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HIGHLIGHT OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

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I. **The meeting between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan and Armenia in Almaty**

On May 10-11, 2024, negotiations were held between Jeyhun Bayramov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and Ararat Mirzoyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, in Almaty, Kazakhstan. This marked the second meeting between the two ministers this year, following their discussions in Berlin in late February. The ministers welcomed the progress on the delimitation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani interstate border and the agreements reached in this regard. The recent return of four non-enclave villages to Azerbaijan in April was seen as a significant milestone in resolving long-standing territorial disputes peacefully. This event was celebrated as the first instance in the post-Soviet era of such a resolution between the two countries.

During the Almaty talks, the ministers and their delegations continued discussions on the provisions of the draft bilateral Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and Interstate Relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia. They agreed to continue negotiations on the remaining open issues where differences still exist. Despite the progress, some key issues remain unresolved, and the parties committed to further discussions to address these differences. The choice of Almaty as the location for the talks was symbolic, referencing the Alma-Ata Declaration of 1991, which played a crucial role in the post-Soviet space. Unlike earlier negotiations often mediated by external parties, these talks are being held in a bilateral format, with the host country providing only a platform for the meeting.

One significant agreement reached during the recent negotiations was on the choice of maps for the delimitation process. Previously, Armenia had proposed using a Soviet map from 1975, while Azerbaijan advocated against relying solely on one map. On May 7, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan announced that the delimitation process would be based on the latest Soviet maps with legal force, rather than a single map. While significant progress has been made, challenges remain. Ongoing anti-government protests in

Armenia, sparked by the handover of the four non-enclave villages, pose a risk to the stability needed for successful negotiations. These protests, led by representatives of the Armenian Apostolic Church and supported by various opposition groups, complicate the prospects for constitutional reforms proposed by Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

The likelihood of a referendum on constitutional changes in Armenia is low, particularly in light of the ongoing anti-government protests that began following the transfer of the four non-enclave villages to Azerbaijan. The protests are being led by representatives of the Armenian Apostolic Church and are supported by various groups, including former Armenian diplomats, pro-Russian opposition parties, diasporan organizations, and the nationalist Dashnaksutyun Party. These demonstrations pose a risk of destabilizing Armenia, potentially jeopardizing the ongoing peace talks.

Azerbaijan's victory in the 44-day War and subsequent targeted counter-terrorism actions conducted on September 19-20, 2023, within the historic Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, have opened a novel opportunity for peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan through direct bilateral engagement. Within this development, three key aspects emerge, with tangible progress already evident.

The initial aspect pertains to the high-level decision-making process. Notably, Azerbaijan and Armenia jointly announced on December 7, 2023, the historic prospect of achieving long-awaited regional peace, reiterating their commitment to normalize relations and establish a peace treaty based on principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. As a gesture of goodwill, Azerbaijan released 32 Armenian detainees, reciprocated by Armenia releasing 2 Azerbaijani military personnel. Additionally, Armenia withdrew its candidacy for hosting the 29th Session of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in support of Azerbaijan's bid, while Azerbaijan endorsed Armenia's candidature for the Eastern European Group COP Bureau membership. Both nations pledged to pursue discussions on implementing further confidence-building measures, urging

international support for fostering mutual trust and regional stability.

The second aspect involves the delimitation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, initiated on May 24, 2022, with direct meetings between the Joint Border Commissions, carried out under the leadership of the deputy prime ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia, Shahin Mustafayev and Mher Qrigoryan. Notably, progress was achieved during the eighth and ninth commission meetings in April and May 2024, resulting in the return of four Azerbaijani villages and the signing of a protocol defining the northern border segment. 40 border pillars have been installed by May 6, 2024, symbolizing enhanced security for bordering villages and regions.

The third dimension, the journey towards Armenia-Azerbaijan rapprochement, underscores diplomatic efforts. Initial bilateral discussions between the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia in Tbilisi in July 2022 paved the way for subsequent meetings aimed at normalizing relations.

Despite the advancements, the path to a comprehensive peace treaty remains fraught with difficulties. However, it is possible that the two sides could agree on some fundamental principles by the end of the year. On April 23, President Ilham Aliyev expressed optimism about reaching an agreement on basic principles before the COP29 conference in November, which will be held in Baku. President Ilham Aliyev suggested that while a detailed peace treaty might take more time, an initial agreement on key principles could be achievable, with further negotiations to finalize the specifics later.

II. Building Bridges and Crafting Strategic Partnerships: Azerbaijan's Expanding Global Influence

Azerbaijan's foreign policy, under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev, continues to be shaped by the balanced and pragmatic approach established by his father, the National Leader President Heydar Aliyev, who served from 1993 to 2003. This strategy involves maintaining equidistance from

major global powers while utilizing all available resources to achieve national goals, such as the liberation of territories occupied by Armenia. Since President Ilham Aliyev took office in 2003, he has adhered to these guiding principles. Azerbaijan successfully liberated its occupied territories during the 44-day War in 2020 and subsequent operations in 2023. Recently, the withdrawal of the Russian peacekeeping mission from Karabakh marked a historic milestone, leaving Azerbaijan free of foreign troops for the first time since the early 19th century.

Continuation of Balanced Diplomacy

Re-elected with a landslide victory on February 7, President Ilham Aliyev remains committed to a balanced and pragmatic foreign policy. In the three months since his re-election, his government has focused on strengthening ties with friendly states and developing new relationships. Beyond traditional diplomatic engagements in the West and the post-Soviet space, Azerbaijan is enhancing cooperative links with countries like China and Iran. This strategy has effectively positioned Azerbaijan as a diplomatic bridge in the region, a role that many other leaders have attempted to fulfill without success.

Bilateral and Equal Partnerships

Azerbaijan has adopted a unique approach to foreign policy by prioritizing bilateral and equal partnerships. Observing the challenges faced by Georgia and Ukraine in their attempts to join the EU and NATO, as well as the experiences of other post-Soviet states integrating into Russian-led projects, Baku has opted against pursuing Euro-Atlantic integration. This stance was outlined in the National Security Concept of 2007 and has led Azerbaijan to maintain a safe distance from Russian-led initiatives like the Eurasian Economic Union and the Collective Security Treaty Organization. Instead, Azerbaijan has successfully built bilateral cooperation with the member states of these blocs.

Strategic Partnerships with EU Members

Rather than applying for EU membership or signing an Association Agreement, which could imply an unequal relationship, Azerbaijan has signed

strategic partnership declarations with ten EU members. Most recently, Slovakia became the 10th EU member to sign such a declaration during Prime Minister Robert Fico's visit to Baku on May 6. This was followed by a joint declaration with Bulgaria during President Rumen Radev's visit. Previous partnerships include Romania (2011), Croatia (2013), Italy (2014), Hungary (2014), Czech Republic (2015), Bulgaria (2015), Poland (2017), Latvia (2017), and Lithuania (2017). These partnerships, covering more than one-third of EU members, provide a robust foundation for bilateral relations.

NATO Cooperation without Membership

Azerbaijan has confined its engagement with NATO to cooperation against common threats, such as terrorism and extremism, without seeking membership. Despite this, Azerbaijan has built strong relationships with NATO members, including Türkiye and the United States. The bond with Türkiye has evolved into an alliance, reinforced by mutual security commitments under the 2021 Shusha Declaration. This relationship is further bolstered by integration efforts within the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) alongside other Central Asian Turkic states.

Azerbaijan's foreign policy under President Ilham Aliyev continues to be guided by the pragmatic approach championed by his father, National Leader Heydar Aliyev. By fostering bilateral and equal partnerships, particularly with EU and NATO members, and maintaining strategic autonomy from major power blocs, Azerbaijan has enhanced its regional and global standing. This approach not only ensures the country's sovereignty and security but also positions it as a key player in regional diplomacy and international relations.

Azerbaijan-US Relations

Azerbaijan's relations with the United States are evolving into a strategic partnership, driven by shared geopolitical and geoeconomic interests. Diplomatic contacts between Baku and Washington have intensified, indicating a mutual need for cooperation. Last year's reintroduction of sanctions against Azerbaijan under Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act (1992) strained relations. However, recent developments suggest a

normalization of ties. Notably, Hikmet Hajiyev, foreign policy advisor to President Ilham Aliyev, visited Washington on May 17, holding significant meetings with US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan and State Department officials. These interactions have positively influenced bilateral relations, demonstrating a commitment to overcoming past tensions.

Approach to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)

Azerbaijan's stance on the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) aligns with its principles of economic self-sufficiency and independent foreign policy. President Ilham Aliyev reiterated this during an international conference in Baku on April 23. He emphasized that Azerbaijan maintains close bilateral partnerships with all EAEU members, except Armenia, and evaluates further integration based on practical advantages. Azerbaijan's robust economy, with low foreign debt below 8% of GDP, allows it to maintain an independent course in foreign policy.

In the three months since his re-election, President Aliyev has met with leaders of all EAEU member states, except Armenia. These meetings, including visits by Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Kyrgyzstan's President Sadyr Zhaparov, and Belarus's President Alexander Lukashenko to Baku, as well as Aliyev's visit to Russia to meet President Vladimir Putin, underscore Azerbaijan's effective diplomacy. These engagements highlight strong bilateral relationships without committing to the multilateral complexities of the EAEU.

Enhancing Relations with China

Azerbaijan's relationship with China is also progressing rapidly, with an anticipated strategic partnership agreement. The two countries are deepening cooperation in various areas, particularly in connectivity, energy, and trade. The trade volume between Azerbaijan and China increased by over 43.5% last year, reaching approximately \$3.1 billion, with both imports and exports experiencing significant growth. Azerbaijan has emerged as China's largest trade partner in the South Caucasus, reflecting strong economic collaboration.

A key area of interest is connectivity, where Azerbaijan has positioned itself as a crucial transit hub between Europe and Asia through the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route, known as the Middle Corridor. Infrastructure projects such as the Baku International Sea Trade Port and the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway line create an efficient network for transporting goods across Eurasia. The Middle Corridor is attracting interest from Chinese transit operators and logistics companies, highlighting the potential for optimizing transportation routes through cooperation.

Azerbaijan's balanced and pragmatic foreign policy has proven to be a strategic asset in a geopolitically turbulent region. Under the leadership of Presidents Heydar and Ilham Aliyev, Azerbaijan has skillfully navigated the complexities of global power dynamics, fostering strong bilateral relationships while avoiding alignment with any single bloc. This approach has enabled Azerbaijan to secure economic and diplomatic benefits from various directions, including strategic partnerships with over one-third of EU member states and robust ties with NATO members like Türkiye and the United States, without seeking formal membership in these alliances.

Azerbaijan's nuanced approach to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) underscores its commitment to maintaining an independent economic and foreign policy. The country enjoys high-level relationships with EAEU members, demonstrated by frequent diplomatic engagements, while retaining the flexibility to evaluate further integration based on practical benefits. Additionally, Azerbaijan's strengthening relationship with China exemplifies its forward-looking strategy. By enhancing cooperation in trade, energy, and connectivity, Azerbaijan is diversifying its economic partnerships and reinforcing its role as a critical transit hub between Europe and Asia through the Middle Corridor.

Despite challenges posed by Armenia and its allies, Azerbaijan's strategic, balanced foreign policy has positioned it as a significant player in international relations. By establishing itself as a reliable partner to both Western and Eastern power centers, Azerbaijan has successfully become a bridge between diverse geopolitical spheres. This

balanced approach has allowed Azerbaijan to harness economic and diplomatic opportunities, ensuring its prominence on the global stage.

III. Azerbaijan and Slovakia elevate partnership to strategic level

Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico embarked on his inaugural foreign visit outside Europe, making his first official visit to Azerbaijan on May 7, shortly after assuming office. His meeting with President Ilham Aliyev marked a significant milestone, crowned by the signing of pivotal agreements solidifying the foundation of a strategic partnership between the two nations. Among the noteworthy accords inked were a joint declaration affirming the establishment of a strategic partnership, a memorandum of understanding delineating avenues for military-technical cooperation, and an agreement fostering defense collaboration.

These agreements, emblematic of burgeoning bilateral ties, underscore the multifaceted nature of cooperation, with energy, defense-industry, and political domains occupying the forefront of collaborative endeavors.

Foremost among the collaborative dimensions is energy cooperation, driven by a confluence of geopolitical dynamics and strategic imperatives. The protracted Russia-Ukraine conflict, which escalated into a full-fledge in 2022, has precipitated a paradigm shift in the European Union's energy calculus, prompting a quest for alternative energy sources to mitigate dependence on Russian supplies.

The European Union's resolve to diversify its energy portfolio has propelled Azerbaijan into the spotlight as a viable alternative. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on strategic cooperation in the energy sector, inked between Azerbaijan and the EU in 2022, has catalyzed enhanced collaboration, facilitating increased gas exports from Azerbaijan to Europe. Azerbaijan's gas exports to the EU have surged from 8 billion cubic meters in 2021 to a projected 12 billion cubic meters in the current year, constituting a significant proportion of the nation's total gas

exports. With plans to augment gas deliveries to the EU to 20 billion cubic meters by 2027, Azerbaijan is poised to emerge as a pivotal energy partner for Europe.

Slovakia, cognizant of the imperatives of diversification, has embraced Azerbaijan as an alternative energy source. The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in April 2023, involving Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, and Azerbaijan, underscores a collective commitment to bolstering gas supply diversification. The initiative aims to enhance the capacity of existing gas transmission routes, facilitating the seamless transport of Azerbaijani gas to European markets.

Furthermore, Slovakia's exploration of alternative gas routes, including the potential utilization of the Russia-Ukraine pipeline through a swap agreement involving Azerbaijan and Russia, underscores the nation's proactive stance in ensuring energy security amidst evolving geopolitical dynamics.

As Slovakia embarks on a trajectory of diversification, Azerbaijan emerges as a pivotal partner, offering not only energy security but also fostering deeper bilateral ties across a spectrum of strategic domains. The synergy between the two nations holds the promise of mutual prosperity and enduring collaboration in the pursuit of shared objectives.

Azerbaijan has solidified its strategic cooperation with 10 European nations, with Slovakia recently joining the fold as the latest partner. These agreements hold particular significance in light of the perceived hostility from certain quarters within European Union institutions towards Azerbaijan, especially following the liberation of Karabakh from occupation.

During his meeting with President Ilham Aliyev, Prime Minister Fico expressed his dismay over the discriminatory treatment meted out to smaller nations within international forums, citing Slovakia's own experiences. In response to such injustices, Slovakia has pledged to serve as a bridge between Azerbaijan and the European Union, advocating for fairness and equality. Azerbaijan views the growing number of supportive voices

within EU institutions as instrumental in dismantling any attempts at isolation.

Moreover, Slovakia, following in the footsteps of Hungary, has committed to participating in the reconstruction efforts in Karabakh. The devastation wrought by Armenian forces during the occupation, particularly evident in the Agdam region, underscores the urgent need for rehabilitation. As a gesture of solidarity, a Slovak company has undertaken the task of reconstructing the Garvand village in the Agdam district, further deepening bilateral ties and fostering mutual cooperation between Slovakia and Azerbaijan in the post-conflict reconstruction phase.

The defense-industry collaboration between Slovakia and Azerbaijan traces its roots back to the late 1990s and early 2000s, with significant milestones marking their journey towards mutual cooperation. One notable instance occurred on May 20, 2005, when Azerbaijan received the first model of the BOZENA-5 mechanical demining machine (MDM) produced by Slovakia. These machines have since played a crucial role in Azerbaijan's demining operations, particularly in the liberated territories.

In the aftermath of the 44-day War, two key developments heightened Azerbaijan's interest in Slovakia's defense industry. Firstly, Armenia's continued armament by countries such as France and India underscored the imperative for Azerbaijan to bolster its defensive capabilities. Secondly, Slovakia's weapons products garnered acclaim in Ukraine, presenting new avenues for collaboration.

Several Slovak companies view collaboration with Ukraine as a gateway to expanded opportunities. Against this backdrop, joint developments, production, servicing, and modernization of defense products, including the Zuzana-2 and Zuzana-2S self-propelled howitzers, have gained traction. Notably, Slovak Defence Minister Robert Kaliňák's visit to Azerbaijan on January 18, 2024, spotlighted the potential for synergistic cooperation between the two nations in the defense industry domain.

The envisioned collaboration encompasses joint production endeavors, with Slovakia contributing technology and Azerbaijan providing financial support. Prime Minister of Slovakia emphasized that the resulting weapons would either be exported or retained in Azerbaijan, underscoring the mutual benefits of such cooperation. The advent of a new geopolitical landscape, characterized by heightened demand for weaponry amid conflicts like that in Ukraine, further underscores the strategic significance of this collaboration. Prospective joint production initiatives, such as the Zuzana and BIA self-propelled howitzers, exemplify the tangible outcomes of this partnership.

Ultimately, both Slovakia and Azerbaijan stand to gain from this collaboration, aligning with their respective interests in energy security, political stability, and defense preparedness. Slovakia's engagement with Azerbaijan not only enhances its own energy diversification efforts but also provides a platform to amplify Azerbaijan's voice in the face of political challenges within the European Union. As both nations deepen their strategic cooperation, the potential for mutual prosperity and resilience grows ever brighter.

IV. Azerbaijan's Renewable Energy Ambitions: Pioneering the Green Transition in the Wider Region

The urgency of addressing climate change has never been more apparent, as the detrimental impacts of greenhouse gas emissions continue to manifest in rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and disruptions to ecosystems worldwide. Recognizing the global nature of this challenge, nations worldwide are called upon to take swift and concerted action to mitigate these effects and safeguard our planet's future.

Amidst this global imperative, the Republic of Azerbaijan stands as a nation rich in resources, particularly in the realm of energy production heavily reliant on fossil fuels. However, Azerbaijan has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to sustainable development goals, notably in the realm of green energy infrastructure and the

widespread adoption of renewable energy sources across various sectors of the economy.

The economic potential of renewable energy sources in Azerbaijan is substantial, with estimates suggesting a capacity of 27 GW, including significant contributions from wind, solar, bioenergy, and hydroelectric resources. The government has set ambitious targets to increase the share of renewables in the country's overall energy mix to 30 percent by 2030, recognizing renewables as the most promising low-carbon solution to meet climate targets.

Aligned with its commitments under the Paris Agreement, Azerbaijan aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 35 percent by 2030 and 40 percent by 2050 from 1990 levels, emphasizing the pivotal role of alternative and renewable energy sources in achieving these targets.

Against this backdrop, Azerbaijan is poised to host the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29) this year in Baku, underscoring the nation's determination to accelerate green growth initiatives and foster a sustainable and eco-friendly environment. The government's approval of "Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socio-Economic Development" underscores its commitment to creating a clean environment and fostering a culture of green growth, pivotal in meeting international standards for greenhouse gas emissions.

In a landmark declaration, 2024 has been designated as the "Green World Solidarity Year" in Azerbaijan, symbolizing the country's unwavering dedication to environmental protection and climate action. Key regions, including Karabakh, East Zangezur, and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, have been designated as "Green Energy Zones," with initiatives underway to harness renewable energy potential effectively.

Noteworthy collaborations with international partners further exemplify Azerbaijan's commitment to renewable energy development. Strategic partnerships with renowned entities such as Masdar, ADNOC, ACWA Power, BP, and China Gezhouba Group Overseas Investment underscore Azerbaijan's resolve to implement renewable energy projects at scale. The inauguration of the

Garadagh Solar PV Plant, the largest of its kind in the Caspian region and the CIS, underscores Azerbaijan's capacity for innovation and collaboration in the renewable energy sector.

Amidst its abundant fossil fuel resources, Azerbaijan's pivot towards renewable energy is driven by a confluence of factors, including economic growth, rising energy demands, and the imperative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Collaborative efforts, such as the "Memorandum of Understanding on a Strategic Partnership in the Field of Energy" signed with the European Union in 2022, underscore Azerbaijan's commitment to fostering energy efficiency and renewable energy sources in collaboration with global partners.

Azerbaijan's ambitious commitments to renewable energy underscore its proactive stance in addressing climate change and advancing towards a sustainable future. By harnessing the potential of renewable energy sources, Azerbaijan aims to not only mitigate greenhouse gas emissions but also to pave the way for a greener, more resilient future for generations to come.

The concept of a "Green Energy Corridor" is gaining momentum as Azerbaijan, Georgia, Hungary, and Romania recently inked a landmark agreement to construct an underwater electric cable beneath the Black Sea. This ambitious project aims to interconnect the energy systems of the South Caucasus with those of South-Eastern Europe, laying the groundwork for a seamless flow of green energy across borders. Termed the "Green Energy Corridor," this initiative holds the potential to emerge as a transformative power source for the European Union, marking a significant step towards reducing Europe's dependence on Russian energy.

Beyond bolstering regional energy security, the Black Sea submarine cable project holds profound implications for Central Asian nations. With abundant green energy resources awaiting harnessing, these nations stand poised to tap into the burgeoning demand for renewable electricity in Europe, facilitated by Azerbaijan's strategic positioning as a crucial transit hub within the Middle Corridor. By supporting strategic connectivity and energy projects, Azerbaijan aims to facilitate the transit of energy resources from

Central Asia to global markets, further enhancing its pivotal role in shaping regional energy dynamics.

Moreover, Central Asian countries, notably Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, boast rich reservoirs of critical minerals essential for the production of renewable energy technologies. This strategic advantage positions the region as a key player in the global renewable energy landscape, attracting interest from both Western powers seeking to bolster their presence in the region and China aiming to expand its influence. The resulting competition for influence not only fosters a conducive environment for investments but also amplifies the region's significance in facilitating energy and trade flows between Asia and Europe.

The recent signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation between Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan further underscores the region's commitment to advancing green energy initiatives. This landmark agreement paves the way for enhanced collaboration in the production and export of renewable energy, leveraging Azerbaijan's infrastructure to facilitate the seamless integration of energy systems and maximize the utilization of renewable resources.

Against the backdrop of these transformative developments, the hosting of COP29 in the region presents a unique opportunity for the South Caucasus and Central Asian nations to showcase their commitment to sustainable development and accelerate the transition towards a green economy. The emergence of the "Green Energy Corridor" and the growing momentum towards renewable energy integration underscore the region's potential to emerge as a global leader in sustainable development. By leveraging its abundant resources and strategic positioning, Azerbaijan and its regional partners are poised to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of energy transition and fostering a more resilient and sustainable future for generations to come.

V. Trilateral Energy Cooperation Agreement: A Step Towards Regional Integration

On May 1, during the Tashkent International Investment Forum, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan signed a memorandum of cooperation to integrate their energy systems. This event brought together key figures such as Uzbekistan's Minister of Energy Jurabek Mirzamakhmudov, Minister of Investment, Industry, and Trade Laziz Kudratov, Kazakhstan's Minister of Energy Almasadam Satkaliev, and Minister of Energy of Azerbaijan Republic Parviz Shahbazov and Minister of Economy of Azerbaijan Republic Mikayil Jabbarov, along with representatives from other departments and international financial institutions. Mikayil Jabbarov highlighted that this initiative would enable the countries to collaborate on producing and exporting green energy through Azerbaijan to Europe, promoting efficient use of renewable energy sources and the integration of their energy systems.

Almasadam Satkaliev mentioned the development of a business model to address financing, revenue flow, and ownership of the proposed transmission corridors intended to sell green energy to the European Union. He also noted that draft technical specifications for laying a deep-sea cable beneath the Caspian Sea have been prepared.

The Ministry of Energy of Uzbekistan emphasized that, in addition to approving the terms of reference for developing a preliminary feasibility study for exporting green energy to Europe, the meeting also discussed the involvement of international consultants to assess the technical and economic conditions of the project.

It is notable that on November 14, 2023, the relevant ministries of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan adopted a joint communiqué in Baku. This document outlined the creation of a joint venture aimed at exporting green energy to Europe and agreed on developing infrastructure to facilitate the supply of green hydrogen and green ammonia to other countries.

Notably, a joint communiqué adopted in Baku on November 14, 2023, has greenlighted the participation of third countries in this project. This

communiqué also outlined the creation of a joint venture to export green energy to Europe and agreed on developing infrastructure to supply green hydrogen and green ammonia to other nations. The existing parallel operation of the energy systems of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan within the United Energy System of Central Asia, created during the Soviet era, could extend to other Central Asian countries, despite Turkmenistan's withdrawal from the system in 2003.

The success of this agreement hinges on whether these countries can meet their ambitious renewable energy targets. Successful implementation could yield substantial benefits for the participating countries and EU members.

Azerbaijan aims to produce over 2 GW of green energy by 2027 and exceed 8 GW by 2030, aiming for at least 33% of its electricity to come from renewable sources by 2030. To achieve this, regions like Karabakh, East Zangezur, and Nakhchivan have been designated as "green energy" zones.

Uzbekistan plans to achieve 27 GW of renewable energy capacity and generate 40% of its electricity from renewables by 2030. Currently, renewable energy accounts for about 10% of the country's total electricity production.

Kazakhstan aims for at least 15% of its electricity to come from renewable sources by 2030, increasing to 50% by 2050. The country has 146 renewable energy facilities with a total capacity of 2.8 GW and plans to commission five large projects totaling 5 GW by 2030.

By collaborating on joint projects and linking their energy systems, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan are positioning themselves to enhance their influence in the European energy market. This cooperation could also pave the way for Central Asian countries to establish a structured relationship on green energy with the EU, supporting the EU's strategic goals of energy security.

In December 2022, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Romania, and Hungary signed the Black Sea Energy project agreement in Bucharest, which involves laying an

undersea cable to bring 1 GW of electricity from Azerbaijan to EU markets. Supplementing this with additional electricity from Central Asia aligns with the EU's interests.

This agreement supports the commitments made by Baku, Astana, and Tashkent under the 2015 Paris Agreement to significantly reduce carbon emissions and transition to renewable energy sources. It underscores the importance of moving away from fossil fuels and could serve as a blueprint for green cooperation at the interregional level.

The political motivations behind this agreement are as significant as the economic benefits. This trilateral cooperation opens new geopolitical opportunities, potentially reshaping the Caspian region's landscape. Merging their energy systems allows Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan to improve their economic prospects and regional influence by aligning their energy policies with the EU. The agreement reflects a strong political commitment to deepening economic and political cooperation between the three countries and the EU.

In short, the recent memorandum of cooperation signed by Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan to integrate their energy systems marks a significant development in regional energy collaboration.

The agreement represents a pivotal step towards achieving ambitious renewable energy targets and enhancing energy security for the participating nations and the EU. By committing to the production and export of green energy, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan are positioning themselves as key players in the global energy transition. This collaboration is expected to:

1. **Enhance Regional Energy Security:** Integrating the energy systems of Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan will provide a more stable and resilient regional energy network. This interconnected system can better manage supply and demand fluctuations, reducing the risk of energy shortages and enhancing overall energy security.

2. **Boost Green Energy Production:** The collaborative effort aims to significantly increase the production of green energy in the region. Azerbaijan's goal to produce over 8 GW of green energy by 2030, Uzbekistan's target of 27 GW, and Kazakhstan's plans to reach at least 50% renewable energy by 2050 underscore the potential for substantial growth in renewable energy capacity.
3. **Facilitate EU Energy Diversification:** By exporting green energy to the EU, this partnership aligns with the EU's strategy to diversify its energy sources and reduce dependence on fossil fuels. The integration of Central Asian green energy into the EU market can help achieve the EU's climate goals and enhance its energy security.

The trilateral agreement also carries significant geopolitical and economic implications:

1. **Strengthening Regional Influence:** By merging their energy systems and collaborating on green energy projects, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan can increase their influence in the regional and global energy markets. This cooperation positions them as critical players in the EU's energy diversification strategy and enhances their geopolitical clout.
2. **Attracting Investment:** The commitment to large-scale renewable energy projects is likely to attract significant international investment. The involvement of international consultants and financial institutions in feasibility studies and project implementation will bring expertise and funding, further boosting the region's economic prospects.
3. **Promoting Sustainable Development:** The focus on green energy aligns with global efforts to combat climate change and promote sustainable development. By investing in renewable energy, the participating countries are contributing to global carbon reduction efforts and setting

a precedent for sustainable energy practices in the region.

The memorandum of cooperation signed by Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan marks a significant milestone in regional energy collaboration and the global energy transition. By integrating their energy systems and focusing on green energy production, these countries are setting the stage for a more sustainable and secure energy future. With the right investments, policies, and international partnerships, this trilateral cooperation has the potential to transform the regional energy landscape and contribute significantly to global renewable energy efforts.

VI. Strengthening Azerbaijan-Germany Cooperation

In an era marked by escalating global uncertainty, Azerbaijan and Germany are actively bolstering their collaboration to address emerging challenges. This assertion is underscored by the recent visit of President Ilham Aliyev to Germany, where pivotal discussions were held to deepen bilateral ties amidst evolving geopolitical dynamics. President Ilham Aliyev's participation in the 15th Petersberg Climate Dialogue in Berlin from April 25-26, 2024, served as a significant platform for fostering mutual understanding and cooperation on pressing issues.

The Petersberg Climate Dialogue, an annual forum for high-level political deliberations on climate action, provided a conducive setting for discussions between President Ilham Aliyev and Federal Chancellor Scholz on climate policy and the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. Chancellor Scholz reaffirmed Germany's commitment to supporting peaceful resolutions to conflicts, emphasizing the potential for collaboration in green and hydrogen energy within the region. President Ilham Aliyev, in turn, highlighted Azerbaijan's strides in exporting green energy to Europe alongside its natural gas resources.

Amidst these discussions, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock highlighted the significance of COP29 in Baku as an opportunity to advance peace

and prosperity in the Southern Caucasus, underscoring the pivotal role of a peace treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan. President Ilham Aliyev echoed the sentiment, emphasizing the broader implications of Germany-Azerbaijan relations for regional stability and development.

Germany's proactive role in facilitating the normalization process between Azerbaijan and Armenia is noteworthy, exemplified by recent initiatives spearheaded by German Foreign Minister Baerbock. The constructive engagement of Germany underscores its commitment to fostering peace and stability in the region amidst evolving geopolitical dynamics.

Against the backdrop of geopolitical realignments, the longstanding diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and Germany have assumed renewed significance. With over three decades of diplomatic ties, both nations have forged a robust partnership anchored in pragmatic cooperation across various sectors.

Economic collaboration stands as a cornerstone of Azerbaijan-Germany relations, with Germany emerging as a key economic partner for Azerbaijan in the South Caucasus. The establishment of Germany's Chamber of Commerce Abroad in Baku underscores the burgeoning trade ties between the two nations, with Germany ranking as Azerbaijan's second-largest trading partner in the EU.

In addition to traditional economic sectors, German companies are increasingly eyeing opportunities in Azerbaijan's transition to green energy and renewable energy projects. Azerbaijan's ambitious targets for renewable energy expansion present lucrative prospects for collaboration, with German expertise and investment poised to play a pivotal role in driving sustainable development.

Moreover, the reconstruction efforts in Karabakh following its liberation offer a fertile ground for German companies to contribute to the region's development across various sectors.

Azerbaijan-Germany relations are characterized by mutual respect and a shared commitment to addressing global challenges through pragmatic

cooperation. President Ilham Aliyev's frequent visits to Germany underscore the breadth and depth of the bilateral agenda, which spans economic, political, and environmental domains.

As both nations navigate the complexities of a rapidly evolving geopolitical landscape, there remains ample scope for deepening cooperation across various fronts. Against the backdrop of Germany's economic prowess and Azerbaijan's strategic significance in the South Caucasus, pragmatic collaboration between the two nations holds immense potential for advancing shared interests and fostering regional stability. With COP29 on the horizon, Azerbaijan and Germany stand poised to leverage their partnership to address pressing global challenges and chart a course towards a more sustainable future.