries. They stressed that successful internal and foreign policies pursued by the Government have brought increased regional and international role and international prestige for Azerbaijan. The ministers also talked about the challenges and tasks lying ahead. They underlined that Azerbaijan's authorities pay special attention to enhancing international cooperation and in that respect emphasized the role and support by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and diplomatic missions abroad in forging and enhancing international collaboration.

On the second day of the Conference Chief of Presidential Administration Ramiz Mehdiyev, Minister of Industry and Energy Natig Aliyev, Minister of Economic Development Shahin Mustafayev, Chairman of State Customs Committee Aydin Aliyev addressed the participants.

The speakers noted the role of Azerbaijan's diplomatic missions abroad in implementing general political course and defending interests of the state. Moreover they also discussed key tasks and

challenges lying ahead for Azerbaijani diplomacy.

They also spoke about fulfilled measures and achievements with a view to ensuring sustainable economic development and energy policy and emphasized that with expanding international relations Azerbaijan has gained more prestige on the international arena.

The speakers who addressed the Conference on its last day included Speaker of Milli Mejlis Ogtay Asadov, Minister of Education Misir Mardanov, Minister of Culture and Tourism Abulfas Garayev and Chairman of the Committee of the Work with Diaspora Nazim Ibrahimov.

They held discussions about ways to increase parliamentary exchanges and the implementation of the Government policies in education, culture, tourism and diaspora related issues. The speakers drew attention to achievements gained in these areas over the last years and underlined the role of Azerbaijani diplomacy in promoting Azerbaijani culture and tourism potential abroad, in deepening education links and in uniting Azerbaijanis living abroad around national ideals.

MƏQALƏLƏR – ARTICLES – СТАТЬИ

AZƏRBAYCAN - Aİ ƏMƏKDAŞLIĞINDA SİYASİ LAYİHƏLƏRİN ƏHƏMİYYƏTİ

Qənirə Paşayeva*

XX əsrin sonlarında baş verən qlobal dəyişikliklər Cənubi Qafqazın siyasi həyatında bir sıra yenilikləri şərtləndirdi. Regionun Rusiyanın hakimiyyəti altından çıxması və dünyaya açılması nəticəsində yenidən dövlət müstəqilliyini bərpa etmiş Azərbaycan Respublikasının coxsaxəli xarici siyasət prioritetləri formalaşmağa başladı. Qərbi dünyaya yeni müstəqil dövlətlərə yardım göstərməklə, ilk növbədə onların yenidən Rusiyanın ağılığı altına keçməsinə imkan vermək istəmədi. Məhz bu prosesdə geosiyasi maraqlar ön plana çıxdı və yenidən müstəqillik qazanmış dövlətlərin müasir beynəlxalq münasibətlər sisteminə inteqrasiyasında Qərbi və ABŞ geosiyasəti (ilk növbədə regional səviyyədə) müsbət rol oynadı¹.

Müstəqilliyin ilk illərindən etibarən Avropa inteqrasiya proseslərində iştirakı və Avropa təhlükəsizlik məkanına qoşulmaq xəttini götürməsi ilk növbədə Azərbaycanın qarşılaşdığı tələpəli daxili və xarici problemlərlə bağlı idi ki, Avropa dəstəyinin əldə olunması həmin problemlərin nizamlanmasında öz rolunu oynaya bilərdi. Bu öncə Ermənistan-Azərbaycan, Dağlıq Qarabağ münaqişəsinin nizamlanması prosesinə Avropa qurumlarının cəlb edilməsi istəyi ilə bağlı idi. Hərbi, diplomatik-siyasi və informasiya blokadasında olan Azərbaycanın Avropaya çıxış yollarının qonşu dövlətlər tərəfindən bağlanmasına baxmayaraq respublikamızın geosiyasi mövqeyi və karbohidrogen ehtiyatları bütövlükdə Xəzər hövzəsinin nicatında öz rolunu oynadı. Heydər Əliyev diplomatiyasının gücü ilə neft geosiyasi və münaqişə "oyunlarına" qarşı qoyuldu və öz sözünü dedi².

Dünya sosializm sisteminin süqutundan sonra yaranmış vakuumu doldurulması Avropa İttifaqının başlıca qayğısına çevrildi üçün bu sahədə çevik siyasi-diplomatik addımların atılması vacib idi. Nəzərə almaq lazımdır ki, Avroasiyada baş verən hadisə və proseslərin başgicəlləndirici sürəti və hazır modellərin olmaması olduqca ciddi problemlər yaratmışdı və regional xaosun qarşısının alınması üçün təcili tədbirlər görülməli

idi. Məhz bu zərurət Aİ-ni Cənubi Qafqaz dövlətləri ilə çoxtərəfli əməkdaşlığa xüsusi diqqət yetirməyə vadar edirdi. Aİ-nin Cənubi Qafqaz-Mərkəzi Asiya regionu siyasətində müxtəlif layihələrin əhəmiyyəti və rolu böyükdür. Belə layihələrin içərisində Əməkdaşlıq və Tərəfdaşlıq Sazişi (ƏTS) və Avropa Qonşuluq Siyasəti (AQS), TRASEKA, TASİS, TEMPUS. İNOGEYT bə s. mühüm yer tutur. Bu layihələrin Azərbaycan üçün əhəmiyyəti ilk növbədə onunla müəyyənləşir ki, birincisi, respublikamızın Avropaya daha sıx inteqrasiya olunması üçün real imkanlar yaradır, ikincisi, Xəzərin enerji resurslarının Avropa bazarlarına çıxarılması üçün yollar açılır, nəhayət, Avropanın münaqişələrlə dolu regiona daxil olması onun potensial təhlükə mənbəyi kimi əhəmiyyətinin real olaraq dərk olunmasına imkan verir. Avropanın qonşuluğunda belə potensial və real təhlükə qaynaqlarının mövcudluğu ona beynəlxalq terrorizmdən daha böyük təhlükə yaradır və nizamlanması üçün "konservləşdirilmə" tipli metod və üsulların o qədər də böyük əhəmiyyət kəsb etmədiyini göstərir.

Avropa İttifaqının coxsaxlı regional layihələri içərisində ƏTS, AQS və TACİS və s. Aİ-nin yeni müstəqil dövlətlərlə bağlı götürdüyü strateji xətti müəyyənləşdirməklə gələcək əməkdaşlığın inkişaf perspektivlərini göstərən sənədlər idi. Çünki Aİ-nin genişləndirilməsi, Avropa məkanının yenidən bütövləşməsi, beynəlxalq terrorizmin, Balkan və Qafqaz münaqişələrinin ümumavropa təhlükəsizliyinə yaratdığı təhdidlər, qlobal məzmunlu siyasi dəyişikliklər, Aİ dövlətlərinin öz siyasi və iqtisadi çəkisini dünyada artırmaq istəkləri və s. onun öz yeni qonşuları ilə münasibətlərinə bir sıra dəyişikliklər etməyə vadar edirdi. Müasir politoloji fikrə görə, Aİ-nin xarici siyasət strategiyasında mühüm yer tutan siyasi, iqtisadi və enerji xarakterli layihələri ilk növbədə daxili problemlərin həllinə və yarım milyonluq iqtisadi məkanın təhlükəsizliyinin təmin edilməsinə yönəlmişdir. Avropa kontinentinin etnosiyasi mozaikası, burada coxsaxlı xalqların yaşaması onun qaynar və potensial münaqişə ocaqları ilə "zənginliyini" şərtləndirən başlıca

* Azərbaycan Respublikası Milli Məclisin deputatı.

¹ Hüseynova H. Azərbaycan Avropa inteqrasiya prosesləri sistemində. B., Hərbi nəşriyyat, 1998, s.5;

Сумарков В.Н., Сумарков Н.В. Расширение Европейского Союза и внешнеэкономические связи России. М., 2006, с.25

² Heydər Əliyev Azərbaycanı dünyaya tanıdır. B., Azər nəşr, 1994, s.34

faktordur. Təkcə 30-a qədər müxtəlif etnosların yaşadığı Balkanlarda cərəyan edən və etməkdə olan hadisələr buna əyani nümunədir³.

Təsadüfi deyil ki, yuxarıda qeyd etdiyimiz sənədlərin regional əməkdaşlığın genişləndirilməsi və milli təhlükəsizliyin təmin edilməsi baxımından əhəmiyyəti böyükdür. Aİ-nin ötən yüzilliyin 90-cı illərdən başlayaraq qəbul etdiyi və reallaşdırmaqda olduğu proqram və layihələrin başlıca hissəsi bunların istiqamətləndiyi ölkələrin istisnasız olaraq Avropa bazarına "qatılmasına" nail olmaq və Ümumi bazarın hüduqlarını genişləndirməkdir. Bu mənada həmin sənədlər həm fərdi, həm də konkret xüsusiyyətlərə malikdirlər. Belə ki, dövlətlər Aİ qarşısında götürdükləri öhdəlikləri yerinə yetirəcəkləri təqdirdə bu təşkilatın daxili bazarında və müxtəlif xarakterli proqramlarında iştirak etmək hüququ qazanacaqlar⁴.

Azərbaycanın xarici siyasət strategiyasında Avropa ilə çoxtərəfli əməkdaşlığın genişləndirilməsinə ictimai fikrin müsbət münasibəti hakimiyyət strukturlarının qərbönlü kursunun intensivləşməsində mühüm rol oynayır. Qərb ölkələrinə belə münasibətin formalaşması ictimai-siyasi, iqtisadi, enerji, hərbi, təhlükəsizlik, investisiya və s. sahələrin kompleksi ilə bağlıdır. Bunu bir sıra qeyri-hökumət qurumlarının apardığı sorğuların nəticələri də təsdiq edir. Belə ki, "Puls-R" Sosialoji sorğu xidməti tərəfindən Bakı şəhərində keçirilmiş "İctimai rəyin monitorinqi Azərbaycanda vətəndaş cəmiyyətini formalaşdıran faktordur" layihəsi çərçivəsində min nəfər respondentlə 2004-cü ilin dekabr və 2005-ci ilin yanvarında keçirilmiş sorğu nəticəsində rəyi soruşulanların 28%-i Azərbaycanın xarici siyasət istiqamətləri içərisində Avropa İttifaqı ilə inteqrasiyaya üstünlük verdiyini bildirmiş, respondentlərin bir qismi isə Rusiyanı prioritet seçmişdir⁵.

Avropa iqtisadi və təhlükəsizlik məkanına inteqrasiyasının memarı ümummilli lider Heydər Əliyev olmuş, onun başladığı işi Respublika prezidenti İ. Əliyev uğurla davam etdirməkdədir. Onun 2004-cü ilin martında Bratislavada Avropa liderləri ilə görüşdəki çıxışı Azərbaycanın Avropaya verdiyi önəmin bariz göstəricisidir: "Avropa İttifaqı bizim xarici siyasətimizdə xüsusi və özünəməxsus yer tutur. Bizim Avropa İttifaqı ilə Əməkdaşlıq və Tərəfdaşlıq Sazişimiz

ikiterəfli əməkdaşlığı nəzərə çarpacaq dərəcədə yaxşılaşdırmış və bizim iqtisadi strukturları Avropa standartlarına yaxınlaşdırmışdır. Avropa İttifaqının fəal iqtisadi partnyoru olan Azərbaycan Əməkdaşlıq və Tərəfdaşlıq Sazişindən daha irəli gedən əməkdaşlığa hazırdır. Biz hər bir ölkəyə fərdi yanaşma prinsipini alqışlayır... Mən bir daha Azərbaycanın Avropa və Avroatlantik inteqrasiyası istiqamətində ciddi niyyəti olduğunu bildirirəm"⁶. Təsadüfi deyil ki, bu kursun ardıcıl şəkildə həyata keçirilməsi nəticəsində Azərbaycan ümumavropa təhlükəsizlik məkanına inteqrasiya kimi tələyüklü məsələni həyata keçirməkdədir.

Avropa İttifaqının Cənubi Qafqaz siyasətinin aydınlaşdırılması ilə bağlı aparılmış tədqiqatlar bizə belə nəticəyə gəlməyə imkan verir ki, ƏTS və AQS-nin həyata keçirilməsində yaxından iştirak edən Azərbaycan bu global layihələrin köməyi ilə aşağıdakı məqsədlərin reallaşdırılması üçün Avropa dəstəyinin əldə edilməsinə nail olmağa çalışır:

- Azərbaycanın global məzmunu malik dünya inteqrasiya proseslərinə qoşulması beynəlxalq sülh və təhlükəsizlik orbitinə daxil olması demək olub ümumplanet, regional və milli səviyyələrdə təhlükəsizliyin təmin edilməsi məqsədlərinə xidmət edir və bu baxımdan Avropa ilə əməkdaşlığın əhəmiyyəti böyükdür;
- təhlükəsizlik sahəsində Avropa İttifaqının obyektiv fəaliyyəti regionda seperatizmin və terrorizmin genişlənməsini əngəlləyən faktora çevrilməklə ilk növbədə Ermənistan - Azərbaycan, Dağlıq Qarabağ münaqişəsinin dinc yollarla nizamlanması üçün təsir imkanlarını genişləndirilməsinə imkan yaradar;
- özünün zəngin neft və qaz ehtiyatlarını dünya bazarına çıxarmaqla Avropa iqtisadi modelinə mümkün qədər yaxınlaşan Azərbaycanın perspektivdə ümumi Avropa daxili bazarına qoşulmasının reallaşdırılması üçün şəraiti formalaşdırmaq mümkündür;
- Tərəfdaşlıq və Əməkdaşlıq Sazişi, habelə Avropa Qonşuluq Siyasətinin reallaşdırılması gedişində Azərbaycanda hüquqi dövlət və Qərb dəyərləri ilə səciyyələndirilən vətəndaş cəmiyyətinin formalaşdırılması və inkişafına nail olması obyektiv reallığa əsaslanır;
- qarşılıqlı çoxtərəfli əməkdaşlığın gedişində Avropa Şurası və Avropa İttifaqının yeni qonşular və tərəfdaşlar üçün

³ Шемятенков В.Г. Европейский союз. Учеб. пособие. М., 2003, с. 476

⁴ İbadov R. Avropa İttifaqının əsasları, Bakı, 2004, s.26-28

⁵ İlyasadə X. Rasim Musabəyov sorğunun nəticələrini açıqladı, əhali ölkə başçısına və milli orduya güvənir / <http://www.sherg.az/view.php?d=11798>

⁶ Statement by HE Mr. İlham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan at the Prime Ministerial Conference on Towards a Wider Europe - The New Agenda, 18-19 March 2004, Bratislava. <http://www.azerbaiian-eu.com/doc/speechbratislava.htm>.

reallaşdırmaqda olduğu sosial-iqtisadi, siyasi-hüquqi, elm, təhsil, mədəniyyət və s. sahələrdəki proqramlarından dolğun şəkildə istifadə edilməklə Azərbaycanın idarəçiliyinin və hüquqi dövlət quruculuğunun inkişaf səviyyəsinin yüksəldilməsi;

- Böyük İpək yolunun üzərində yerləşən Azərbaycanın Qərb-Şərq və Şimal-Cənub ticarət-iqtisadi əməkdaşlığının genişləndirilməsində tarixən ona məxsus olan vasitəçilik missiyasının respublikamızın iqtisadi yüksəlişinə xidmət etməsi.

TƏS-in və AQS-nin meydana gəlməsi beynəlxalq səviyyəli şərtlərin kompleksi ilə bağlı idi. Belə ki, yarandıqları anlardan etibarən gedən əksər müzakirələrdə bu layihələrin regionda inteqrasiya prosesləri və əməkdaşlığın dərinləşməsində rolu, qonşu dövlətlərin ümumavropa təhlükəsizlik məkanına qoşulması yolları, transmilli cinayətkarlığa qarşı mübarizənin təşkilində və terror-seperatçılığın qarşısının alınmasında əhəmiyyəti diqqət mərkəzində olmuşdur. Hər iki layihə Avropa İttifaqının hüduqlarının genişləndirilməsinə hazırlıq xarakteri daşımaqla yanaşı, bir sıra problemlərin aradan qaldırılmasına yönəlmişdir. Politoloqların fikrincə, AQS-in əsas ritorikası İttifaqın hüduqlarının genişlənməsi nəticəsində yeni ayırıcı sərhəd xəttlərinin meydana gəlməsinin nəticələrini yeni qonşular üçün bir qədər yumşaltmağa yönəlmişdir, çünki qonşularla üzvlər arasında bərabərlik işarəsinin qoyula bilməməsi konkret amillər və şəraitlə bağlıdır. Təsadüfi deyil ki, Aİ-nin müxtəlif vəzifəli şəxsləri AQS-yə daxil olmanın hələ Aİ üzvlüyünə iddia üçün əsas vermədiyini dönə-dönə qeyd edirdilər. Avropa hüququ baxımından məsələnin belə qoyuluşunda qeyri-adilik yoxdur. Lakin Aİ-nin təsis müqaviləsinə görə "hər hansı Avropa dövləti İttifaqa üzvlük üçün müraciət edə bilər", bu isə ilk növbədə Avropanın coğrafi və siyasi hüduqlarının müəyyənləşdirilməsini tələb edir. Mövcud politoloji fikrə görə, Avropa dövləti kimi müəyyən edilmək üçün həmin ölkənin təkəcə coğrafi məkanda yerləşməsi kifayət deyildir, bunun üçün həmin ölkənin eyni zamanda Avropa Şurasına üzvlüyü də əsas götürülməlidir⁷.

Problemə bu baxımdan yanaşdıqda Cənubi Qafqazın, o cümlədən də Azərbaycanın həm siyasi, həm də coğrafi baxımdan Avropaya aid edilməsinin Qərb siyasi fikri tərəfindən qəbul edildiyini görürük, Avropa isə münacişə və müharibələrə kifayət qədər həssasdır, ona görə

də regional layihələrdə istisnasız olaraq sülh və təhlükəsizliyin təmin edilməsi əsas şərt kimi götürülür, bu isə inkişafın rəhnidir. Təsadüfi deyil ki, uzunmüddətli götür-qoydan və sonuncu genişlənmədən sonra 2004-cü il mayın 12-də Avropa Komissiyası Avropa Qonşuluq Siyasətinə dair strategiyayı açıqladı ki, sənədə əsasən Azərbaycan, Ermənistan və Gürcüstanın bu siyasətə daxil edilmələri Avropa İttifaqı Şurasına tövsiyə edilirdi. Yaxın qonşular kimi bu üç respublikanın AQS-yə qatılması Avropa İttifaqı dövlət və hökumət başçıları Şurasının 2005-ci ilin iyunun 17-18-də Brüsseldə keçirilmiş iclasında reallaşdırılmışdı⁸.

Avropa Qonşuluq Siyasətinə əsasən, Aİ-nin qonşu və tərəfdaş ölkələrlə münasibətlərini yaxın gələcək üçün tənzimləyən başlıca sənəd 3-5 illik dövrləri əhatə edəcək Fəaliyyət planları olmalıdır. Fəaliyyət planlarında Aİ ilə qonşu tərəf arasında münasibətlərin prioritetlərinin müəyyənləşdirilməsi nəzərdə tutulurdu. AQS-yə görə, bu prioritetlər siyasi dialoq və islahat, tərəfdaşların tədricən Aİ-nin daxili bazarında paya sahib olmalarına şərait yaradan ticarət və tədbirlərin görülməsi, ədliyyə və daxili işlər, enerji, nəqliyyat, informasiya, cəmiyyət, ətraf mühit, tədqiqat, innovasiya və s. ola bilər. Avropa Qonşuluq Siyasətinin Azərbaycan üçün yaratdığı imkanları aşağıdakı kimi qiymətləndirmək olar:

- siyasi, iqtisadi və inzibati islahatların səmərəli və sistemli şəkildə həyata keçirilməsi və birgə dəyərlərə hörmət edilməsi sahəsində konkret irəliləyişlərə nail olunması müqabilində Aİ-nin daxili bazarında müəyyən paya sahib olmaq imkanının reallaşması uğurlu xarici siyasət xəttinin yeridilməsi nəticəsində mümkündür;
- Avropa iqtisadi məkanında vətəndaşların, əmtəələrin, xidmətlərin və kapitalın paralel olaraq sərbəst dövriyyəsinin təmin etmək yolu ilə inteqrasiya və liberallaşma proseslərinin yaxın gələcəkdə Cənubi Qafqaz – Mərkəzi Asiya regionunu əhatə etməsinə nail olunması;
- Aİ ölkələri ilə daha səmərəli siyasi dialoq və əməkdaşlığın genişləndirilməsi, güzəştli ticarət əlaqələri və açıq bazar, miqrasiya, narkotiklər və mütəşəkkil cinayətkarlıqla mübarizə sahəsində əməkdaşlıq, investisiyaların təşviqi imkanlarının artması, yeni maliyyə mənbələrinin müəyyənləşdirilməsi, Ümumdünya Ticarət Təşkilatına üzvlüyün dəstəklənməsi və s.

⁷ http://www.europahouse-az.org/presentations/Standard_ENP_Presentation_en.ppt

⁸ Azərbaycan Respublikası XİN arxivi. Arayış, 2008, s.3

Avropa Komissiyası Avropa Qonşuluq Siyasəti çərçivəsində Azərbaycanla bağlı götürülmüş öhdəlikləri və görülmüş işləri hərtərəfli müzakirə etdikdən sonra 2005-ci il martın 2-də xüsusi hesabat nəşr etdirdi. Hesabatda əməkdaşlığın nailiyyətləri öz əksini tapmışdı ki, buna əsasən Aİ Şurasına Azərbaycanla əməkdaşlığı daha da intensivləşdirmək istiqamətində tövsiyələr verilirdi. Məhz buna əsasən Aİ Nazirlər Şurası 25 aprel 2005-ci ildə Azərbaycanla bağlı Fəaliyyət planının hazırlanmasına dair müsbət qərar çıxardı. Müvafiq addımlar Azərbaycan rəhbərliyi tərəfindən də atıldı, belə ki, ölkəmizin Avropa İttifaqı ilə əlaqələrinin daha da gücləndirilməsi, onun Azərbaycan üzrə Fəaliyyət planının işlənilməsi və həyata keçirilməsi üçün səmərəli və əlaqələndirilmiş işin təmin edilməsi məqsədilə 2005-ci il iyunun 1-də Respublika Prezidentinin sərəncamı əsasında Azərbaycanın Avropaya inteqrasiyası üzrə Dövlət Komissiyası yaradıldı. Komissiyanın fəaliyyəti öz nəticələrini respublikamızın ümumavropa siyasi, iqtisadi və təhlükəsizlik məkanına qatılması ilə bağlı sahələrdə özünü göstərdi⁹.

Hazırda AQS-nin Aİ-yə üzvlüyə hazırlıq mərhələsi olub-olmaması məsələsi Qərb və Azərbaycan politoloji fikri tərəfindən hərtərəfli müzakirə olunan problemlərdən biridir. Tədqiqatçıların müxtəlif mövqe sərgiləmələrinə baxmayaraq Aİ-nin bilavasitə əhatəsində olan ölkələrlə münasibətlərinin üç qrupa bölməsi və "qonşular"ın (AQS-ə daxil olan ölkələrin) üçüncü qrupa aid edilməsi göstərir ki, onların Avropa evinə qatılması uzaq perspektivdə müzakirəyə çıxarılması məsələlərin sırasında¹⁰. Aİ-yə üzvlük və ya qonşuluq statuslarına iddialı olan dövlətlərin bir-birindən fərqləndirilməsinin nə qədər mürəkkəb olduğunu Avropa Komissiyasının "Daha böyük Avropa - Qonşuluq: Aİ-nin şərq və cənub qonşuları ilə münasibətləri üçün yeni zəmin" adlı bəyanatında da görmək olar. Bəyanat Aİ-yə üzvlük probleminin bir sıra örtülü məqamlarına aydınlıq gətirmək baxımından əhəmiyyətlidir. Belə ki, bəyanat qonşuları şərq və cənub qruplarına ayırmaqla onları bir növ yaxın və uzaq qonşulara bölür. Uzaq qonşulara ilk növbədə Avropa dövlətləri sırasında olmayan Aralıq dənizi hövzəsi ölkələri aiddir, halbuki, yaxın - şərq qonşularına münasibətdə (Cənubi Qafqaz dövlətləri) məsələ hələ tamamilə aydınlaşdırılmamışdır¹¹. Fikrimizcə, yaxın və uzaq qonşuların belə fərqləndirilməsi çoxsaylı faktorlarla əlaqədardır ki, bunlardan ən əhəmiyyətlisi təhlükəsizliyin təmin edilməsi məsələləri ilə bağlıdır.

Təsadüfi deyildir ki, TƏS və AQS-nin Avropa İttifaqına üzvlük imkanı baxımından yaratdığı müzakirələr Azərbaycan üçün strateji əhəmiyyət daşıyır. Belə ki, Avropa Şurasının üzvü kimi Azərbaycan nəzəri-praktiki cəhətdən daha yüksək statusa layiqdir, siyasi və iqtisadi əməkdaşlığın düzgün istiqamətdə inkişaf edəcəyi təqdirdə Azərbaycan Avropa İttifaqına üzvlüyün verə biləcəyi bir sıra üstünlükləri reallaşdırma bilər, lakin bu ilk növbədə zaman məsələsi olmaqla bərabər, həm də adaptasiya proseslərinin necə və hansı sürətlə inkişaf edəcəyi ilə bağlıdır.

Qarşılıqlı münasibətlərin inkişafında öhdəliklərin aparıcı rolunu nəzərə alsaq Azərbaycan-Aİ münasibətlərində bu baxımdan obyektivliyin zəif olduğunu görürük. Belə ki, Aİ üzvlüyə iddialı ölkələrin, o cümlədən də Azərbaycanın qarşısında qeyd etdiyimiz layihələrə əsasən müəyyən şərtlər qoyur və bu şərtləri yerinə yetirilməyəcəyi təqdirdə müxtəlif təzyiqlər – tövsiyələr, sanksiyalar və s. işə salınır. Nəzərə alsaq ki, bu zaman Aİ-nin subyektiv rəyi mühüm rol oynayır və onun nəyə əsasən formalaşdırıldığı bir qədər müəmmalı qalır, məsələnin problematik olduğu aydın görünür. Aİ-nin qonşu regionlarla bağlı yeritdiyi siyasətin təcrübəsi göstərir ki, Azərbaycanın zəngin enerji potensialından istifadə hesabına uzun müddət üçün özünün enerji təhlükəsizliyini təmin etmiş Aİ Azərbaycan qarşısında heç bir konkret öhdəlik götürmür, əksinə Azərbaycanda demokratiyanın zəifliyi, insan hüquqlarına riayət olunmaması, seçkilərdə hüquq pozuntularına yol verilməsi, milli azlıqlarla bağlı problemlərin olması, müxalifətin sıxışdırılması, erməni qaçqınlarının sayının bilərəkdən çox göstərilməsi və s. məsələlərdən respublikamıza qarşı təzyiqlər kimi istifadə olunur.

Azərbaycanın hazırda çoxsahəli islahatlarla səciyyələnən keçid mərhələsini yaşaması Aİ və Avropa Şurası qarşısında götürdüyü öhdəliklərə uyğundur. İslahatların uğurla nəticələnməsi Aİ-nin Azərbaycanla bağlı mövqeyində dəyişiklikləri şərtləndirməklə bərabər, ikitərəfli əlaqələrin genişlənməsində, yeni layihələrin həyata keçirilməsində mühüm rol oynayır. Aİ-nin Cənubi Qafqazla bağlı regional layihələrində Azərbaycana xüsusi yer verilməsi regionun aparıcı dövləti kimi respublikamızın beynəlxalq aləmdə mövqelərinin möhkəmlənməsi ilə sıx bağlıdır. Bununla belə, Avropa İttifaqı komissarı B.Ferrero-Valdnerin qeyd etdiyi kimi, göstərilən layihələr gələcəkdə qonşu dövlətlərin Avropa İttifaqına üzvlüyə heç bir zəmanət vermir, amma eyni zamanda bunu

⁹ Azərbaycan Respublikası XİN arxiv. Arayış, 2008, s.4

¹⁰ Waldemar H. "Europäische Nachbarschaftspolitik als Surrogat für einen Beitritt zur EU?" Die Union und ihre Nachbarn. Innsbruck, 2005, s.238

¹¹ Сумарков В.Н., Сумарков Н.В. Расширение Европейского Союза и внешнеэкономические связи России. М., 2006, с.143

istisna da etmir¹². Problemin belə qoyuluşu Azərbaycanla Aİ ilə dialoqu davam etdirmək üçün imkan yaradırdı.

Azərbaycan hökuməti ilə Avropa Komissiyası arasında Fəaliyyət planı ilə bağlı hələ 2005-ci ilin dekabrından 2006-cı il iyulun ortalarınaqədər danışıqlar prosesinin üç raundu keçirilmiş və FP-nin mətni razılaşdırılmışdı. 2006-cı il noyabrın 7-9-da Azərbaycan Respublikasının Prezidenti İ.Əliyevin Brüsselə işgüzar səfərinin gedişində Azərbaycanla Aİ arasında enerji məsələlərinə dair anlaşma memorandumu imzalanmış, habelə Azərbaycan Prezidentinin Avropa Komissiyasının Prezidenti J.M. Borrozo, Enerji və Nəqliyyat məsələlərinə dair məsul Komissar A. Pibalqs, Avropa Parlamentinin Prezidenti J.F. Borrell və Aİ-nin Ümumi Xarici və Təhlükəsizlik Siyasəti üzrə Ali Nümayəndəsi X. Solana ilə görüşləri keçirilmiş, noyabrın ortalarında Azərbaycan-Aİ birgə Fəaliyyət Planı imzalanmışdır. Aİ-nin AQS-yə qoşulan dövlətlərlə bağlı həyata keçirdiyi müntəzəm monitorinqlər və görüşlər, habelə tərtib etdiyi hesabatlar bu strateji xəttə verilən diqqətin bariz göstəricisidir. İllik hesabatlarda Azərbaycanda ictimai-siyasi vəziyyət təhlil edilir, ölkənin həyatında baş vermiş dəyişikliklərin analizi verilir, Azərbaycanda demokratik idarəçilik sahəsində Fəaliyyət planının tələblərinin yerinə yetirilməsində əldə edilmiş irəliləyişlərin əhəmiyyəti göstərilir. Ümumilikdə əldə olunmuş uğurların nəticəsi idi ki, 2007-ci ilin iyununda Azərbaycan Respublikası Avropa İttifaqının Birgə Xarici və Təhlükəsizlik Siyasəti çərçivəsində irəli sürülən bəyanat, demarş və digər qəbildən olan

sənədlərinə qoşulmaq üçün dəvət almış, sonrakı illərdə bu proses daha da genişlənmiş və əhatəli olmuşdur¹³.

Avropa İttifaqı regional layihələrindən olan TACİS proqramı çərçivəsində müvafiq texniki və ekspert yardımları vasitəsilə Azərbaycanda aparılan iqtisadi islahatlara hərtərəfli yardım göstərirdi. 1991-ci ildə yaradılmış TACİS proqramı MDB ölkələrinə və Monqolustana texniki yardımların göstərilməsi məqsədini güdürdü¹⁴. Bu proqramın Azərbaycanla bağlı hissəsində əməkdaşlığın üç əsas istiqamətinə üstünlük verildi: infrastrukturun qurulması, özəl bölmənin və insan resurslarının inkişafı. TACİS-in şaxələnməsi Azərbaycanla əlaqədar əsas çoxtərəfli şəbəkə layihələri kimi TRASECA və İNOGATE-nin siyasi və iqtisadi əhəmiyyətini olduqca genişləndirmişdir.

Ümumiyyətlə, aparılmış təhlil bizə belə nəticəyə gəlməyə imkan verir ki, Aİ-nin qonşuları kimi onun regional əməkdaşlıq layihələrinə qoşulmaqla Azərbaycan ümumavropa təhlükəsizlik və iqtisadi məkanının bir hissəsinə çevrilə və Avropanın dəstəyi ilə qarşılaşdığımız problemlərin çözülməsinə, bütövlükdə regionda terror-seperatizmin aradan qaldırılmasına və münaqişələrin nizamlanmasına nail ola bilər. Məhz bununla əlaqədar Avropa Komissiyasının Prezidenti R.Prodinin qeyd edirdi ki, "AQS çərçivəsində biz hər şeyi paylaşa bilərik, ancaq institutlardan başqa"¹⁵. Bu o demək idi ki, səsvermə hüququ, idarəetmə strukturlarında iştirak olmadan Avropa İttifaqı ilə əməkdaşlıqdan bəhrələnmək üçün hər bir AQS ölkəsinin, o cümlədən Azərbaycanın geniş imkanları vardır.

¹² Həsənov Ə.M. Müasir beynəlxalq münasibətlər və Azərbaycanın xarici siyasəti. Dərslük. Bakı, 2005, s.241

¹³ Azərbaycan Respublikası XİN arxiv. Arayış, 2008, s.4-5

¹⁴ Шемятенков В.Г. Европейский союз. Учеб. пособие. М., 2003, с.352

¹⁵ http://www.europhouse-az.org/presentations/Standard_ENP_Presentation_en.ppt

2003-CÜ İLDƏN SONRA İRAQ XARİCİ SİYASƏTİ

Heydər Şiya Əl-Barrak*

İraqın xarici siyasəti 2003-cü ildən sonra məzmununa və vasitəsinə görə yenilik və çeşidliliklə səciyyələnməyə başlamışdır. Belə ki, o vaxtki keçmiş diktator rejimi başçısının təmsil etdiyi emosional reaksiyaları üzərində qurulmuş işğalçılıq siyasətindən müasir İraq hökumətinin İraq Parlamentinin nəzarəti və rəhbərliyi altında müəyyənləşdirdiyi və Xarici İşlər Nazirliyinin həyata keçirdiyi müstəqil siyasət yeridilir. Bu siyasət İraqın ali maraqları üzərində qurulur və başqalarının işinə qarışmamazlıq və işğalçı olmamaq prinsipinə əsaslanır. 2003-cü ildə dəyişikliklər başlayan zaman bu yeni doğulan siyasətə qarşı bəzi dövlətlər tərəfindən atılması gözlənilən olan reaksiyalara baxmayaraq İraqın xarici siyasətini müəyyənləşdirənlərin müdrikliyi və məharəti onu istər ərəb, regional və ya beynəlxalq səviyyədə inteqrasiyaya qaytarmağı mümkün etmişdir. Başlanğıc kimi bu siyasət 2008-ci ildə ABŞ-la "SOFA" adı ilə tanınan hərbi və iqtisadi sahədə strateji müqavilə imzalanması, İraq ərzilərindən bütün xarici silahlı qüvvələrin çıxardılmasına dair zaman çərçivəsi qoyulması, 2011-ci ilin sonunadək onların İraqı tərk etməsi, ABŞ-la iqtisadi sahədə əməkdaşlığın başlanması, İraqın ərəb qardaşları ilə xarici əlaqələrinin bərpası, yaraların sağaldılması olaraq müstəqil ərəb fəaliyyəti sistemində ləqəbli olduğu aparıcı rol əldə etməyə çalışmış, sülh və məhəbbət şəhəri olan Bağdadda 29 martda keçirilmiş Ərəb Dövlətləri Liqasının Zirvə Toplantısına ev sahibliyi etmişdir. İraqın Avropa və digər dünya dövlətləri ilə xarici əlaqələrinə gəlinə, İraq Avropa İttifaqı ilə əməkdaşlığın, xüsusilə də qanunların yerinə yetirilməsi, düzgün idarəetmə və daimi inkişaf sahəsinə, formasını təyin etmişdir ki, Avropa İttifaqı ilə 2012-ci ildə imzalanmış tərəfdaşlıq haqqında müqaviləyə əsasən, bütün mövcud olan şəraitinin öyrənilməsi üzərində qurulmuş real xarici siyasət və münasib qərarların qəbul edilməsi nəticəsində İraq bir çox hamıya məlum olan hədələrə qalib gələ bilmişdir.

Əsl ərəb məkanı, nurun və sülhün paytaxtı olan Bağdadda Ərəb Dövlətləri Liqasının Sammitinin keçirilməsi heç də qəribə deyil. Bütün dünya 40 ilə yaxın bir dövr ərzində İraqda hakimiyyətdə olan keçmiş rejimin təhlükə, vəhşilik və qəddarlığına göz yumduğu bir vaxtda İraq sınaqlardan başıuca çıxmış, beynəlxalq və regional şəraitin əhatə etdiyi küldən yenidən doğulmuşdur. Bütün bu illər vaxı ilə ümummilli bəyan edilmiş, lakin

zaman ötdükcə puç olmuş, İraqa müharibələr və dağıntılardan başqa bir şey gətirməmiş boş simvollar və hədəflər daşıyan siyasət üzündən İraqa çox baha baş gəlmişdir. Əksinə olaraq bu siyasətin regionda qonşu dövlətlər və qardaş ərəb ölkələrinə keçmiş rejim tərəfindən edilən amansız hücumlardan başqa bir şey olmaması bütün dünyaya bəlli olmuşdur. Nəticədə isə yüz minlərlə günahsız insan onun qurbanına çevrilmiş, İraq xalqına qarşı daxildə baş vermiş heç bir məhkəməsiz, özünü müdafiəsiz kütləvi qırğınlar cinayətləri törədilmiş, on minlərlə günahsız insanın dəfn olunduğu və elə bu gün də ölkənin bütün yerlərində: şimaldan cənuba, qərbdən şərqə aşkarlanan kütləvi məzarlıqlar yaranmışdır.

Bu hadisədə hamını təəccübləndirən Ərəb Dövlətləri Liqasının Sammitinin uğurla keçməsi oldu. Bu sammiti izləyən bəzi müşahidəçilər onun bu səviyyədə keçirilməsini gözləməmişdilər, onun ərəb regionunun yaşadığı indiki dövrdə - diktator rejimlərinin dəyişməsi və ərəb xalqının uzun illər boyu uğrunda mübarizə apardığı istəklərini və arzularını həyata keçirən demokratik rejimlərlə yeniləşməsi sahəsində böyük dəyişikliklərin şahidi olduğu bir dövrdə keçirilməsi imkanına şübhə ilə yanaşırdılar. Amma bu şübhə edənlər İraqın keçmiş diktator rejiminin devirilməsi və onu 1958-ci ildə İraq Respublikasının elan olunmasından indiyə qədər ən yeni İraq tarixində ilk dəfə hakimiyyətin sülh yolu ilə ötürülməsini yeni qəbul edilmiş konstitusiyanın əsası edən çoxpartiyalı federativ demokratik sistemlə dəyişdirilməsi ilə ərəb demokratik baharının yarandığı ilk ölkə olduğunu yaddan çıxarmışdılar.

Sammit uzun müddətdir ki, İraqda misli görünməmiş xalqla hökumət arasında birlik, əməkdaşlıq, əlaqələndirmə və vəhdətlə keçirilmişdir. Hamı İraqın yeni demokratiya erasını açaraq ərəb xalqları üçün əldə etdiyi nailiyyətlərlə fəxr və iftixar hissi duyurdu. İraqın ərəb dövlətlərinə rəhbərliyinə və ərəb dünyasının istər keçmişdə, istərsə də indiki aslı qalmış problemlərinin həllində fəal rolunun xeyir-duasına ləqəbli Sammitin həyata keçirilməsində bütün lazımı tədbirlər görülmüşdür. Təhlükəsizlik sahəsində vəziyyətin sabitləşməsinin bu sammitin uğurla keçirilməsində böyük təsiri olmuşdur. Sülh və məhəbbət şəhəri olan Bağdad şəhərinə ərəb dövlətlərinin kralları və başçıları keçmiş rejimin

* İraq Respublikasının Azərbaycan Respublikasındakı fəvqəladə və səlahiyyətli səfiri.

qardaş Küveytin işğalından sonra açıq-aydın yaralanmış qardaşlığa qayıdışı ifadə etmək üçün yığışmışdılar. Buna ən bariz sübut kimi Sammitdə iştirak üçün ərəb kralları və dövlət başçılarından birincisini Küveyt əmiri Şeyx Cabir Əl-Əhməd Əs-Sabahın gəlməsi oldu. Sammitin nəticəsi kimi Ərəb Dövlətləri Liqası nizamnaməsinin prinsip və məqsədlərinə sadiqliyini, ərəb şüuru və tarixi-mədəni əsaslarını, ərəb həmrəyliyi ruhuna qayıdış və kollektiv ərəb təhlükəsizliyinin qorunması, ictimai, iqtisadi və inkişaf sahələrində ərəb müştərək işinin dəstəklənməsinin aktual zərurətini təsdiqləyən Bağdad bəyannaməsi qəbul olundu. Bu Bəyannamə terrorizm, ekstremizm, ünsürçülük və radikallığın bütün növlərini rədd edərək əsas etibarlı ilə aşağıdakılardan ibarət olmuşdur:

- Bütün ərəb dövlətlərinin suverenliyinə, öz milli müstəqilliyini və potensial və qüvvəsini müdafiə etməyə qanuni hüquqlarına hörmət, digərlərinin daxili işinə qarışmamazlığının, toxunulmamazlığının qorunması və ərəb dünyasında mövcud olan prolemlərin sülh yolu ilə konstruktiv, məqsədyönlü dialoq vasitəsi ilə həllinin vacibliyi;
- Ərəb vətəndaşının ləyaqətini qoruyan, onun ərəb xalqlarının yaşadığı son dəyişikliklər və inkişafın əks etdirdiyi azadlıq, sosial ədalət və siyasi həyatda iştirak hüquqlarını möhkəmlədən siyasi, ictimai və iqtisadi islahatların hərtərəfli görünüşünün qəbul edilməsi;
- İsrailin fələstin xalqına qarşı öz müqəddəs torpaqlarında və irsində davam edən təcavüzündə ona hörmət və ehtiram bildirərək paytaxtı şərq qüds olan müstəqil Fələstin dövlətinin yaradılması naminə onun səylərinin dəstəklənməsi;
- Suriya xalqının azadlıq və demokratiya, müstəqilliyini təyin etmək və hakimiyyətin sülh yolu ilə ötürmək hüququna qanuni tələb və istəklərinin, qardaş Livianın yaşadığı vacib dəyişikliklərin tam şəkildə alqışlanmasının, Somali, Yəmən, Sudan, Birləşmiş Komor adalarında baş verən müsbət dəyişikliklər və inkişafın, Afrika qitəsində sülhün və təhlükəsizliyin gücləndirilməsinə xidmət edən Qətər vasitəçiliyi ilə Cibuti Respublikası və Eritriya arasında mövcud ixtilafı son qoyulmasının alqışlanmasının Bağdad Sammiti tərəfindən dəstəklənməsi;
- Nüvə silahının yayılmamasına dair Konvensiyanın tələblərinə uyğun dövlətlərin atom enerjisinin sülh məqsədləri ilə texnologiyasının inkişafı, yiyələnməsi və istifadəsinə olan yenilməz hüququnun dəstəklənməsi;
- Milli azlıqların dini, mədəni, siyasi

hüquqlarının və insan hüquqları prinsiplərinə hörmət edilməsinin və heç bir ayrıseçkiliyə yol verilmədən qadın hüquqlarının müdafiəsinin dəstəklənməsi;

- Xalqlar, dinlər, sivilizasiyalar arasında dialoqun intensivləşdirilməsinə, səmimiyyət mədəniyyətinin möhkəmləndirilməsinə, qardaşlıq, dözümlülük prinsiplərinin dəstəklənməsi, ekstremizmin rədd edilməsi, birinin digərinə qıcıqlandırıcı qərar verməsindən uzaqlaşmaya çağırış və etiqad etiyi tayfa, din, irq və sair ayrıseçkiliyə uzaq olaraq bütün vətəndaşların hüquqlarının qorunması.

Böyük inamla demək olar ki, İraqın Ərəb Dövlətləri Liqasının Sammitinə və müştərək ərəb fəaliyyətinə gələcəkdə rəhbərlik etməsi çox təbii bir haldır. İraq, keçmiş rejimin beynəlxalq və regional ictimaiyyətə qarşı törətdiyi qanlı cinayətlər səbəbindən beynəlxalq, regional, ərəb reionunda uzun illər boyu sürən izolyasiyadan sonra ərəb fəaliyyətində öz aktiv rolunu qaytarmağa başlamışdır. İraqı ərəb dövlətləri ilə bağlayan möhkəm əlaqələri bir aforizm ilə konkretləşdirmək olar: "Ərəb dövlətləri ilə sıx həmrəysiz güclü İraq, İraqsız isə güclü ərəb dövlətləri mümkün olmaz". Bu aforizmə uyğun olaraq ən azı bütün nöqtəyi-nəzərlərdən fəvqəladə bur sammitdən sonra ərəblər öz həmrəyliklərini, regional gücünü bərpə etmişlər.

Demokratiya və hakimiyyətin sülh yolu ilə ötürülməsinə doğru siyasi dəyişiklər yaşamış ilk ərəb dövləti olan İraqın müştərək ərəb fəaliyyəti sisteminin rəhbəri olaraq, qarşısında bir çox hədələr var. İraq bu hədələrin qarşısı alınması üçün bir tərəfdən Ərəb Dövlətləri Liqasının Baş Katibi və Katibliyi ilə əməkdaşlıq və əlaqələndirmə, digər tərəfdən isə ərəb qardaşları ilə məsləhətləşmələr apararaq, ən əsası Bağdadda ərəb liderləri tərəfindən qəbul edilmiş qərarların yerinə yetirilməsinə nəzarətin həyata keçirilməsi olmalıdır.

Bu səhkidə Bağdad, Dördlər komissiyasının fəaliyyətinin dondurulması fonunda ərəblərin əsas problemi olan Fələstin probleminin həllində səylərinin cəmlənməsi uğrunda iş aparır və Fələstin hakimiyyəti ilə birlikdə ərəb sülh təçəbbüsünə və beynəlxalq qətnamələrə müvafiq Fələstin dövlətinin yaradılması üçün digər təsirli vasitələr axtarır.

Regionu kütləvi qırğın silahından azad etmək sahəsində Bağdad ərəb dövlətlərinin səyləri ilə əlbir olaraq Yaxın Şərq regionunu kütləvi qırğın silahlarından, ən əsası isə nüvə silahından azad bir regiona çevrilməsi naminə fəaliyyət göstərir. Bağdad həmçinin cari ilin dekabr ayının ortalarında

Helsinki şəhərində keçiriləcək BMT konfransında ümumi ərəb mövqeyinin müəyyənləşməsi uğrunda iş aparır. İraq Respublikasının müasir beynəlxalq və regional böhranların həllində fəal rolunun təcəssümü olaraq, İraq hökuməti regionda beynəlxalq sülhün və sabitliyin möhkəmlənməsi üçün beynəlxalq və regional səviyyədə qaynar nöqtələrdə olan problemlərin həllində öz fəal rəhbərliyininə doğru addımlamağa başlamış və regionu dağıdıcı müharibələr və ixtilaf oduna sürüklənməsinin qarşısını almaq və regionu kütləvi qırğın silahlarından və siyasi gərginlikdən azad regiona çevirmək yolunda regional cəhdlərə rəhbərlik etmək istəyindən irəli gələrək, 23 may 2012-ci il tarixində Bağdad şəhərində İraq Respublikası İranın nüvə proqramı ilə bağlı Avropa Birliyi tərəfindən Avropa Birliyinin xarici işlər və təhlükəsizlik siyasəti üzrə ali nümayəndəsi Ketrin Eştonun rəhbərliyi altında 5+1 formatında (ABŞ, Rusiya, Çin, Fransa, Böyük Britaniya və Almaniya) nümayəndə heyəti və İran tərəfindən İranın milli təhlükəsizlik üzrə Ali Şurasının rəhbəri Səid Cəlalinin rəhbərliyi altında nümayəndə heyəti arasında danışıqların ikinci raunduna ev sahibliyi edəcək.

Daimi inkişaf proqramının prioritetləri sahəsində Bağdad əsas məqsəd kimi səylərinin cəmləndirilməsini yeni minillikdə 2015-ci ildə ərəb inkişaf proqramlarının tezlaşdırilməsinin izlənməsində, ərəb regionunun yaşadığı inkişaf fonunda ərəb inkişaf fondlarının rolunun artırılmasında və dəyişikliklər yaşayan dövlətlərə yardım və dəstəyin göstərilməsində görür.

Son olaraq, Bağdadın İraq ən yeni siyasi tarixində böyük dönüç nöqtəsi olan praktik və həlledici şəkildə əldə edilməsinə səylərini yönəltdiyi İraq yeni siyasətinin əsas prinsiplərini aşağıdakı kimi cəmləşdirmək olar:

- Başqalarının işinə qarışmamazlıq və bunun müqabilində hər hansı bəhanə, tərəf, alət olursa olsun, digərlərinin İraqın daxili işlərinə qarışmasına yol verməmək. Dini, irqi, siyasi səbəb heç vaxt daxili işlərə qarışmaq üçün vasitə olmamalıdır. Bu, İraqın yeni konstitusiyasının təsbit etdiyi əsas maddələrdən biridir. Yeri gəlmişkən, burada İraq Hökumətinin qonşu İrana qarşı müxalif mövqedə duran "Mücahidi Əl-Xalq" təşkilatının elementləri yerləşən Əşrəf düçərgəsinin boşaldılması haqqında 2011-ci ilin sonunda qəbul etdiyi həlledici qərarına işarə etmək olar. Bu qərar İraq ərazilərində hər hansı bir terror təşkilatının olmasını və başqalarının daxili işlərinə qarışmağı qadağan edən iraq konstitusiyasının 7-ci və 8-ci maddələrinin tətbiqi olaraq qəbul edilmişdir;

- İraqın müstəqil qərarlar verməyinə heç bir dövlətin müdaxilə etməsinə icazə verilməməsi, onun ali milli maraqları fonunda sabit siyasi kursunda təsiri, suveren və müstəqil mövqeyi olan xarici siyasətdə siyasi qruplaşma və bloklar prinsipindən uzaqlaşma;
- Beynəlxalq və regional səviyyədə əməkdaşlıq və sülh şəraitində yaşamaq və dünyaya açıqlıq siyasəti yeritmək, şəriklər arasında ədavətin, narahatçılığın yaradılması, qardaşlar arasında etibarın itirilməsinə gətirib çıxaran işğalçılıq və sui-qəsdlər siyasətdən uzaq olmaq;
- Müəyyən hədəflərə nail olmaq üçün sirli qruplaşmalar və sui-qəsdlər nəzəriyyəsi siyasətinin tərəflər arasında etibarın itirilməsi və regional sabitlik və əmin-amanlığa təhlükə törətdiyindən bu siyasətdən uzaq olmaq;
- Bağdad siyasətdə böyük dövlətlərin hər hansı bir tabeçiliyini rədd edir və onlarla güc sahəsində hərbi bərbərliyi olmasa belə siyasi bərabərlik əsasında davranır. İraq müstəqil dövlətdir və qərarını heç bir tərəfdən müdaxiləyə və ya təsirə məruz qalmadan özü verir.

Ola bilsin ki, İraqın müasir siyasi kursunun əsas xüsusiyyətləri onun iqtisadi, ictimai və siyasi inkişaf sivilizasiyasındadır ki, bunların da ən bariz nümunələri aşağıdakı kimidir:

- Keçid dövrü ədalətinin yaradılması, dəstəklənməsi və qorunması;
- Hakimiyyətin sülh yolu ilə ötürülməsi;
- Qarşılaşdığı çətinliklərə baxmayaraq dövlətin yenidən qurulması, inkişaf etmiş dövlətlər sırasında yer tutması (İraq həqiqətən də, bu sahədə çox gözəl addımlar atmışdır. Əgər İraqın yerində belə siyasi və ictimai infraquruluşla, belə tərkibdə, belə regional şəraitdə olsaydı, heç də onun bu gün nail olduğu açıq-aydın və təsirli nailiyyətlər əldə edə bilməzdi). İraq dünyada ağıllı bəşəri potensial, böyük enerji sərvətləri və digər ilkin potensiala malik az saylı dövlətlərdəndir. Əgər ona inkişaf etməyə imkan yaradılarsa, bu, nəhəng inkişafı olacaq;
- İqtisadi cəhətdən inkişaf etmiş dövlətin yaradılması. Bu, İraq kimi gündəlik 3 milyon barrel neft ixrac edən dövlət üçün heç də çətin bir şey deyil. Əcnəbi potensialımızın müdrik investisiya planı sayəsində 2012-ci ildə bu rəqəm 10 milyon barrele çatmalıdır.

Son olaraq onu qeyd etmək istərdik ki, ümidimiz puç olmur, əksinə artır, İraq kimi 7 minillik tarixi olan ölkə mərhələ-mərhələ inkişaf edir, onun qədərinə ölmək yox, yaşamaq yazılmışdır.

THE EAST-WEST STRATEGIC CORRIDOR: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR AZERBAIJAN

Lulian Chifu*

Azerbaijan is facing now one of the most important windows of opportunity from this period of its independent history. Situated in the Caucasian Regions, on the shores of the Caspian Sea, rich in oil and gas offshore resources in a period of economic crisis in the World and a crisis of Sovereign Debts in Europe, at the end of military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan and in the framework of a controversial Iranian nuclear issue, Azerbaijan is able to offer the suitable conundrum of solutions for several key world players and to value its position and assets for increasing its own security.

Leverages of a “minor power”

There is a traditional approach in the realpolitik characteristic to the geopolitics and the policies of the countries from the post-Soviet space. The World is seen as organized on different tracks according to the “power” that each member state enshrines in itself and projects around it - be that in terms of Authority, Resources or Prestige, status and influence capabilities. In that respect, we do have Great powers – during the World Wars Period, than the two Superpowers – during the Cold War, now a Superpower and Hegemon – The US, after the fall of the Cold War, debatable in terms of military capabilities, economy or capacity of projection around the world versus the will to assume this status.

But in our very region, in the Euro-Atlantic reality, the relevance begins to be more and more that of the Regional powers – EU itself, Germany, France or Russia, Turkey and Iran. And, more and more, a special role has been attributed to the countries that do not assume any Regional power status, but succeeded in increasing their strategic profile, secured a regional important role, took advantage, at suitable moments, of their geography and resources in order to have arguments to claim the respect of their opinion, the respect for their national interests in their respective region, not talking about the respect of their independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty. Those are the minor powers.

In that theoretical framework, we can assess that Azerbaijan is such a minor power of the Caucasus Region, of the Caspian Region, of the Euro-Atlantic area. This posture is granted through

some very important assets that Baku can put on the table: huge resources and an important economy, with an important growth rate, military capabilities important for its dimensions and the needs to ensure its defence, a valuable policy of balanced approach to the World and a position to be valued on the East-West Strategic Corridor from EU-NATO to Central Asia via the Caucasus.

The East West Strategic Corridor – The Silk Road redivivus

First, the balanced approach is given by the relations that Azerbaijan defines towards the powers of the World and the powers of the region. It is in the best relations with US and NATO, with an important contribution to the theatres in Afghanistan, but also ensuring the transit corridor for troops, weapons and supplies for NATO troops.

At the same time, the East-West Corridor is designed for civil and commercial transport, and the trade old Silk Road is still in the minds of the principal beneficiaries of such a corridor, namely the European Union and countries from the Asian East, first and foremost India and China. Moreover, it is an important entering point and transit space for the Southern EU Energy Corridor, a strategic project of the post/modern integrated neighbour on the other side of the shores of the Black Sea.

It has an important relation with Russia, sharing common history and commercial ties, but also maintaining its individualism, defending its positions in key issues for national security in the delimitation of the economic exclusive zones in the Caspian Sea and the options for alternative routes and distribution networks for its oil and gas.

Second, a good relation and balanced approach is developed in relation with the regional powers. Iran is a difficult neighbour, with its controversial nuclear program, its approach to the politics of power, but Azerbaijan succeeded to have a balanced approach enabling it to maintain the link by road and train with the Nakichevan region and refraining from entering into the logic of confrontation even in worlds with Tehran. Moreover, Azerbaijan also keeps other leverages that are important for the bilateral relations.

* An associated professor at the National School for Political and Administrative Studies Bucharest and chaired the Conflict Prevention and Early Warning Center Bucharest. He is currently the Advisor of the Romanian President for Strategic Affairs, Security and Foreign Policy.

Azerbaijan is a Muslim country. This is an added value of first importance and relations with its brothers from Turkey as with other countries are encouraged by this reality, that could also help in opening markets usually closed to other countries, niches that could be taken by Baku's administration. An important role could be developed, as well, in the neighbouring Northern Caucasus region, in stabilizing it.

All those added values are used and could offer new opportunities in the existing situation at the international level, economic crisis, Arab Spring, state building after wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, projects to build alternative routes and alternative sources for the oil and gas towards industrialized Europe and possibilities to get from there transfer of technology for diversifying the economy.

Good neighbouring relations on the East West Corridor

The scheme of values strengths and opportunities could be completed by assessing Baku's relations with its neighbours East and West, along the Corridor. And there is also an added value to be used extensively. First, it is about its relations in the Caucasus region with Georgia. This good relation as well as several energy projects, investments in its neighbour and support is of great importance. BTC, BTE, the AGRI project are at the same time projects that link countries in the region and solve the equation of resources for the EU and NATO countries.

Whatever project will be chosen in the auction related to the 16 bcm of the Shah Deniz phase 2 would be of great help for the support to the Strategic Corridor of the EU. It will link Azerbaijan with Turkey and Romania, and it will bring oil and gas in the EU. And the SOCAR program of investments in both countries ensures the capacity of being involved in downstream operations, as well as, directly inside the EU and NATO.

Then we have the relations with countries on the other side of the Caspian Sea – Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. In spite of the unresolved issue of the delimitation of the exclusive zones with Turkmenistan, trade and energy relations are very good and Turkmen Oil is floating towards the West, as gas should arrive at the possibility of floating, in a Transcaspian pipeline. And the differences of view of other actors in the Caspian Region on the statute of the Sea, and the delimitation of the economic exclusive zones should not harm trade and energy extraction.

On the contrary, economic activity and businesses are good common projects that could settle unresolved conflicts in the area, as it did happen

not far, in the Black Sea, between Romania and Ukraine: both states agreed to solve the delimitation of the economic exclusive zones in 1997, through the bilateral agreement, in front of the Hague International Court if a solution could not be reached bilaterally in due time. And three years ago, the International Court offered a solution that solved an issue which could not be achieved in some 40 years during Communist times between the superpower Soviet Union and the minor power of the same Communist block, Socialist Romania. The two independent countries solved the issue and now take profit of the reserves of oil and gas in their respective offshore, that they couldn't exploit for 50 years and more.

On Nagorno-Karabakh: a stable position

Nagorno-Karabakh is the hardest security issue unsolved in the region by Azerbaijan. But its behaviour in the other most important subjects and taking opportunity of the advantages that the East-West Corridor can offer in transit, transportation – military and civilian – and Energy can fill the gap. Violence is not a solution and the existing format has its limitations. Moreover, the trial of moving in a 1 plus 2 format sponsored by Russia proved to be a dead end, and the return to the Minsk Group mediation should be the solution, by involving more partners that Azerbaijan has in the world and in the region.

The NATO summit in Bucharest stated, in its final declaration reinforced every summit until Lisbon, the support for political independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. Moreover, the NATO-Russia Council assumed, under the signature of the 27 plus one members (NATO member countries and Russian Federation) the support for all the Euro-Atlantic Countries' territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence. That is the most credible guarantee for a peaceful solution in Nagorno - Karabakh according to the stated principles, internationally accepted and reflected in the proposals for the Madrid principles.

The special role that Azerbaijan has in the transit of ISAF supplies to the operation Theatre in Afghanistan is of tremendous importance and could constitute the second strategic guarantee for the support of a solution based on the international law principles in Nagorno-Karabakh. And thirdly, the direct contribution of Azerbaijan with troops in Afghan operation and in other international missions is another brick in the solid establishment of an international support for a fair and stable solution in Nagorno-Karabakh, with respect to the principles established by the United Nations and OSCE Helsinki conference.

PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY: NO ASIAN CENTURY WITHOUT THE PAN-ASIAN INSTITUTION

Anis Bajrektarevic*

For over a decade, many of the relevant academic journals are full of articles prophesizing the 21st as the Asian century. The argument is usually based on the impressive economic growth, increased production and trade volumes as well as the booming foreign currency reserves and exports of many populous Asian nations (with nearly 1/3 of total world population inhabiting just two Asian countries). However, history serves as a powerful reminder by warning us that economically or/and demographically mighty gravity centers tend to expand into their peripheries, especially when the periphery is weaker by either category. It means that any (absolute or relative) shift in economic and demographic strength of one subject of intl. relations will inevitably put additional stress on the existing power equilibriums and constellations that support this balance in the particular theater (implicit or explicit structure).

Thus, what is the state of art of Asia's security structures? What is the existing capacity of preventive diplomacy and what instruments are at disposal when it comes to early warning/prevention, fact-finding, exchange mechanisms, reconciliation, capacity and confidence– building measures in the Asian theater?

What becomes apparent, nearly at the first glance, is the absence of any pan-Asian security/ multilateral structure. Prevailing security structures are bilateral and mostly asymmetric. They range from the clearly defined and enduring non-aggression security treaties, through less formal arrangements, up to the Ad hoc cooperation accords on specific issues. The presence of the multilateral regional settings is limited to a very few spots in the continent, and even then, they are rarely mandated with security issues in their declared scope of work. Another striking feature is that most of the existing bilateral structures have an Asian state on one side, and either peripheral or external protégé country on the other side (which makes them nearly per definition asymmetric). The examples are numerous: the US – Japan, the US – S. Korea, the US – Singapore, Russia – India, Australia – East Timor, Russia – North Korea, Japan – Malaysia, China – Pakistan, the US – Pakistan, China – Cambodia, the US – Saudi Arabia, Russia – Iran, China – Burma, India –

Maldives, Iran – Syria, N. Korea – Pakistan, etc.

Indeed, Asia today resonates a mixed echo of the European past. It combines features of the pre-Napoleonic, post-Napoleonic and the League-of-Nations Europe. What are the useful lessons from the European past? Well, there are a few, for sure. Bismarck accommodated the exponential economic, demographic and military growth as well as the territorial expansion of Prussia by skillfully architecturing and calibrating the complex networks of bilateral security arrangements of 19th century Europe. Like Asia today, it was not an institutionalized security structure of Europe, but a talented leadership exercising restraint and wisdom in combination with the quick assertiveness and fast military absorptions, concluded by the lasting endurance. However, as soon as the new Kaiser removed the Iron Chancellor (Bismarck), the provincial and backward-minded, insecure and militant Prussian establishment contested (by their own interpretations of the German's machtpolitik and weltpolitik policies) Europe and the world in two devastating world wars. That, as well as Hitler's establishment afterwards, simply did not know what to do with a powerful Germany.

The aspirations and constellations of some of Asia's powers today remind us also of the pre-Napoleonic Europe, in which a unified, universalistic block of the Holy Roman Empire was contested by the impatient challengers of the status quo. Such serious centripetal and centrifugal oscillations of Europe were not without grave deviations: as much as Cardinal Richelieu's and Jacobin's France successfully emancipated itself, the Napoleon III and pre-WWII France encircled, isolated itself, implicitly laying the foundation for the German attack.

Finally, the existing Asian regional settings also resemble the picture of the post-Napoleonic Europe: first and foremost, of Europe between the Vienna Congress of 1815 and the revolutionary year of 1848. At any rate, let us take a quick look at the most relevant regional settings in Asia.

By far, the largest Asian participation is with the APEC, an organization engulfing both sides of the Pacific Rim. Nevertheless, this is a forum for

* Geopolitics of Energy Editorial Member, Chairperson for Intl. Law and Global Pol. Studies, Vienna, Austria.

member economies (not of sovereign nations), a sort of a prep-com or waiting room for the WTO. To use the words of one senior Singapore diplomat who recently told me in Geneva the following: “what is your option here? ...to sign the FTA, side up with the US, login to FaceBook, and keep shopping on the internet happily ever after...”

Two other crosscutting settings, the OIC and NAM (the first with and the second without a permanent secretariat) represent the well-established political multilateral bodies. However, they are inadequate forums as neither of the two is (strictly) mandated with security issues. Although both trans-continental entities do have large memberships (being the 2nd and 3rd largest multilateral systems, right after the UN), neither covers the entire Asian political landscape – having important Asian countries outside the system or opposing it.

Further on, one should mention the KEDO (Nuclear) and the Iran-related Contact (Quartet/P-5+1) group. In both cases, the issues dealt with are indeed security related, but they are more an asymmetric approach to deter and contain a single country by the larger front of peripheral states that are opposing a particular security policy, in this case, of North Korea and of Iran. Same was with the short-lived SEATO pact defense treaty organization for SEA which was essentially dissolved as soon as the imminent threat from communism was slowed down and successfully contained within the French Indochina.

If some of the settings are reminiscent of the pre-Napoleonic Europe, the SCO and GCC remind us of the post-Napoleonic Europe and its Alliance of the Eastern Conservative courts (of Metternich). Both arrangements were created on a pretext of a common external (ideological and geopolitical) threat, on a shared status quo security consideration. Asymmetric GCC was an

externally induced setting by which an American key Middle East ally Saudi Arabia gathered the grouping of the Arabian Peninsula monarchies. It has served a dual purpose; originally, to contain the leftist Nasseristic pan-Arabism which was introducing a republican type of egalitarian government in the Middle Eastern theater. It was also (after the 1979 revolution) an instrument to counter-balance the Iranian influence in the Gulf and wider Middle East. The response to the spring 2011 turmoil in the Middle East (including the deployment of the Saudi troops in Bahrain, and including the analysis of the role of influential Qatar-based and GCC-backed Al Jazeera TV network) is the best proof of the very nature of the GCC mandate. The SCO is internally induced and more symmetric setting. Essentially, it came into existence through a strategic Sino-Russian rapprochement¹ (based, for the first time in modern history, on parity) to deter external aspirants (the US, Japan, Korea, India, Turkey and Saudi Arabia) and to keep the resources, territory, present socio-political culture and political regime in the Central Asia, Tibet heights and the Xinjiang Uighur province in line.

The next to consider is the Indian sub-continent's grouping SAARC. This organization has a well-established mandate, well staffed and versed Secretariat. However, the Organization is strikingly reminiscent of the League of Nations. The League is remembered as an altruistic setup which repeatedly failed to adequately respond to the security quests of its members as well as to the challenges and pressures of parties that were kept out of the system (e.g. Russia until well into the 1930s and the US remaining completely outside the system, and in the case of the SAARC surrounding; China, Saudi Arabia and the US). The SAARC is practically a hostage of mega confrontation of its two largest members, both confirmed nuclear powers; India and Pakistan. These two challenge each other geopolitically and ideologically (existence of one is a negation of the existence of the other; the religiously

¹ Analyzing the Sino-Soviet and post-Soviet-Sino relations tempts me to compare it with the Antic Roman Empire. The monolithic block has entered its fragmentation on a seemingly rhetoric, clerical question – who would give the exclusive interpretation of the holy text: Rome or Constantinople. Clearly, the one who holds the monopoly on the interpretation has the ideological grip, which can easily be translated into a strategic advantage. It was Moscow insisting that the Soviet type of communism was the only true and authentic communism. A great schism put to an end the lasting theological (but also geopolitical) conflict in the antique Roman theatre. The Sino-Soviet schism culminated with the ideological and geopolitical emancipation of China (especially after the Nixon recognition of Beijing China). Besides the ideological cleavages, the socio-economic and political model of the Roman Empire was heavily contested from the 3rd century onwards. The Western Roman Empire rigidly persisted to any structural change, unable to adapt. It eroded and soon thereafter vanished from the political map. The Eastern Empire successfully reformed and Byzantium endured (as a viable socio-economic and political model) for another 1,000 years. Feeling the need for an urgent reshape of the declining communist system, both leaders Gorbachev and Deng Xiaoping contemplated reforms. Gorbachev eventually fractured the Soviet Union with glasnost and perestroika. Deng managed China successfully. Brave, accurate and important argumentation comes from diplomat and prolific author Kishore Mahbubani (The New Asian Hemisphere, 2008, page 44-45). Mahbubani claims that Gorbachev handed over the Soviet empire and got nothing in return, while Deng understood “the real success of Western strength and power ... China did not allow the students protesting in Tiananmen Square”. Consequently, Deng drew a sharp and decisive line to avoid the fate of Russia, and allowed only perestroika. China has survived, even scoring the unprecedented prosperity in only the last two decades. Russia has suffered a steep decline in the aftermath of the loss of its historic empire (including the high suicide and crime rates as well as the severe alcohol problems). Gorbachev himself moved to the US, and one vodka brand labels his name.

determined nationhood of Pakistan is a negation of multiethnic India and vice versa). Additionally, the SAARC although internally induced is an asymmetric organization. It is not only the size of India, but also its position: centrality of that country makes SAARC practically impossible to operate in any field without the direct consent of India (be it commerce, communication, politics or security). For a serious advancement of multilateralism, mutual trust, a will to compromise and achieve a common denominator through active co-existence is the key. It is hard to build a common course of action around the disproportionately big and centrally positioned member (which would escape the interpretation as containment by the big or assertiveness of its center by the smaller, peripheral members).

Finally, there is an ASEAN – a grouping of 10 Southeast Asian nations², exercising the balanced multi-vector policy (based on the non-interference principle) internally and externally. This, Jakarta/Indonesia headquartered³ organization has a dynamic past and an ambitious current charter. It is an internally induced and relatively symmetric arrangement with the strongest members placed around its geographic center (like in case of the EU equilibrium with Germany-France/Britain-Italy/Poland-Spain geographically balancing each other). Situated on the geographic axis of the southern flank of the Asian landmass, the so-called growth triangle of Thailand-Malaysia-Indonesia represents the core of the ASEAN not only in economic and communication terms but also by its political leverage. The EU-like ASEAN Community Road Map (for 2015) will absorb most of the Organization's energy⁴. However, the ASEAN has managed to open its forums for the 3+3 group/s, and could be seen in the long run as a cumulus setting towards the wider pan-Asian forum in future.

Before closing this brief overview, let us mention two recently inaugurated informal forums, both based on the external calls for a burden sharing. One, with a jingoistic-coined name by the Wall Street bankers⁵ - BRI(I)C/S, so far includes two important Asian economic, demographic and political powerhouses (India and China), and one peripheral (Russia). Indonesia, Turkey, Saudi

Arabia, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Iran are a few additional Asian countries whose national pride and pragmatic interests are advocating a BRIC membership. The G-20, the other informal forum, is also assembled on the Ad hoc (pro bono) basis following the need of the G-7 to achieve a larger approval and support for its monetary (currency exchange accord) and financial (austerity) actions introduced in the aftermath of (still unsettled) financial crisis. Nevertheless, the BRIC and G-20 have not provided the Asian participating states either with the more leverage in the Bretton Woods institutions (besides a burden sharing), or have they helped to tackle the indigenous Asian security problems. Appealing for the national pride, however, both informal gatherings may divert the necessary resources and attention to Asian states from their pressing domestic, pan-continental issues.

Yet, besides the UN system machinery of the Geneva-based Disarmament committee, the UN Security Council, OPEW and IAEA, even the ASEAN Asians (as the most multilateralized Asians) have no suitable standing forum to tackle and solve their security issues. An organization similar to the Council of Europe or the OSCE is still far from emerging on Asian soil.

Our history warns. Nevertheless, it also provides a hope: The pre-CSCE (pre-Helsinki) Europe was indeed a dangerous place to live in. The sharp geopolitical and ideological default line was passing through the very heart of Europe, cutting it into halves. The southern Europe was practically sealed off by notorious dictatorships; in Greece (Colonel Junta), Spain (Franco) and Portugal (Salazar), with Turkey witnessing several of its governments toppled by the secular and omnipotent military establishment, with inverted Albania and a (non-Europe minded) non-allied, Tito's Yugoslavia. Two powerful instruments of the US military presence (NATO) and of the Soviets (Warsaw pact) in Europe were keeping huge standing armies, enormous stockpiles of conventional as well as the ABC weaponry and delivery systems, practically next to each other. By far and large, European borders were not mutually recognized. Essentially, the west rejected to even recognize many of the

² The membership might be extended in the future to East Timor and Papua New Guinea.

³ Symbolic or not, the ASEAN HQ is located less than 80 miles away from the place of the historical, the NAM-precursor, the Asian-African Conference of Bandung 1955.

⁴ Comparisons pose an inaccuracy risks as history often finds a way to repeat itself, but optimism finally prevails. Tentatively, we can situate the ASEAN today, where the pre-Maastricht EU was between the Merge Treaty and the Single European Act.

⁵ The acronym was originally coined by Jim O'Neill, a chief global economist of Goldman Sachs, in his 2001 document report: "Building Better Global Economic BRICs". This document was elaborating on countries which may provide the West with the socially, economically and politically cheap primary commodities and undemanding labor force, finally suggesting to the West to balance such trade by exporting its high-priced final products in return. The paper did not foresee either creation of any BRIC grouping or the nomadic change of venue places of its periodic meetings. O'Neill initially tipped Brazil, Russia, India and China, although at recent meetings South Africa was invited (BRICS) with the pending Indonesia (BRIICS).

Eastern European (Soviet dominated/installed) governments.

Currently in Asia, there is hardly a single state which has no territorial dispute within its neighborhood. From the Middle East, Caspian and Central Asia, Indian sub-continent, mainland Indochina or Archipelago SEA, Tibet, South China Sea and the Far East, many countries are suffering numerous green and blue border disputes. The South China Sea solely counts for over a dozen territorial disputes – in which mostly China presses peripheries to break free from the long-lasting encirclement. These moves are often interpreted by the neighbors as dangerous assertiveness. On the top of that Sea resides a huge economy and insular territory in a legal limbo – Taiwan, which waits for a time when the pan-Asian and intl. agreement on how many Chinas Asia should have, gains a wide and lasting consensus.

Unsolved territorial issues, sporadic irredentism, conventional armament, nuclear ambitions, conflicts over exploitation of and access to the marine biota, other natural resources including fresh water access and supply are posing enormous stress on external security, safety and stability in Asia. Additional stress comes from the newly emerging environmental concerns, that are representing nearly absolute security threats (not only to the tiny Pacific nation of Tuvalu⁶, but also) to the Maldives, Bangladesh, Cambodia, parts of Thailand, of Indonesia, of Kazakhstan and of the Philippines, etc⁷. All this combined with uneven economic and demographic dynamics⁸ of the continent are portraying Asia as a real powder keg. It is absolutely inappropriate to compare the size of Asia and Europe (the latter being rather an

extension of a huge Asian continental landmass, a sort of western Asian peninsula) but the interstate maneuvering space is comparable. Yet, the space between the major powers of post-Napoleonic Europe was as equally narrow for any maneuver as is the space today for any security maneuver of Japan, China, India, Pakistan, Iran and the like.

Let us also take a brief look at the peculiarities of the nuclear constellations in Asia. Following the historic analogies; it echoes the age of the American nuclear monopoly and the years of Russia's desperation to achieve the parity.

Besides holding huge stockpiles of conventional weaponry and numerous standing armies, Asia is a home of four (plus peripheral Russia and Israel) of the nine known nuclear powers (declared and undeclared). Only China and Russia are parties to the NPT (N. Korea walked away in 2003, whereas India and Pakistan both confirmed nuclear powers declined to sign the Treaty). Asia is also the only continent on which nuclear weaponry has been deployed.

As is well known, the peak of the Cold War was marked by the mega geopolitical and ideological confrontation of the two nuclear superpowers (whose stockpiles by far outnumbered the stockpiles of all the other nuclear powers combined). However enigmatic, mysterious and incalculable to each other⁹, the Americans and Soviets were on opposite sides of the globe, had no territorial disputes, and no record of direct armed conflicts.

Insofar, the Asian nuclear constellation is additionally specific as each of the holders has

⁶ Tuvalu, a country composed of low-laying atoll islands, faces an imminent complete loss of state territory. This event would mark a precedent in the theory of intl. law – that one country suffers a complete geographic loss of its territory.

⁷ Detailed environmental impact risk assessments (including the no-go zones) are available in the CRESTA reports. The CRESTA Organization is powered by the Swiss RE as a consortium of the leading insurance and reinsurance companies.

⁸ The intriguing intellectual debate is currently heating up the western world. Issues are fundamental: Why is science turned into religion? (Practiced economy is based on the over 200-years old liberal theory of Adam Smith and over 300-years old philosophy of Hobbes and Locke – basically, frozen and rigidly canonized into a dogmatic exegesis. Scientific debate is replaced by a blind obedience.) Why is religion turned into political ideology (religious texts are misinterpreted and ideologically misused in Europe, ME, Asia, Americas and Africa)? Why is the (secular or religious) ethics turned from the bio-centric comprehension into the anthropocentric environmental ignorance? The resonance of these vital debates is gradually reaching Asian elites. No one can yet predict the range and scope of their responses, internally or externally. One is certain; Asia understood that the global (economic) integration can not be a substitute for any viable development strategy. Globalization, as experienced in Asia and observed elsewhere, did not offer a shortcut to development, even less to social cohesion, environmental needs, domestic employment, educational uplift of the middle class and general public health.

⁹ The Soviet Union was enveloped in secrecy (a political culture, eminent in many large countries, which the Soviets inherited from the Tsarist Russia and further enhanced) – a feature that puzzled Americans. It was the US cacophony of open, nearly exhibitionistic policy debates that puzzled Russians – and made both sides unable to predict the moves of the other one. The Soviets were confused by the omnipresence of overt political debate in the US, and the Americans were confused by the absence of any political debate in the USSR. Americans well knew that the real power resided outside the government, in the Soviet Politburo. Still, it was like a black-box (to use a vivid Kissinger allegory), things were coming in and getting out, but nobody figured out what was happening inside. Once the particular decision had been taken, the Soviets implemented it persistently in a heavy-handed and rigid way. Usually, the policy alternation/adjustment was not coming before the personal changes at the top of the SU Politburo – events happening so seldom. On the other hand, the Soviets were confused by the equidistant constellation of the US executive, legislative and judicial branches (for the Soviet taste, too often changed), the chaotic setup of dozens of intelligence and other enforcement agencies, the role of the media and the public, and the influential lobby groups that crosscut the US bipartisanship – all which participated in the decision prep and making process. Even when brokered, the US actions were often altered or replaced in zigzagging turns. The US was unable to grasp where the Communist Party ended and the USSR government started. By the same token, the Soviets were unable to figure out where the corporate America ended and the US government started. Paradoxically enough, the political culture of one prevented it from comprehending and predicting the actions of the other one. What was the logical way for one was absolutely unthinkable and illogical for the other.

a history of hostilities – armed frictions and confrontations over unsolved territorial disputes along the shared borders, all combined with the intensive and lasting ideological rivalries. The Soviet Union had bitter transborder armed frictions with China over the demarcation of its long land border. China has fought a war with India and has acquired a significant territorial gain. India has fought four mutually extortive wars with Pakistan over Kashmir and other disputed bordering regions. Finally, the Korean peninsula has witnessed the direct military confrontations of Japan, USSR, Chinese as well as the US on its very soil, and remains a split nation under a sharp ideological divide.

On the western edge of the Eurasian continent, neither France, Britain, Russia nor the US had a (recent) history of direct armed conflicts. They do not even share the land borders.

Finally, only India and now post-Soviet Russia have a strict and full civilian control over its military and the nuclear deployment authorization. In the case of North Korea and China, it is in the hands of an unpredictable and non-transparent communist leadership – meaning, it resides outside democratic, governmental decision-making. In Pakistan, it is completely in the hands of a politically omnipresent military establishment. Pakistan has lived under a direct military rule for over half of its existence as an independent state.

What eventually kept the US and the USSR from deploying nuclear weapons was the dangerous and costly struggle called: “mutual destruction assurance”. Already by the late 1950s, both sides achieved parity in the number and type of nuclear warheads as well as in the number and precision of their delivery systems. Both sides produced enough warheads, delivery systems’ secret depots and launching sites to amply survive the first impact and to maintain a strong second-strike capability¹⁰. Once comprehending that neither the preventive nor preemptive nuclear strike would bring a decisive victory but would actually trigger the final global nuclear holocaust and ensure total mutual destruction, the Americans and the Soviets have achieved a fear-equilibrium

through the hazardous deterrence. Thus, it was not an intended parity, but the non-intended MAD (with its tranquilizing effect of nuclear weaponry, if possessed in sufficient quantities and impenetrable configurations) that brought a bizarre sort of pacifying stability between two confronting superpowers.

As noted, the nuclear stockpiles in Asia are considerably modest¹¹. The number of warheads, launching sites and delivery systems is not sufficient and sophisticated enough to offer the second strike capability. That fact seriously compromises stability and security: preventive or preemptive N-strike against a nuclear or non-nuclear state could be contemplated as decisive, especially in South Asia and on the Korean peninsula, not to mention the Middle East¹².

Close geographic proximities of Asian nuclear powers means shorter flight time of warheads, which ultimately gives a very brief decision-making period to engaged adversaries. Besides a deliberate, a serious danger of an accidental nuclear war is therefore evident.

One of the greatest thinkers and humanists of the 20th century, Erich Fromm wrote: “...*man can only go forward by developing (his) reason, by finding a new harmony...*”¹³

There is certainly a long road from vision and wisdom to a clear political commitment and accorded action. However, once it is achieved, the operational tools are readily at disposal. The case of Helsinki Europe is very instructive. To be frank, it was the over-extension of the superpowers who contested one another all over the globe, that eventually brought them to the negotiation table. Importantly, it was also a constant, resolute call of the European public that alerted governments on both sides of the default line. Once the political considerations were settled, the technicalities gained momentum: there was – at first – mutual pan-European recognition of borders which tranquilized tensions literally overnight. Politico-military cooperation was situated in the so-called first Helsinki basket, which included the joint military inspections, exchange mechanisms, constant

¹⁰ As Waltz rightfully concludes: “Conventional weapons put a premium on striking first to gain the initial advantage and set the course of the war. Nuclear weapons eliminate this premium. The initial advantage is insignificant...” due to the second strike capability of both belligerents. (‘The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed’ by Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth N. Waltz, 2003, p. 112).

¹¹ It is assumed that Pakistan has as few as 20 combat/launching ready fission warheads, India is believed to have some 60, and Korea (if any, not more than) 2-3 only. Even China, considered as the senior nuclear state, has not more than 20 ICBM.

¹² Israel (as a non-declared nuclear power) is believed to have as many as 200 low-powered fission nuclear bombs. A half of it is deliverable by the mid-range missile Jericho II, planes and mobile (hide and relocate) launchers. Iran successfully tested the precision of its mid-range missile and keeps ambitiously working on the long-range generation of missiles. At the same time, Iran may well have acquired some vital dual-use (so far, peaceful purpose) nuclear technologies. There is a seed of nuclear ambition all over the Middle East (with Saudi Arabia and Turkey as the least shy ones).

¹³ “The Art of Loving”, Erich Fromm, 1956, page 76. Fromm wrote it at about the time of the Bandung conference.

information flow, early warning instruments, confidence-building measures mechanism, and the standing panel of state representatives (the so-called Permanent Council). Further on, an important clearing house was situated in the so-called second basket – the forum that links the economic and environmental issues, items so pressing in Asia at the moment.

Admittedly, the III OSCE Basket was a source of many controversies in the past years, mostly over the interpretation of mandates. However, the new wave of nationalism (often replacing the fading communism), the emotional charges and residual fears of the past, the huge ongoing formation of the middle class in Asia (whose passions and affiliations will inevitably challenge established elites domestically and question their policies internationally), and a related search for a new social consensus – all that could be successfully tackled by some sort of an Asian III basket. Clearly, further socio-economic growth in Asia is impossible without the creation and mobilization of a strong middle class – a segment of society which when appearing anew on the socio-political horizon is traditionally very exposed and vulnerable to political misdeeds and disruptive shifts. At any rate, there are several OSCE observing nations from Asia¹⁴; from Thailand to Korea and Japan (with Indonesia, a nation that currently considers

joining the forum). They are clearly benefiting from the participation¹⁵.

Consequently, the largest continent should consider the creation of its own comprehensive pan-Asian multilateral mechanism. In doing so, it can surely rest on the vision and spirit of Helsinki. On the very institutional setup, Asia can closely revisit the well-envisioned SAARC and ambitiously empowered ASEAN¹⁶ fora. By examining these two regional bodies, Asia can find and skillfully calibrate the appropriate balance between widening and deepening of the (security) mandate of such future multilateral organization – given the number of states as well as the gravity of the pressing socio-political, environmental and politico-military challenges.

In the age of unprecedented success and the unparalleled prosperity of Asia, an indigenous multilateral pan-Asian arrangement presents itself as an opportunity. Contextualizing Hegel's famous saying that "freedom is...an insight into necessity" let me close by stating that a need for the domesticated pan-Asian organization warns by its urgency too.

Clearly, there is no emancipation of the continent; there is no Asian century, without the pan-Asian multilateral setting.

¹⁴ The so-called OSCE-Asian Partners for Cooperation are: Japan (1992), Korea (1994), Thailand (2000), Afghanistan (2003), Mongolia (2004) and Australia (2009). Within the OSCE quarters, particularly Thailand and Japan enjoy a reputation of being very active.

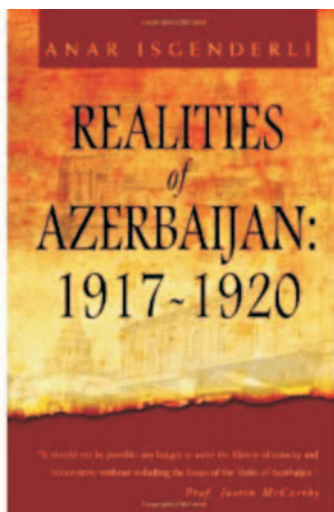
¹⁵ It is likely to expect that five other ASEAN countries, residentially represented in Vienna, may formalize their relation with OSCE in a due time. The same move could be followed by the Secretariats of both SAARC and ASEAN.

¹⁶ In Europe and in Asia (even when being at the HQ in Jakarta), I am often asked to clarify my (overly) optimistic views on the ASEAN future prospects. The ASEAN as well as the EU simply have no alternative but to survive and turn successful (although currently suffering many deficiencies and being far from optimized multilateral mechanisms). Any alternative to the EU is a grand accommodation of either France or Germany with Russia – meaning a return to Europe of the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries – namely, perpetual wars and destructions. Any alternative to the ASEAN would be an absorptive accommodation of particular ASEAN member states to either Japan or China or India – meaning fewer large blocks on a dangerous collision course. Thus, paradoxically enough in cases of both the EU and of ASEAN, it is not (only) the inner capacitation but the external constellations that make me optimistic about their respective success.

YENİ NƏŞRLƏR – NEW PUBLICATIONS – НОВЫЕ ИЗДАНИЯ

"REALITIES OF AZERBAIJAN: 1917 - 1920"

Anar İsgenderli



Azərbaycan tarixinin 1917-1920-ci illər dövründən bəhs edən kitabda – ermənilərin Cənubi Qafqazda məskunlaşması, Osmanlı dövləti ərazisində yaşamaı, 1918-ci ildə Azərbaycanın müxtəlif bölgələrində (Bakı, Şamaxı, Quba, Lənkəran, Zəngəzur, İrəvan və s.) yerli türk əhalisinə və digər xalqlara qarşı erməni silahlı quldur birləşmələri tərəfindən həyata keçirilən kütləvi qırğınlar, Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyətinin yaranması və fəaliyyəti, Sovet Rusiyasının müdaxiləsi və müvafiq dövrə aid digər hadisə və proseslərdən bəhs olunur. Tarix elmləri doktoru, professor Anar İsgəndərlinin müəllifi olduğu kitab ingilis dilində, Amerika Birləşmiş Ştatlarında nəşr edilmişdir.

YENİ NƏŞRLƏR – NEW PUBLICATIONS – НОВЫЕ ИЗДАНИЯ