

BULLETIN

HIGHLIGHT OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

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I. Azerbaijan demands the complete withdrawal of illegal Armenian armed formations from its territory

Since the end of the 44-Day War, illegal Armenian armed formations in the territory of Azerbaijan, where the Russian peacekeepers are temporarily stationed, have continuously committed various provocations. Just in March, there were numerous attempts to escalate the situation on the ground by opening fire at the positions of the Azerbaijan Army by these illegal armed groups. On March 5, illegal Armenian armed formations opened fire at the positions of the Azerbaijan Army in the direction of Gulustan settlement of the Goranboy region. On March 6, they again opened fired at the Azerbaijan Army positions, deployed in the direction of the Khidirli and Chukhurmehle settlements of the Aghdam region. On March 7, illegal Armenian armed groups in the territory of Azerbaijan, where Russian peacekeepers are temporarily stationed, 23 times opened fire at the positions of the Azerbaijan Army in Goranboy, Tartar, Aghdam and Khojaly regions. On March 7, using various caliber weapons, they subjected to fire the positions of the Azerbaijan Army in the direction of the Papravend settlement of the Aghdam region. Starting from the afternoon of March 8 to the morning of March 9, these armed groups periodically opened fire at the positions of the Azerbaijan Army in Khojaly and Goranboy regions. On March 10, they again subjected to fire the positions of the Azerbaijan Army in the direction of Chukhurmehle, Gurdlar, Khidirli, Garadaghli and Gasimli settlements of the Aghdam region. On March 10, these illegal groups fired at the positions of the Azerbaijan Army in the direction of Aghdam, Khojavend and Fuzuli regions. Starting from 19:45 on March 10 to 08:35 on March 11, the positions

of the Azerbaijan Army in the direction of Fuzuli, Khojavend, Aghdam and Khojaly regions were again subjected to fire. On March 12-13, the members of the illegal Armenian armed detachments in the territory of Azerbaijan, where the Russian peacekeepers are temporarily deployed, periodically subjected to fire the positions of the Azerbaijan Army in the direction of the Khojavand and Tartar regions.

Azerbaijan has continuously warned that, according to article 4 of the Trilateral Statement of November 10, these illegal armed groups should have been expelled from the territories of Azerbaijan, where the Russian peacekeepers are temporarily stationed, long time ago. However, in direct violation of the article 4, these illegal armed detachments not only have not been expelled from the territories of Azerbaijan, they have been digging trenches and strengthening their positions in the territories of Azerbaijan, where the Russian peacekeepers are temporarily stationed. Despite the fact that by not expelling these illegal armed formations, the Russian peacekeepers are themselves in direct violation of the provisions of the Trilateral Statement, the Russian Defense Ministry accused Azerbaijan of breaching the provisions of the trilateral statement. The statement claimed that Azerbaijan “entered the zone of responsibility of the Russian peacekeeping contingent from March 24 to 25, violating the provisions of the trilateral statement of the leaders of Russia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia dated November 9, 2020.”

On March 26, in response to the statement of the Russian Defense Ministry, the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Azerbaijan issued a statement, expressing regret regarding “the one-sided statement of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation dated March 26, 2022.” In its statement, the Ministry

of Defense of the Republic of Azerbaijan noted that the statement of the Russia Defense Ministry did not reflect the reality. The statement of the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan pointed out that “On March 25, during the telephone conversation between Azerbaijan Defense Minister Colonel General Zakir Hasanov and Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, the situation in the territory of Azerbaijan, where the Russian peacekeeping forces are temporarily stationed, was discussed. The Azerbaijani side stated that the positions and deployment locations are being clarified on spot. However, in the morning of March 26, members of illegal Armenian armed detachments attempted to sabotage the Azerbaijan Army Units. As a result of immediate measures, members of illegal Armenian armed detachments were forced to retreat. The Defense Ministry states that Azerbaijan is committed to the Joint Statement of November 10, 2020 and has not violated any of the provisions.” Moreover, the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan underscored the fact that in direct violation of the trilateral statement, the illegal Armenian armed detachments are still active in the territories of Azerbaijan. “We regrettably inform that the withdrawal of the remnants of the Armenian army and illegal Armenian armed detachments from the territory of Azerbaijan in accordance with article 4 of this Statement has not yet been completed. Therefore, it is Armenia, not Azerbaijan, that violates the provisions of the Statement,” the statement of the Ministry of Defense read.

The Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan emphasized that “the statement of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation contradicts the essence of bilateral relations and the Declaration on Allied Interaction signed between the two countries on February 22, 2022,” adding one again that “there is no

administrative and territorial unit called “Nagorno-Karabakh” in the territory of Azerbaijan. The name of the village mentioned in the statement is not Furukh, but Farrukh.”

The statement noted that “the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Azerbaijan requests the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation to completely withdraw the remnants of the Armenian army and illegal Armenian armed detachments from the territory of Azerbaijan recognized by the international community in accordance with the provisions of the Joint Statement, asks not to use the term “Nagorno-Karabakh” and correctly indicate the names of the territories of Azerbaijan.”

On March 27, the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan had to issue another statement, pointing out that “some points of the statement of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation dated March 27, 2022, do not reflect the reality. There have been no changes in the positions of the Azerbaijan Army in the Farrukh village and on the surrounding high grounds, which are part of the sovereign territory of Azerbaijan. The information about the retreat of the Azerbaijan Army Units from these positions does not reflect the reality. The Azerbaijan Army completely controls the operational situation.” Earlier that day, the Russia Defense Ministry claimed that “the Azerbaijan Army Units retreated from Farrukh, following the negotiations.”

“The information in the statement of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation about the alleged violation of the ceasefire by Azerbaijan also does not reflect the reality and no cases of injuries among Azerbaijani servicemen have been recorded,” the statement of the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan read. The Ministry of Defense had

to point out once again that the use of the term "Nagorno-Karabakh" in the statement of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation was unacceptable, noting that "there is no administrative and territorial unit called "Nagorno-Karabakh" in the territory of Azerbaijan." The statement noted that "the use of the expression "Nagorno-Karabakh" in the statements of the Russian Ministry of Defense dated March 26 and 27 is disrespectful to the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which is recognized and accepted by the international community, including the Russian Federation."

Moreover, the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan noted that "we remind the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation that Article 1 of the Declaration on Allied Interaction signed by the Presidents of the two countries on February 22, 2022, states that "The Russian Federation and the Republic of Azerbaijan build their relations on the basis of allied interaction, mutual respect for independence, state sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the state borders of the two countries, as well as adherence to the principles of non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, peaceful settlement of disputes and non-use of force or threat of force," adding that "in accordance with Article 18 of the Declaration, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Azerbaijan are joining their efforts to combat and neutralize the threats of international terrorism, extremism, and separatism."

The Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan also reiterated that "there is no village called "Furukh" in the Khojaly region of Azerbaijan. The name of the mentioned village is "FARRUKH," expressing the hope in the following statements "the name of the village will be indicated correctly."

In the meantime, Baku put the member of the Russian parliament Mikhail Delyagin on an Interpol international wanted list over his call to use tactical nuclear weapons against Azerbaijan's oil industry. On March 29, Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Azerbaijan announced that it launched a criminal case against member of Russian State Duma Mikhail Delyagin. "Investigation is being conducted by the Prosecutor General's Office of Azerbaijan in connection with recent statements in the media by Delyagin Mikhail Gennadievich, a member of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, Deputy Chairman of the State Duma Committee on Economic Policy, who demonstrated a stand contrary to the principles of interaction between the two states," press service of the Prosecutor General's Office reported. The Prosecutor General's Office said Delyagin was charged with calls for the start of a war, terrorism, and instigation of ethnic hatred.

"On March 28, 2022, during a program broadcasted on the Russia 1 TV channel, Mikhail Delyagin, openly calling for waging an aggressive war against the Republic of Azerbaijan, made a provocative statement about the use of tactical nuclear weapons to destroy the energy infrastructure and oil industry of the country, and in this regard conducted public opinion poll on the social media platform. On March 29, 2022, a criminal case was initiated by Prosecutor General of the Republic of Azerbaijan against Mikhail Delyagin, since his actions fall under the signs of Article 101.2 (open calls through the media and by an official to wage an aggressive war), 214.2.3 (threat with committing an act of terrorism with the use of firearms and objects used as weapons), 283.2.1 and 283.2.2 (incitement to national hatred by threatening to use force and using one's official position) of the Criminal Code. The preliminary

investigation was entrusted to the Investigation Department of the Prosecutor General's Office. Given sufficient evidence justifying charges brought against the accused, on March 29, 2022 Mikhail Delyagin was charged under the articles above, and through INTERPOL channels was put on the international wanted list with arrest imposed as a measure of restraint against him. At the same time, requests were addressed to the relevant competent authorities of a number of partner states to ensure the immediate detention of the accused upon his entry into the territory of these countries and his extradition to the Republic of Azerbaijan for bringing to justice," the statement of the Prosecutor General's Office read.

At the same time, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Delyagin's remarks did not correspond to Russia's "official line" and called for restraint in words when speaking about partner countries like Azerbaijan. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova also noted that Delyagin's remarks were unacceptable.

II. Azerbaijan puts forward basic principles of normalization of relations with Armenia

In March, Azerbaijan send in a proposal comprising five basic conditions for the establishment of bilateral relations to Armenia. They were presented to the Armenian side through the mediators. Leyla Abdullayeva, Head of the Press Service Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, pointed out that "during his speech at the Antalya Diplomacy Forum, Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov spoke about Azerbaijan's peace-building efforts in the post-conflict period. It was noted that despite the steps taken by our country to

normalize relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia, and the highest-level statements about our readiness to sign a peace agreement with that country, no response was given by Armenia over the past period. As reported, as a next step, Azerbaijan's proposal on the basic principles for the establishment of relations between the two countries was submitted to Armenia by the mediators a few days ago." It is part of Baku's post-conflict peace-building efforts, which began in 2020, and coincides with a series of top-level comments by the senior state officials about their readiness to sign a peace treaty with Yerevan.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the proposal contains the following five basic principles for the normalization of relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia:

- Mutual recognition of respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of internationally recognized borders and political independence of each other;
- Mutual confirmation of the absence of territorial claims against each other and acceptance of legally binding obligations not to raise such a claim in future;
- Obligation to refrain in their inter-State relations from undermining the security of each other, from threat or use of force both against political independence and territorial integrity, and in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the UN Charter;
- Delimitation and demarcation of the state border, and establishment of the diplomatic relations;
- Unblocking of the transportation and other communications, building other communications as appropriate, and establishment of cooperation in other fields of mutual interest.

Thus, there is an opportunity to achieve the durable peace in the region. Azerbaijan's position on this issue has been clear and constant since the end of the 44-Day War. Azerbaijan understands the importance of normalization of relations between the two countries and is ready to move forward in this direction. Reacting to the statements of the Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan's on the proposals of Azerbaijan on the normalization of relations between the two countries, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan noted that "if Armenia also takes the issue seriously, then it must present its concrete proposals and thus must demonstrate its readiness to start substantive and result-oriented negotiations."

III. Azerbaijan and Iran sign MoU to establish new communication links

On March 11, Azerbaijan and Iran signed a Memorandum of Understanding on establishing new communication links between the East Zangazur economic region of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic through the territory of Iran. The memorandum was signed by Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan Shahin Mustafayev and Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development Rostam Gasemi. Similar to the Zangazur Corridor (approximately 43 km) proposed after the 44-Day War, the planned route via Iran (55 km) is also supposed to include both railway and highway links in addition to communication and electricity connections. The new communication network will serve as an important international corridor for transport and electricity. It will fundamentally transform the transport and communication landscape of the region and lays the ground of a new

multipurpose corridor, which includes roads, railways, electricity lines and digital communications uniting Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkey in Eurasia.

Commenting on the signing of this document between Azerbaijan and Iran, Assistant to the President of Azerbaijan and Head of Foreign Policy Affairs Department of the Presidential Administration Hikmat Hajiyev called it a historic event, noting that President Ilham Aliyev keeps this important transport and communication project at the center of constant attention and that the relevant authorities are instructed over its implementation. As a result of the implementation of this project, the long-term policy of Armenia on the blockade of Nakhchivan will be put to an end. Between the two regions of Azerbaijan – Eastern Zangezur and Nakhchivan – through the Iranian territory will be created automobile, railway, electric power lines. Highlighting that the realization of this project became possible due to the restoration of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan following the 44-day War and regaining of control over the Azerbaijani part of the Azerbaijan-Iran border, which President Ilham Aliyev dubbed "a border of friendship", Hikmat Hajiyev noted that "signing the Memorandum of Understanding coincides with the 30th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and Iran. The relations of friendship, mutual trust and close neighborhood established between Azerbaijan and Iran over the past 30 years play an important role in the implementation of this project." "We are confident that the new corridor will open up favorable opportunities for regional cooperation, development and welfare of the peoples of the region and expansion of economic and commercial ties", Hikmat Hajiyev added.

The new route will generally mirror the Zangazur corridor. Vasif Huseynov, a senior advisor at the Center of Analysis of International Relations (Air Center), noted that “Zangazur corridor appeared as a top priority for Azerbaijan’s foreign policy after the 2020 Karabakh War. This was seen in Baku, among others, as a move to end the blockade of the Nakhchivan exclave and obtain a shorter route to connections with Turkey, which would also boost the viability of the Trans-Caspian International Transit Corridor, also known as, the Middle Corridor. However, Azerbaijan and Armenia have so far failed to come to an agreement on some critical issues in these negotiations. One major bone of contention between the sides is related to the customs rules to regulate the passage through Armenian territory. Although Azerbaijan agreed to the application of Armenia’s customs regulations and other control mechanisms at the railway border crossings, for Baku similar conditions could be applied to the motorway passage only if they would be replicated at the Lachin corridor, which connects Armenia and the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, according to the trilateral statement of November 10, 2020.”

While the new deal does not rule out the possibility of Azerbaijan building a transportation corridor via southern Armenia, it does have a number of implications for the region. To begin with, it greatly strengthens Azerbaijan's negotiation position on new transportation lines. Baku has made it abundantly clear now that the Zangazur corridor is not its only choice, and that it may leave it entirely if Yerevan fails to meet Azerbaijan’s expectations and addresses the relevant concerns. Another benefit of the new route for Baku is that, unlike the Zangazur corridor, which will be under the jurisdiction of Russia's FSB, the trans-Iranian route will not

fall under the control of any third party. The agreement on the trans-Iranian route also allows Baku to take out the Zangazur corridor as a bargaining chip for the Armenian side. This also weakens the false narratives of Armenia's revanchist groups, who oppose virtually all post-war peace initiatives between Armenia and Azerbaijan and portray them solely as beneficial to Azerbaijan and Turkey.

Vasif Huseynov noted that “as a result of the new realities created by the Iran-Azerbaijan deal, Armenia now needs the implementation of the Zangazur corridor much more than Azerbaijan,” adding that “this project in its larger format also includes a railway passage for Armenia to link with Iran, a railway and motorway communication with Russia, as well as similar connections with Turkey. The re-opening or construction of these transportation channels would put an end to Armenia’s isolation from the regional projects that the country found itself after Azerbaijan and Turkey closed their borders with Armenia in protest to its occupation of the Azerbaijani territories in the early 1990s.” Since the end of 44-Day War, Armenia has made it clear in many occasions that the opening of these communications links are critical for the Armenian economy. Vasif Huseynov said that “it can be expected that Armenia will demonstrate more interest in the Zangazur project and its speedy implementation in the future. Such a policy shift could, generally, positively impact the peace negotiations between Baku and Yerevan and create positive dynamics in negotiations on a peace treaty.”

IV. Recent flurry of diplomatic activity highlights the importance of Azerbaijan

On March 1, President of the French Republic Emmanuel Macron made a phone call to

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev. During the phone call, the presidents discussed the current crisis in Ukraine and the issues of providing humanitarian aid to Ukraine. The sides also exchanged views on energy issues. On March 3, President of the Republic of Moldova Maia Sandu made a phone call to President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev. During the conversation, the sides exchanged views on regional issues, as well as discussed the expansion of economic and trade relations and energy cooperation between Azerbaijan and Moldova.

On March 8, President of the Council of Ministers of the Italian Republic Mario Draghi made a phone call to President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev. During the phone call, the sides noted that this year marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Italian Republic. They hailed the fact that throughout these three decades, relations between the two countries have developed to the level of strategic partnership. During the phone call, the sides noted that Azerbaijan and Italy established fruitful cooperation in economic, trade and energy spheres. They underscored the significance of the Southern Gas Corridor and its fundamental part Trans Adriatic natural gas pipeline in energy cooperation. It was noted that Azerbaijan ranks first in oil supply and third in gas supply of Italy. The sides also discussed successful cooperation projects implemented in the fields of culture and education, and emphasized the importance of establishing an Italy-Azerbaijan University in Baku. The sides confirmed their readiness to continue high-level political dialogue and exchange of reciprocal visits in order to strengthen strategic partnership between the two countries. During the conversation, the

sides discussed regional issues, including the continuing crisis in Ukraine.

On March 14, President of the European Council Charles Michel made a phone call to President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev. During the conversation, the sides discussed the post-conflict period in the South Caucasus, contacts and the process of normalization between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the opening of communications and delimitation of borders. President Ilham Aliyev thanked President Charles Michel for his efforts to normalize relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan. President Charles Michel stressed that the European Union would continue to support stability, peace and prosperity in the South Caucasus. They also exchanged views on the ongoing developments in Ukraine and their potential implications for regional security in the South Caucasus.

On March 15, President of Romania Klaus Iohannis made a phone call to President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev. During the phone call, the sides discussed the deepening of relations between the two countries. They pointed out that this year marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and Romania, during which the bilateral ties have developed on the basis of strategic partnership. During the phone talk, they exchanged views on prospects for energy cooperation, the export of natural gas and electricity from Azerbaijan in terms of ensuring Romania's energy security and diversification of energy supply. The sides also discussed other regional and international issues of mutual interest.

On March 15, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken made a phone call to President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev. During the phone call, the sides discussed the issues

related to the post-conflict period in the South Caucasus region, including the process of normalization between Armenia and Azerbaijan. They also discussed the regional security issues. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken expressed his gratitude to Azerbaijan for providing humanitarian aid to Ukraine.

Commenting on Europe's recent flurry of diplomacy, Shahmar Hajiyev, a leading advisor at the Center of Analysis of International Relations (Air Center), pointed out that "the current crisis raises very important questions about how to reduce dependence on Russian natural gas in the near future," adding that "Azerbaijan has proved itself to be a reliable energy partner for Europe. An important inter-regional energy project, the Southern Gas Corridor (SGC), has been finalized. In its initial stage, the SGC was set to deliver about bcm to Turkey and ten bcm to Europe. However, the project has also been built with potential expansion capacity, which could be increased to thirty-one bcm in the South Caucasus Pipeline Expansion Project and the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline, and up to twenty bcm in the Trans Adriatic Pipeline, thereby doubling the corridor's capacity. Azerbaijan has the potential to increase gas deliveries to Europe by using its gas reserves in the Caspian Sea as well as accessing natural gas sources from Turkmenistan and Iran."

V. Azerbaijan provides humanitarian aid to Ukraine

On March 28, President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy made a phone call to President Ilham Aliyev. During the conversation, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy informed President Ilham Aliyev about the situation in Ukraine. The presidents underscored the importance of establishing humanitarian corridors and continuing peace talks. During

the phone conversation, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy thanked President Ilham Aliyev for the humanitarian aid provided to Ukraine, including medical supplies and readiness to provide fuel for sowing. During the conversation, President Ilham Aliyev noted that Baku always attaches great importance and pays special attention to humanitarian issues.

Ukraine's Ambassador to Azerbaijan Vladislav Kanevsky thanked President Ilham Aliyev and the people of Azerbaijan for supporting Ukraine with humanitarian aid. "I would like to sincerely thank President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and all the Azerbaijani people for providing us with humanitarian aid at such a critical and difficult time for Ukraine," Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine to Azerbaijan Vladislav Kanevsky told reporters on March 12. The ambassador emphasized that this is not the first humanitarian aid of Azerbaijan to Ukraine, underscoring that the delivered humanitarian aid saves hundreds of civilian lives who are now under attack.

On February 26, Azerbaijan sent two aircrafts carrying humanitarian aid worth more than €5 million (\$5.6 million) to Ukraine amidst the ongoing war with Russia. In a post shared on his official Twitter account, President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy thanked President Ilham Aliyev for the humanitarian aid and medicines. In another post shared on his official Twitter account, Zelenskyy stated that President Ilham Aliyev instructed the State Oil Company of the Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR) in Ukraine to provide ambulances and vehicles of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine with fuel free of charge in all its 55 filling stations across 11 regions of Ukraine. "Azerbaijan provides the necessary needs - medicines, medical equipment, food. This is

what Azerbaijan and Ukraine have demonstrated for many years. We are not just strategic partners, we are friends,” Kanevsky noted. In the meantime, Azerbaijan evacuated over 9,500 citizens from Ukraine since the outbreak of the war.

VI. Azerbaijan and the UK discuss strengthening bilateral defense cooperation

On March 30, a delegation led by Minister for the Armed Forces of the UK, member of the UK Parliament James Heapey visited Azerbaijan. During the meeting with President Ilham Aliyev, the sides stressed that 2022 marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and the UK, noting that the two countries had enjoyed fruitful cooperation in various areas during this period. The significance of the congratulatory letter of Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Boris Johnson to President Ilham Aliyev and the Azerbaijani President’s letter of congratulations to Boris Johnson on this occasion was underscored at the meeting. The sides emphasized that the successful cooperation between the two countries for 30 years creates good grounds for further expansion of bilateral relations. They also exchanged views on prospects for cooperation in the energy areas, UK’s investment in Azerbaijan’s economy, as well as in trade, transport and defense. Azerbaijan’s participation in the NATO’s “Resolute Support” mission in Afghanistan was noted during the conversation. President Ilham Aliyev highlighted the processes in the post-conflict period in the region. During his visit, James Heapey also met with the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Azerbaijan Colonel General Zakir Hasanov. The Minister of Defense

informed the other side on the work that was carried out in the liberated territories after the victory gained in the 44-Day War, as well as on the situation in the Karabakh economic zone and on the state border between Azerbaijan and Armenia. The Minister thanked the United Kingdom for the support provided within the framework of the United Nations Development Programme in the demining of the liberated territories of Azerbaijan. James Heapey underscored the significance of mutual visits and meetings for the expansion of bilateral relations between the two sides. The sides discussed the prospects for cooperation in the military sphere. James Heapey also met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov. During the meeting, Minister of Foreign Affairs Jeyhun Bayramov informed James Heapey on the implementation of the trilateral statement signed by Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Russia, as well as the on the demining activities in liberated areas. Minister of Foreign Affairs Jeyhun Bayramov also hailed UK companies’ contributions to demining activities as well as their participation in the restoration and reconstruction of liberated areas. The ministers also discussed the restoration of liberated territories as well as the prospects for cooperation on alternative energy sources and other issues. Throughout the conversation, both sides expressed satisfaction with the level of cooperation between the two countries within bilateral and multilateral structures. The economic success of the two countries was discussed. Both sides pointed out that the United Kingdom is Azerbaijan’s largest foreign direct investor. During the meeting, political, economic, trade, energy, and investment perspectives were all discussed. The significance of Azerbaijan’s contribution to Europe’s energy security was also emphasized. The sides also discussed the

situation in Ukraine and other issues of mutual interest.

VII. EU hosts high-level meeting between Armenia and Azerbaijan

Senior government officials from Azerbaijan and Armenia met in Brussels in preparation for an upcoming meeting between European Council President Charles Michel, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in Brussels on April 6. The March 30 meeting between Secretary of the Security Council of the Republic of Armenia, Armen Grigoryan, and Assistant to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Hikmat Hajiyev, was facilitated by EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus Toivo Klaar.

"During substantive discussions, which also included a separate bilateral conversation between Mr Hacıyev and Mr Grigoryan, the participants reviewed the political and security situation and the full spectrum of issues between Armenia and Azerbaijan as a follow-up to the understandings reached during the meeting of leaders of both countries and President Michel, held in Brussels on 14 December 2021. The participants agreed to meet again over the coming weeks in order to continue discussions, among others on issues raised during the leaders' meeting of 14 December 2021. Armenia and Azerbaijan will also address issues related to prospects for a peace agreement between them," the EU External Action Service announced.

VIII. Azerbaijan marks the 30th anniversary of membership to the United Nations

Azerbaijan became a Member State of the United Nations on March 2, 1992, after the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 46/230 at the 82nd plenary meeting of its 46th session in New York. Shortly after that on May 6, 1992, Azerbaijan opened its Permanent Mission to the UN in New York. In its statement, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan underscored that the UN has shown unwavering support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and inviolability of the internationally recognized borders of Azerbaijan, pointing out that part of the territory of Azerbaijan was occupied as a result of armed aggression during the early years of its participation in the Organization. Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted that "in those challenging times the United Nations also rendered its critical assistance to Azerbaijan in alleviating the grave humanitarian consequences of the occupation," adding that "almost 30 years later, Azerbaijan, guided by the UN Charter, liberated its territories, and is now engaged in large-scale recovery and rehabilitation activities." Azerbaijan is cooperating with UN and its specialized agencies in demining and other critical activities aimed at securing the right to return of Azerbaijani IDPs in safety and dignity.

Over the last 30 years, Azerbaijan has demonstrated itself on the international stage as a responsible member of the United Nations. As Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted in its statement, "through its engagement across the three pillars of the UN activities - peace and security, development and human rights – Azerbaijan has been contributing to the achievement of the purposes and advancement of the principles enshrined in the UN Charter. It is no coincidence that with

the overwhelming support of the UN membership Azerbaijan in 2011 was elected to serve as a non-permanent member in the Security Council for the period 2012-2013.”

Azerbaijan has participated very closely at the UN-mandated peacekeeping missions worldwide and in the realization of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Azerbaijan has been actively engaged in UN projects aimed at protection and promotion of human rights and cooperation in the field of combatting conventional and emerging threats to global security.

From the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Azerbaijan, as the current Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, proposed global initiatives at the United Nations that were based on

shared responsibility, enhanced solidarity, and international collaboration. As Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted in its statement, “convening in 2020 of the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on the fight against pandemic, adoption in 2021 by the UN General Assembly and the UN Human Rights Council of the resolutions on the fair, timely and affordable access for all countries to COVID-19 vaccines, as well as further initiatives on post-pandemic recovery, testify to the important role of Azerbaijan in this regard.”

As an outspoken supporter of international law and multilateralism, Azerbaijan will continue to be a reliable UN partner and will make every effort to contribute to international peace and security.