

DOI <https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2024-1-24>

THE MAIN DIRECTIONS OF MODERN DIPLOMATIC HISTORY OF AZERBAIJAN

Saida Nizami Salmanova,

Lecturer, Azerbaijan State University (Baku, Azerbaijan)

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-3248-062X

saidanizamiqizi@mail.ru

Gulmira Gasham Guliyeva,

Lecturer, Azerbaijan State University (Baku, Azerbaijan)

ORCID ID: 0009-0007-1110-6934

gulmiraguliyeva4@gmail.com

Dunya Hasanova, daughter of Khaliq,

Lecturer, Azerbaijan State University (Baku, Azerbaijan)

ORCID ID: 0009-0009-8743-9529

dunya.hasanova@inbox.ru

Abstract. On October 18, 1991, the declaration of independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, located in a geopolitically important region, and the changes that took place in the international arena in the late 80s and early 90s brought to the fore the importance of formulating and implementing a new foreign policy in Azerbaijan. On March 2, 1992, the Republic of Azerbaijan, which began to be recognized by many countries of the world, became a member of the United Nations (UN). The recognition of Azerbaijan by the countries of the world and the establishment of diplomatic relations created the basis for the systematic integration of the country into the world community. After gaining independence, Azerbaijan established an optimal foreign policy to establish relations with foreign countries and international organizations and solve its problems peacefully. With the collapse of the USSR, more priority was given to establishing dynamic relations with foreign countries, especially Western countries and Turkey.

Key words: Azerbaijan, the history of diplomacy, international relations, the Second Karabakh War.

Introduction. Known as a reliable partner in modern world politics, Azerbaijan, the leading country of the South Caucasus region, successfully continues effective and mutually beneficial cooperation relations within the framework of both bilateral relations and international organizations. Its rich economic potential and favorable geopolitical position are of great importance in strengthening Azerbaijan's independence and protecting state interests. These factors create a good basis for an effective and purposeful foreign policy that meets the interests of the Azerbaijani state. However, the realization of the existing primary potential and favorable conditions requires a serious analysis of the processes going on in the world. By choosing democratic society and market economy as a strategic development line, the Republic of Azerbaijan tries to use tested global standards and human values, attracts the advanced technological and financial capabilities of developed countries, and establishes mutually beneficial cooperative relations with them. The establishment of diplomatic relations with many countries in the 1990s enabled the systematic integration of the Republic of Azerbaijan into the international world. The establishment of bilateral political relations has also created a favorable ground for the development of economic and cultural relations. Ensuring mutual economic cooperation plays an important role in deepening political relations and strengthening mutual trust.

1. The main priorities of Azerbaijani diplomacy. Today, Azerbaijan conducts a balanced foreign policy based on multi-vector cooperation, equal partnership and national interests. Azerbaijan's geographical and geopolitical position, current economic position and potential play an important role

in determining the country's foreign policy. In the first years of its independence, as a result of the efforts of the Armenian lobby, Azerbaijan was isolated from the international world, and its relations with most of the neighboring countries were aggravated (On the foreign policy activities of national leader Heydar Aliyev covering the years 1993–2003). The implemented foreign policy completely changed the position of the country in the global arena. Currently, Azerbaijan is not only a participant in the global political scene, but also an initiator and participant of important projects in the region, and a country distinguished by its reputation in the international world. Historically located at the intersection of different civilizations, cultures and religions, Azerbaijan, located in the lands where new communication, transport and energy corridors pass in the Eurasian region, has a great reputation in the region as a country connecting West and East, North and South (Central Asia and the South Caucasus, 2000). At the same time, Azerbaijan has gained the image of a reliable partner in the field of energy security. Not only neighboring countries, but also a number of European countries prefer Azerbaijan in energy policy. This trust was earned thanks to the international cooperation that began with the "Deal of the Century".

Azerbaijan's active foreign policy is not based on competition, but on cooperation and mutual support. Guided by these principles, the foreign policy of Azerbaijan, acting from the position of long-term national interests, pursues the vital goal of eliminating threats to the republic's independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national security. One of the main priorities of Azerbaijan's foreign policy is the establishment of peace and stability at the regional level, the implementation of cooperation projects and the achievement of such strategic goals. Also, attracting foreign investments to various projects for the development of the country's economy for the purpose of more rational protection of the interests of the people of Azerbaijan is extremely important in this modern global world (The main directions of the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2017). Thus, having chosen the path of democratic development, Azerbaijan is determined to fully realize the common goal of establishing and developing equal and mutually beneficial relations with neighboring and other states on a bilateral and multilateral basis in various fields.

Azerbaijani diplomacy attaches importance to mutual economic, commercial and political relations, and accepts the principles of geopolitical balance and neutrality. The first priority is to avoid joining military alliances and maintain *de facto* neutrality in the region. Azerbaijan did not join the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and was one of the first former Soviet Union republics to be free of Russian military forces and bases. Similarly, unlike its regional partners Georgia and Ukraine, Azerbaijan has no desire to join NATO. Instead, it focuses on practical and pragmatic cooperation with NATO and its members under the Partnership for Peace programme. Cooperation includes participation in demining projects, peacekeeping operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, public diplomacy and education programs, and other non-sensitive issues. It has established similar military cooperation with Israel, Belarus, Ukraine, Pakistan and many other countries (Hasanov, 2019: 8). Maintaining military *de facto* neutrality helps ensure Azerbaijan's security and reduces potential pressures and risks from regional power centers.

Secondly, Azerbaijan actively participates in existing regional cooperation frameworks, and at the same time proposes the creation of new multilateral institutions and platforms. It is the United Nations and its specialized agencies, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; European Union and its institutions, including the European Parliament and the Council of Europe; Commonwealth of Independent States; Organization of Islamic Cooperation; Economic Cooperation Organization; and developed active relationships and collaborations with many others. The Republic of Azerbaijan protects and implements its national interests by participating in international and regional organizations. Azerbaijan is one of the rare countries in the world that is a member of both the OIC and the European Union. One of the most important events in foreign policy was the election of the Republic of Azerbaijan as a temporary member of the UN Security Council with the support

of 155 countries between 2012 and 2013. This meant that the policy pursued by Baku in the region and in the international world was positively welcomed by other states and received the full support of 155 of the 193 UN member states.

Azerbaijan's election as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2011 became an important opportunity to seek the support of the international community for its foreign policy goals. Azerbaijan is also a founding member of a number of new regional organizations, including GUAM and the Turkic Council, as well as informal trilateral cooperation frameworks such as Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey, Azerbaijan-Iran-Turkey, and Azerbaijan-Turkey-Pakistan. Multilateral cooperation takes place not only in political or military fields, but also in economic and communication matters. This is shown by the North-South transit corridor, which includes Iran and Russia, the BTQ regional railway project, which includes Georgia and Turkey, and the TAP gas pipeline, which includes the Balkan countries and Italy. In 2019, Azerbaijan became the chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, which is another important foreign policy achievement. The organization with more than 120 members has a strong voice in the international world (Regarding the foreign policy activities of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev covering the years 2003–2019). On December 16, 2021, the UN General Assembly as the leader of the Non-Aligned Movement proposed Azerbaijan's "affordable, timely and on providing universal access" adopted the resolution (Khalilov, 2021). This was another international success that strengthened Azerbaijan's position in the world.

As a result, it can be said that Azerbaijani diplomacy has two distinguishing features: creating and maintaining a balance, establishing pragmatic and rational relations. It was possible to crown military victories with these policies, which have been continued since independence and especially accelerated in recent times. A lot of lessons should be learned from Azerbaijan's diplomacy, which actively and flexibly reacts to attacks against Turkey through social media, press and local political institutions. Finally, Azerbaijan actively cooperates bilaterally with many countries to coordinate on political issues and develop economic opportunities, including trade and investment. Only 15 years ago, there were about 25 foreign diplomatic missions of Azerbaijan, including permanent missions to international organizations. Today, this number is closer to 85 (Diplomacy of the era of independence, 2023).

2. The role of diplomacy in the results of the Second Karabakh War. From the first days of independence, the Republic of Azerbaijan faced the military aggression of Armenia, and as a result, its internationally recognized territories were occupied, ethnic cleansing was carried out by the Armenian armed forces in those territories, and the entire Azerbaijani population was forcibly expelled from their homes (Ahmedov, 2020: 35). The former Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict The position of the international community regarding the solution is reflected both in the documents adopted by individual states in bilateral relations, as well as in the decisions and resolutions adopted by international organizations (Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict. Electronic texts) were required to leave their territories, the right of refugees and internally displaced persons to return to their homes was defended. These were made possible as a result of Azerbaijan's numerous appeals to international organizations and successful foreign policy.

The position of Azerbaijan in the process of negotiations on the resolution of the conflict was based on the norms and principles of international law, being of a principled nature, and remained unchanged within the framework of the ongoing process for many years. Armenia, which continues its aggressive policy, has sought to strengthen the results of the occupation of Azerbaijani lands by slowing down the negotiation process. Despite Azerbaijan's commitment to a political solution to the conflict, the demonstration of provocative and aggressive actions by Armenia made the restoration of territorial integrity within the internationally recognized borders of Azerbaijan inevitable through military and political means. As a result of the victory of the Muzaffar Azerbaijani Army in the 44-day Patriotic War, Azerbaijan implemented the decisions and resolutions of international organizations

demanding the complete, immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian occupying forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and calling for the resolution of the conflict based on the norms and principles of international law, the 30-year occupation was ended (44-day Karabakh war: reasoning and results, 2021).

The victory of our brave Army under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev, the victorious Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the Second Karabakh War, and the liberation of the occupied lands are written in golden letters in our history. Along with the valor and heroism of the Azerbaijani Army, the wise and courageous diplomacy of President Ilham Aliyev is of particular importance in achieving this victory. This diplomacy was a continuation of the wise and visionary policy and diplomatic successes of National Leader Heydar Aliyev.

After the signing of the tripartite ceasefire agreement on November 10, 2020, Armenia's attempts to describe the saboteurs and terrorists arrested for their provocative behavior as "prisoners of war" have been proven to be groundless. However, based on the principles of humanism, Azerbaijan returned a large number of Armenian soldiers to Yerevan.

Three important factors were behind Azerbaijan's victory in the Second Karabakh War, which lasted 44 days: the tactical-mechanical superiority of the army, the dedication of the Azerbaijani people, and the diplomatic institution, which has reached a competent position over decades. After the end of the war, the most challenging to the Karabakh regime are the alliances and relations established by Azerbaijani diplomacy. Thanks to the legacy of the network of relations established by the diaspora in the 20th century, Armenia, which achieved great success in the diplomatic field, is today stuck between Russia and Iran. On the other hand, the relations established by Azerbaijan on pragmatic and rational bases from Washington to Moscow, from Tel Aviv to Islamabad play the highest role in crowning the victory of the Azerbaijani army.

The years 2020–2023 are remembered by a number of successes achieved by Azerbaijan in the military, political and diplomatic fields. In 2020–2023, the country strengthened its positions in the mentioned areas and managed to protect its national interests. In the last year, Baku has succeeded in exposing the aggressor on an international scale by skillfully highlighting the large-scale war crimes, vandalism and destruction committed by Armenia in the former occupied lands of Azerbaijan for nearly 30 years, as well as during last year's 44-day war. Azerbaijan has provided comprehensive and objective information to the world community by organizing the visits of foreign officials, parliamentarians, well-known mass media and non-governmental organizations, representatives of religious communities to the territories liberated from occupation. he was actively working on the bitter consequences of his refusal to give. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented a special draft resolution to the UN in this regard and put serious pressure on Yerevan and forced it to hand over some of the mine maps to Azerbaijan through the mediation of the United States, Russia and the European Union.

Azerbaijan has also taken practical steps in the legal framework to refer Armenia to international courts such as the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The fact that the ICJ asked Armenia to take urgent measures to prevent the violation of the rights of Azerbaijanis can be considered as the country's next diplomatic success.

The relevant measures carried out by the Azerbaijani army forced Armenia to agree on the delimitation and demarcation of the state borders with Azerbaijan. After the 44-day war (2020), the political, diplomatic and military activities of Azerbaijan made the world's superpowers and major international organizations accept the new political reality in the region (Galandarli, 2021). As a result of Azerbaijan's diplomatic efforts, leading international states and organizations supported Azerbaijan-Armenia negotiations on delimitation and demarcation of borders, solving humanitarian problems, and restoring communications.

Contrary to Yerevan's expectations, Russia and France, as well as the European Union, accepted the new geopolitical realities formed by the tripartite declaration of November 10, 2020, after Azerbaijan's

military victory in the 44-day war. On June 15, 2021, during the visit of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Shusha, the signing of the Shusha Declaration on Alliance Relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey opened a new page in bilateral relations as one of the most important political events of the year (Galandarli, 2021).

Azerbaijan is in a historical and principled position unlike its other two neighbors in the South Caucasus. It is not completely thrown towards the West like Georgia, nor is it closed and under the military, political and economic yoke of Russia like Armenia. Moreover, after gaining independence with its natural resources and labor force, it has gained the opportunity to conduct a more independent, more impartial and more rational policy than its neighbors. Diplomatic institutions played a role similar to the role played by the Azerbaijani army in changing the status quo in Karabakh in this change and in protecting the interests of the country. Despite the fact that the Armenian diaspora scattered around the world has established close relations with the local authorities over the years, Baku had no difficulty in accepting its victory by the international community.

Conclusions. The development and implementation of the balanced foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which serves to protect its national interests, is generally connected with the name of national leader Heydar Aliyev. It was thanks to his sense of statesmanship, deep logic, ability to deeply understand the essence of issues that it was possible to determine the right way to approach the establishment of international relations. Also, the modern foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, implemented under the leadership of Ilham Aliyev, shows its commitment to the course of comprehensive development of all goodwill and mutually beneficial relations (founded by Heydar Aliyev). The diplomatic activity carried out within the framework of this complex and multilateral process consists of several main directions, and all of them together constitute the foreign policy of independent Azerbaijan.

References:

1. Ahmedov E. (2020). *Armenia's Attack on Azerbaijan and International Organizations*, Baku, 137 p.
2. *Central Asia and the South Caucasus: reorientations, internal transitions, and strategic dynamics: conference report (2000)*. Washington, D.C: National Intelligence Council, 85 p.
3. *Diplomacy of the era of independence (2023)*. Presidential Library. Baku, https://files.preslib.az/projects/azdiplomacy/a2_3.pdf
4. Galandarli N. *Azerbaijani diplomacy in 2021*, https://www.yeniazərbaycan.com/Analitik_e64590_az.html
5. Hasanov, A. "Modern Geopolitical Development of Azerbaijan: Current Situation and Prospects" // *Geostrategji* magazine. Baku, March 2019, p. 10–20.
6. Ibrahimov M. 1. *Patriotic War: 44-day victory chronicle* // *Materials of the republican scientific-practical conference dedicated to the 2nd anniversary of the victory in the 44-day Patriotic War*, November 2–3, 2022, Baku 2022.
7. Khalilov V. *Azerbaijan's political, diplomatic successes in 2021*, <https://www.azernews.az/nation/187522.html>
8. *Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict*. Electronic texts. <http://www.elibrary.az>
9. *On the foreign policy activities of national leader Heydar Aliyev covering the years 1993–2003*, <https://heydaraliyev.preslib.az/>
10. *Regarding the foreign policy activities of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev covering the years 2003–2019*, <https://foreignpol.preslib.az/>
11. *The main directions of the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan (1991–2016)*. (2017). A collection of articles. Baku: Poliart LLC.
12. *44-day Karabakh war: reasoning and results*. (2021). Center for the analysis of international relations. Baku.