



**AZERBAIJAN IN THE WORLD  
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**AZERBAIJAN AND JAPAN:  
TOWARDS AN EXPANDED PARTNERSHIP**

An Interview with H.E. Mr. Gursel Ismayilzada  
Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Japan

*Azerbaijan in the World:* What do you see as the central core of relations between Azerbaijan and Japan?

*Ambassador Ismayilzada:* Relations between Azerbaijan and Japan are built on principles of common interest, mutual understanding and respect, which work to the benefit of our two nations. The two countries share common values such as democracy, free market economy, human rights, peace and stability in the world to which they both work to contribute. From the very first years, these factors created favorable ground to develop our cooperation.

The most significant development of bilateral relations took place after the visits of the national leader Heydar Aliyev in 1998 and President Ilham Aliyev in 2006 to Japan. As a result, political dialogue between our countries is currently at a high level. Japan was among those who voted in favor of Azerbaijan's candidacy for the position of a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. Moreover, Japan has always supported the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The GUAM+Japan dialogue and cooperation framework is another accomplishment. And the ties which we have established continue to grow and deepen. In recent years, Azerbaijan's energy contribution to Japan and Japan's ODA assistance to Azerbaijan have been central to our relationship.

*AIW:* How have relations between Azerbaijan and Japan evolved in the post-Soviet era and how would you describe their current status?

*Amb. Ismayilzada:* Japan was among the first countries to recognize Azerbaijan's independence and it was among the first to offer technical assistance, grants and to organize various training courses for our experts during the initial post-independence stage of economic and social hardship.

Japan has also been a pioneer as far as investments in our energy projects and the development of Azerbaijan's off-shore oil fields are concerned as well as a backer of the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline. Now given Azerbaijan's rapid economic growth and the level of success it achieved on the path towards modernization, our bilateral cooperation has geared up to equal partnership and is expanding into other areas as well.

*AIW:* What are presently the key areas of cooperation and dissent between Azerbaijan and Japan? What are the main components of bilateral trade?

*Amb. Ismayilzada:* The key area of cooperation remains the energy sector, including the petrochemicals industry. Japanese companies such as ITOCHU and INPEX are actively involved in the oil industry of Azerbaijan and have recently increased their shares in ACG project. In addition, Japan is interested in the realization of Southern Gas Corridor as well as Trans-Caspian Project.

At the same time, we are seeking to diversify our cooperation into the spheres like tourism, agriculture, industry, and information & communication technologies, among others. Recently, we have witnessed increasing interest by the Japanese companies in the infrastructure projects in our country, including in the fields of construction safety, disaster prevention, and environment. To that end, our embassy provides as much information as possible to Japanese companies about investment possibilities and business opportunities in Azerbaijan.

*AIW:* What is the state of bilateral cultural and social cooperation?

*Amb. Ismayilzada:* Our work in that area is important in promoting mutual understanding and a strong friendship between Azerbaijani and Japanese people. The Embassy pays close attention to the development of cultural relations and public diplomacy. Our main goal in this direction is to expand media ties, strengthen people-to-people contacts, and increase mutual understanding through various presentations, publications, art and cultural exchange.

The Embassy also works to promote Azerbaijani culture in Japan. Last year, for example, we held a number of seminars and presentations on Azerbaijan in such major Japanese universities as Keio, Sophia, Tsukuba, Utsunomiya, and the Gunma Prefectural Women's University, among others. We also publish and disseminate the *IRS* (Heritage) magazine in the Japanese language, on pages of which readers can find comprehensive information about Azerbaijan, including its history, architecture, cuisine, and lifestyle.

We are also pleased to witness that the number of tourists visiting Azerbaijan from Japan has been growing every year. So too have alternative platforms upon which people-to-people contacts are set to flourish, including a new-born idea to introduce the concept of sister and friendship cities in our bilateral relations. Now we are in the process of realizing this framework between Ismayilli—one of the natural beauties of Azerbaijan—and Ito city of Shizuoka Prefecture, home to world-famous hot springs.

*AIW:* What do you expect to constitute the core of your agenda as the Ambassador in the time ahead? What are the key issues currently facing Azerbaijan-Japan relations and what in your view should be the next steps in bilateral relations?

*Amb. Ismayilzada:* Azerbaijan is modernizing in all areas, and we would like Japan, as one of our main partners, to closely participate in this process. Over a relatively short period of time, we have achieved a great deal, and today our relations are truly a strategic partnership reflecting cooperation in political, socio-economic, humanitarian and other fields, as well as substantial dialogue on regional and international levels.

In addition to developing bilateral cooperation in such areas as agriculture, health, culture, tourism, ICT, Azerbaijan is also highly interested in working deeper with Japan in the field of human capacity building, including education, research and youth development, as a foundation for our future development. Therefore, Japan's technical assistance is very important to us.

I am confident that the successful and harmonious relations between the two countries will continue to expand for the benefit of our two peoples.

*AIW:* Given your own experience, what advice would you give young Azerbaijanis beginning their careers in diplomacy?

*Amb. Ismayilzada:* Compared to last two decades during which we faced challenges of the newly independent young country, young Azerbaijanis today have many more chances to develop their capacity and to gain vast experience in order to become fully fledged diplomats of contemporary time. To that end, our young diplomats should pay close attention to the efficient use of ICT, display our national tolerance, and be open to public discussion. Moreover, they need to acquire foreign languages and knowledge about other countries and be always updated on the currents of

global affairs. They also need to develop good communications skills and the ability to work in a team, be responsible and punctual. Finally, regardless of the position they hold and the intellectual heights they have achieved, they should never stop learning and upgrading and updating their knowledge on the dynamically evolving complex world in which we happen to live and work.

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## **DEPOLITICIZED DIPLOMACY: JAPAN'S APPROACH TO CENTRAL ASIA AND THE SOUTH CAUCASUS**

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Japan's engagement with the countries of Central Asia and the South Caucasus, including Azerbaijan, is based on a *politics-free* diplomacy, a reality that has led some—both in Japan and in the CASC region—to conclude that Tokyo has not succeeded in living up to the expectations of the CASC states (Len, et al 2008). On closer examination, however, it is clear that there are many internal and external factors, as well as geopolitical hindrances, that have contributed to Japan's relatively shallow presence in the region.

Two major factors—the geographical situation in which Japan finds itself and the mentality of the Japanese people—have profoundly affected diplomacy of the state. As an island country, Japan consists of four main and over six thousand tiny islands. It is linguistically and culturally homogeneous with 98.5 percent of its population ethnic Japanese. [1] Located in the middle of the ocean, the Japanese people have been predominantly inward looking (Ogoura 2009). While some might argue that this pattern is limited to the general population, a closer examination shows that it is also true of the country's political elite. Indeed, many Japanese intellectuals acknowledge their sharp differences or uniqueness and explain these with reference to being "*shimaguni seishin*" (island country ethos) or "*shimaguni konjo*" (insularity) (Khan 1997, p. 45).

For many centuries, the Japanese rulers have preferred to have less interaction with outsiders, but depend more on the strong solidarity of the inhabitants of the islands. From the early seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century, Tokugawa *shogunate* took strict isolation measures to cut or minimize country's ties with the outsiders (Khan 1997). Such trends were commonly accepted and strictly followed until Japan was forced by foreign powers "to open its doors" to outsiders in the mid-nineteenth century (Iwasawa 2001, p. 123). Although there have been revolutionary changes in the minds of its people as well as in the political spheres, elements of that past can be observed in many aspects of life, as well as in the country's relations with other countries.

Japan, which has experienced a wide variety of geopolitical shocks over the last 150 years, underwent another one in 1991 with the dissolution of the USSR, an event which undermined one of the country's key post-World War II foreign policy pillars. Tokyo was simply unprepared for the appearance of the new countries of Central

Asia and the South Caucasus. While it quickly recognized them, [2] the Japanese government was relatively slow in establishing full-scale ties with them, since most Japanese policy makers viewed them as part of Russia's sphere of influence (Mihalka 2007, p. 22). Japan has now opened several embassies in the CASC states, [3] but it has continued to keep in touch with some of them through its diplomatic representatives in Moscow. It still does not have an embassy in Yerevan, although Armenia established one in Tokyo in June 2010. [4] Instead, Japan's embassy in Moscow is jointly accredited to Armenia. [5]

A major reason for Japan's slow and careful approach towards this region has been its long-standing territorial dispute with Russia. Japan still hopes it would regain the Northern Territories occupied by the Soviet troops in the closing days of World War II (Yasmann 2005). Tokyo had been inspired by the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, which reunified the two Germany formally on October 3, 1990 (Malley-Morrison 2009, p. 10). That precedent made the Japanese policy-makers even more confident given the economically depressed and politically unstable Russia of the time.

Traditionally, Japan has maneuvered within the foreign policy priorities of the USA, its closest ally. It also closely observes and tries to keep a harmony with the interests of leading European nations, particularly when it comes to Japan's involvement in western and central Eurasia. [6] This approach is also apparent in the case of the CASC region. Anxious to avoid making a mistake, Japan has preferred and followed a "wait-and-see" stance with regard to establishing closer ties with the regional states. But having seen business opportunities in the CASC, Japan has in recent years worked hard to gain an economic foothold in this region. Tokyo has thus readjusted its policy with regard to the post-Soviet realm, re-considered its stance on the issues of Kuril Island and CASC, and channeled its resources and efforts towards the latter without any further delays (Jones 1992, p. 3).

Immediately after 1991, the CASC states were eager to welcome any country, which wanted to establish relations. Such inter-state relations were deemed instrumental to the consolidation of their newly gained independence. They also hoped to attract foreign investments to boost economies paralyzed by the collapse of the centralized and state controlled Soviet economy. Not surprisingly, given that, CASC quickly became an area of fierce competition among world's leading nations. Tokyo, too, was well aware of importance of having multi-sided and deep-rooted relations with the CASC states. Hoping to get its share from the region, Japan moved in with one of its traditional foreign policy tools—*checkbook diplomacy*—economic aid in the form of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in return for closer cooperation. However, to strengthen the relations with the CASC states, Japan has had to commit more in terms of both economic assistance and political activism.

At least these were the expectations of the CASC governments (Len, et al 2008). Japan managed to live up to the expectations in the field of economic assistance. The volume of Japanese ODA to these newly independent states prompted an increase and soon exceeded that from European countries and the United States. With such generous economic assistance Japan had already offered a hand of cooperation to the CASC states, which seemed to have accepted it with pleasure. Nevertheless, Japan's presence in the regional politics has remained relatively small compared to that of other outside powers.

The concept of "Eurasian Diplomacy," formulated by Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto in 1997 was the first effort by Japan to develop a comprehensive policy for the region. That document emphasized improving relations with Russia and China as well as establishing a Japanese presence in the CASC region. It focused on energy, economic, cultural, educational, and human resource issues. Because of Russian irritation over outside penetration into its "sphere of influence," Japan continued to move cautiously, given that improved ties with Moscow and the possible solution of the Northern Territories issue are central concerns in Japan.

One way or another, by 2000, Tokyo concluded that it no longer had to treat the CASC countries as Russia's backyard. Instead, Japanese policy makers adopted the idea of promoting the restoration of the ancient Silk Road across the region. The CASC portion of this new approach focused on political dialogue, economic cooperation and cooperation in nuclear non-proliferation, democratization and maintaining stability. It is worth noting in this regard that this "Eurasian diplomacy" reflects a broader view than has been typical of Japanese foreign policy since 1945 (Takeshi 2007).

Silk Road Diplomacy called for Japan to intensify its economic assistance through its Official Development Assistance program. As a result, Japan became the largest donor to the region in terms of loans and grants. A decade after the proclaimed Silk Road Diplomacy, the Japanese assistance to Central Asia in the form of long-term and low interest loans totaled USD 2 billion, which was mainly used for the construction of infrastructure. Japan's assistance was also in the form of grants and technical assistance, which totaled USD 600. [7] Japan is still continuing this approach in the CASC region.

Although Silk Road Diplomacy encompasses a wider geography, Tokyo appears to have focused more on Central Asia than on the South Caucasus. There are several reasons for this: First, it is the geographical location and proximity of Central Asia that makes it essential for both sides to have closer and multi-sided relations. Second, there is a constant rivalry between Japan and China over that geostrategic region (Zhuangzhi 2007). And third, Japan is an energy importer, as the third largest petroleum consumer in the world. [8] It consumes 4.5 million barrels per day, 87 percent of which comes from the Middle East. [9] Given turmoil there, Japan has always been in search of more stable sources of supply, and even though most of the production from the CASC region flows westward with no direct supply to the Japanese market, it does make important contribution to global energy supply and market stability, something that is "important for Japan" (VOA 2009). One Japanese foreign minister noted that, "Japan does not import oil or gas directly from the region, but views that market as a source for a stable supply, if there is turmoil in the Middle East or supplies from other oil exporting countries become unreliable" (VOA 2009).

Japanese policy makers often talk about dialogue with others. Such a concept reflects Japanese culture and must be understood by Tokyo's various partners, because it is often a time-consuming process. The "Central Asia plus Japan" dialogue initiative was announced by Foreign Minister Yuriko Kawaguchi in 2004. The foreign ministers of Japan and all the countries of Central Asia except Turkmenistan subsequently gathered in Astana to discuss future cooperation. That meeting addressed a wide range of issues concerning the region and their implications for Japan. Importantly, it sought to foster multilateral relations, to encourage Central Asian regional integration, and to enhance the capacities of these

countries to deal with regional problems by regional means. Succeeding Japanese foreign ministers have continued this practice (Dadabaev 2006).

Japan would eagerly have initiated a "Japan plus the South Caucasus" Dialogue, if the three countries of that region could agree, but conflicts among them and especially Armenia's occupation of Azerbaijani territory have made that impossible. Nonetheless, Japan has taken a few steps in that direction by promoting the "GUAM plus Japan" dialogue, which includes Azerbaijan and Georgia, but not Armenia. Several high level exchanges have taken place between the parties.

The global economic recession led Japan to re-consider its once ambitious foreign policy outlook. As a result, Tokyo has postponed or narrowed the scope of its diplomatic initiatives in the CASC region. Moreover, it has concluded that its "dialogue" and "plus" arrangements were not proving to be as useful as it had hoped. Japan's passivity, in turn, has allowed other powers to make progress, a development that has worked against the CASC states, because they now confront a situation in which fewer countries are playing any role there.

In this new environment, Japan's Northern Territories problem with Russia has left little room for Japanese policy makers to get involved with the CASC region in a comprehensive way. Tokyo still believes that engaging actively in political, security, and energy issues in this sensitive region could lead Moscow to dig in its heels on the territorial dispute. In addition, Japan appears increasingly concerned about security at home now challenged by North Korea (Koshoji 2009). Given that threat, Tokyo cannot afford to offend Russia or China.

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#### Notes

[1] See CIA Factbook: Japan, available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ja.html> (accessed 19 June 2013).

[2] See Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs official website at <http://www.mofa.go.jp> (accessed 21 June 2013).

[3] Japan opened its first embassies in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in January 1993. Establishing diplomatic representatives in the CASC states has continued since then.

[4] See the official website of the Embassy of Armenia in Japan at <http://japan.mfa.am/en/bilateral-jp> (accessed 24 June 2013).

[5] See the Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs official website at [http://www.mofa.go.jp/about/emb\\_cons/over/europe.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/about/emb_cons/over/europe.html) (accessed 21 June 2013).

[6] Having coherent foreign policies with its major allies have always been observed in the Japanese diplomacy since the end of WWII. Adherence to such a tradition has been mentioned many times at the highest level in Japan. For example, in a speech to the policymakers at the Diet in January 2007, Taro Aso, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, reaffirmed that Japan will work with nations, "such as the USA, Australia, the UK, France, Germany, and other nations of Europe" to achieve its goals.

[7] See the Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs official website at <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/data/index.html> (accessed 1 June 2013).



[8] According to Energy Information Administration (EIA), the first and second biggest consumers are the USA and China.

[9] See Energy Information Administration (EIA) 2011 Statistics at <http://www.eia.gov/cabs/japan/Full.html> (accessed 15 June 2013).

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## **AZERBAIJAN'S TRADE WITH ASIAN COUNTRIES EXPANDS**

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Since 1992, Azerbaijan's trade with China has increased by a factor of 600 times to more than a billion US dollars a year, according to Beijing's ambassador in Baku, a development that reflects a more general rise in trade between Azerbaijan and the countries of Asia and one that is likely to have geopolitical consequences as well.

Speaking at the Presidential Center for Strategic Research in Baku on June 13, Ambassador Hong Tsyuinem noted that, "if in 1992, trade between the two countries amounted to 1.5 million dollars, in 2011, it reached 1.086 billion dollars, 16.5 percent more compared to 2009 and 600 times the amount 21 years earlier."

Such trade, the ambassador continued, has contributed to "an unprecedented level of mutual political trust and respect." As a result, "there are no unresolved issues" between China and Azerbaijan, and "both countries support one another on the issues of sovereignty and territorial integrity." And China expects this relationship to develop further.

Chinese companies have begun to make major investments in Azerbaijan amounting to 700 million US dollars, Hong Tsyuinem said, and there are now 15 Azerbaijani companies operating in China, a number that the ambassador said he expects to see increase over the next few years. [1]

Azerbaijan's economic and political relations with China and other countries in Asia have attracted less attention than its ties with Europe and the former Soviet republics, but they are large and increasingly important. In 2011, according to Azerbaijan's state statistical committee, total foreign trade turnover with Asian countries amounted to 8.2 billion US dollars, some 22.6 percent of the country's total trade. Although that share was only a third of Azerbaijan's trade with Europe, it was three times that of Baku's turnover with the Americas and vastly more than its trade with Africa or Oceania. [2]

Although Azerbaijan exported more to Asian countries than it imported from them, 5 billion US dollars as opposed to almost 3.2 billion US dollars, Asian countries were responsible for almost a third (32.6 percent) of Azerbaijan's imports, while Azerbaijan's exports to the countries on that continent formed less than a fifth (18.6 percent) of the country's total exports.

Azerbaijan's most important trading partners in Asia in 2011 were Indonesia, with almost a billion US dollars in turnover, China with roughly the same, Korea with a total of 650 million US dollars in trade, Thailand with 150 million, and Taiwan 30 million. It also had trade with most of the other countries in the region.

In support of this trade and in recognition of Asia's growing importance politically as well as economically, Baku has opened embassies in China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia and Vietnam and has active exchanges of officials, parliamentarians, and students with these countries and others in which it has not yet established an embassy.

### Notes

[1] See <http://news.day.az/economy/408365.html> (accessed 30 June 2013).

[2] See <http://azstat.org/publications/azfigures/2012/en/018en.shtml> (accessed 30 June 2013).

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## **A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY**

### **I. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy**

President Ilham Aliyev says on the 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces that, "Azerbaijan will restore its territorial integrity" (<http://news.day.az/politics/411080.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev says that, "the Turkic language peoples and their governments are making a significant contribution to the securing of peace and security in the world" (<http://news.day.az/politics/410032.html>).

Ali Hasanov, chairman of the State Committee on Refugees and IDPs, says "it would be better if international structures involved themselves with the issue of the fulfillment of their decisions and only then give Azerbaijan lessons on human rights" (<http://news.day.az/politics/409161.html>).

### **II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan**

The presidents of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries issue a statement expressing their "deep regret" that there has not been more progress in talks toward the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and calling on Armenia and Azerbaijan to step up their efforts to reach an agreement (<http://news.day.az/politics/409284.html>).

Charles Hendry, trade representative of the British prime minister to Azerbaijan, says that Azerbaijani energy resources will play an ever greater and vitally important role in Europe (<http://news.day.az/economy/411818.html>).

Daniel Stein, senior advisor on Eurasian energy issues at the US State Department, says that, "Europe needs Baku" (<http://news.day.az/politics/409784.html>).

### **III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy**

30 June

Polad Bulbuloglu, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Moscow, says that the selection of Gabala as the cultural capital of the CIS has "great importance" (<http://news.day.az/politics/412197.html>).

Nikolay Patskevich, Belorussian ambassador to Baku, takes part in the ceremony declaring Gabala the cultural capital of the CIS (<http://news.day.az/politics/412183.html>).

Aladdin Burujerdi, a member of the Iranian parliament, says that Tehran is prepared to renew its relations with Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/412156.html>).

29 June

Boris Tadić, former president of Serbia, calls for Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia to cooperate with each other (<http://news.day.az/politics/412101.html>).

28 June

President Ilham Aliyev receives the letters of credence from the incoming ambassador from Saudi Arabia, Musaid bin Ibrahim bin Abdulla al-Salim (<http://news.day.az/politics/411918.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Franco Frattini, former Italian foreign minister (<http://news.day.az/politics/411907.html>).

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev says that the Azerbaijani military can liberate the occupied territories at any time (<http://news.day.az/politics/411888.html>).

Industry and Energy Minister Natic Aliyev says the route chosen for the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline will ensure that there will be adequate investment in the project (<http://news.day.az/economy/411713.html>).

Taxation Minister Fazil Mammadov receives Linas Linkevičius, foreign minister of Lithuania, to discuss cooperation (<http://news.day.az/economy/411831.html>).

Ali Ahmadov, deputy chairman and executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, receives Chon Chu Lu, deputy chairman of the Vietnamese parliament (<http://news.day.az/politics/411808.html>).

Samad Seyidov, head of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that Armenia's Edvard Nalbadyan has violated the rules of the Council of Europe with his remarks about Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/411795.html>).

Tamerlan Garayev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Jakarta, participates in a hearing of

the Indonesian parliament on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the Khojaly genocide (<http://news.day.az/politics/411764.html>).

The US State Department welcomes the selection of the pipeline route for the transportation of Azerbaijani gas to Europe (<http://news.day.az/politics/411919.html>).

Iranian Ayatollah Mujtahid Shabistari says that Nagorno-Karabakh must be returned to Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/411671.html>).

Charles Hendry, trade representative of the British prime minister to Azerbaijan, says that Azerbaijani energy resources will play an ever greater and vitally important role in Europe (<http://news.day.az/economy/411818.html>).

Russia's trade representation in Baku announces the formation of a Russian-Azerbaijani Business Club (<http://news.day.az/economy/411758.html>).

27 June

President Ilham Aliyev receives Romanian Prime Minister Victor Ponta (<http://news.day.az/politics/411450.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev appoints Farid Abdinbayov Azerbaijan's ambassador to Bucharest (<http://news.day.az/politics/411578.html>).

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev receives the outgoing US military attaché to Baku, Daniel Grillo, and his replacement, Christopher Monaghan (<http://news.day.az/politics/411408.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that the Armenian leadership continues to deceive the world community about Yerevan's actions and intentions in the region (<http://news.day.az/politics/411526.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that Armenia's continuing occupation of Azerbaijani territory represents a threat to the security of the entire region (<http://news.day.az/politics/411528.html>).

Rovshan Damshidov, Azerbaijan's incoming ambassador to Canberra, presents his credentials to Quentin Bryce, governor general of Australia (<http://news.day.az/politics/411322.html>).

Gudsi Osmanov is honored on the occasion of the conclusion of his service as consul general in St. Petersburg (<http://news.day.az/politics/411514.html>).

The Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy signs a cooperation agreement with the Romanian Diplomatic Institute (<http://news.day.az/politics/411569.html>).

Amir Dossal, special representative of the UN secretary general, says that Azerbaijan has performed extremely well in the UN Security Council, but that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is not a major priority for the international community at the present time (<http://news.day.az/politics/411554.html>).

26 June

President Ilham Aliyev says on the 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces that, "Azerbaijan will restore its territorial integrity" (<http://news.day.az/politics/411080.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev says that, "a strong Azerbaijan can speak with a weak Armenia in any language" (<http://news.day.az/politics/411116.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov receives Yu Ki Jun, a member of the Korean National Assembly (<http://news.day.az/politics/411079.html>).

Abbasali Hasanov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Dushanbe, meets with A. Rakhmonov, chairman of the Tajikistan Committee on Television and Radio (<http://news.day.az/politics/411247.html>).

Mubariz Gurbanly, deputy executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that the Azerbaijani army is the strongest and best equipped in the South Caucasus (<http://news.day.az/politics/411212.html>).

Jean-Claude Minon, chairman of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, hosts a meeting of the Azerbaijani and Armenian delegations (<http://news.day.az/politics/411456.html>).

NATO discusses its IPAP with Azerbaijan for 2013 (<http://news.day.az/politics/411229.html>).

The monitoring committee of PACE meets to discuss the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/411059.html>).

25 June

President Ilham Aliyev receives Andres Morrison, British deputy defense minister (<http://news.day.az/politics/410934.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives outgoing Dutch ambassador Arien Peter Uiterlinden on the completion of his assignment in Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/410934.html>).

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva says that Baku will fulfill in a worthy fashion its responsibilities as host of the European Games (<http://news.day.az/politics/411073.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that Yerevan is behaving in a duplicitous fashion, making proposals that it then proceeds to block (<http://news.day.az/politics/411007.html>).

24 June

The Organization for Islamic Cooperation names Azerbaijani diplomat Arif Mammadov as the OIC permanent representative to the European Union (<http://news.day.az/politics/410697.html>).

Ali Ahmadov, deputy chairman and executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan

Party, receives a delegation of Korean parliamentarians (<http://news.day.az/politics/410523.html>).

Samad Seyidov, head of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that he hopes the Armenian delegation to PACE will actually prove willing to talk about the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/410681.html>).

Jean-Claude Minor, chairman of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that PACE will not discuss the Nagorno-Karabakh issue during this session, but will invite the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group to report on developments (<http://news.day.az/politics/410604.html>).

Kerry Cavanaugh, the first US co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, says that Baku is conducting a wise policy (<http://news.day.az/politics/410579.html>).

22 June

President Ilham Aliyev says that, "we want to become as close to Europe as possible" (<http://news.day.az/politics/409893.html>).

Finance Minister Samir Sharifov says that Baku is carefully considering its relationship with the International Development Association (<http://news.day.az/economy/410198.html>).

Eldar Ibrahimov, a Milli Majlis deputy who is deputy chairman of the Azerbaijan-Iran Interparliamentary Group, receives Mohsen Pakayin, Iran's ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/410256.html>).

Kazzem Jalili, a member of the Iranian parliament, says that Tehran is prepared to help resolve the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan and notes that, "no country, not even Armenia, officially recognizes Nagorno-Karabakh as an independent state" (<http://news.day.az/politics/410245.html>).

21 June

President Ilham Aliyev makes a working visit to Brussels and meets with Jose Manuel Barroso, president of the European Commission (<http://news.day.az/politics/410182.html> and <http://news.day.az/politics/410114.html>).

The First Forum of heads of the Diaspora Organizations of the Member Countries of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Language States adopts the Baku declaration calling for greater cooperation among these groups (<http://news.day.az/politics/409989.html>).

20 June

President Ilham Aliyev says that, "the Turkic language peoples and their governments are making a significant contribution to the securing of peace and security in the world" (<http://news.day.az/politics/410032.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives José Manuel Barroso, president of the European

Commission (<http://news.day.az/politics/410114.html>).

Economic Development Minister Shahin Mustafayev meets with Kazakhstan officials in Aktau to discuss expanding economic cooperation between the two countries (<http://news.day.az/economy/409668.html>).

Nazim Ibrahimov, chairman of the State Committee for Work with the Diaspora, says there are no problems with the diaspora (<http://news.day.az/politics/409984.html>).

The Milli Majlis ratifies the Azerbaijani-Russian agreement on border demarcation (<http://news.day.az/politics/410135.html>).

The Milli Majlis adopts a resolution criticizing the European Parliament's resolution on Azerbaijan as reflecting double standards and representing an attempt to interfere in the country's internal affairs (<http://news.day.az/politics/409996.html>).

Elkhan Suleymanov, head of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of Euronest, criticizes the statement Human Rights Watch made to European Commission about Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/409894.html>).

Herman van Rompuey, president of the European Union, says that, "Azerbaijan is a very important partner for the European Union" (<http://news.day.az/politics/410059.html>).

German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle says that Germany supports closer ties between Azerbaijan and the European Union, because Azerbaijan is "a bridge" between East and West (<http://news.day.az/politics/409721.html>).

The US embassy in Baku congratulates Azerbaijan for the positive evaluation it received in the annual US State Department report on human trafficking (<http://news.day.az/politics/409678.html>).

Antonius Broek, UN resident coordinator in Baku, says that, "by its dynamic development over the last decade, Azerbaijan has defined the future" (<http://news.day.az/politics/410137.html>).

Daniel Stein, senior advisor on Eurasian energy issues at the US State Department, says that, "Europe needs Baku" (<http://news.day.az/politics/409784.html>).

The International Foundation of the Black and Caspian Seas and the European Union present a special award for its achievements in the advancement of international peace and security. Fuad Iskandarov, Azerbaijan's permanent representative to the EU, receives the award on behalf of Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/409709.html>).

19 June

Economic Development Minister Shahin Mustafayev receives Vuk Eremic, speaker of the 67<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly, who says that the United Nations rates highly the role of Azerbaijan in the Security Council (<http://news.day.az/politics/409507.html>).

Economic Development Minister Shahin Mustafayev meets with his Kazakhstan counterpart Erbolat Dosayev (<http://news.day.az/economy/409554.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says, in response to the joint declaration of the leaders of the OSCE Minsk co-chair countries, that Azerbaijan has followed international decisions, but that Armenia has violated these decisions and international law by continuing to occupy Azerbaijani territory (<http://news.day.az/politics/409414.html>).

Fuad Iskandarov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Brussels, meets with Albert II, king of Belgium (<http://news.day.az/politics/409520.html>).

Govhar Bakhshaliyeva, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that the US decision not to provide funds to Armenia for the Millennium Challenges program shows that relations between Yerevan and Washington are in trouble (<http://news.day.az/politics/409357.html>).

Aydin Mirzazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that the joint declaration of the presidents of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries cannot satisfy Azerbaijani society, because "it is impermissible to close one's eyes to Armenian aggression" (<http://news.day.az/politics/409465.html>).

Azerbaijani news agencies release the list of military equipment that Russia sold Azerbaijan in 2012 (<http://news.day.az/politics/409518.html>).

Mohsun Pakayin, Iran's ambassador to Baku, says that relations between Tehran and Baku have a glorious future (<http://news.day.az/politics/409332.html>).

The Swedish government announces that it will open an embassy in Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/409463.html>).

The Belorussian parliament ratifies a bilateral agreement with Azerbaijan on law enforcement cooperation (<http://news.day.az/society/409558.html>).

Alexander Funk, a deputy in Germany's Bundestag, says that Armenia must withdraw from the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/409418.html>).

18 June

Finance Minister Samir Sharifov signs a cooperation agreement with Choi Su-kin, Korea's ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/economy/409311.html>).

Faig Tagizade, deputy emergency situations minister, says that Baku and the IAEA are expanding their level of cooperation (<http://news.day.az/society/409207.html>).

Ali Hasanov, chairman of the State Committee on Refugees and IDPs, says, "it would be better if international structures involved themselves with the issue of the fulfillment of their decisions and only then give Azerbaijan lessons on human rights" (<http://news.day.az/politics/409161.html>).

Azay Guliyev, a Milli Majlis deputy, calls on OSCE members to cooperate with civil society in Azerbaijan, rather than engage in criticism alone (<http://news.day.az/politics/409215.html>).

Mubariz Gurbanly, deputy executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that Freedom House works for those who pay its bills and has not prepared an accurate report concerning Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/409306.html>).



Bayram Safarov, head of the Azerbaijani Community of the Nagorno-Karabakh Region of Azerbaijan, says that the European Union supports the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/409198.html>).

The presidents of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries issue a statement expressing their "deep regret" that there has not been more progress in talks toward the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and calling on Armenia and Azerbaijan to increase their efforts to reach an agreement (<http://news.day.az/politics/409284.html>).

Belorussian President Aleksandr Lukashenko says there is "no normal life" in the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/409180.html>).

The Netherlands embassy in Baku says that Robert Gabriels has been selected as the next Dutch ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/409153.html>).

17 June

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev receives his Georgian counterpart, Irakli Alasania (<http://news.day.az/politics/409037.html>).

Gudsi Osmanov, deputy ambassador of Azerbaijan to Moscow, meets with Georgy Poltavchenko, governor of St. Petersburg (<http://news.day.az/politics/409049.html>).

Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, director general of ISESCO, says that Armenia is continuing to violate international law by its occupation of Azerbaijani lands (<http://news.day.az/politics/408906.html>).

Aleksey Pushkov, chairman of Russian Duma's foreign relations committee, says that Moscow must be "active" in the South Caucasus (<http://news.day.az/politics/408914.html>).

### **Note to Readers**

The editors of "Azerbaijan in the World" hope that you find it useful and encourage you to submit your comments and articles via email ([adabiweekly@ada.edu.az](mailto:adabiweekly@ada.edu.az)). The materials it contains reflect the personal views of their authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan.