



Global Horizons

President Aliyev's Visit to the USA

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AZERBAIJAN
INTERNATIONAL

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Global Horizons

President Aliyev's Visit to the USA

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Global Horizons

Just five years ago, the history of the world was being shaped by two superpower vying to split the world into two artificial camps. Both were convinced for their survival depended upon building complex defense systems to guard against invasion by the other.

But in 1991 the Soviet Union collapsed, and the United States was left as the world's sole superpower. Azerbaijan and the 14 other republics which had been dominated by the Soviet system for more than 70 years were free to begin to forge their own independent relations with the international community.

In this respect, Azerbaijanis have great expectations—they have set their sights on global horizons. Inspired by the fact that President Heydar Aliyev's visit to the United States (July 27-August 2, 1997) brings to more than 20 major countries that he has personally visited since taking office in October 1993.

President Aliyev is the first to admit that he is seeking the support from the United States and the international community to bolster his own country's independence against those who would seek to strangle this newly-petited freedom.

But the benefits of its relationship between Azerbaijan and the United States are not one-sided. A new reality is dawning on superpower politicians realize that their survival now depends upon mutual cooperation with energy-rich countries like Azerbaijan and other former Soviet republics. Securing access to these energy resources is their only guarantee to continued supremacy in the 21st century. And only if countries like Azerbaijan succeed will they be able to succeed its own.

The warmth and respect bestowed upon President Aliyev by President Bill Clinton and other high-ranking U.S. officials is indicative of the idea that the United States places on its new relationship with Azerbaijan—a country that few politicians even knew where to locate on the world's map less than five years ago.

In Azerbaijan, there is a long-standing tradition of carrying messengers back to the people one town. President Aliyev brought back signed documents that promise to set the political and economic course between Azerbaijan and America for decades to come. For the first time in the history of the U.S., three major oil contracts worth \$6 billion in investment were signed in the White House.

This publication (available both in English and Azeri Latin) provides a glimpse of President Aliyev's U.S. visit to the United States beginning in New York and continuing through Washington, D.C., Houston and Chicago. On the uppermost pages, the photos document the chronology of his memorable trip; on the left-hand pages, we have sponsored contemporary scenes of Azerbaijan. Our deep appreciation to the companions who have sponsored this project and, finally, helped preserve a glimpse of this historical occasion for generations to come.

Editor of Azerbaijan International

Betty Stein



President Aliyev's Itinerary

July 27, 1997 (New York)

- Arrives from Baku via London
- Javier Solana, Secretary General of NATO

July 28 (New York)

- *Wall Street Journal* (George Mallory, Melissa Kikpatrick and Mary O'Grady)
- Bill Richardson, US Ambassador to the UN
- UN Signing Ceremony - Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)
- Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General
- Representatives of the 15 states of the UN Security Council
- Luncheon with *New York Times* (Philip Taubman, Tom Rosenzweig, Karl Meyer and James Greenfield)
- Henry Kissinger (Secretary of State to Clinton)
- Dinner - Cocktails of the Presidents of Jewish Organizations in the US

July 29 (New York/Washington, DC)

- Breakfast - US Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce and the Business Council for International Understanding
- Assembly - Permanent Representatives of the UN (118 countries)
- Luncheon with the presidents of humanitarian organizations rendering assistance in Azerbaijan
- Flight to Washington, DC: Interview with Philadelphia inquirer (Therly Rubin) and Journal of Commerce (Michael Iselyev)
- Meeting with Azerbaijan Consulate at the Blair House
- Official reception at the Willard Intercontinental Hotel hosted by Ambassador Hediye Pashayeva

July 30 (Washington, DC)

- Breakfast meetings with prominent policy thinkers which included Richard Armitage (former Coordinator for US assistance to the Newly Independent States), Zsigmond Szegedi (National Security Advisor to Carter) and now with the Center for Strategic and International Studies; Richard Cheney (Secretary of Defense in Bush); Steve Elgotz (New York Times Washington); George Ann Carter (former USA Ambassador); Alexander May (Secretary of State to Reagan); Anthony Jaki (former National Security Advisor to Clinton); Gaili Powell (former Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Clinton); Steve Rasmussen (Washington Post); James Schlesinger (Secretary of Defense to Nixon) and Secretary of Energy to Carter) and then Secretary of National Security Advisor to Bush)
- Open House at Georgetown University sponsored by the US - Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce
- At Congress, Commission testimony in Azerbaijan such as House Appropriations and International Relations; also meetings with Speaker of House Newt Gingrich, Senator Robert Byrd, Senate Majority leader and last but not others
- Luncheon sponsored by the US Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce at the National Building Museum. Briefing speakers included US Secretary of Energy Federico Passo and US Ambassador to Azerbaijan Richard Goodrick.



Top:
Azerbaijan's officials meeting the President Aliyev off an jet trip to the United States. Shaking hands goodbye with Baker's cousin Robert Abdurakhmanov.

Middle:
President Aliyev being officially welcomed in the United States.

Bottom:
Baker's junior's president Ben Netanyahu greet President Aliyev. Baker's companion, Tam Rubin, looks on (left).



July 31 (Washington, DC)

- Arlington Cemetery
- William Cohen, US Secretary of Defense
- US Export-Import Bank
- US Secretary of Treasury Robert Rubin, US Secretary of Energy Federico Pena and CIA Director George Tenet
- Session addressing the U.S. business community sponsored by the US Department of Commerce
- World Bank with Janina Wolterschell
- Dinner hosted by Federico Pena

August 1 (Washington, DC-Houston)

- Meeting with US President Bill Clinton at the White House
- Speeches by Clinton and Aliyev
- Contact to continue official dialogue about energy and business signed by US Secretary of Energy Federico Pena and Azerbaijan Minister of Foreign Affairs Hasan Hasanov
- Chevron-SOCAR contract: Absheron prospect with SOCAR's VP Ilham Aliyev and President of Chevron Division Petroleum Richard Matzke
- Mobil-SOCAR contract: Oguz prospect with SOCAR's President Natiq Aliyev and President of Mobil's New Exploration and Producing Venues and Global Exploration Bill Songgans
- Exxon-SOCAR contract: Nakhchivan prospect with SOCAR's VP Ilham Aliyev and Exxon Venues's President Terry Koonce
- Amoco-SOCAR Memorandum of Understanding: Izam prospect with SOCAR's President Natiq Aliyev and Amoco-Eurasia's President Chuck Pitzer
- Speeches by US Vice President Al Gore and President Aliyev
- Private session with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright
- Washington Times
- Flight to Houston

August 2 (Houston)

- Robert Latham, Houston's Mayor (Mayor's penthouse)
- Houston Chronicle and CH & Gas
- Meetings with CEOs and leaders of Frontier, Chevron, Petrosol, Canoco and Unocal (Presidential hotel suite)
- Banquet sponsored by the Greater Houston Partnership and the US-Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce

August 3 (Houston-Chicago)

- Breakfast with Houston's Sister City Association
- Meetings with CEOs and leaders of Exxon, BP, Inceac, Arco, Shell and Mobil (Presidential hotel suite)
- Houston's Medical Center tour with special focus on the Centers for Blood and Transfusion plus special session with world-renowned heart surgeon, Dr. Michael DeBakey
- Flight to Chicago. Interview with Azerbaijan International (Betty Blair)

August 4 (Chicago)

- Chicago Tribune interview Tyler and Don Wygill
- Meetings with CEOs of Amoco, INEC, Motorola and Caterpillar
- Luncheon by Mid-America Committee (sponsored by Amoco, Motorola and Caterpillar)
- Meeting with Azerbaijan Consulate
- Visit of the 9/11 Information Rescue Center (Woodsall)

August 5 (Chicago)

- William Daley, US Secretary of Commerce
- Chicago Stock Exchange
- Breakfast luncheon cruise on Lake Erie sponsored by Amoco
- Flight back to Tokyo (via London)



Fig.
View from the United Nations Plaza Hotel where the President stayed (New York).

Figure
The gun and "movement to hunt of United Nations (New York).



President Aliyev's Speech Georgetown University

President Heydar Aliyev gave the following address at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., on July 29, 1997. It was his first open forum of his first official visit to the United States. The event was sponsored by the U.S. Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce and was attended by more than 300 people. This is an edited transcript of President Aliyev's speech which he delivered without the use of notes.

I have great respect for this university as it has done so much to foster and promote foreign policy throughout the world. Many great statesmen have either graduated from here or taught here. I was very lucky that President Bill Clinton graduated from Georgetown and that Mrs. Madeleine Albright, the U.S. Secretary of State, has taught here as a professor. I could go on listing many dignitaries who are affiliated with the university. Therefore, it is a great honor for me to speak to you today at this institution which has such a rich history. I would like to express my appreciation to everyone who has been involved with organizing this session.

Well, I trust five of you have come here to learn more about Azerbaijan and to hear my views about its development. Let me begin by briefly providing some background. Azerbaijan is one of the oldest countries of the world. We have a long history and ancient culture and have contributed immensely to the world's culture and science through literary, art and scientific work.

But during this past century, we have had to cope with many difficult problems. It was not until 1918 that Azerbaijan was finally able to gain its independence for the first time, becoming the first democratic nation in the East. This independence was short-lived, and in 1920, the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan collapsed, and a socialist communist regime was established which lasted for 70 years (until 1991). Beginning in 1992, Azerbaijan began its course of building relationships with international organizations such as the United Nations and with many countries in the world.

In this regard, Azerbaijan pays great importance to its relations with the United States of America. The United States was one of the first nations in the world to recognize the independence of Azerbaijan. The main purpose of my visit is to bring Azerbaijan-U.S. relations to a new level—a higher level of partnership. You are aware that I have come to the United States upon the official invitation of the President of the United States of America. This is the first such official visit of a president from independent Azerbaijan.

Since our proclamation of independence, Azerbaijan has decided to build a democratic state based on the rule of law. We have been pursuing this policy with determination. Unfortunately, we have faced many problems and difficulties in carrying out this policy. Sometimes these difficulties have created impediments, but they have never set us back from the direction that we have chosen.

I would like to take this opportunity, once again, to announce that Azerbaijan has chosen its strategic policy to build up a democratic free society. We are pursuing this path and will continue to do so. We are capable of overcoming barriers, and we will spare no efforts to achieve this goal. We are progressing forward to achieve these goals just as regular forces in Azerbaijan. One to our major impediments, we have been



His Excellency Heydar Aliyev of the United Nations (July 28, 1997).

Author: The Azerbaijan press team which accompanied the president on the first U.S. official visit in front of the United Nations Building (New York).



A view of the United States park.



Communist Party.

is the slow in carrying out some of our economic reforms. We only began implementing these reforms in 1994, but since then we have been carrying them out fairly rapidly. The reasons why we have been slow relate to events that immediately preceded our independence. Specifically, in 1993 when we were still part of the former Soviet Union, neighboring Armenia launched a campaign of aggression against us with the intention of separating an integral part of Azerbaijan, namely Nagorno-Karabakh, and uniting it with Armenia.

The result of this aggression led to military battles, and many people lost their lives. Over three million, 30 percent of our territory is militarily occupied by Armenia. This includes the region of Nagorno-Karabakh and seven other provinces outside of Nagorno-Karabakh. This occupation has resulted in more than one million citizens of Azerbaijan being evicted and ousted from their homes. One million of our people have become refugees and have had to live in less than adequate and unsatisfactory health circumstances.

Now, imagine that the total population of Azerbaijan is seven million people. Out of seven million, one million of our people are refugees. The fact that we have one million refugees has made an incredibly negative impact both on our national economy, as well as our social life.

Another reason why we started economic reforms so late was that there was no political stability in the country. Unfortunately, when we proclaimed our independence during the Soviet regime, various armed groups came up in Azerbaijan and fought among themselves for power. As a result, there the government was overthrown by coup d'état. This obviously has had a very negative impact on the development of Azerbaijan and in our ability to carry out reforms. These factors have acted as a barrier—an impediment for us.

But we have overcome all these difficulties, and today in Azerbaijan we have an attractive stable political and social situation. As I've already mentioned, Azerbaijan is advancing on the path to a market economy. Azerbaijan has been carrying out economic reforms. We have already achieved results. Our privatization program is underway. Land reforms and laws privatizing land and transferring it to private hands has been already passed. Great opportunities have been created by entrepreneurship in Azerbaijan and for the private sector. In this regard, the doors of Azerbaijan have been opened to all the countries in the world. We have created favorable conditions for foreign investments and for foreign companies to come and invest in Azerbaijan.

And I would like to express my immense pleasure that these conditions have been assured and that they are attracting the international business community, not only American oil companies but multinational oil companies are investing in Azerbaijan and are jointly developing our resources with us.

So Azerbaijan is building a democracy. Azerbaijan will continue to build democracy in our country. It is one of the strategic goals of our state to create a pluralistic, viable and beneficial of the people. Azerbaijan is a multinational country. All people, regardless of their nationalities, race and religion, enjoy equal rights in Azerbaijan.

As I've already mentioned, Azerbaijan has some difficult problems. One of the most difficult problems is the military conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. I have already told you you know the history of this conflict. The unfortunate consequences of this conflict have not yet been resolved. It is the first time in May of 1994 we signed a ceasefire



Top:
President Aliyev with UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan (May 21, 1997).

Middle:
President Aliyev addressing the United Nations which consists of 183 nations since July 27, 1997.

Bottom:
President Aliyev in a group session with UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan and UN Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights, Sergio Villalpando (July 25, 1997).



Photograph: Shyng M. Kim



Photograph: M. K. Mammadov

agreement. Since then, there have been no hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan. During these past three years, no blood has been shed; Armenian and occupied lands have not been looted, and justice has not been questioned or abused.

Still today, we have more than one million refugees who are being held under extremely difficult circumstances. Azerbaijan has been subjected to great damage and loss: tens of thousands of Azerbaijanis have lost their lives. Our homes, schools, workplaces, along with our cultural, history and social monuments have been completely destroyed in those lands that are now occupied. However, regardless of all this devastation, we are in favor of a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Three years ago [May 1994], we agreed to a ceasefire, agreement and since then, we have been trying to negotiate a peaceful solution. We will continue to make every effort to achieve peace. In 1992, the OSCE (Organization for the Security and Cooperation in Europe) has started, what is called the Minsk Group to negotiate a peaceful resolution to this conflict. Because of their activities, a very important decision was made in December, 1994 at the OSCE Summit in Budapest. And finally, the 1st December (1996) of the OSCE Summit in Lisbon, these main principles were set forth and accepted for the solution of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan:

The first principle recognizes the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and Armenia. The second principle gives Nagorno-Karabakh the highest degree of autonomy—the highest status for which—but within the framework of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The third principle guarantees security for the entire population of Nagorno-Karabakh.

I would like to stress that when the conflict started back in 1988, the population of Nagorno-Karabakh was 170,000. Approximately 70 percent of the population was Armenian and 30 percent was Azerbaijan. Since then, all Azerbaijanis have been evicted and evaded from their homes in these territories, and today only about 80,000 Armenians are living in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Armenia did not accept these three principles of the 1994 Summit, but I want to emphasize the remaining 53 of the 56 member states of the OSCE did agree to them. We are not too happy with these principles either. They are not very acceptable in Azerbaijan either. However, we did accept them in order to compromise. Based on these principles, we believe justice can be achieved.

Since the beginning of 2007, there has been a change in the leadership of the Minsk Group. Today, it is led by three countries—the United States, Russia and France. It was a very significant decision for us that these three great countries have taken on the responsibility to find the solution to this conflict. It means that they have undertaken a great challenge and responsibility. We are very hopeful that they will carry out this task and succeed in this conflict too.

It is gratifying to note that in Denver on June 20th, the three presidents of the countries comprising the Minsk Group—President Bill Clinton (U.S.), President Jacques Chirac (France) and President Boris Yeltsin (Russia) together made a joint statement urging the peaceful solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The contacts and free discussions have all started from negotiations: Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan. On the American side, the delegation is headed by U.S. Deputy Secretary of State司徒



President Bakiyev's gift to the United Nations—a traditional Kyrgyzstan handmade carpet. US Secretary Powell, left, center, holds it.

Center: President Bakiyev's gift to the United Nations when President Bush visited in the fall.



to date. Recently, the co-chairs have presented their newest proposal which contains some very positive aspects. Their proposal calls for two phases in the resolution of the problem. We have accepted the document as a basis for negotiation upon which to base our negotiations. [Always goes to the map of Azerbaijan and points out its geographical relations with the Republic of Georgia, Armenia, Moldavia, the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazeti and Iran. He also emphasizes that 20 percent of Azerbaijan's territory is being held by Armenians. He points out the towns of Shusha and Lachin which are under Armenian occupation.]

The Minsk proposal would require that Armenia withdraw from the areas that they are occupying outside of Nagorno-Karabakh and that OSCE multinational peacekeeping forces ensure this withdrawal. The Armenian troops would have to withdraw to the borders of Nagorno-Karabakh. The second phase would define the status for Nagorno-Karabakh and will occur when the Lachin and Shusha provinces will be freed from occupation.

In general, we support this phased plan because it is impossible to solve this huge problem all at once. We believe that if the sides could agree to this proposal, and if the co-chairs will continue to support it, these occupied areas can be freed in a very short period of time. These three presidents—Armenian, French and Russian—have announced that this conflict needs to be solved peacefully in 1997. Another subject for concern for Nagorno-Karabakh is their connection with Armenia. You see this black road. This road links Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia. On several occasions, we have announced that we are willing to grant the corridor that would link Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia. We are ready to grant this corridor and for it to be under the control of OSCE multinational peacekeeping forces.

As far as Nagorno-Karabakh is concerned, once again, I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize that we are ready to give Nagorno-Karabakh the highest status of autonomy that has ever existed in the world. But it must remain within the territory of Azerbaijan.

Unfortunately, Armenia does not agree to this, and, at the Lisbon Summit of the OSCE, they acted unconstructively and continued to push for the total independence of Nagorno-Karabakh. But we can never consent to that. We can never allow the creation of a second Armenian state inside Azerbaijan territory. Neither was, nor the world community would agree to that. But within the Republic of Azerbaijan, however, we are prepared to grant a great autonomous authority and power. We are ready to give a high status of self-rule to Nagorno-Karabakh. We are ready to grant this autonomy.

Another issue of great concern for Azerbaijan is Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, which was passed by the U.S. Congress in 1992. The decision was made by Congress without taking into consideration that Armenia was also blockading Azerbaijan, and for this reason the U.S. Congress has imposed an embargo on all aid from the United States to Azerbaijan. It was a very unjust decision.

I'm very pleased that, recently, the American President of the United States and high ranking officials of the United States and the administration, have announced that they are against Section 907. I will be discussing this issue with members of Congress, and I hope that Congress will repeal this unjust decision against Azerbaijan. Commentator Kuryl has presented a bill to Congress to repeal Section 907. I'm hopeful that this bill will pass.



Photo courtesy of Azeri Oil Media



Photo courtesy of Azeri Oil Media



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Top: Photo: session with Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State to President Bush, in the presidential suite of the United Nations Plaza Hotel (May 25, 1997).

Bottom: Kissinger's, Director of Foreign Affairs, Peter Demessie, consulting with President Bush (New York).

But I want to make it very clear when they accuse us of blocking Armenia, they should take a closer look at the map. This railroad goes from Baku to Yevlakh (Armenia). I want you to know that the part of this railroad linking Azerbaijan with Armenia is currently under the occupation of American forces, and it is in the hands of Armenians. In other words, 130 kilometers of this railroad bridging Azerbaijan to Armenia is not under our control. Down here to the south is Iran. When Armenia occupied Azerbaijani territories, they also seized the border of Azerbaijan with Iran. Note that it is really Armenia which is blocking Azerbaijan's part of Azerbaijan, namely the Azerbaijan Republic of Nakhchivan, used to be connected to Azerbaijan only through the territory of Armenia. But now we have been deprived of this link. They are blocking it.

Irrespective of all these complications, I think we should leave all these things to history. We should look to the future. We believe strongly that a peace will be established that all these problems could be solved and definitely this great legislature, Section 907 should be repealed as well.

Finally, I want to say that Azerbaijan is a peace-loving country. We want peace in our region. We want peace in our country. We want peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan and Armenia have been living as neighbors for centuries, and we must continue to live and maintain good neighborly, friendly relations. We, as an independent country, want to establish peaceful relations with independent Armenia.

But there are conditions—the occupied lands of Azerbaijan must be freed. The territorial integrity of Azerbaijan has to be ensured and based on these conditions, we are ready for a long-lasting peace. We strongly believe that peace is the only way for Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Finally, I would like to be very brief about the activities of American companies in Azerbaijan. We have already begun implementing the contract which we signed in September of 1994, which is called the "Contract of the Century." In order to develop Azerbaijan's oil fields and export the "dirty oil," two pipelines are already being constructed. One goes from Azerbaijan through Russia to the port of Novorossiysk on the Black Sea, the other passes through Georgia. And in the future, in order to export the "dirty oil," we are planning to construct a pipeline from Azerbaijan to Georgia, then through Turkey to the Mediterranean seaport of Istanbul.

Azerbaijan is an abundant oil-producing country. Azerbaijan scientists and oil workers discovered oil fields offshore in the Caspian 50 years ago. These 50-year later, Azerbaijan is once again attracting the world's major oil companies to develop oil resources just as we did at the turn of the last century. Today, 17 oil companies from 11 countries of the world have already invested in Azerbaijan. They are already working in our country.

During these days here in the United States, we will be signing several contracts with American oil companies. These oil contracts and the economic cooperation will link Azerbaijan and the United States for decades to come and will create great opportunities for the integration of our economies. We are in favor of increasing economic cooperation with the United States of America and will spare no efforts in our attempts to achieve this.

I could go on and tell you many more things, but I want to be brief so that there will be time for your questions. Thank you very much. ♫



Illustration: The American Herald



Illustration: The American Herald

Questions & Answers Frankly Speaking

The questionnaire was answered by President Heydar Aliyev's address at Georgetown University in Washington, D. C., on July 30, 1997.

What will you discuss tomorrow in your meeting with President Bill Clinton?

I believe tomorrow's meeting with the President of the United States will be a very historic meeting. We discuss several important questions in regard to the development of U.S.-Azerbaijan relations. We'll also talk about ways to reach a solution to the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. I want to point out ways in which the United States can play an essential role in helping achieve a peaceful solution in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Will you discuss the need for expanding Section 1057 of the Freedom Support Act. Will the Congress act as an impediment that hinders development not only in Azerbaijan but the Caucasus, but throughout the world as well. I don't have time during my speech to elaborate. But I want to make clear that Azerbaijan has already joined NATO's "Partnership for Peace Program" and we are already a member of the Euro-Atlantic Council of Nations. As the president of Azerbaijan, I participated in NATO's Summit in Madrid on July 25 of this year. We will continue to cooperate in such situations. Therefore, I have great expectations for continued cooperation from our meeting together tomorrow.

Since Azerbaijan has a long and univocal history of religious tolerance for over a thousand years towards its minorities, especially towards the Jewish community, why isn't this fact presented strongly and continuously in the media?

Well, your are three hours, and I'll tell you. I was asked to be very brief so for three would be time for questions. As you remember in my speech, I focused on the fact that we are a multiethnic country. We have never been interested in creating a country comprised of a single ethnicity. All minorities have equal rights in Azerbaijan. After all, Azerbaijan is the natural land of many people and not just the Jews, who have lived there since ancient times.

Jews from Azerbaijan participated in the development of Azerbaijan both in culture and science. I would especially like to pay tribute to the generations that Jews have made in the development of both culture and science in the 20th century. I am especially proud that Azerbaijan has many Jewish and Jewish. When I was in New York last May with our First Lady, we went to the Conference of the Presidents of all Jewish Organizations in the United States. We spent several hours together. I explained our policy towards Jews in our country. We will continue to carry out this policy.

Please comment on the influence of Iranian fundamentalism on religious freedom in Azerbaijan.

As I mentioned, Azerbaijan guarantees all rights, including the freedom of religion. All religions have equal rights in Azerbaijan. Muslims, Christians, and others live in full harmony and we mention that when I was elected as President in 1993, representatives from all these three major religions supported me and helped me win the election. I support this in confidence. It is not like the majority of our population are Muslim and that during the Soviet period there were fundamentalist Muslims and other religious groups of society are being built and removed. We allow people to express their religious freely. At the same



Historical painting from Baku.



Local market Baku.



Page 19
The U.S. Capitol building which houses offices for President Clinton and Vice President Al Gore, D.C.

Page 21, top
The Azerbaijan flag flying above the White House which opens its official guest house for the White House (July 30-August 1, 1997).

Bottom
President Clinton officially opened his bookshop in Washington, D.C.

are protecting our borders with our own personnel, and we will continue to do so. [Applause]

What are you doing to fight corruption in Azerbaijan?

As for corruption, it's not only in Azerbaijan, but it's all over the world. Do you agree with that or not? I believe that you're never fighting corruption in the United States of America. Let me ask you, "What are you doing to fight corruption here?" [Applause]

Seriously, corruption is one of the most dangerous evils which undermines society. If you go back and examine the Soviet press from the old days, you will see that ever since I was elected as leader of Azerbaijan back in 1995, I have struggled against corruption. It is true that later on what I called "people's voices" had revealed for corruption appeared on television and described themselves as victims of Heydar Aliyev's regime, but that did not influence me. I have not wavered from my determination to fight corruption.

Corruption, unfortunately, is widespread, especially in countries undergoing transitions. In Russia today there is corruption. The same goes for all of the former Soviet republics as well as Azerbaijan. I never denied that there was corruption [in the USSR] in 1992 when everybody was saying, "This, you can never have corruption in a communist regime. It is only associated with capitalism." Thirty years ago, I was saying, "Corruption and bribery are the most dangerous ill in our society." I said it 30 years ago, and I say it again today. I have been fighting corruption and will continue to do so. I would like to ensure you that building a society which is free from corruption is important for our people—for their morale and for their future. I took a great responsibility on my shoulders when I agreed to run for president during this very difficult period. I am making every effort, not only to ensure the independence of Azerbaijan but to create a clean society in Azerbaijan. This is the essence of my life. [Applause]

Mr. President, what will Turkey's role be and will Turkish companies have an expanding share in the exploration and production of Caspian oil?

Turkey is a very close friend of Azerbaijan. We are deepening and expanding these relations. I agree, 100 percent with the views of Dr. Baskin when he says that the U.S. needs to support Turkey. Turkey truly plays an important role in our region, and it will continue to do so. We have been cooperating with Turkey in many fields. I have close personal relations with Turkey's leaders. Our languages are basically the same. Our traditions also are very, very close. These cultural links go a long way, in strengthening our relations.

Turkey has a very important role to play in the development and transportation of our oil resources. Turkey is already a member of two projects [BAC and Silk Road] which we have agreed with international oil companies. I believe that Turkish-Azerbaijani relations will continue to be strengthened. To build a pipeline through Turkey for the east export of our oil is important from every aspect.

Nagorno-Karabakh was an autonomous republic under the Soviet Constitution from 1920-1988. But Armenians have been deported from Karabakh, and the autonomous status was arbitrarily abolished. Why then should Armenians trust your promise about giving them the highest autonomy for self-rule?

Some aspects of your question are our concerns, but never mind. It is all within 2 days of our Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Republic (NKAR) was established inside Azerbaijan in 1921. Any within the Republic. U



By: Edward Sweeney/Reuters—President Clinton with President Aliyev.

By: Edward Sweeney/Reuters—President Clinton with President Aliyev.



Azerbaijan, the NCAAF was developing very well. In the 1970s and early 1980s, when I was the leader of Azerbaijan, I personally and regularly was involved with NCAAF's development. Therefore, I know it very well.

I have already stated that only 170,000 people were living in Karabakh. The truth is that under Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh was better than other parts of Azerbaijan. Because it was an autonomous region, the government of Azerbaijan always tried to create better conditions for it, so as not to allow any room for discontent and unrest. I remember those days as I've visited every part of that region. There are several schools and many books and newspapers about my visits to Karabakh and the meetings that I had there.

I had a great deal of respect for the Americans even as they did for me. In the past, we had very friendly relations with America. I personally have visited America many times, and the leaders of America have visited Azerbaijan. We have exchanged visits frequently and didn't have problems. The problem of Nagorno-Karabakh was artificially created. It was brought about by imperialist forces and the leadership of the Communist party of the Soviet Union.

It was Mikhail Gorbachev who personally opened the situation by supporting these separatists. When I was still working in Moscow, they wanted to raise the question of separation, but I always protested. But at some point I refused to go to the Politburo in Moscow, in fact, just two or three months afterwards, the Politburo started arguing immediately. There was a time when it would have been possible to have prevented this world conflict, but nothing was done to do so. That's my last lesson.

Generally, Americans have never been displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh. Americans are living in Nagorno-Karabakh today. It is the Azerbaijanis who have been displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh. I told you that the Azerbaijan population of Nagorno-Karabakh has been completely evicted from Nagorno-Karabakh. It began in early in 1991, during the Soviet period. And this was an historical injustice.

When the conflict began, I was arrested and isolated (in Nakhchivan) but I know today very well, and the facts indicate that in 1988 the Parliament of Armenia unilaterally passed a decision and adopted into law to join Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia. Also that Azerbaijan's leadership passed a law establishing the autonomous status of Nagorno-Karabakh. But from that moment, you make it sound like Azerbaijan initiated the conflict. In response I have shown you one by one the facts, and we can prove them with documents.

If there is a part of Azerbaijan—Nakhchivan—inside of Armenia, then what is the problem of having part of Armenia—Nagorno-Karabakh—inside of Azerbaijan?

Well, I can tell you that Nakhchivan is an integral part of Azerbaijan (not a part of Armenia). Also the establishment of the Soviet Union, the head entity of that time (Soviet), simply gave the step of land that separates Nakhchivan from mainland Azerbaijan (it is present in Armenia). They wanted to divide Azerbaijan, and as they give Armenia this 40-kilometer strip of land.

So be the less willing to do with Karabakh. The region of Nagorno-Karabakh never belonged to Armenia. But Nakhchivan has always been part of Azerbaijan. Nagorno-Karabakh has only been an autonomous region within Azerbaijan. We cannot compare Nakhchivan with Nagorno-Karabakh. I can't really understand the essence of your question because there is no basis of comparison. □



54. President Clinton welcoming President Ayaz in the White House (August 1, 1997).

Notes:

1. Azerbaijan's economy is neither deluged in income and energy markets (great between Azeri and Russia) than U.S. Secretary of Energy. Meeting with to sign the Paris Forum (American's Ambassador to the U.S., President Serdar Iliev, President of Azerbaijan, U.S. Sec. U.S. New President and Secretary of Energy U.S. Secretary of State in the White House (August 1, 1997).



A Presidential Perspective Major Issues

These are President Hovhannes Agha's views about major issues as he presented them publicly July 27-August 1, 1997 on his first official visit to the United States.

Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

Nagorno-Karabakh is a mountainous area like in western Azerbaijan near Armenia. In 1988, when hostilities broke out between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the population of this region was about 170,000 of which 70 percent were Armenian and the remaining 30 percent was Azerbaijani.

The conflict started when Armenia's Parliament attempted to annex Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia. As a result, military hostilities broke out, leaving tens of thousands of people killed. Today, 20 percent of Azerbaijan's territory is still under Armenian military occupation. The occupied areas not only include Nagorno-Karabakh, but several other provinces outside of this region.

As a consequence, more than one million Azerbaijanis have been kinshiply banished from their homes. They have to live under extraordinarily difficult circumstances as refugees, many of which still remain in host camps. Azerbaijan has provided its territory to approximately 100,000 Armenian refugees of all ethnicities. Today, approximately 80,000 Armenians live in this region, and all Azerbaijanis were forced to flee for their lives. The total population of Azerbaijan is only 7 million people, but out of this total, 7 million people are living as refugees. Imagine, if you will, the possibly negative impact of so many displaced people that have made on both the economic and social life.

Peace Negotiations with Armenians

Three years ago (May 1994), a tentative agreement was signed between Azerbaijan and Armenia. However, there are no hostilities going on between us. We are committed to full cooperation and are trying to achieve a permanent peace. Since 1992, the Minsk Group, a special committee of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), has been commissioned to try to negotiate a settlement. OSCE's main committee is co-chaired by Russia, France and the United States. We are hopeful that this problem will soon be solved.

During the OSCE (also known as December 1996), three essential principles were adopted by the peaceful solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. These included: (1) recognition of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and Armenia (Nagorno-Karabakh) would continue to be recognized as part of Azerbaijan; (2) high status of autonomy for Nagorno-Karabakh within the Republic of Azerbaijan (Armenians would have to grant a deal of autonomy to govern themselves but within the framework of Azerbaijan); and (3) guarantee for the security of the entire population of Nagorno-Karabakh (for Armenians as well as for the Azerbaijanis who want to return to their native lands).

We accepted these principles as all 33 of the 54 OSCE member countries. Armenia (also included there) but it is unacceptable to us to have it around Armenia, since (Nagorno-Karabakh) located within the boundaries of Azerbaijan. Armenia must stop. We have already compromised.

Section 907 of the "Freedom Support Act"

A good gesture to Azerbaijan is the "Freedom Support Act" which was passed by the U.S. Congress in 1992 to facilitate the formation of the newly independent Republic of the former USSR. American lawmakers



The President Hovhannes Agha meeting the press at the White House after the meeting with President Clinton (May 1, 1997).

With President Hovhannes Agha meeting for a number of days.

With President Hovhannes Agha meeting the press at the White House immediately after the first (October 15, 1997) collection of the press at the White House.



Photo by Hovhannes Agha.



Photo by Hovhannes Agha.

included one single exception—Armenia—to this law which provides aid to the remaining 14 republics. Section 907 has blocked all direct U.S. aid to the Azerbaijan government for the past five years. This law was based on the election of the sub-kingpin Azerbaijan for blocking Armenia which, at the time, was aggressively at war with us.

When Congress accused us of blocking Armenia, they should have taken a closer look at the map. The oilfield, between Baku [Azerbaijan] and Yerevan [Armenia] is what they were referring to currently under the occupation of Armenian forces. It is in the hands of Armenia. It is under their control, not ours. The fact is Armenia is blocking Azerbaijan, not Azerbaijan, because the Autonomous Republic of Nakhchivan, part of Azerbaijan, remains tied through the history of Armenia [which was given to them by Stalin]. But Armenia has been blocking Nakhchivan and taking it off from us for years.

The blocking of U.S. aid to Azerbaijan is a very unjust decision. The U.S. government needs to speak out directly to the governments of all our neighboring countries. Armenia, for example, receives \$100 million annually [in credits] this amount is seven [times] greater than what Russia receives, but Azerbaijan has been deprived of this assistance during this transitional period where we need it most. In any event, the recently President Clinton and other high-ranking officials of the U.S., and the administration, have announced that they are against Section 907 and that they plan to work for its repeal. I would like to express my hope that Congress would overturn this unjust decision against Azerbaijan and restore justice towards us.

Major Pipeline Route

I'd like to see the pipeline crossed through Turkey to the Persian Gulf on the Mediterranean. I will continue to do my best to achieve this goal. Turkey is a very close friend of Azerbaijan and has a very important role to play in the development and transportation of our oil resources. We have been cooperating with them in many spheres. Our cooperation has been very fruitful. Our relations this one, very close, and these relations help us in a long way to strengthen relations.

I agree 100 percent with the views of Dr. Zeynep Bostanci when he says that the U.S. needs to support Turkey in a very important role in our region and will continue to do so.

Russia

Russia, our neighbor to the north, is a great country. For 200 years, we were part of it. Our economies are closely integrated. We want to continue developing economic relations and to cooperate in many other spheres. Many Azerbaijanis live in Russia and the Russians in Azerbaijan. When we make friendly relations that do not violate the independence of Azerbaijan. These relations must recognize our equal interests. Russia should not interfere in our internal affairs. We are pursuing our independence and not making alliances with any country that would diminish our independence.

We are well aware that Russia maintains military bases and bases in countries which used to be former Soviet republics, including countries like Armenia and Georgia which border us. Russia does this, despite the fact that these are independent nations today. Russia has a vast arsenal of military equipment and possesses in Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, Libya and Iran. We are also concerned about the \$1 billion of illegal arms that Russia has supplied Armenia and the secret military agreements that have made with each other. In summary, we are in favor of maintaining good relations with Russia. We want to develop these relations but under one condition—there are no other to protect our borders and maintain our independence.



Photo: AP/Wide World



Photo: AP/Wide World



President Bill Clinton in the National Stadium, August 1, 1997

Democracy Building

Democracy and human rights, in general, are very new concepts for Azerbaijan society. Some people think we should be able to establish democracy in a short time, but that's impossible. Azerbaijan is a young nation, and democracy is a new concept. Democracy has to enter the minds of people, not just the mind of one person. People have been living under the communist ideology in a socialist regime for 70 years. It's impossible for them to change overnight. Even in mind that the United States has been advancing about this path called "democracy" for a long time—more than 200 years. They've achieved a lot, but they're still working on it. Democracy is not an apple you buy at the market and bring back home.

Great changes have occurred in my own lifetime since I left the Politburo in 1987. These changes have resulted in my becoming very disappointed, though I myself, and a Communist regime on the way involved in building a democratic state (though I used to be a member of the Politburo and the Communist Party) it took me several years to change my own views, but I did it.

I'm helping build this new society in Azerbaijan. I want to assure you that we will build it as a democratic society. Do we make mistakes? Yes, but we strive to eliminate our mistakes. Democracy is an everlasting process. The beginning stages of the process are slow, but free democracy has no limit. Even for you living here in the United States, democracy is an everlasting process.

Religious Freedom

Azerbaijan guarantees all human rights, including the freedom of religion. All religions have equal rights in Azerbaijan. Mosques, synagogues and churches operate freely. Azerbaijan is the native land of many nationalities and religions. I am immensely proud, for example, that Azerbaijan has more than 200 Synths.

It's true that the majority of our population is Muslim despite the fact that during the Soviet period Islam was forbidden. But it's important to note that Azerbaijan is not an Islamic state, not is Islam the state ideology. Islam is just the ideology of the government of Azerbaijan. Church and state are separated.

Although Islam is the ideology of some countries, in Azerbaijan we are building a secular state based on Western and world standards. In other words, we are building a government based on the recognized principles of democracy and universal rights for all. It is true that there are some forces which are trying to spread Islam fundamentalism in our country. We consider them a threat to our nationalhood. The majority of our people are against Islam fundamentalism. Again, I reiterate—Azerbaijan is committed to being a secular state.

Corruption

Corruption is one of the most dangerous evils undermining society. It's not only in Azerbaijan, but it's all over the world. Unfortunately, corruption is widespread, especially in countries undergoing transition. It was not found at all in all of the former Soviet republics, including Azerbaijan, back in 1992 in the USSR. I never denied that there was corruption at a time when everybody was saying, "This is the only name. Now corruption is a common regime, corruption is only associated with capitalism." But corruption and bribery are the more dangerous. It's in our society, I said it 30 years ago, and I say it again today. I have been fighting corruption and will continue to do so. I would like to assure you that building a society which is free from corruption is important for our people—for their freedom and for their future. □



The ceremonial signing of signing these major contracts in the White House—a first in U.S. history (August 1, 1997).

Closest contact for Azerbaijan Project: Samir Abbasov (left), Vice President of State Oil Company of Azerbaijan (SOCAR), signs with Richard Holbrooke, President of Chevron's Azerbaijan Division.

World's largest contract for State Property: Samir Abbasov (left), President of SOCAR, signs with Bill Rogovin, President of Huber's New Technology and Production Ventures and Global Engineering, including left to right: Bill Ferguson (Azerbaijan Ambassador to the U.S.), Roman Rozov (Azerbaijan Minister of Foreign Affairs), Heydar Aliyev (President of Azerbaijan), Richard Holbrooke (Secretary of State), Bill Rogovin (Vice President), William Boyce (U.S. Secretary of State) and William Boyce (U.S. Secretary of Commerce).

Recent... Closest contact for Azerbaijan Project: Samir Abbasov (left), Vice President of State Oil Company of Azerbaijan, signs with Richard Holbrooke, President of Chevron's Azerbaijan Division.

President Aliyev: Personally Speaking

by Betty Blair, Editor of Azerbaijan International

The following interview took place during President Heydar Aliyev's first official visit to the United States on August 3, 1997. It was the eighth day into his 10-day trip to the United States (July 27-August 5). Two days earlier, President Aliyev had met with U.S. President Bill Clinton and signed three major oil contracts in the White House. This was President Aliyev's third visit to the United States. He had addressed the United Nations (1994 and 1995) and on both occasions met privately with President Clinton. Aliyev had also met Clinton personally on other occasions including the Summit of the Organization on the Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Budapest in 1994.

Many do journalists and President Aliyev personal questions. When foreign journalists get the opportunity to interview him, they usually inquire about the latest political and economic developments in the region. Azerbaijan journalists, on the other hand, tend to follow a more formal traditional journalistic style established during the Soviet period and avoid broaching personal topics.

Therefore, I have tried, as in earlier interviews beginning in 1993 after President Aliyev's inauguration, to introduce topics that would reveal some of his interests, his character and personality. As I was among the 20-member entourage (the only non-Azerbaijani) accompanying the President on his first to the United States, I intentionally avoided the usual topics which had been discussed publicly on a daily basis (see "Access—a Presidential Perspective").

The interview was conducted on the flight between Houston and Chicago. President Aliyev had already visited New York, Washington, D.C. For previous interviews with the President which are published in Azerbaijan International, see AI 2, Spring 1994; AI 2, AI 3 (Winter 1994) and AI 2 (Summer 1995). They are also available on the Web site: <http://aznet.com/>.

Let me start by asking you to comment on the hospitality and warmth that you've received here in the United States. Less than ten years ago, the United States and the Soviet Union considered each other the worst of enemies. This host manifested itself in the buildup of vast military arsenals on both sides even to the neglect of responsibly meeting the social needs of both of their populations. Both nations boasted the superiority of their own system over the other's. And they both exploited their own propaganda tools to demonize the other: as the "insidious bad guy."

Yes, today the warmth and acceptance that you've received in the United States from the highest level down, contradicts this era of suspicion and animosity. Sometimes, it's hard to remember how cold and suspicious people used to act towards each other. How do you explain this phenomenon?

As you know, the Soviet Union no longer exists. As a super power, the Soviet Union of which Azerbaijan was a part, "competed" with the United States. A Cold War existed for such a long time between us because the world was basically split into two camps—capitalists and socialists. The Soviet Union had the socialist camp well-managed to attract various countries to its side, especially African countries that they gained their independence from colonialism.

But now the Soviet Union has disintegrated, and the Cold War has ended. If the Soviet Union had not collapsed, or maybe Azerbaijan would not be an independent country today. Had it not collapsed, there



The President Aliyev and President Clinton sign agreements for further cooperation between Azerbaijan and the United States in the White House (August 1, 1997).

Betty Blair's interview with Betty Blair (Editor of Azerbaijan International), Heydar Aliyev (President of Azerbaijan), took on board between Houston and Chicago on a commercial plane (August 3, 1997).



-of the former Soviet Union republics, including Ukraine, with its sizable population of 50 million people, would be independent.

But now, finally, Azerbaijan has achieved its national independence—once again after 70 years! Now we're trying to strengthen and maintain our independence, and I think this is one of the most important reasons why there is such a warmth between the United States and Azerbaijan. You have to take into account that there are countries in our region which have tried to strangle our independence. That's why we look to the United States as an opposing strength against those forces who want to choke us. In other words, we look to the United States as a country which will help us to preserve our independence.

Secondly, we are building a democratic state in Azerbaijan based on law and order—in other words, Azerbaijan is making great strides to live in accordance with Western standards. This is another reason for the warmth and kind relations.

And finally, we have established broad extensive economic relations with the United States. You've seen so many of these American companies, particularly the oil companies, visiting Azerbaijan. These range from two days, both yesterday and today, I met with the executives and CEO's of many of these companies. It turns out that the companies which have established themselves and are already working in our country want to expand their operations. And those which have not yet begun to work with us are looking for ways to get started.

For example, one company admitted that a year and a half ago their board had made the decision not to invest in the Caspian Sea region. But today, they've completely changed their minds. They confessed to me that they had made a mistake in analyzing the oil fields. Now, they're asking us to give them a chance to get involved with developing a field in Azerbaijan. So, all these factors together contribute to the warm, hospitable relations that we see witnessing here in the United States.

For the past week, you've been emphasizing several major issues in your speeches. I'd like to know if there are any other areas that you consider critical for our relationship to understand. I'm referring to issues such as: (1) the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, (2) the need for Congress to repeal Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, (3) the issue of the illegality of Russia supplying Armenia with \$1 billion of arms that obviously were used in the Karabakh conflict against Azerbaijan, (4) Russo-Iranian relations, (5) the "altus of the Caspian" in terms of who "owns" the sea and can develop its oil resources, (6) and finally, the business opportunities for foreign investors in Azerbaijan. My question is, are there other major issues that our readers should know about?

These are the main problems. If you succeed in conveying these ideas to your readers, that'll solve these problems. Let your readers understand these problems, then I'll give you some more.

Much of your time here in the United States has been spent making speeches. It's the same back in Azerbaijan. As I've watched you over the years, it seems to me that much of your power as President is bound up with your rhetorical ability—your ability to express yourself and persuade others. I imagine that you've spent a lifetime making speeches and wondering about some of your early experiences in public speaking.

Some of us brought up the subject 12-13 years ago. It is a talent that I was born with. It is a gift. The only gift I can't simply be studying (or working hard or even by listening to your speeches). Obviously, like the entrepreneurs, it takes an important role. I've done a lot of things. I've had a lot of experiences.



U.S. Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, and President Alassan Ouattara of the Ivory Coast, the official guest house of the U.S. president (August 1, 1997).

President Alassan Ouattara and a few members of his entourage at the formal lunch program, during the Embassy of the Ivorian Republic (August 2, 1997).



Field of reeds



Children in a public setting

Yes, we talked about the relations between the United States and Azerbaijan. We spoke about the settlement of Nagorno-Karabakh and about the resolution of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. These were the main issues.

Ms. Albright has a very positive attitude towards Azerbaijan. And she has a very strong personal history with me. I have a great deal of respect for her. I consider her a very wise person. President Clinton has chosen very well in selecting her to fill the Cochrin position. She is a very useful and judicious person.

What do you consider to be some of the highlights of this official visit here in the U.S. apart from meeting President Clinton and Vice-President Gore and signing three contracts in the White House? What were some of the other moments that have given you a great deal of personal satisfaction so far?

Well, it was a very special moment for me when a lady came up to me and showed me a photo of me that had been taken 20 years earlier. I was pictured with the U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union at that time. I approached her earlier by two weeks. But an American family had considered that meeting which had taken place so many years before as such a momentous occasion that they had kept this photo for such a long time. That was remarkable to me. It meant that the meetings and discussions that I had in the past also made an impact and increased awareness of that time. It seems that her husband had been the assistant to the Ambassador. And that woman, a stranger to me, brought this photo to me 20 years later and asked for my autograph. At the same time, that photo made me recall those years long ago, and I caught a glimpse of myself and realized that I haven't changed so much. I look quite the same. That, in itself, was quite gratifying.

Obviously, the warmest moment of this whole journey for me was the announcement of the birth of my grandson yesterday. I can't imagine anything sweeter than that! It was an extremely special moment for me. And where did I keep about 800,000 miles away from home during my visit to the southernmost state of the U.S., on the border between the U.S. and Mexico. Quite amazing, isn't it?

What's your grandson's name?

I haven't named him yet. It's still in London (where the baby was born) in a couple of days and come him there. Following tradition, three days later, the President bestowed his own name, "Haydar," on his grandson. This is the first grandson to carry the Aliyev name!

In my mind, the another personal highlight of this trip has been meeting Dr. Michael DeBokuy. He's a very great person. He was the first person ever to conduct open heart bypass surgery. Lucky when we met him, he mentioned that he has performed some 50,000 surgeries. Imagine how much he has not given to so many people. As you know, Dr. DeBokuy was the only foreign specialist that President Boris Yeltsin (Russia) invited to participate in his own heart bypass surgery. Dr. DeBokuy is in his late eighties (born 1908). That's why I respected him so much. So aged, and yet he still works so actively. You see him, he's an extremely respectable person. That's why I made sure to include him in my program while I was in Houston. He's a very famous person—a very great person. And he's created a great medical center (Houston Medical Center) right in the middle of a desert. I know that from contacts by correspondents. We can count on increased in because ten years ago I had a heart attack myself.

So, you've been in contact with him!



Photo: Reuters/Corbis (11/05)



Illustration: Endowment (11/05)

President Yarov is observing one of the gifts prepared on the wall of the United Nations' building. The intricate design of the granite carpet is a traditional design based on the Islam school of carpet-weaving.



Yes, he's involved with programs. There was no need for me to have surgery. When I had a heart attack back then—in 1987—many people told me that I wouldn't live very long. That was August 1987—ten years ago. I had to stay in the hospital for three months. They told me I wouldn't be able to work anymore. But you see, here I am—still living and working.

Your schedule is daunting. Don't you ever stop? Everybody in the back of the plane is wiped out and exhausted. This is the eighth day of your trip. Everybody is so tired out, but you're still going strong. How much rest do you get everyday? How much sleep?

Very little—just about five to six hours.

Do you take a break in the middle of the day?

Yes. Often.

Let me ask you about some of the gifts that you carried with you to the U.S. Tell me about the carpet which you presented to President Clinton. I understand it was especially designed with the portraits of Bill Clinton and his wife Hillary together.

I also brought a separate carpet for their daughter, Chelsea. He told me that Chelsea accepted his first meeting to look at them in his office. He said she was quite happy and liked them very, very much—they all did.

That's not the typical thing to do—to give a president a gift that features both him and his family. How did you come to think of it?

It was my idea because I know that for every man, his wife and children are very close—very precious to him. That's why I did it. It's a way of commemorating them all in one art form that will last for centuries.

Many people have varied opinions about Hillary. A lot of people don't quite know what to make of her.

I don't know Mrs. Clinton very well although I've met her on occasion. When I've talked with her, she has left a very great impression on me. Anyway, it's impossible to be liked by everyone—especially if you're in public life.

Azerbaijani have a habit of bringing back gifts to the people they love when they return from a trip. What's your gift to the Azerbaijani people?

The greatest gift was the achievement that was achieved here in the United States. We signed an agreement with President Clinton, strengthening the ties between our two countries on many levels. These agreements will lay a great historic value. In addition, Mr. Clinton and I had a very frank discussion about the situation and relationship of our countries to each other.

We witnessed the meetings with the presidents of three oil companies who signed contracts with us—the presidents of Chevron, Exxon and Mobil. Remember, I visited them. I flew there. I flew right to the White House. They all told me, "No." I don't forget, some of these companies have been in existence for 100 or more years. I talked with them, asking whether in all these years signed of over the world, if they had ever signed one in the White House. They admitted that hadn't. That's I did that. I was the one who brought them to the White House. I went to Moscow on company. I went to the history of the White House. We have now taken an official step. Some money of contracts were signed. These are the gifts I bring to my people. □



The next edition of News International is 11 months late in the last version of the publisher's my staff to travel in Azerbaijan. That's the 2nd edition, second. Please, don't forget to visit and the great one thing at the White House (August 1, 1997).

State Visits, State Gifts Memorializing the Clintons in Carpets

by Anne Kressler

Exactly what size, color, green, pattern, and presiding guest are critical to commemorating the momentous occasion of their official visit. And what the partner gift is to the someone who has access to everything they could ever wish for?

This could easily be the heart of State before the different presidents during his tenure in office. Here's the background to the gift that President Hovakimyan presented to President Bill Clinton on his first official visit to the White House on August 1, 1997.

Along with mood dress in location in preparation of his first official visit to the United States, President Hovakimyan wanted to find a way to mark the momentous occasion with a gift. President Hovakimyan wanted the gift to be unique, distinguished from other gifts that President Clinton received. It needed to be aesthetically beautiful, while at the same time representative of Azerbaijani arts and craftsmanship. In typical Azerbaijani style, he also made sure that it was something personal to him.

Hovakimyan's trip to the United States had long been anticipated and, frankly speaking, was long overdue. Four years into his presidency, Hovakimyan had signed some contracts with American companies, then with other, more foreign countries. American investment has run into billions of dollars. So President Hovakimyan desired acknowledgment, if only for these economic reasons, that his ties had been established between the two countries. On his part, Hovakimyan openly admits that relationships with the West, especially with the United States, are strategic in his quest to preserve the independence of his own tiny country, which is no larger than the tiny state of Maine.

The formal official invitation to visit the White House came in late spring when the U.S. Ambassador in Baku, Richard Kautstovitch, presented him the coveted white on the occasion of his 74th birthday—May 10th. The visit was initially set for August 1, giving the Azerbaijani government nearly two weeks to organize the trip with its 10-member entourage.

But thinking for the gift came much harder. In 1996, after Clinton's second term was started, President Hovakimyan approached the renowned carpet artist Karim Hovakimyan, 75, and commissioned him to start working about to design something that he, President Clinton, and First Lady Hillary Clinton together on a pattern carpet. "How nice, how much it says appreciate, he says that children honored Hovakimyan himself in mid-1996 since 1993 when his wife died of cancer. So the decision was made to commemorate the First Couple in an art form that would last for centuries.

On water-saturated, President Hovakimyan had met both Bill Clinton and his wife, Hillary, a woman he found to be of great intelligence, hearty, colorful, sympathetic, and one who had continued tirelessly to his husband's success as president.

Karim recalls how excited he was at first to tackle such a project. "I had never seen two parents looked on the same carpet," he said. "Usually one parent is placed in the center of a meditation or, occasionally, you'll find a group of people depicted together. But they're always seated in a single row. I really don't quite see how it works in terms of the geometry of two people. But I couldn't say no. How do you allow the President on such a tremendous occasion?

So Karim went searching for photos of the Clintons, inquiring of the U.S. Embassy in Baku and then, at home of the American ambassador. Did anyone have a picture, perhaps even a photograph that captured the essence of this couple? "Suddenly, photos trickled in. That's when the work began. Karim sketches. The whole process of carpet design usually begins with photos and pencil. The cartoon for the final work is the Clintons, which he has done since



First couple coming to the Clinton



How nice and much the gift



Getting ready to begin the pattern carpet featuring President Clinton which became President Hovakimyan's gift to the White House. Clinton

was a composite of numerous photos. Since President Almyr wanted to convey the unity of the couple, Kamel decided to place them inside a stylized heart-shaped medallion. Under their portraits is a piece of fabric, "I imagine how life must be like a piece of fabric," he explained, "thinking more of the prestige and glory of their position rather than the laugh appalling that the Clintons have had to deal with on a daily basis ever since taking office."

"I had heard a lot about this couple and realized they were very close to each other. The world knows that, too. I wanted to convey their lives as one beating heart. I wanted to depict them as warm and charismatic, not stiff and formal," Kamel said, explaining the concept for his design.

Though the idea for creating the Clinton carpet started early, the actual task of weaving came only after the formal invitation. Therefore, it was an extremely rushed job. The team had only ten weeks to complete work that normally would have taken two to three months. Kamel himself was involved with drawing the yarn in 80 to 90 different shades for the carpet which was designed as 1.8 x 1.7 meters in dimension.

Twelve experts, all women between the ages of 18 to 35, were employed in three 8-hour shifts, working around the clock in a workshop in the medieval section of Balu, called "back Chayir" (Inner City). An experienced master carpet weaver, Adnan Muayyada, was chosen to weave all the front details. When they reached the bottom of the carpet, the alone, did all the work.

Mr. Clinton's suit is woven in dark blue, and his wife's dress is colored red with gold buttons. She wears a strand of white, white miniature pearls, amazingly placed in detail. The background pattern includes designs of golden browns and hues of red and coral also.

According to Kamel, some of the motifs are based on the famous gigantic Shah-Sab carpet (5,297 x 341) on display at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London where it spans an entire wall (110.55 x 3.57 meters). The Shah-Sab carpet for which he has become known as the "Kamel Carpet" is based on the fabric school of carpet weaving, considered to be one of the finest in the world.

Tanzania is presently less populated by Azerbaijan because known as the best export yarn for Azerbaijani carpets. As early as the 13th to 17th centuries, these carpets became popular in Europe and were often used to decorate palaces. Palace paintings by famous European artists of that period often include carpets on the floor with designs that are recognizably Azerbaijani.

Historical carpets are rare now in Azerbaijan although turban, "dogmat" and other geometrical or floral motifs are more common. It seems, partial carpets started becoming famous as silk gifts in the USSR in the 1920s with the textile popularity of Azerbaijan until Kirovov (1930-1931). There is that such carpets had existed but were not highly valued in design. Kirovov designed patterns to commemorate great poets of his own location such as Ferdowsi, Nizami, Hafiz and Jami and Soviet figures, along with Russian writers Pushkin and Gorky. There were two big classes, silk knaps and Gorkyknaps, even Taj Gorkyknaps. The first Soviet congress in 1961 was commemorated like this.

At midnight before the day when the Azerbaijan officials boarded the plane, the Clinton carpet was locally finished. At the top edge of the carpet woven in English is the inscription: From the President of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliev, on 1.08.97.

American presidents are not personally allowed to keep the furniture, any of his gifts they receive. Presents become the property of the government and, periodically, will probably end up in a museum, some palace. A country, at least, from now, who knows who will stand and wonder about the political, economic and personal implications behind this gesture? This gift, with its hundreds of thousands of tiny knitted strands calculated to take the shape of cities, rivers, and flowers symbolizes mutual recognition and relationship on the part of both the very, but nevertheless, western country and the world's single superpower at the turn of the 20th century.

The 8-meter weaver carrying colossal Gorkyknaps finished the work for the first time in 1961. The Gorky knaps took one hour 27 minutes, and finished at the speed of 18,000 piles per hour.



Official portrait of Bill Clinton by Andrew Eccles



Official portrait of Hillary Clinton



Some of the carpet weavers who worked around the clock in three shifts to complete the Clinton portrait carpet. Kamel Aliev, center, sent the carpet with his own hands (left of Almyr) but he was responsible, at weaving the intricate knot borders, from the next poem with the carpet he might before the president's entrance left for the United States. The carpet was Almyr's close gift.

Adnan Muayyada, above, wove the portraits of President Clinton and First Lady Hillary Clinton. She also did the final dyeing before the carpet is packed up to go to the United States.

Anticipating an Optimistic Future The Relationship between the U.S. & Azerbaijan

by Hafiz Pashoyev,
Azerbaijan's Ambassador to the United States

Ambassador Pashoyev delivered this speech at a conference focusing on "Azerbaijan—An Economy in Transition," sponsored by the U.S. Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce in Washington, D.C., on May 21, 1997.

In considering the economic status and future growth of Azerbaijan, one cannot ignore geopolitical realities and governmental stability—a fact that international businessmen and workers, including those in our audience today, know very well. Let me start first with governmental stability, and then I will touch on geopolitical factors.

When I was appointed as Ambassador to Washington in late 1992, Azerbaijan had just achieved its independence. We had a democratically elected government, but there was tremendous uncertainty. The economy was in shambles, in large part because of the war with Armenia. We had lost many of the structures and institutions of the Soviet era, and we were struggling to replace them with democratic institutions. We had a growing separatist crisis. American policy and that of many Western countries was largely influenced by the worldwide Armenia (Drapet) and outside interests were constantly seeking to destabilize the government of Azerbaijan to advance their own agendas.

The American *oilmen's*, starting in 1992, ultimately resulted in the military occupation of 20 percent of Azerbaijan and the creation of 1 million refugees. This led to economic disaster, local warlords, prompted in part by outside forces, created further chaos and instability. At the time, the American lobby was attacking Azerbaijan in Congress and throughout Western European countries.

I remember as well talking with American oil company officials at the time. They were very concerned about the stability of the government and, needless to say, were somewhat reluctant to invest in a country whose future was in doubt. Many business people took a "wait-and-see" attitude which was understandable.

But Azerbaijan has surprised even its most severe skeptics. Out of the chaos of 1993, Heydar Aliyev was elected to the office of President—first by appointment under our Constitution and then through direct elections. We negotiated a ceasefire at the war with Armenia. Parliament began serious constitutional laws designed to make the transition to a market economy. First negotiations on the final stage of contract were begun. Under the leadership of President Aliyev, Azerbaijan began formulating a foreign policy based on independence, good relations with our neighbors, cooperation with the West and close ties with the United States.

Some \$17 billion in oil contracts have now been signed with oil companies from the United States, Western Europe, Russia, Turkey and Iran. Despite protests from time to time, none of these oil deals have come unstowed, and all are progressing, more or less, on schedule. We have signed economic cooperation agreements with most of our neighbors, and we are full participants in the United



Top: Hafiz Pashoyev (center) at the U.S. Iraq summit earlier with Vahid Movsumov (President of Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce) left and Hattay Aydin (President of State Oil Company of Azerbaijan—SOCAR) right at one of the meetings. President Aydin met with the officials of American Oil Companies, in the presidential suite in Houston (August 7, 1997).

Bottom: Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C.



Notices, World Bank, Exim Bank and other international institutions. We have introduced our own currency—the manat—and it is very stable, with very low inflation. We have largely minimized, although not totally, attempts by outside groups to influence the internal politics of Azerbaijan.

As a result of all this, international business concerns now have faith in Azerbaijan, and they are flocking to Baku to participate in the coming economic growth. These businessmen would not be coming to Azerbaijan if they thought the government wasn't stable.

At the risk of sounding immodest, I believe Azerbaijan has achieved a great deal in a relatively short period of time. For those of us who have lived with these problems on a daily basis, it seems like a decade or more has passed. But the reality is that we have gone from chaos to stability in only four years. That, I think, is a remarkable achievement. But it is only the beginning.

Now let me talk to the geopolitical realities, which have as much to do with the investment climate as internal stability. Major problems remain—Armenia among them is selling the war with Armenia so our refugees can return to their homes and so that normal commerce can resume between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and so we can live in peace with our Armenian neighbors. This is the key to maintaining economic stability and growth. Unfortunately, recent actions by the Republic of Armenia do not indicate the same desire for peace that we have. Let me cite three disturbing developments:

1. We have recently learned that Armenia received about \$1 billion in illegal arms shipments from Russia, starting during the period of Armenian offensives that resulted in the current military occupation of parts of Azerbaijan. Many of these arms were shipped from Armenia to the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. This has created a military infrastructure in the region, but it has also created a backlash by governments and the international community. President Yelcin has launched an investigation, as has the United States Senate. Prompted in part by these huge arms shipments, the United States and Azerbaijan have issued a joint declaration concerning foreign troops on Azerbaijan soil and the territorial integrity of our republic.

2. On December 3, 1996, at the Lisbon Summit, the 54-member Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) considered a agreement of principles upon which to base negotiations for settlement of the Armenia/Azerbaijan conflict. Armenia was the only country out of 54 that refused to support these principles because Armenia was unable to optime the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. The net result of this stance has led to a new, or renewed, problem in the world community, again, it has only served to isolate Armenia. In April, Armenia made the same mistake at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

3. And finally, Armenia recently appointed as Prime Minister Robert Kocharyan, the longtime leader of separatist elements in Nagorno-Karabakh. Rather than appoint someone who could foster the peace process, Armenia gave it to ultranationalists who, increasingly, seem to control events in Yerevan. These nationalists would rather fight a war than make peace. They would rather isolate Azerbaijan, than negotiate. And they would rather foolishly buy their backs on the table of history than make history.



At the official reception for the President sponsored by the Embassy, President Ilham Aliyev (center), Azerbaijan's Robert Kocharyan and his wife, Anna, far left; Italy's President Alessandro Napolitano (Azerbaijan Ambassador to the U.S.), far right; Justice Minister U.S. Deputy Secretary of State and a member of the World Group of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe—OSCE—which has been assigned the responsibility of finding a peaceful resolution to the Karabakh conflict. At the White House on Monday (July 27, 1997).

While President Aliyev gave a press conference inside the Capitol Building, Washington, D.C., (July 20, 1997).

Before President Aliyev's visit with Ross Perot (U.S. Governor of the House of Representatives).



Despite these facts, I am more optimistic than ever, both about the future of Azerbaijan, its economic growth potential and even about the settlement of the Armenian conflict.

You may ask why I'm so optimistic about the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict? For one simple reason—history and facts are not on the side of the aggressor in Armenia. History in the 21st century will not be on the side of aggression. History will not favor those who create a million refugees and then claim they are victims. And history will not be kind to those who live in the past but do not learn from it.

So far in the internal stability we have achieved, geopolitical realities have improved dramatically. I believe Azerbaijan's independence has achieved permanence. Our strategic role in the region is universally recognized. Our neighbors—with the exception of Armenia—are beginning to treat us as peers and partners, rather than as enemies or little kids.

Another reason I am so optimistic about our economic and political future is Azerbaijan's growing relationship with the United States. As I have said many times, whether Americans like it or not, they are the world's only superpower and with that role comes awesome responsibility and opportunities.

Let me take you back to when I first arrived in Washington. At that time very few Washington officials were familiar with Azerbaijan. The only few members of Congress known about us was that the American lobby did not like us. And the general public knew almost nothing about Azerbaijan.

Within the last month (July 1997), we have seen signs of just how far we have come and how attitudes are changing. Just Monday, the United States and Azerbaijan issued a joint declaration affirming the independence of Azerbaijan and its right to possess the territory of foreign troops on its soil. On Thursday, Prime Minister Ruzubekov will meet with Vice President Gore. Two weeks ago, the House International Relations Committee (U.S. Congress) rejected an amendment designed to interfere on Azerbaijan's sovereignty and another to cut humanitarian assistance. One week ago, the Senate adopted language making a study of the illegal arms shipments to Armenia. And finally, President Clinton has issued an invitation to President Aliyev to meet with him in the White House in late summer (August 1).

Problems remain, of course. Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act remains an discriminatory piece of legislation that is a constant source of disharmony. The American lobby will, no doubt, continue its efforts to destroy good relations between the United States and Azerbaijan.

But more and more, Americans want to focus on the future, not the past. They want to seize new opportunities, not focus them away. They believe in making new friends, not new enemies. They believe the future lies with commerce, not conflict. Naturally, I share these views.

I have found that most Americans are optimistic, and perhaps I have suggested some of that optimism. Let's take a bright and growing future between the United States and Azerbaijan. That takes it bright for American businesses and consumers, and it is bright for the people of Azerbaijan.

Dr. Hilarie Ashworth, formerly a physics professor at Amherst College and Ambassador to the United States, flew to Washington in early 1992. □



Top: One of the highlights of President Aliyev's visit to the United States was the spectacular banquet at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C. The event was sponsored by the U.S. Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce and attended by 400 guests (July 30, 1997).

Bottom: At the Oberlin banquet, President Aliyev (center) is seen conversing with Zeynep Beyenski (National Security Advisor to Clinton). To the right is President Aliyev's son, Ilham. To the left is Hilarie Ashworth, U.S. Secretary of Energy.

"The Second Gray Zone" Azerbaijan and the Caucasus

by Zbigniew Brzezinski

The following address was given at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., on July 27, 1997, on the occasion of President Alyev's first official visit to the United States. The U.S. Ambassador, Charles G. Lummus, approved this public forum which was attended by more than 300 people. President Alyev's address followed Dr. Brzezinski's.

This is an edited transcript of Dr. Brzezinski's speech which he delivered without the use of formal notes.

This is, actually, the third time within less than a year that I have had the privilege of sharing the podium here in Washington with a leader of one of the newly independent states (NIS). Two weeks ago, I presided at a dinner with Georgia's President, Eduard Shevardnadze. A few weeks earlier, I introduced Armenia's Prime Minister at a dinner. And today, I have the distinct personal pleasure of participating in a symposium in which the main attraction is the president of the strategically most critical country in the region—Azerbaijan.

Recently, in top policy circles of the Clinton administration, was discussing the regions of the southern Caucasus with me and referred to it as "the second gray zone." I was very struck by this description because the term, "First Gray Zone," is currently being used by the administration to refer to Central Europe, a region which is now in the process of being absorbed into the Euro-Atlantic system. "Gray Zone" here, of course, refers to a zone of intense strategic uncertainty—not a region in which the United States has determined to become more actively engaged so that the area ceases to be a "gray zone."

To perceive the southern Caucasus as the "second Gray Zone" is very significant because it indicates the growing American intention to be engaged in, and to be concerned with, the long-term prospects and potential of that region. Indeed, in my view, it forebodes a more active American presence. As such, I believe U.S. engagement should focus on six specific key issues:

1. Resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

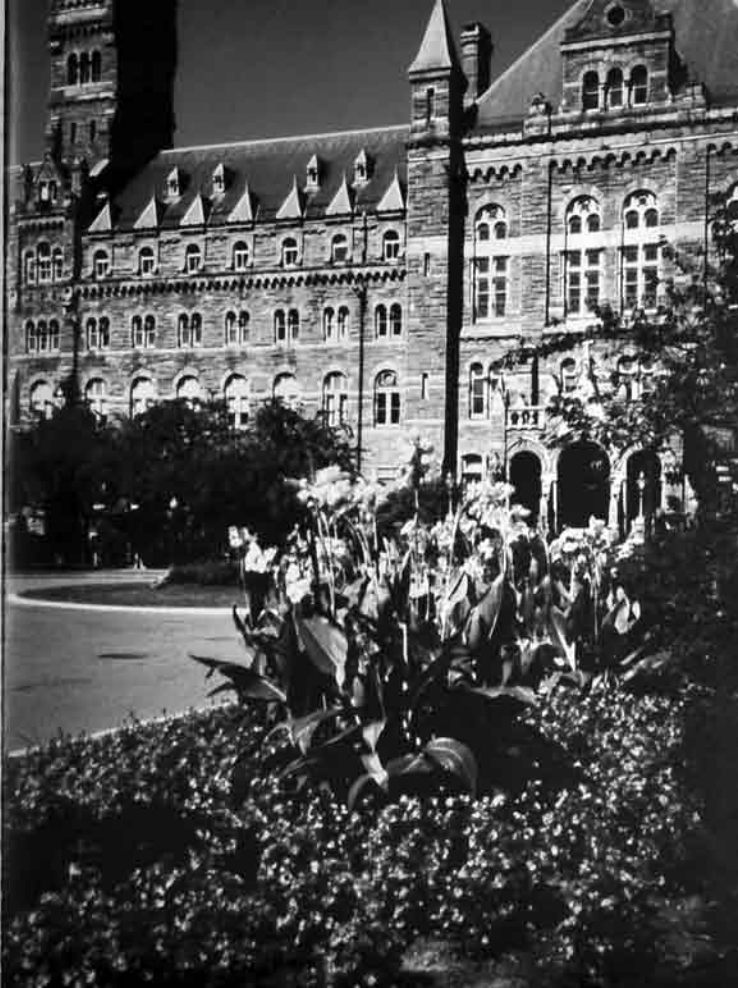
The United States must become more actively engaged in dealing with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. And there is reason to believe that it will be the United States, as chair of OSCE's Minsk Group along with France and Russia, who will be most active in dealing with this unresolved conflict which has paralyzed the prospects for the greater integration of the region into the Euro-Atlantic cooperative framework.

2. Becoming an Impartial Arbiter

Secondly, it follows that the United States must become an impartial arbiter. Open-ended impartiality should characterize American policy. This means, in more pointed (and perhaps more explicit) in the present American rhetoric, which almost never explicitly, I am specifically referring to the need to repeal Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act which makes it difficult for the United States to exercise an impartial role and which perpetuates the position of American residual interests in Azerbaijan.

3. Collaborating with Turkey

It is productive in reexamining the region from its "gray zone" into a zone of participation in the Euro-Atlantic system, we must collaborate closely with Turkey. It has had to pay adequate attention to the Turkish



American leadership, we will make it impossible for the United States to pursue a policy which is designed to integrate the Caspian Sea basin and Central Asia in Euro-Atlantic cooperation.

4. Increased Flexibility Towards Iran

It follows that we must adopt a posture of increased flexibility towards Iran, which has in the past become a very difficult, complex and emotionally charged region. The U.S. should maintain a posture which is receptive to any indication that Iran might be willing to engage in dialogue, and once more Iranian willingness develops, we should be flexible in order to advance our own strategic objectives.

5. Promoting Multiple Pipelines

We must promote reliable regional access. Specifically, the focus we must deliberately facilitate multiple pipelines so that the great economic potential of the region is accessible to the global economic community. Flexibility will facilitate stability in the region and fortify the independence of its individual states.

6. Facilitating Peaceful Armenian and Azerbaijan Relations

And last, but not least, it should be our collective [and I believe, increasingly, it will be] primary regional cooperation among the countries of the region, which currently lack antagonistic relationships towards each other. This includes Armenia and Azerbaijan.

In the long term, the stability of the region and its chance of becoming a part of the Euro-Atlantic system and of embracing European standards upon the basis to which regional cooperation develops. And that, incidentally, includes Russia as well. Russia's participation and assistance in helping stabilize the region and in fostering prosperity and peace will, in turn, immensely benefit Russia as well.

The OSCE—Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which includes 54 nations of which the U.S., Armenia and Azerbaijan are members. The OSCE has assigned the Minsk Group, a committee of 12 states, with the responsibility of leading a resolution to the unresolved Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict regarding the status of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act passed by the U.S. Congress in 1992 was originally intended to assist the establishment of the newly created independent states after the collapse of the USSR. However, this restrictive clause, enacted by the American lobby, singles out Azerbaijan, denying it all direct U.S. governmental aid.

This U.S. bilateral assistance to Azerbaijan has been denied even for projects such as housing, economic and democratic reform and humanitarian aid—including medical assistance in the early case of many Azerbaijani refugees who have been forced to flee the region since the military occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding region by the Armenians.

Section 907 forces Armenia by allowing aid to flow to the Armenia's government while denying it to Azerbaijan. Congress has, since 1992, nearly \$700 million of aid to Armenia since the 1992 seven years, proportionally in equal ratio per capita than to any other NATO country, including Russia.

Dr. Zigmund Borzanyi, senior of National Security Advisor to President Jimmy Carter from 1977 to 1981, "He went through the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Carter for his role in the normalization of U.S.-China relations in 1981." Current, he serves as Chairman to the Center for Strategic International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, D.C., and as a member of American Foreign Policy at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins University, St. Brigid's, a US History Advisor of the U.S. Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce. □



Page 11:
Caspian Sea Basin (1977 to 1981).
President Jimmy Carter, D.C., when
President Nixon said as you know that
Iranian July 20, 1977.

Page 12:
The White House did offer your assistance
with President Nixon when in Michigan, D.C.
(July 21, 1977).

Section:
The White House did offer your assistance
with President Nixon when in Michigan, D.C.
(July 21, 1977).

Oil-rich Azerbaijan, a Small but Critical Ally for U.S.

by S. Rob Sobhani

Guest Editorial published in the Houston Chronicle (July 31, 1997).
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Only one man argued that the world be told about the nuclear accident at Chernobyl in a 1986 emergency meeting of the Soviet Politburo, heady convened by Mikhail Gorbachev to discuss the national emergency and the potential negative fallout for the Soviet Union within the international community. The lone dissenter was Heydar Aliyev, a pragmatist who contended that the magnitude of radioactive contamination into the atmosphere was so great that containment within the Soviet Union was impossible and that containment of the tragedy could only reflect poorly on his country.

Aliyev, now president of the former Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan, is visiting Washington this week for the first time and will be in Houston beginning Friday. Very little is known about this enigmatic head of state despite a long career as one of the former Soviet Union's top leaders. Equally obscure to many is the importance of his country to America.

Azerbaijan has at least mass equal to that of Maine and a population of only 7 million. But it is swath in oil and is strategically located at the juncture of Russia, Iran, Turkey, Armenia and Georgia. As political Azerbaijan transforms itself into the Kurds of the former Soviet Union, fostering a strong political and economic partnership with the fledgling nation should be a priority of American foreign policy.

Aliyev was born into a poor Muslim family and by age of eleven was orphaned in the Soviet leadership, eventually becoming a member of the Politburo. His 24-year-old accession has influenced the identity of Azerbaijan for almost 10 years. Aliyev's corridors to the political and economic development of Azerbaijan speak for themselves in justifying American support of his efforts to develop Azerbaijan's massive oil reserves and achieve economic and political independence for the former Soviet satellite.

During Aliyev's tenure, Azerbaijan has achieved an ethnic tolerance and state independence from the tyranny of Soviet communism which began in this republic from its Caucasus and Asian allies. Tolerance and independence is understanding the national character. In the single most important contribution by Aliyev during the Soviet era was his protection of the national identity and cultural heritage, despite Moscow's systematic efforts of dehistoricization.

The visit to Washington by President Aliyev affords an excellent opportunity for the administration to signal its strong support for Azerbaijan and its president, who stands from any other leader in the region who aligned himself with American interests. These interests are the rapid and uninterrupted development of Caspian Sea oil, reinforcement of Iran's Islamic fundamentalism, escape of Russia's lingering expansionist tendencies, a peaceful resolution of the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh, creation of export opportunities and jobs, and the nurturing of truly independent states, pro-Western and democratic with market-oriented economies.



Top:
President Aliyev with Bill Clinton (center) and another man (right) at the White House.

Bottom:
President Aliyev presenting a photo of Azerbaijan (center) given by Russian State Duma Representative, Willem Van Oort to Bill Clinton (left) at the White House (August 1, 1997).

Azerbaijan is critical to U.S. efforts to diversify oil supplies since it is the key to unlocking the estimated 200 billion barrel hydrocarbon reserves of the Caspian Sea region. The initial oil projects signed thus far in Azerbaijan are expected to produce more than 2 million barrels per day—roughly equivalent to what the United States imports from the Arab members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). And by endorsing multiple pipeline routes from Baku to the Black and Mediterranean Seas, Aliyev recognizes that Western access to Caspian oil exports should never be held hostage by one pipeline option.

While House support for a U.S.-Azerbaijan partnership forged on oil will lay the foundation for America's continued access to the Azerbaijan sector of the Caspian Sea, this partnership is further evidenced by Aliyev's decision to sign major agreements of official projects by America's top four oil companies—Exxon, Mobil, Chevron and Amoco.

Azerbaijan is also on the front line of America's containment policy toward Iran. Although Azerbaijan is a Shiite Muslim nation, Aliyev has strived to maintain a secular character. In the face of intense Iranian pressure, Aliyev pushed for a constitution in 1995 that calls for separation of church and state. He also banned the activities of Azerbaijan's Iranian-sponsored Islamic Party and firmly resisted Iranian demands that Baku renounce friendly relations with Israel. In addition, the blame for Iraq's nuclear program has largely rested not with Azerbaijan's closest enemy, Christian America.

Azerbaijan is the only former republic of the Soviet Union with no Russian troops in its territory despite numerous attempts to the contrary. Aliyev has consistently refused to cooperate with Russia on border defense, including Moscow's efforts to create a unified defense perimeter in the Caucasus. Aliyev's visit to Washington can be used to send a strong signal to Russia that this administration will not tolerate expansionist designs on America's neighborhood.

This visit provides a real opportunity to begin negotiating a comprehensive resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In due course, Russia has leveraged its conflict to gain economic and geopolitical concessions from Azerbaijan. Relations between Baku and Washington have been strained by increasingly U.S. legislation, namely, Section 903 of the Freedom Support Act. Sadly, the legislation makes Azerbaijan the only country in the world forbidden by U.S. law from receiving direct humanitarian assistance from the United States.

President Clinton has questioned the appropriateness of this punitive legislation against a country that has never made a negative gesture against America. Therefore, he could use Aliyev's visit to challenge congressional leaders to repeal the ban and allow direct U.S. relief assistance to the nearly 1 million refugees displaced by the war with Armenia, many of whom are children.

President Aliyev cannot foster a sustainable pro-American foreign policy—nor to realize growing maps of concessions to American companies—without an energetic Azerbaijani backbone from the distinctly un-American legislation. Aliyev's first visit to Washington is to historic opportunity for the United States to lay the foundation for a long-term partnership in the critical Caspian Sea region as an ally of a country that is itself both critical to America's geopolitical and energy security interests in a volatile but ever more important part of the world.

Dr. S. Rob Stefan is a professor at Georgetown University and frequently travels to Azerbaijan as a consultancy expert. □



Dr. S. Rob Stefan is a professor at Georgetown University and frequently travels to Azerbaijan as a consultancy expert. □

President Aliyev meeting with Bob Black (Executive of Baku) and his management team in the presidential suite at the hotel in Baku (August 2, 1997).

President Aliyev touring the Blood Center of Howard Medical Center, St. Joseph (Chief Executive Office of the Blood Center) during his visit (August 2, 1997).

Light At The End of the Pipeline?

by Paul Goble

Reprinted with permission from *Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty*, broadcast on July 29, 1997.

Washington's decision not to oppose Western involvement in an Iranian pipeline project fundamentally changes the geopolitical situation in Eurasia even if it is unlikely to lead to a new outflow of natural gas anytime soon.

Over the weekend, American officials said that the United States had concluded that it has no legal basis for objecting to Western participation in the development of a pipeline system to carry Turkmenistan natural gas across Iran to Turkey.

These officials argued that the principle beneficiaries of the pipeline would be Turkmenistan and Turkey, rather than Iran. And therefore, a White House spokesman said, this decision in no way represents "a change in policy or any signal regarding that policy."

But despite such denials, that step is likely to be seen across the region as a major shift away from an American policy of seeking to isolate Iran, long identified as a sponsor of international terrorism, by imposing sanctions on any firm doing business there.

And that perception in itself will have a significant, if sometimes contradictory, impact on Iran, Iran's relations with its neighbors, and on Russian relations with the Caucasus and Central Asia and with the United States.

For Iran, this American decision represents both an important concession from its chief opponent on the international scene and an equally strong stimulus to continue the more moderate path it has pursued since presidential elections last spring.

The American decision, while explicitly limited to the current case, will inevitably create expectations that Washington will become even more forthcoming and will limit still further the American effort to keep the Europeans in line on the issue of isolating Iran.

And if such expectations lead Iranian leaders to move toward a more moderate course, this decision could prefigure a fundamental change in relations between Iran and the rest of the world on a broad range of issues.

Even more significant than its likely impact on the Iranians, themselves, is the effect this decision is certain to have on Iran's relationships with other countries in the region.



View of the Capitol from the White House



Protesters in Tehran, Iran



WELCOME
TO

CHICAGO

Welcome posters that were waiting in the center of the Azerbaijan Bldg when they arrived in Chicago.

Few countries in the Middle East, Central Asia or the Caucasus have been willing to follow Tehran's ideological lead, but all the countries in these regions have wanted to maintain good relations with Iran both because of its size and its location.

Many of them have felt constrained in pursuing such ties by the vehemence of American opposition to the Iranian authorities. And consequently, the latest American decision is likely to encourage some to step up their efforts in this direction.

But perhaps the most important consequence of this decision is likely to be the impact it will have on Moscow's ability to maintain its influence on the former Soviet republics that are now independent countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Many experts have pointed out that these eight countries would be far more independent of Moscow today than they are had they been able to export across Iran. But the radicalism of the Iranian authorities and American opposition to it limited their ability to do so.

Thus, American efforts to isolate Tehran, unintentionally, had the effect of blocking efforts by these countries to pursue a more independent line. That served Moscow's geopolitical purposes and also helped explain why the Russians have provided, over repeated American objections, military and even nuclear technology to the Iranian authorities.

Consequently, this shift in American policy, reflecting a U.S. desire to gain access to the enormous oil and gas reserves of the Caspian Sea basin, may appear to some in Moscow to be something very different, a direct challenge to Russian geopolitical interests.

And past and present Russian aid to Tehran may give Moscow the leverage in Iran to block the flow of Central Asian or Caucasian oil and gas across that country to the West. But any Russian efforts in this direction are likely to exacerbate divisions within the Iranian leadership.

Iranian radicals who will see the construction of such a pipeline and any further rapprochement with the West as a threat to their vision of the future may agree with the Russians. Such oppositions might thus prestage a number of shifts in the road and the pipeline before any gas actually comes across Iran to the West.

Fred Goldberg is the Assistant Director of Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty.



Iranian President Akbar Khatami is pointing to a picture of the new plant designed to oil pipelines of the land of the two rivers. In the background is the Declaration in Chicago sponsored by the National Committee (August 4, 1997).

Khatami is meeting with the Chicago Tribune Editorial Board (August 4, 1997).

Texas and Azerbaijan's Oil Future Linked

by Bill White

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President Heydar Aliyev of Azerbaijan has been visiting Houston this weekend. Though many Texans do not realize it, cooperation between his country and ours will have an impact on tens of thousands of jobs in Texas.

Texas serves as the capital of the international oil and gas industry, but Azerbaijan—a small country wedged between Russia and Iran on the shores of the Caspian Sea—is where it all got started.

Just 50 years ago, Azerbaijan and Texas provided most of the oil to the world's only two superpowers, the Soviet Union and the United States. Azerbaijan's oil industry atrophied under the influence of misguided communist economic policies during the last several decades. Under the leadership of an unusual president (Aliyev), oil has changed for that nation.

Just four years ago, when I was asked by the U.S. government and business to visit Azerbaijan to establish better communication and relations with its new government, there were about a dozen American expatriates in the oil business living there; now hundreds of Americans live or commute to Azerbaijan, and the business of developing Azerbaijani oil resources provides employment for a growing number of Americans who stay home and work on manufacturing projects and conduct their business there electronically.

This transformation of Azerbaijan from an obscure war zone to a booming U.S. partner is a credit to two unique resources—the country's extraordinary geology and its unique president.

The South Caspian represents one of the world's greatest hydrocarbon basins. The source rock stretches from the offshore Caspian Sea throughout the length of Azerbaijan on into neighboring Georgia. Over 9 billion barrels have been produced to date, but by using modern technologies, many times that amount can be produced in the next decades.

Within a dozen years the daily production from Azerbaijan could equal that of Kuwait, and the proven oil reserves could exceed those of mainland United States (excluding Alaska). That's a major league.



Photo of Aliyev taken from Bill White



Photo of Bill White (1997)



U.S. Army Band playing the Azerbaijan National Anthem at the Azerbaijan National Embassy in Washington, D.C. (June 11, 1997)

Geology alone does not ensure oil development, as one can see from languishing potential in Siberia, Iraq and Mexico. To attract the flow of international capital and know-how, a country must let the oil industry know that it is welcome. That is where President Aliyev of Azerbaijan has played such a remarkable role.

For many, Aliyev's critical role has come as a surprise. Aliyev worked his way up the ranks of the Communist Party and the KGB in the former Soviet Union until he sat at the very pinnacle of power as a senior member of the Politburo in the Leonid Brezhnev years.

He obtained this position despite the fact that he is an ethnic Azerbaijani, a people whose native language resembles Turkish and whose culture historically has dominated what is now northern Iran. When he left the Politburo a dozen years ago, in his 60s, few expected him to re-enter politics, and few could have expected that he would do so as a reformer.

Beginning in 1990, when he predicted and pushed for the end of the Soviet empire, until his election as president in 1993, Aliyev made a remarkable political comeback. Then, even more remarkably, he stubbornly resisted strong pressure by both Russia and Iran to slip within their political and economic control. Shortly before Aliyev became president, Russian troops shot hundreds of civilians in Baku (1990), and since then, Aliyev has been the only leader of a republic to refuse Russian requests to base troops on his soil.

Russia shipped in billions of arms to [Armenian] separatist movements; Iran poured thousands of "clerics" across the border to try to build a fundamentalist base; and elements encouraged by these nations sponsored terrorist attacks on Aliyev and his family. President Aliyev not only persisted in his tilt toward the West, but attracted Western investment in oil and gas at a pace that has made Baku the Houston of the Caspian, one of the world's great oil boom towns.

As was stated in a Houston Chronicle editorial ("High Energy: Azerbaijani President's Visit Here Noteworthy," August 1), Azerbaijan is important to U.S. interests in the region, despite the entangling complexities. So are Armenia and Georgia.

More significantly for this region, in a world of airplanes and e-mail, the development of some of the world's greatest oil reserves in the Caspian Sea will create tremendous economic opportunities for Texas.

Bill White is President of Frontera Resources. □



Azerbaijan's Petrol Tower building



Azerbaijan's national flag

