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The US welcomes Azerbaijan-Kazakh pipeline deal

The United States welcomed the agreement allowing Kazakhstan to pump its oil through a U.S.-backed pipeline running from Azerbaijan to Turkey Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline.

A statement by the State Department said the deal, reached last week between Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, "underscores the strategic importance of the pipeline and the East-West linkages it provides for the broad Caspian and Caucasus region."

The statement said the United States wishes "Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan well in their next round of negotiations that will protect the interests of governments and project investors alike, paving the way for commercial partnerships and prospective international financing."

33rd Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers starts in Baku

On June 19, a three day Session of the 33rd Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers opened in Baku which brought together representatives from 57 countries. President I. Aliyev attended the Session. The event was opened by Dr. Abu Baker al-Qirbi, the Foreign Minister of Yemen and the Chairman of the 32nd Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, who greeted participants and expressed deep gratitude to President Ilham Aliyev for excellent organization of the event. President I. Aliyev addressed the session.

Global fight against terrorism, the Middle East peace process, the deteriorating situation in Palestine, the war in Iraq, Iran's nuclear issue, Afghanistan and UN reforms topped the agenda of the three-day event.

Azerbaijan took over the chairmanship of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) from the Republic of Yemen at the 33rd Session of the Conference.

President meets Turkish Foreign Minister

On June 19, President I. Aliyev met with Turkish Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Abdulla Gul who was attending the 33-rd Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Baku.

The meeting focused on Kars-Tbilisi--Baku Railway Project. A. Gul stressed that the transportation ministers of Azerbaijan, Turkey and Georgia should come together to overcome several difficulties about the project. "Georgia has some serious hesitations. Turkey can help Georgia to remove those hesitations," he said. Noting that Armenia might join the project, A. Gul said that private companies in Kazakhstan were interested in construction of the project.

Meanwhile, President I. Aliyev said that they attach great importance to the railway project. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline was also high on the agenda of the meeting. The President said that the inclusion of Kazakhstan in the pipeline was a historic development. During the meeting, Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the recent developments in Palestine and the activities of the OIC were also discussed. A. Gul invited President I. Aliyev to attend the Summit of Turkish-Speaking Countries in Turkey in fall.

OIC demands Armenian forces withdrawal from Azerbaijan

On June 21, member-states of the Organization of Islamic Conference issued a demand to Armenia to immediately, unconditionally and irrevocable withdraw its armed units from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The demand was formulated in the Baku declaration the final document of the 33rd Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers. The OIC urged the international community to take all necessary measures towards achieving a peace agreement on the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The declaration says the Foreign Ministers urge OIC member-states to support Azerbaijan's efforts to restore its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

President visits Kazakhstan

On June 16, President I. Aliyev arrived in Almaty, Kazakhstan to attend the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia. On the same day, President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev met with President I. Aliyev.

The Presidents signed an agreement on joint oil supply to global markets through the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline. The accord has become a testimony to a high level of cooperation between the countries, President I. Aliyev pointed out, adding that the deal would predetermine the region's development for many years to come. The pipeline's significance, now that Kazakhstan has joined in the project, is difficult to exaggerate, as it will now become the largest oil-pumping artery in the region, I. Aliyev said.

At the same time, President N. Nazarbayev agreed with his counterpart, showing the same high regard for the importance of a cooperation agreement for transporting Kazakh oil to global markets via the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, as this would give Kazakhstan a third alternative supply route for its hydrocarbon exports. He averred that all the required terminals would be built and the pipeline's capacities would be boosted by 2030 in order to pump Kazakh oil. "This agreement will be an important milestone in the history of amicable relations between two countries whose people have a lot in common in their history, culture, and roots," the Kazakh President stated.

President receives ex-chief of staff of G. Bush administration

On June 12, President I. Aliyev met with former New Hampshire governor, President G. Bush's ex-chief of staff John Sununu. During the meeting, the prospects of Azerbaijan-US bilateral relations, the issues of regional cooperation and other issues of mutual interest were touched upon.

President meets BSTDB delegation

On June 12, President I. Aliyev met with a delegation led by President of the Black Sea Trade Development Bank (BSTDB) Hairettin Kaplan. H. Kaplan said that they had useful meetings that resulted in the preparation of several projects. The President noted that such visits serve the expansion of bilateral relations. Stressing the importance of the projects connected to regional cooperation, President I. Aliyev stated that these projects bring Caspian and Black Sea regions closer. "Our cooperation is being successfully implemented, and the Black Sea and Caspian have already been accepted as a single region", the President added. President I. Aliyev also spoke of successful economic development in the country and the realization of huge regional projects.

President receives Secretary General of BSEC

On June 12, President I. Aliyev received Secretary General of the Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos. Rapid economic development in the country, Azerbaijan-BSEC cooperation and other issues of mutual concern were discussed.

L. Chrysanthopoulos also met with Foreign Minister E. Mammadyarov the same day. During the meeting, security issues, stability in the region, integration into Euro-Atlantic structures, the perspectives of cooperation between Azerbaijan and BSEC and other issues of mutual interest were touched upon. Minister E. Mammadyarov said that the only obstacle to the stability in the region is the Armenia-Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

President receives a delegation of CoE

On June 13, President I. Aliyev met with a delegation of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers' Ago Group led by Roland Wegner. R. Wegner said that the Council of Europe closely follows the developments in Azerbaijan. He praised the repeat parliamentary elections in the ten constituencies on May 13 where results were annulled in the 2005 November elections and welcomed the Azerbaijan-Venice Commission consultations on the improvement of electoral legislation of Azerbaijan. The President I. Aliyev said that the present visit of the CoE delegation to Azerbaijan creates good opportunities to discuss the current stage and prospects of the existing cooperation.

President meets the Chairman of Halliburton Company

On June 13, President I. Aliyev met with Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Halliburton Company David Lesar. D. Lesar congratulated President I. Aliyev on the dispatch of the first tanker with Azerbaijani oil on board from Ceyhan port in Turkey and expressed his satisfaction with his company's participation in the realization of Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan main oil export pipeline project. He noted that the commissioning of the BTC pipeline is of great importance for the diversification of global energy market and demonstrates the regional leadership of Azerbaijan.

President Ilham Aliyev described the commissioning of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan main oil export pipeline as a historical event. He pointed out that Azerbaijan is now capable of delivering its oil to the world market through Baku-Supsa, Baku-Novorossiysk and Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipelines. "The BTC has unique infrastructure connecting three seas: the Caspian, Black and Mediterranean seas," he added.