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Contact: Ramil Huseynli

President Aliyev and Foreign Minister Greet California Delegation

On September 26, President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation of California state lawmakers led by State Senator Sheila Kuehl. President Aliyev noted that Azerbaijan-US relations are strong and pointed to cooperation between the two countries on important political, economic, energy and regional security issues. The President expressed how much he valued U.S. support for global energy projects in which Azerbaijan participates. President Aliyev said that he believed the California delegation's visit would serve to further strengthen bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and the U.S.

State Senator Kuehl said that the members of her delegation learned a great deal during their visit to Azerbaijan and gained a better appreciation for how the country is progressing. Senator Kuehl said this deeper understanding of Azerbaijan will only help strengthen the relationship between the two countries.

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov also met with members of the California State Senate delegation. Minister Mammadyarov informed the U.S. delegation about Azerbaijan's foreign policy priorities. The Minister said that Azerbaijan is participating in a number of important energy projects in the region. He also noted that the country's non-oil sector, including tourism, transportation, agriculture and education, continues to attracting significant foreign investment.

Minister Mammadyarov also addressed the troubling issue of Armenia's occupation of the Azerbaijani territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. He noted that Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh are Azerbaijani citizens and they can be granted a high status of autonomy, but only within Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. The Minister also dwelt on the destructive activities of Armenian Diaspora in California.

Members of the California State Senate delegation said that they join their country in support of a peaceful settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and that territorial integrity must be at the foundation of efforts to resolve the dispute.

Soros Fund Allocates \$1.5 Million Grant for Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan is the recipient of a \$1.5 million Soros Fund grant aimed at encouraging the adoption of children in the country.

The agreement was signed on September 24 in Baku by Azerbaijani Minister of Education Misir Mardanov and Judy Klein of the Soros Fund. The program will be implemented over five years. Some \$300,000 will be allocated per year, Mardanov said. According to Klein, some of this money will serve as financial support for families looking to adopt a child.

Azerbaijan will also receive technical assistance to implement the grant project and have the help of specialists. Azerbaijan will be the first of the former Soviet republics to implement this project.

President Aliyev Receives Political Conference Participants

On September 27, President Aliyev received a group of participants in the conference "Dialogue of Civilizations: Role of Political Parties." President Aliyev stressed the importance of the event and went on to note Azerbaijan's embrace of diversity and tolerance. "In Azerbaijan we are trying to contribute to this dialogue. Tolerance in the country is very strong. There is a very sincere environment here..." the President noted.

Conference participants represented various countries and expressed their satisfaction with participating in the conference. They underlined that Azerbaijan is making concrete contributions to this dialogue between different countries. The meeting participants also noted their desire for the conference to be held on a regular basis.

Baku Hosts Meeting of International Frontier Conference Working Group

On September 27, representatives of the International Frontier Conference Working Group gathered in Baku for their regular meeting. The meeting is attended by representatives of border security agencies of the U.S., Germany, Belarus, UK, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Switzerland, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Russia, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey and Ukraine, as well as members of the International Organization for Migration, FRONTEX agency and Boderpol.

During the two-day event, its participants discussed the theory and practice of integrated border management, the agenda for the 16th general assembly of the International Frontier Conference, activities of the Conference's working groups and other issues.

At the opening ceremony, representatives of Azerbaijan including, Chief of the State Border Security Service Lieutenant-General Elchin Guliyev, Assistant to the President for Defense Affairs Lieutenant-General Vahid Aliyev, and Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov spoke of Azerbaijan's achievements, the large-scale economic projects initiated and led by the country in the region, and its growing international prestige.

They noted that the State Border Security Service of Azerbaijan had established mutually fruitful cooperation with the border security agencies of numerous countries and international organizations. Azerbaijan's representatives stressed that the country's strategic geopolitical location along the Heydar Aliyev Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, Silk Road and other international transport corridors makes a strong and comprehensive border security system a top priority. (AzerTac)

Azerbaijani President Works to Attract 2016 Summer Olympics

In an effort to help Baku prepare its bid for the 2016 Olympics and Paralympics, President Ilham Aliyev issued an executive order to establish an Olympic organizational committee.

The President stresses that Baku's bidding for the 2016 Summer Olympics aims to propagate state policy through sport events, expand the Olympic movement, and develop and spread sports and physical education throughout Azerbaijan. The executive order states that holding such events in Baku will bolster the image of the country in the world of sports and beyond.

Deputy Prime Minister Yagub Eyyubov has been appointed head of Baku's 2014 Organizing Committee.

The Organizing Committee was commissioned to address all of the issues related to preparing Baku for the Olympics.

Special Announcement

On October 2, 2007 the Embassy of Azerbaijan in Washington D.C. will organize a *Mugam* concert (Azerbaijani folk music). *Mugam* is one of the highest forms of Azerbaijani and regional classical music. This traditional style of vocal music is rich with emotion and leaves much to the innovation and interpretation of the singer. The vocalist is accompanied by musicians playing the *tar*, *kamancha* and *def*.

Time and the location of the event:

Tuesday, October 2, 2007

6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m., Carnegie Institution 1530 P. St. NW, Washington, D.C.

A cocktail reception will precede the concert

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