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### **President Ilham Aliyev attends Congress of Turkish-speaking Countries**

On September 17, President Ilham Aliyev visited Antalya, Turkey to participate in the 10th Congress of Friendship, Fraternity and Cooperation of Turkish-speaking Countries and Communities (September 18-20). The next day President I. Aliyev delivered a speech at the Congress touching upon the importance of the conference, in particular the significance of unity among the Turkish world and the cooperation among them, and Turkey's vital support to the Turkish speaking countries after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The President also addressed the current stage of Turkey-Azerbaijan relations involving the energy corridors connecting Azerbaijan and Turkey with Central Asia, the importance of cooperation in all fields, and Armenian aggression and territorial claims against Azerbaijan and Turkey and the results of Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The President noted the propaganda activities of the Armenian lobbies and the increasing significance of cooperation among Turkish and Azerbaijani Diaspora organizations.

On September 18, President I. Aliyev met with Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The emphasis of the meeting was on the current stage and the issues of bilateral relations, regional energy projects, cooperation in the international sphere, the importance of the tenth Congress of Friendship, Brotherhood, Cooperation of Turkish-speaking Countries and Communities and other issues of mutual concern.

President I. Aliyev also met with State Secretary of Kazakhstan Oralbay Abdikarimov to discuss the successful development of bilateral relations in numerous fields and the cooperation in international field.

### **Poland to back Azerbaijan's membership to WTO**

On September 18, it was reported that Poland backs Azerbaijan's bid for World Trade Organization (WTO) membership and is ready to send its specialists to bring Azerbaijani laws in line with WTO standards.

Azerbaijan's membership was stressed during the first meeting of the Azerbaijan-Poland intergovernmental commission for economic cooperation held on September 11-13 in Warsaw.

Moreover, during the meeting, the sides discussed how to bring Azerbaijani laws in line with European Union requirements on banking control, financial stability, protection of intellectual property, creation of technological parks and economic zones.

Trade turnover between Poland and Azerbaijan made up \$ 22.6 million, up 3.7% from the last year.

### **President I. Aliyev receives Deputy Commander of US European Command**

On September 20, President I. Aliyev met with General William Ward, Deputy Commander of the US European Command. The President expressed confidence that Azerbaijan-US relations which are developing successfully in several areas will be further expanded.

General W. Ward expressed satisfaction with his first visit to Azerbaijan, and described the country's cooperation with the US European Command as very successful.

### **Defense Minister meets NATO Rear Admiral**

On September 19, Defense Minister Safar Abiyev met with Rear Admiral Deniz Kutluk, Assistant Director of the Cooperation & Regional Security Division at the NATO International Military Staff. Rear Admiral D. Kutluk said that NATO is satisfied with its cooperation with Azerbaijan and believes in further improvement of this policy. In his words, Azerbaijani officers are doing a fruitful job as NATO staff and perform their tasks successfully.

The Defense Minister informed his guest on the current military and political situation in the South Caucasus, and exchanged views on the peaceful settlement of Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and other issues of mutual concern.

## **Oil and Gas Production increase in Azerbaijan**

Joint ventures and operation companies have produced 747.4 thousand tons of oil over the last eight months, up by 1.2 thousand tons on the same period last year, the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan announced. Moreover, gas production constituted 75 mln. 353 thousand cubic meters.

Salyanoil Operation Company produced 27 mln. 848 thousand cubic meters of gas from Kursangi-Garabagli field over the last eight months. And, between January and August of this year, operating companies Anshad Petrol and Gobustan sold 16 mln. 97 thousand cubic meters of gas to SOCAR.

### **Azerbaijan's oil output to hit 47 mln. tons in 2007 -- forecast**

"On September 20, Azerbaijan's crude oil production will reach 47 mln. tons (345 mln. bbl) in 2007, rising about 40 percent over the next two years," stated the President of the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan (SOCAR). Rovnag Abdullayev, CEO of SOCAR added that "the Caspian country's oil output is expected to reach 65 million metric tons (478 mln. bbl) in 2009."

According to Azerbaijan's industry and energy ministry, crude output in Azerbaijan in 2005 was 22.2 million metric tons (163 million bbl), representing a 43% year-on-year increase.

SOCAR is part of the Azerbaijan International Operating Company, the BP-led consortium that operates the country's Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli (ACG) offshore oilfield, with estimated recoverable reserves of 5.4 billion barrels.

### **Robert Simmons: "NATO is ready to assist Azerbaijan on defense reforms"**

*"Azerbaijan continues the defense reform efforts it has committed itself through the Individual Partnership Action Plan, (IPAP)"*

Robert Simmons, Special Representative to South Caucasus and Central Asia, NATO "

As partner of NATO participating in the IPAP, Azerbaijan has agreed to pursue a wide range of reforms toward more transparency and democratic control of its defense establishment," NATO Secretary General's Special Representative to South Caucasus and Central Asia, Robert Simmons told in exclusive interview.

R. Simmons said that meeting these objectives will provide more transparency in the region and build confidence with other countries, noting "the Alliance would welcome if Azerbaijan steps up the reform efforts it has committed itself to in the IPAP".

"NATO is ready to assist Azerbaijan in meeting its reform objectives for more effective and transparent budgeting of its defense establishment. Azerbaijan has signed up to these goals in the framework of the IPAP, and NATO is looking forward to support Azerbaijan in meeting these goals," the Special Representative said.

As for Azerbaijan's integration into NATO, Simmons said this is not being discussed at the moment, "however, defense, institutional, and political reforms in the framework of the IPAP will serve to bring Azerbaijan forward on its chosen path towards European and Euro-Atlantic structures and institutions.

"Simmons also said that Azerbaijan's IPAP contains ambitious objectives and there remains much to do.

"The IPAP agreed between Azerbaijan and NATO foresees wide-ranging defense and institutional reforms, with particular focus on a better and sounder system of defense planning, budgetary transparency, and democratic control of the armed forces. NATO is ready to assist Azerbaijan on all these reform efforts. Meeting the goals of the IPAP will draw Azerbaijan closer to Euro-Atlantic structures and institutions," he underlined.