

AZERBAIJAN-TURKEY STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP RELATIONS IN THE NEW LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT

Gunel ADIGOZALOVA*

ABSTRACT

One of the power centers concentrated in the Southern Caucasus region is considered to be Turkey. Having very big attractiveness from economic, political, military security, as well as history, culture and ethno-psychological parameters is the increasing factor of the region policy effectiveness of the official Ankara. One nation – two countries- this became a fashionable motto for Azerbaijani and Turkish leaders to proclaim and promote throughout the 1990s. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the restoration of Azerbaijan's independence, Turkey became the first country to recognize the sovereignty of its 'kinship brother.' After that, Turkey continued to provide significant economic, military, political and humanitarian assistance to Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan is also the important link, uniting Turkey with multimillion Turkish World. Azerbaijan and Turkey, first of all, are states with common values from the standpoint of ethnics, language, culture and religion. Referring to the language of the national leader Heydar Aliyev, "one nation, two states" relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey are of strategic nature in accordance with all the parameters.

Keywords: Azerbaijan, Turkey, strategic relations

YENİ GELİŞİM AŞAMASINDA AZERBAJCAN-TÜRKİYE STRATEJİK ORTAKLIĞI

ÖZET

Güney Kafkasya bölgesinde yoğunlaşmış güç merkezlerinden biri Türkiye olarak kabul edilmektedir. Çok büyük ekonomik, politik, askeri güvenliğin yanı sıra tarihsel, kültürel ve etnopsikoloji göstergilere sahip resmi Ankara'nın bölgedeki politik etkinliği artan faktördür. Şüphesiz ki Türkiye'nin bölgedeki politikasının temeli Azerbaycan ile ilişkilidir. Azerbaycan aynı zamanda çokuluslu Türk Dünyası ile Türkiye'nin birleşmesi açısından önemli bir bağlantıdır. Her şeyden önce, Azerbaycan ve Türkiye, etnik grup, dil, kültür ve din açısından ortak değerlere sahip devletlerdir. Milli lider Haydar Aliyev'in sözlerine göre, Azerbaycan ve Türkiye arasındaki "bir millet, iki devlet" ilişkileri tüm parametrelere uygun stratejik doğaya sahiptir. Bundan dolayı, bu makalede Azerbaycan-Türkiye stratejik ilişkileri ve uygulama mekanizmaları hakkında bilgi verilmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Azerbaycan, Türkiye, stratejik ilişkiler

* Ph. student of the Institute of Philosophy, Sociology and Law of the National Academy of Science of the Republic of Azerbaijan,
e-mail: agunel@yahoo.com

Introduction

At the first years of the independence, Turkey was supporting the efforts of our republic on the way of state structure, considering mutual effective cooperation principles between two fraternal countries, as well as providing extensive support in development of relations in all areas. After coming back to power in 1993 the national leader Heydar Aliyev, who paid special attention to the integration of Azerbaijan to the world community, maintenance of the regional security, and in general, realization of socio-economic and scientific-cultural interests, provided the development of this course in upcoming line.

Intensification of bilateral relations and energy security

Heydar Aliyev's first official visit to Turkey on 4-11 February 1994 as a President of Azerbaijan was a new incentive to the development of mutual relations between the countries. The protocol on cooperation and mutual support between Azerbaijan and Turkey, the agreements on economic, scientific-technical and cultural cooperation, contracts on friendship and development of overall cooperation and 16 other documents on other issues were signed in the frame of the visit.¹

The first main event within the strategic cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey was representation of the "Contract of the Century", signed in September 20, 1994 with the consortium of foreign oil companies including "Turkish Petroleum" company. As a sequel, during the visit of the delegation led by the Prime Minister of the Turkish Republic Ms. Tansu Chiller on 12 April 1995 the agreement on increasing of Turkey's share in oil consortium from 1,75 to 6,75 per cent was signed; this was the most real pattern of the relations between two countries and held a great significance from both economic and political standpoints².

Regular mutual visits of the heads of two countries improved further the relations between two countries. During the official visit to Turkey on 5-8 May 1997 the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev emphasized the special significance of development of the relations with Turkey. Thus, within the framework of the visit the Declaration on intensification of strategic cooperation between the governments of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey, as well as 9 other documents were signed, that raised the relations between two countries on a top new level and covered various areas.³

Azerbaijan pays special attention to Turkey's close participation in global economic projects implemented in the region. With the support of "Europe-Caucasus-Asia Transcaucasia" passage (TRASEKA), in the area of establishment of transport and communication contacts between European and Eastern countries the international conference on restoration of the historical Silk Road was held in Baku

¹Ali Hasanov. *Modern International Relation and the Foreign Policy of Azerbaijan*. Baku, 2005, p.566

²Sevinj Ruinten. *Azerbaijan in the System of Political Relations with the Turkish Countries*. Baku, Tarcuman, 2005, p.66

³ *Ibid.*, p.67

on September 7-8, 1998 with participation of 13 international organizations. The conference offered an incentive to extension of the strategic cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey.⁴ Along with this project, the steps connected to the implementation of other economic projects, especially in the area of transition of the energy resources to the world markets, enlargement of continuous cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey serve to fulfill political, economic and strategic needs of both states in the region.

The implementation of oil strategy by Azerbaijan plays an important role in strengthening of regional stability and deepening of strategic partnership relations with neighboring countries, especially with Turkey. Turkish state which owns special expressive position in Caspian region and is considered a partner of Azerbaijan in all matters, focuses mostly on transit of the oil resources of our republic to foreign markets. For realizing this purpose Turkish government proposed Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan main export oil pipeline itinerary and also came up with proposals on security enhancement of the pipeline.

The signing of one of the grand projects of the 20th century, causing disputes around, the Agreement on Transportation of Raw Oil to the Territory of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey via Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Main Export Pipeline by the Presidents of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey and USA within OSCE summit held in Istanbul in November 1999 was an important step towards cooperation between region countries and integration to Europe.⁵ At the same time, adoption of Istanbul declaration that protects this global project by the presidents of the aforementioned states became a very important document in the context of implementation of a new oil strategy by Azerbaijan, especially by the national leader Heydar Aliyev, as well as a document certifying constant character of friendship and cooperation with Turkey.

Along with this, the resolution on execution of construction of gas pipeline for the purpose of transit of natural gas from Shahdeniz deposit to Turkey via Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum itinerary was adopted. Undoubtedly, implementation of this project was of a great importance in the context of social-economic development of Azerbaijan and Turkey, enhancement of regional security, enlargement of mutual relations and overall integration of both states to the World community.

The national leader Heydar Aliyev in his innovative foreign policy course in a dynamic manner, as well as the current president of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, who is successfully continuing this course, played an important role in the development of relations and strategic partnership with fraternal state, Turkey. Thus, President Ilham Aliyev in his first official visit to Turkey as a head of the state on 13-15 April 2004 signed Joint Statement, protocols on cooperation in civil aviation and cultural areas, being 5 grand documents in total, which developed Azerbaijan-Turkey interrelations.

⁴Илья Азовский Шелковый путь накануне XXI века// Центральная Азия и Кавказ, 1999, №2, с.12

⁵ Elman Nasirov. Azerbaijan Oil and International Contracts. Baku, New Publishing House, 1999, p.32

The main export pipeline Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, named after Heydar Aliyev, which is considered an important branch of East-West energy passage was launched on July 13, 2006 at Ceyhan port in Turkey. This event was recorded in history as a result of far-sighted and thoroughly considered policy of the national leader, as well as successful oil strategy and the day when three-sea legend, which was not believed by some specialists turned into reality.

Global economic projects as indicators of dynamic development in all areas of our countries – Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas and Baku-Tbilisi-Qars railway projects played a great role in provision of peace and security, as well as in enhancement of welfare of our people. In this context, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan İlham Aliyev during his visit to Qars, Turkey on July 24, 2008 in his speech at the ceremony of foundation of the Turkish part of Baku-Tbilisi-Qars railway declared the importance of this project on the way of enlargement of cooperation in this region in general, as well as emphasized Azerbaijan's potential as international energy and transportation passage country.⁶

The commencement of these three grand and significant projects in the region from Baku means that Azerbaijan is not only rich in oil and gas reserves, but also has a great economic potential, strength and opportunity to dictate the realization of such projects in the region.

The decision of the Prime Minister of Turkey Rajab Tayyip Erdoğan at the meetings during his visit to Azerbaijan on May 16, 2010 on establishment of Strategic Cooperation Council, proposed by both states is also one the most important steps on the way of development of bilateral relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan, covering future course as well. The signing of the Agreement on Strategic Partnership and Mutual Support between Turkey and Azerbaijan, as well the Joint Declaration on Establishment of High Level Strategic Cooperation Council by the President of Turkey Abdullah Gül on August 16, 2010 during his visit to Azerbaijan is of great significance.⁷

It is beyond doubt that, signing of the aforementioned document on strategic partnership and mutual support between Azerbaijan and Turkey was right and future oriented step. The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan İlham Aliyev pronounced a big importance of signing of this document with fraternal country: “The Agreement on Strategic Partnership and Mutual Support, signed today, is a document of great historic significance. This agreement determines our future activity and friendship and fraternal relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan in the following decades”. The President of Turkey Abdullah Gül also emphasized the significance and importance of the agreement and mentioned that, “The Agreement on Strategic Partnership and Mutual Support signed today presupposes our solidarity and equality in all the issues arising subsequently”.⁸

We witnessed once again the high level of nowadays' relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan during the visit of the Prime Minister of Turkey Rajab

⁶ “Xalq qazeti”, (newspaper), July 25, 2008

⁷ “Azerbaijan” (newspaper), May 17, 2010

⁸ Ibid.

Tayyip Erdogan on July 27, 2011. The statements made by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and by the Prime Minister of Turkey Rajab Tayyip Erdogan during the press conference support this.

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev underlined strategic character, friendship and fraternity as the principles of this communication and stated that, “We are brought together by historical roots, cultural connections, our past and today’s political interests. We are very happy that relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan are rapidly developing”.⁹ Along with this, the head of the state Ilham Aliyev, mentioned that discussions over the latter situation regarding the resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and expressed gratitude on behalf of Azerbaijani nation and Azerbaijani state for the position of Turkey in this issue, and also said that this is highly appreciated.

The Prime Minister Rajab Tayyip Erdogan mentioned that Turkey has always been beside Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh issue and stated: “Our position, thoughts and struggle in Nagorno-Karabakh issue are the same with Azerbaijan. Another understanding cannot exist in our minds. We have followed this issue until now and will do this until the end”.¹⁰

The discussions between the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and the Prime Minister Rajab Tayyip Erdogan, as well as two representatives of the representative council from each country went over, and protocols on gas transit, gas supply and gas sale and purchase between Turkey and Azerbaijan were signed within the framework of the first meeting of the High Level Cooperation Council between Turkey and Azerbaijan in Izmir on October 25, 2011. The protocol signed on purpose of gas transit presupposes transportation of gas from Azerbaijan to Europe within the Southern passage project.

Besides, the number of protocols on cooperation between the governments of Azerbaijan and Turkey on energy, investments promotion and mutual security, between Anadolu Agency and AzerTaj, Diplomatic Academies of the ministries of foreign affairs, in the areas of family and social policy, forestry, meteorology, press and information, police education were signed.

The second meeting of the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council in Qabala on September 11, 2012 with the participation of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and the Prime Minister of Turkey Rajab Tayyip Erdogan can be qualified as a new level of the relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey. Thus, 7 protocols on cooperation in various areas between Azerbaijan and Turkey were signed, which had a big importance for both states. At the joint press conference held after the signing of the documents the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey Rajab Tayyip Erdogan mentioned the rapid development and enlargement of the process on the second meeting of High Level Strategic Cooperation Council.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰“Azerbaijan” (newspaper), May 17, 2010

Economic cooperation and significance of the investments between Azerbaijan and Turkey are the conditions of the development of our countries. Only during 6 months of the current year the export of goods and products from Turkey to Azerbaijan amounted to 1 billion 235 thousand 729 USD. In the recent years the total amount of trading between our countries amounted to 3.5 billion USD. Nowadays more than 1000 Turkish companies and about 1000 Azerbaijan-Turkish joint companies are active in Azerbaijan. It is planned to increase investments to Turkish economy to 20 billion USD before 2020, 15 million USD from which will come from SOCAR.¹¹ (8, p.15)

Currently the amount of investments of Azerbaijan to the fraternal country amounts 4.5 billion USD. After the grand projects like Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan raw oil, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum natural gas pipelines and Baku-Tbilisi-Qars railway, Trans-Anadolu (TANAP) natural gas pipeline project, implementation of which started on June 26 of this year with the signing of the protocol by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and the Prime Minister of Turkey Rajab Tayyip Erdogan, increased the influence of our countries in the region and in the World. Thus, the execution of TANAP project will be completed in the nearest 5 years and Azerbaijan along with being an important gas supplier to Turkey, at the same time will transport its gas to Europe through Turkey.

The head of the state Ilham Aliyev mentioned that the completion of TANAP project, the total amount of construction of which corresponds 7 billion USD, on the account of financial and technical opportunities of Azerbaijan and Turkey is planned to be in 5 years and emphasized that in the basis of the project are lying friendship and fraternal relations between two countries and that no analogue of such political relations between our states exists in the World practice.

Briefly, the strategic partnership cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey, from the context of the characteristics of its form and content serves to empowerment of peace and security in the region and possess a great potential to development. The head of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev cannot implement any project or initiative in the region without cooperation between Turkey and Azerbaijan.

References

1. "Azerbaijan" (newspaper), May 17, 2010
2. "Xalq qazeti", (newspaper), Jule 25, 2008
3. Economic Cooperation Between Azerbaijan And Turkey.//Eco Vision, 2012, №12, p. 13-21
4. Hasanov, Ali, Modern International Relation and the Foreign Policy of Azerbaijan. Baku, 2005, p. 752

¹¹ Economic cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey, EcoVision, 2012, №12, p.15

5. Nasirov, Elman, Azerbaijan Oil and International Contracts. Baku, 1999, p. 104
6. Ruinten, Sevinj, Azerbaijan in the System of Political Relations with the Turkish Countries. Baku, 2005, p. 236
7. Азовский. Илья, Шелковый путь накануне XXI века.// Центральная Азия и Кавказ, 1999, №2, с.11-19.

