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## GOALS OF MAINTAINING PEACE AND REGIONAL SECURITY IN THE CAUCASUS IN FOREIGN POLICY OF AZERBAIJAN

**Irada Nuriyeva\***

**Abstract.** The article titled "Goals of maintaining peace and regional security in the Caucasus in foreign policy of Azerbaijan" construes determination of foreign policy based on national interests after reinstating the independence of Azerbaijan in 1991, taking some measures related to elimination of political strain in order to implement this policy, implementation of the policy aiming at the coordination of national interests of the country with the interests of other countries in the region and states with special reputation in the Caucasus, strengthening of state independence and sovereignty of Azerbaijan after reinstating our territorial integrity as a result of the settlement of Nagorno- Karabakh problem after the victory at the Second Karabakh war during the period from 27.09.2020 to 10.11.2020, provision of regional security and stability of the South Caucasus and Caspian Sea, international and national security interests of the countries of the region, great role of the relations between Azerbaijan and Turkiye in establishing peace, stability and tranquility in the Caucasus and in all over the world.

**Keywords:** Caucasus, Caspian Sea, peace, regional security, relations between Azerbaijan and Turkiye, foreign policy, national interests

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\* Doctor of Political Sciences, professor,  
professor at the Department of Human Sciences of Azerbaijan State Oil and Industry University; Baku, Azerbaijan  
E-mail: [iradanuri@gmail.com](mailto:iradanuri@gmail.com)  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5309-0009>

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## ЦЕЛИ ЗАЩИТЫ МИРА И РЕГИОНАЛЬНОЙ БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ НА КАВКАЗЕ ВО ВНЕШНЕЙ ПОЛИТИКЕ АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНА

Ирада Нуриева\*

**Абстракт.** В статье «Цели защиты мира и региональной безопасности на Кавказе во внешней политике Азербайджана» рассматриваются вопросы определения внешнеполитического курса, основанного на национальных интересах, после восстановления независимости Азербайджанского государства в 1991 году, реализация ряда мер по устранению политической напряженности, проводя политику, направленную на примирение национальных интересов страны с интересами региональных государств и государств, имеющих особое влияние на Кавказе, укрепление государственной независимости и суверенитета Азербайджана путем восстановления нашей территориальной целостности в результате победоносного разрешения нагорно-карабахской проблемы во Второй Карабахской войне, произошедшей в 27.09-10.11.2020 года, большое значение азербайджано-турецких отношений в обеспечении региональной безопасности и стабильности Южного Кавказа и Каспийского моря, а также интересов международной и национальной безопасности стран региона, установлении мира, стабильности и спокойствия на Кавказе и во всем мире.

**Ключевые слова:** Кавказ, Каспийское море, мир, региональная безопасность, азербайджано-турецкие отношения, внешняя политика, национальные интересы

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\* Доктор политических наук, профессор,  
кафедры «Гуманитарных наук» Азербайджанского Государственного Университета Нефти и  
Промышленности; Баку, Азербайджан  
E-mail: [iradanuri@gmail.com](mailto:iradanuri@gmail.com)  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5309-0009>

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## AZƏRBAYCANIN XARİCİ SİYASƏTİNDƏ QAFQAZDA SÜLHÜN VƏ REGIONAL TƏHLÜKƏSİZLİYİN QORUNMASININ HƏDƏFLƏRİ

**İradə Nuriyeva\***

**Abstrakt.** "Azərbaycanın xarici siyasətində Qafqazda sülhün və regional təhlükəsizliyin qorunmasının hədəfləri" adlı məqalədə 1991-ci ildə Azərbaycan dövləti müstəqilliyini bərpa etdikdən sonra milli maraqlara əsaslanan xarici siyasətin müəyyən edilməsi, onun həyata keçirilməsi üçün siyasi gərginliyin aradan qaldırılmasına dair bir sıra tədbirlərin görülməsi, ölkənin milli maraqlarını region dövlətlərinin və Qafqazda xüsusi təsiri olan dövlətlərin maraqları ilə uzlaşdırmağa yönəlmiş siyasətin yürüdülməsi, Dağlıq Qarabağ probleminin 27.09-10.11. 2020-ci il tarixlərində baş verən İkinci Qarabağ müharibəsində qələbə qazanaraq həll edilməsi nəticəsində ərazi bütövlüyümüzün bərpası ilə Azərbaycanın dövlət müstəqilliyinin və suverenliyinin möhkəmləndirilməsi, Cənubi Qafqaz və Xəzər hövzəsinin regional təhlükəsizliyinin və sabitliyinin, region ölkələrinin beynəlxalq və milli təhlükəsizlik maraqlarının təmin edilməsi, Qafqazda və dünyada sülhün, sabitliyin, əmin-amanlığın bərqərar olmasında Azərbaycan-Türkiyə münasibətlərinin böyük əhəmiyyət kəsb etməsi şərh olunmuşdur.

**Açar sözlər:** Qafqaz, Xəzər hövzəsi, sülh, regional təhlükəsizlik, Azərbaycan-Türkiyə münasibətləri, xarici siyasət, milli maraqlar

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\* Siyasi elmlər üzrə elmlər doktoru, professor,  
Azərbaycan Dövlət Neft və Sənaye Universiteti; Bakı, Azərbaycan  
E-mail: [iradanuri@gmail.com](mailto:iradanuri@gmail.com)  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5309-0009>

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## 1.Introduction

After reinstating state independence in 1991, one of significant tasks of the Republic of Azerbaijan was determination and implementation of foreign policy based on national interests. National leader Heydar Aliyev who had returned to power by insistent demand of the people in 1993 renewed foreign policy of Azerbaijan from the first days and rebuild it based on strategic interests of the country. First of all, the government started to perform the works in order to eliminate gross mistakes made by the former government in foreign policy and, as a result of this, the very strain international political situation around Azerbaijan, to implement the policy that was in the center of attention of the government and aimed at the coordination of strategic interests of the country with the interests of individual countries with special reputation in the Caucasus.

## 2.Azerbaijan's security policy in the South Caucasus

Peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem, strengthening state independence and sovereignty of Azerbaijan, reinstating territorial integrity of the country and providing its worthy place in the world community formed main line of consistent and targeted foreign policy. The President made 79 visits to 33 countries, signed 431 international documents with this purpose just in 1993-1998 [Nuriyeva, I.T., p.575].

National leader Heydar Aliyev noted that in order to establish peace and regional security in the Caucasus: *"Azerbaijan is to have equitable relations with all the countries. We need equitable relations with Turkey, Iran, neighboring Georgia, Russia, the USA, European countries, Arab states, Muslim states, Turkic states, Central Asian countries, Kazakhstan"* [Heydar Aliyev and the Azerbaijani model of foreign policy. Xalq Qazeti].

Thus, at present, situation at and stability of regional security environment of the South Caucasus and Caspian Sea, provision of international and national security interests of the region countries and similar matters basically depend on leader of the region Russia; Turkiye and Iran at the South Caucasus and Caspian Sea, as well the USA and European Union outside the region. The events taking place within the region related to all the matters arise from economic, political and military interests of these countries and blocks. Especially thought-out and balanced security policy implemented by Azerbaijan in order to ensure maximum international and national security interests in the South Caucasus is to take into consideration complex and disputable matters in mutual relations between the CIS led by Russia, the Organization for Economic Cooperation headed by Iran, the Organization of Turkic States headed by Turkiye, as well European Union, China, the USA and other states of the region. Balanced regional policy of Azerbaijan both on

foreign policy and security matters is a factor that is able to play the role of the most significant guarantee of current security and independent future of the country [Hasanov, A.M.(2015). p.765]. The concept of main resources possessed and used by the country in international security includes the entire existence of material and moral life of the country (the complex of the power factors), and in international relations system, the state relies on these resources and implements its security policy and purposefully acts in this field [Hasanov, A.M. (2005). p.247-263].

### **3.Regional and international actors influencing the security environment of the South Caucasus**

After the break-up of the USSR, the security environment of Caspian- Black Sea basin and the South Caucasus changed, the relations between regional and international actors affecting this environment intensified. New relations formed between major states of the region (Russia, Turkiye, Iran), leaders outside the region (the USA, EU countries, China, etc.), other countries of the region (Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, etc.), transnational, geo-economics and military- geostrategic actors (UN, OSCE, EU, NATO, CIS, OIC, transnational oil and gas, transport, communication companies, etc.) in accordance with special and collective interests. Main decisive disputes were around territorial integrity of the countries of the region and territorial claims of some states, energy resources of the Caspian Sea, possession of the oil and gas export routes and security mechanisms, East-West transport, communications and transit infrastructures, desire of the states of the region to influence the relations with transnational political, economic and military blocks, etc. [Hasanov,A.M. (2015). p.769-770]. While the struggle in certain territories of the region, for example, in the Black Sea or the Caspian Sea basin was based mostly on transport and communication routes, export routes, security of local countries and transnational infrastructures, around Central Asia and the Caspian Sea, in fact, energy resources, military and geostrategic matters were aimed at keeping local states under the influence in the South Caucasus, manipulating their territorial integrity problems. In the plane of the struggle of geopolitical interests of the region, each country had its own interests and corresponding claims. Such critical matters as balance of power in the region, relations between local countries and stability of the region mostly depended on the relations between the actors mentioned.

Although national interests of small and large countries of the region coincide with transnational international interests in some matters related to the security measures in the Caspian- Black Sea basin and the South Caucasus, there is serious conflict of interests in other matters. The role of transnational interests carrier in the region is played by the USA, the EU countries and

NATO representing them in military and geostrategic context, as well such big and developed countries as China and Japan, including global corporations representing them, and such the countries as Russia, Turkiye, Iran, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Georgia act as main carriers of geopolitical, geo-economics and military-geostrategic interests of the region [Hasanov,A.M. (2015). p.773-774]. Above all, foreign and security policy of the South Caucasus and the Caspian Sea countries arose from the reaction to the intervention of international powers and big countries in the region with different goals, methods and means, as well to their military-geostrategic interests. Among such the power centers influencing the security environment in the region there are such the geopolitical actors as the USA-NATO-EU, Russia, CIS and Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), as well Iran, Turkiye, etc.

Azerbaijan emphasized in its foreign policy the significance of comprehensively balanced measures in protecting the interests of the country and implemented adaptable maneuvers and special tactical moves, taking into consideration the fight of different states for economic interests and spheres of influence built in the whole Caucasus and directly in our republic. Practical changes have been made in foreign policy course aimed at protecting the interests of the country, taking into consideration modern realities. Place of the independent Azerbaijan in international relations system, the priorities for the short-term of its relations with European countries and the USA, new independent states and Russia, Turkic states and Turkiye, the Muslim world and Iran, as well reputable international organizations were determined and gradually the started to be implemented.

Creation of successful dialogue and mutual understanding environment in the relations with Russia, with which Azerbaijan had historically been linked, was of great importance in terms of strengthening international positions of our country, ensuring stability and security in the region. Azerbaijan has always given great value to the development of the cooperation with Russia after reinstating its independence. National leader Heydar Aliyev and the President of the Republic Ilham Aliyev played special role and had special merits in strengthening friendly relations between two countries. Business visit of Heydar Aliyev to Russia, signing Baku Declaration, settling the matters related to the status of the Caspian Sea brought significant progress and dynamism to the relations between two countries at different levels. The agreement on the division of the Caspian Sea by national sectors between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation was signed in January 2001. The same agreement was signed between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan in November. Although some progress was gained in determining legal status of the Caspian Sea at the Summit of the heads of states of the Caspian Sea

countries held in Ashgabat on April 23, 2002, there were no specific results achieved due to unconstructive position of Iran and Turkmenistan on this matter [Nuriyeva, I.T. p.575-576]. The presidents of Azerbaijan and Russia signed the "Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Azerbaijan on the division of neighboring areas of the Caspian seabed" on September 23, 2002. Both countries are interested in dynamic development of political and economic cooperation. Nowadays, Azerbaijan is the only state in the South Caucasus that was able to establish a system of equitable relations with Russia.

New relations with Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova are also of great importance in bilateral cooperation system. While Ukraine is significant to us as big and rich country, while it is developed country in all the aspects as profitable partner for economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation, Georgia is also our close neighbor, there are half a million of our compatriots living there, it is our access to Europe; and solving of today's complex knots in the Caucasus is significant in terms of ensuring peace and stability. Azerbaijan pays great attention to the matters of development and improvement of the relations with all the Caucasus countries, especially with Georgia, ensuring peace and cooperation in this region that became hot spot of foreign powers, national conflicts. Comprehensive program of the proposals put forward by the head of state on the matters of peace and cooperation in the Caucasus is welcomed by Georgia and all the countries of the region, except for Armenia.

#### **4.The place and role of Azerbaijan in the system of international relations**

Preventing ongoing aggression of Armenia and ceasing the war in the 1990s were of particular importance. Most importantly, such the important matters as bringing to the world the essence of the aggression of Armenia and Armenian atrocities, breaking the information blockade created around Azerbaijan, bringing the truth about Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to the knowledge of the world community were waiting for their solution. The President of the Republic Heydar Aliyev brought the realities of Azerbaijan to the knowledge of the whole world from a rostrum of the UN 49<sup>th</sup> session in September 1994, as well the anniversary sessions in October 1995 and September 2000. Unfortunately, there was no practical result achieved due to neutral position of international community against the occupation of Armenia, as well the failure of such the organizations as the UN and OSCE to take effective measures in order to implement their proposals and resolutions (822, 853, 874, 884) [Aliyev, H. (1997). Our independence is eternal (Vol. I). p.560]. Azerbaijan has repeatedly declared that it supports peaceful solution of the conflict, but the depletion of the peace opportunities is able to force Azerbaijan to exercise

its right to liberate its lands by force of arms. Azerbaijan, which has strong army, can do it. Azerbaijan proved it by winning the Second Karabakh war, which had taken place as a result of the provocation of Armenia within the period from September 27, 2020 to November 10, 2020.

The activities in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE since 1994), the Organization for Economic Cooperation, the UN, the North Atlantic Cooperation Council of NATO since 1992 (European-Atlantic Partnership Council-EAPC since 1997), GUAM, the European Union, Davos Economic Forum, the Non-Aligned Movement and other reputable organizations and associations play significant role in foreign policy of Azerbaijan. They participated in the process of peaceful settlement of regional conflicts: Nagorno-Karabakh, Transnistria, Abkhazia, etc. together with the CIS PA, the UN and the OSCE [General historical overview of Azerbaijan and the Commonwealth of Independent States. (n.d.)].

Azerbaijan implements balanced policy without joining any military block and foreign policy course aimed at developing the cooperation relations with all the countries. That is why, our country decided to become a full member of the Non-Aligned Movement with the status of an observer in 2011. Territorial integrity of our country is unconditionally recognized by the member states within the organization, and our proper position in international matters is always supported. The confidence of the Non-Aligned Movement in our country and growing reputation of our state demonstrated the fact that, despite being a member for a short time, the member states unanimously supported the presidency of Azerbaijan in this organization [The Non-Aligned Movement, Azerbaijan's national interests, and the simplistic thinking of the anti-national opposition. (2020, October 26). AzTV.az]. The Non-Aligned Movement presidency of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2019-2023): The movement presidency of Azerbaijan in 2019-2022 further increased the role and reputation of our state in global processes, strengthened our position in international arena, contributed to economic development of our country, gave wide opportunities for the growth of the non-oil sector and our export potential. The President Ilham Aliyev uses international platforms playing significant role in determining the world policy and agenda and brings the realities of Azerbaijan to the knowledge of the world, achieves expansion of the list of the states defending proper position of our country, achieves turning Azerbaijan into a place of international cooperation where global matters are discussed, as well brings our state closer to strategic goals in stages. After closed meeting of the UN Security Council on the aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan, held on October 19, the co-chair countries of the OSCE Minsk Group, Russia and France, drawn up a draft statement and distributed it among the member



states in order to approve it. However, the draft statement did not include a reference to the known 4 resolutions of the Security Council. The Non-Aligned Movement member states held principled position, insisted on reference to the Security Council resolutions, the UN Charter, regulations and principles of international law, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of all the countries, non-interference in internal affairs of sovereign states and protection of their mutual interests and Bandung principles promoting interstate cooperation, the Non-Aligned Movement documents, and did not allow to implement the draft statement [Azerbaijan's diplomatic and military achievements and the pro-Armenian policy of the great powers. (2020, October 24). AZERTAC]. As the president of the Republic said: *"This political measure has failed, there are no documents adopted, and I think that this is our next political victory. We won in the political arena, just like we won on the battlefield"* ["This is our next political victory" – Ilham Aliyev. (2020, October 25). Yenisabah.az].

Comprehensive cooperation with Türkiye has been playing significant role in foreign policy of sovereign Azerbaijan since the summer of 1993. Türkiye recognized Armenia as an occupant and declared that it would have no relations with Armenia if Nagorno- Karabakh problem is not fairly resolved. The relations between Azerbaijan and Türkiye are of great importance in establishing the peace and tranquility in the world and in the region. The strengthening of the relations between Türkiye and Azerbaijan is aimed at ensuring the stability in the Caucasus. The whole world knows that the relations between Azerbaijan and Türkiye are at the highest level. This was confirmed once again during the 44-days Patriotic War, which lasted from September 27, 2020 to November 10, 2020. Fraternal Türkiye provided political and moral support to Azerbaijan from the first days of the war. The President of Türkiye Recep Tayyip Erdoğan made express and definite statements and declared that Azerbaijan was not alone in this war, and Türkiye was always with our state and people. The relations between Türkiye and Azerbaijan are main condition for regional cooperation. The activities of Turkic-Russian Joint Center in Karabakh are also significant as effective mechanism for establishing the peace in the region. "Shusha Declaration on allied relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Türkiye", signed in Shusha on June 15, 2021 became another manifestation of unity, relationship, friendship and brotherhood between two states and their peoples. Joint initiatives of Azerbaijan and Türkiye in strengthening the stability and security in the Caucasus, reconstruction of all the transport and economic relations, as well normalizing the relations and providing sustainable

peace within the countries of the region is the best example demonstrating the importance of further strengthening and development of these relations.

## 5. Conclusion

After reinstating our independence in 1991 and territorial integrity during the 44-days Patriotic war resulted in Great Victory within the period from 27.09.2020 to 10.11.2020, foreign policy of Azerbaijan is successfully implemented in eliminating existing political strain in the South Caucasus, achieving peace and security, as well developing the cooperation between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Making serious efforts to establish bilateral and multilateral cooperation between the states of the region, ensure peace, tranquility and regional security, coexistence of the peoples, the Republic of Azerbaijan seeks to establish stability in the region and wants to establish good neighboring relations with Armenia.

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