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**On October 12, President Ilham Aliyev received Mr. James Jeffrey, Advisor to the U.S. Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs.**

Mr. Jeffrey said although it was his first-ever visit to Azerbaijan, he closely followed the developments in the country while working in Turkey. He noted he was dealing with the issues concerning the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline project.

Mr. Jeffrey described Azerbaijan as the country with great cultural and economic potential, and its relations with the United States as successfully developing.

President I. Aliyev, in turn, called the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline project as one of the most important components of the cooperation between Azerbaijan and the United States. He said this global project had become a reality, thanks to the joint efforts by the participating states, leading companies and the United States.

The President expressed confidence in further enhancement of Azerbaijan-U.S. cooperation in a variety of fields.

Prospects of Azerbaijan-U.S relations as well as some regional issues were also touched upon during the conversation.

**Romanian President visits Azerbaijan**

On October 11, Romanian President Traian Basescu paid a two-day visit to Azerbaijan. Day one of his visit, he met one-on-one with President Ilham Aliyev.

Both Presidents expressed their satisfaction with successful development of political and economic relations between the two countries and noted the existence of greater potential for economic cooperation. The sides also underlined the expansion of bilateral relations in the process of integration in to Euro-Atlantic structures.

Immediately following the meeting, the Presidents signed a Joint Declaration.

Other key documents signed during the visit include: an "Agreement on cooperation in the field of culture," signed by Minister of Culture and Tourism of Azerbaijan Abulfaz Garayev and State Secretary for Cultural and Religious Affairs of Romania Adrian Lemeni; and a "Memo on cooperation" between Ministry of Economic Development of Azerbaijan and the National Agency for Small and Medium Enterprises and Cooperatives, signed by Minister of Economic Development of Azerbaijan Heydar Babyev and Minister of Economy and Trade of Romania Ian Codrutu Seres. Two separate protocols on trade-economic relations and scientific-technical cooperation, and on encouragement of investments between the two governments were also signed.

On October 12, President Traian Basescu visited the Milli Majlis (the Parliament of Azerbaijan).

After President Basescu and Speaker Oqtay Asadov met behind closed doors, the visit continued in the presence of the two countries' delegations. Speaker Asadov said Azerbaijan attaches great importance to relations with Romania, which was one of the first countries to recognize Azerbaijan's independence.

Regarding Azerbaijan-Romania inter-parliamentary relations, the Speaker said reciprocal visits by the two countries' parliamentarians will contribute to further enhancement of the bilateral ties. Speaker Asadov expressed his gratitude to the Romanian President for supporting Azerbaijan's equitable stance on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

President Basescu, in turn, stressed the role of parliaments in development of the bilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan and Romania. President Basescu relayed an invitation to Speaker Oqtay Asadov by the Romanian Speaker to visit his country.

Later the same day, the President of Romania had a round table dinner with Azerbaijan's Prime Minister Artur Rasizade during which they discussed the prospects of further strengthening of bilateral cooperation between the two countries and other issues of mutual concern.

### **SOFAZ executive director meets Caspian Integration Business Club members**

On October 10, Shahmar Movsumov, Executive Director of the State Oil Fund of Azerbaijan Republic (SOFAZ) met with a delegation of the Caspian Integration Business Club (CIBC) at the "Europe" hotel in Baku.

CIBC President Mr. Telman Aliyev opened the meeting with information about the club.

Executive Director Movsumov said the SOFAZ's main aim is to effectively use and properly manage oil revenues and save it for future generations; noting that oil contracts would bring in an estimated \$200 bln. within the next 20 years. According to Mr. Movsumov, SOFAZ has so far received \$3 bln, of which \$1.4 bln went to infrastructure and reconstruction projects. For example, \$170 million spent on improving the living conditions of internally displaced persons, \$300 million on funding Azerbaijan's share in the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline project, and \$40 million was transferred to the Azerbaijan Investment Company.

The active role of SOFAZ in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) was also highlighted. The EITI was launched by British Prime Minister Tony Blair in Johannesburg, September 2002 in order to increase transparency over payments and revenues in the extractive sector. Mr. Movsumov stressed to the delegation that Azerbaijan is the first country to disclose an EITI report.

### **Foreign Minister meets OSCE Representative on Freedom of Media**

On October 9, Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with a delegation led by OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Miklos Haraszti to discuss issues on the agenda before the OSCE-supported international conference held in Baku the following day.

Mr. Haraszti expressed his satisfaction with the level of cooperation between Azerbaijan and the OSCE. He said the progress Azerbaijan made in the field of information technologies creates huge opportunities for further improvement of mass media in the country.

Minister Mammadyarov and Miklos Haraszti also discussed a range of other issues of mutual concern.

### **National Security Minister meets NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Caucasus and Central Asia**

On October 10, Minister of National Security Lieutenant-General Eldar Mahmudov met with NATO Secretary General Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia Robert Simmons. As Minister of National Security, Eldar Mahmudov welcomes the rapidly developing Azerbaijan-NATO cooperation and stressed to Representative Simmons the successful implementation of the Individual Partnership Action Plan between the NATO and Azerbaijan.

The Minister reaffirmed that fighting against terrorism is one of the top priorities of the Ministry, stating this fight can be effective only if international efforts are consolidated.

Representative Simmons, for his part, expressed his satisfaction with the discussions held in Azerbaijan, and described the relations between NATO and Azerbaijan as rapidly developing.

### **President receives delegation led by NATO Secretary General's Special Representative**

On October 9 President I. Aliyev met with a delegation led by NATO Secretary General Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia Robert Simons.

Representative Simons conveyed greetings from NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer to the President, expressing satisfaction with the expansion of cooperation in the frame of NATO's Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) between NATO and Azerbaijan. President I. Aliyev expressed gratitude for the greeting, noting the successful development of Azerbaijan-NATO cooperation in the frame of IPAP, and expressed hope for further enhancement of cooperation in coming years.