Unofficial translation

NATIONAL SECURITY CONCEPT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

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INTRODUCTION

Azerbaijan has a centuries-long history of statehood and established the first ever democratic Republic in the East in 1918. Azerbaijan lost its state independence in 1920 only to restore it in 1991 in the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The people of Azerbaijan benefiting from the opportunity to foster greater democratic values have chosen the path of building a modern democratic State based on its national statehood traditions, historical and cultural heritage.

In the early years of its independence the young Republic faced the military aggression of Armenia, internal instability, hardships of a transition period and other serious challenges. Nevertheless, the Republic of Azerbaijan under the leadership of its national leader Heydar Aliyev overcame all the difficulties and, having succeeded in identifying and following a consistent approach to strategic development, is now transforming into an economically and politically dynamic modern State and consolidating its global and regional position. In this latter regard, Azerbaijan is becoming an important and in many cases a decisive country to cooperate with in the Caspian-Caucasus region, and plays an indispensable role in the realization of the regional energy and transportation projects. The ultimate goal of this overall strategy is to ensure the prosperity, sustainable development and well-being of the Republic of Azerbaijan and to contribute to maintaining security and stability in the whole region.

The National Security Concept (hereinafter the "Concept") is a set of goals, principles and approaches to the policies and measures, which underline the independence, territorial integrity and democratic development of the country, integration into the Euro-Atlantic area as the strategic choice, and multidimensional and balanced foreign policy, as well as are directed at the protection of the individuals, society and State in the Republic of Azerbaijan against internal and external threats.

SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The security environment of the Republic of Azerbaijan is derived from a set of factors which affects the protection of the State sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of borders, national interests, and ensuring sustainable development, values of the people and their prosperity.

Geographically located at the crossroads of the West and East, the Republic of Azerbaijan has embraced the positive elements of various civilizations. The Republic of Azerbaijan shares the European values and as an inalienable component of the Euro-Atlantic security architecture contributes to the security of this area. At the same time, the Republic of Azerbaijan, as part of the Islamic world, shares the progressive heritage and spiritual values of the Islamic civilization.

The currently unstable region where the Republic of Azerbaijan is located has vast potential and opportunities, which can be used effectively for development in a friendly and cooperative manner with regional and wider international partners. The rich natural resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan open perspectives for the country's prosperity and national welfare and transform the country into an important energy source and a crucial integral part of the international energy supply system. The development of international transportation and communication corridors, including the construction of oil and gas pipelines, already contribute to the development of the economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan and of its partners, and is a salient example of regional cooperation.

This geographic location provides important advantages, but is also a source of a number of the security challenges facing the country. The most important and vivid example of such challenges is the aggression committed by neighbouring Armenia against the Republic of Azerbaijan, as a result of which a considerable portion of the country was occupied and approximately one million Azerbaijanis were displaced or became refugees. The aggression was accompanied by serious crimes against peace and humanity, including genocide and terrorist acts against the citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan, whilst the occupied territories provide fertile ground for illegal activities pursued by transnational organized criminals, including international terrorist groups. Azerbaijani historical, cultural and archeological monuments on the territory of the present-day Armenia and in the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan were massively destroyed, its natural resources were plundered and the environment was damaged. The aggression against the Republic of Azerbaijan is a major determinant of the country's security environment and is a key factor in the formulation of the National Security Policy.

At the same time, the existence of such threats in the security environment of the Republic of Azerbaijan as international terrorism, illegal migration, trans-national organized crime, human and drug trafficking and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction set certain tasks for the country.

2. THE NATIONAL INTERESTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

The national interests of the Republic of Azerbaijan consist of a set of fundamental values and goals of the people of Azerbaijan, as well as the political, economic, social and other needs necessary for the prosperity of the individuals, society and State. They are identified as follows:

- Protection of the State's independence and territorial integrity, ensuring inviolability of its internationally recognized borders;
- Preservation of the unity of the people of Azerbaijan, and promotion of the national consciousness;
- Establishment of the civil society, ensuring respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- Strengthening the performance of State institutions and ensuring security of the people through developing democratic and civil society institutions, and by maintaining the rule of law and public order;
- Fulfilling international obligations and contributing to global and regional security and stability through development of cooperation aimed at integration into the value-shared international organizations;
- Creating favourable conditions for attracting foreign and domestic investment to develop a market economy, improve its legal basis and ensure economic stability;
- Ensuring the future development of the people of Azerbaijan, providing decent living standards and well-being for the population through efficient use of natural resources, sustainable economic development, environmental protection, and increasing educational, scientific and technological potential;
- Consolidating solidarity and national identity based upon the values shared by the Azerbaijanis around the world;
- Preservation of the cultural-historical heritage and spiritual values of the people of Azerbaijan and their enrichment through universal values, development of the language, national consciousness, patriotism, national dignity and the intellectual potential.

3. THREATS TO NATIONAL SECURITY OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

Elimination or containment of threats to the national security are among the major tasks of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The threats to national security of the Republic of Azerbaijan are as follows:

3.1. Attempts against the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and constitutional order of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Every State has the right, according to international law, to protect itself against open and covert activities aimed at undermining its independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and constitutional order. The aggressive policy of Armenia against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan is a vivid example of such threats.

Despite reforms in the rapidly developing economy, and other important accomplishments, the aggression of Armenia against the Republic of Azerbaijan continues to create serious social and political impediments. This problem, with trans-regional implications, represents a major threat to the national interests of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Regardless of the outcome of the conflict resolution process, persistence of the ideology of mono-ethnic statehood, ethnic cleansing practices and territorial expansionism of the Armenian State policy will inevitably continue to affect negatively relations between the two States also in the future.

In addition, attempts by certain extremist elements to instigate ethnic and religion-based tensions in the Republic of Azerbaijan cannot be disregarded.

3.2. Actions undermining the ability of the State to ensure the rule of law, maintenance of public order and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms

In the early 1990s the Republic of Azerbaijan faced a number of aspects of this threat. Attempts by certain domestic and foreign circles, striving to undermine the democratic system in the Republic of Azerbaijan, to hinder the performance of State functions remain among the possible actions threatening national security.

3.3. Separatism, ethnic, political and religious extremism

Separatism, ethnic and religious extremism in all their manifestations are capable to undermine the foundations of the State and society and constitute a potential source of serious threat to country's national security.

3.4. Terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

Proximity to the regions harboring major terrorist groups and proliferation problems are potential security threats. Possibility of acquisition of weapons of mass destruction or their production technologies for terrorist activities may exacerbate these threats.

3.5. Regional conflicts and transnational organized crime

The "uncontrolled" areas, which emerged as a result of continuing occupation of a part of the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan by Armenia, and the unresolved conflicts in neighbouring countries provide fertile ground for trans-national organized crime and other illegal activities.

They are considered among major threats to the security of the country and of the region as a whole.

Outbreak of conflicts in the regional countries represents also a threat to the Republic of Azerbaijan. Regional conflicts may seriously harm the external economic relations of the Republic of Azerbaijan and cause large-scale influx of refugees as well as increase transnational criminal activities such as the illegal arms trade, human and drug trafficking and other illegal activities.

3.6. Actions against energy infrastructure of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Revenues generated from the development and transportation of the energy resources constitutes a valuable asset for the economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Therefore, attempts to undermine this sector of the industry through political means or by inflicting physical damage to the related infrastructure are among potential threats.

3.7. External political, military or economic dependence

In tune with the present trend in the international environment for more integration and cooperation, the Republic of Azerbaijan is interested in establishing mutually beneficial relations with other countries. Political, military or economic overdependence of the Republic of Azerbaijan in international relations, however, is among the threat factors which may potentially impede realization of its national interests.

3.8. Economic destabilization

As a result of the challenges associated with the armed aggression, transition to market economy and integration into global economic system during the first years of independence, the Republic of Azerbaijan went through severe economic crisis in the first half of the 1990s. Despite these odds, the Republic of Azerbaijan persisted in transitioning to the market economy, created favourable conditions for foreign investment and achieved considerable accomplishments, particularly in the energy sector. It is at the same time aware of the risks of overdependence on the fast growing oil and gas revenues which may disrupt macro-economic stability and subsequently leave the country vulnerable to the impact of the global and regional economic crises.

3.9. Inadequate professional human resources

As a result of socio-economic hardships during the first years of independence, the education sector experienced serious difficulties, such as insufficient funding and structural problems. The negative consequences of this setback are felt even today. Failure to developing and effectively managing a modern education system capable of ensuring education and training at all levels necessary for the development of the national professional workforce and of the governing sector may have negative consequences for the overall development of the Republic of Azerbaijan in a long-term perspective.

3.10. Regional militarization

The excessive accumulation of armaments and weapon systems in the region undermines regional stability and may distort the military balance between the regional countries. A military build-up exceeding reasonable national security purposes, including the foreign military bases lacking effective control mechanisms, may create concerns about intentions and result in a regional

arms race. Another aspect is that such increased military build-up may drain the limited economic resources to be allocated for socio-economic development and undermine mutual confidence between the regional countries.

3.11. Environmental challenges

The environmental problems in the Republic of Azerbaijan are a result of the decades-long old-fashioned oil production methods mainly in the Absheron Peninsula and in the Caspian Sea in order to meet the Soviet Union's energy needs in disregard of environmental consequences.

Furthermore, mass destruction of the flora and fauna in the territories of Azerbaijan occupied by Armenia, including the wide-scale fires on these lands, has become one of the acute environmental challenges for the country.

A considerable portion of the sources of drinking water supply of Azerbaijan is situated in neighbouring countries and their exposure to intensive pollution by chemical, radioactive and other harmful substances in the territories of these creates problems in drinking water supply for the population. Furthermore, the technologically obsolete Metsamor nuclear energy station located in the seismic zone in Armenia is a source of a threat for the whole region.

Environmental pollution, degradation of the agricultural soils, irrational use of natural resources, lack of proper recycling of industrial and household wastes are sources of serious problems.

The environmental problems negatively affect economic and social life, threaten the public health and prosperity of the nation and create a burden for the governmental institutions.

4. MAIN DIRECTIONS OF NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

As a sovereign State, the Republic of Azerbaijan formulates and implements a National Security Policy which aims at the containment and elimination of threats in the current security environment and at the realization of the national interests of the country by making use of domestic and foreign policy means.

The National Security Policy takes into account the multidimensional character of threats, which tend to blur the dividing line between external and internal security and require adequate multifunctional measures.

4.1. Promotion of security by foreign policy means

4.1.1. Restoration of territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan

The territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan shall be united, inviolable and indivisible. Restoration of its territorial integrity by making use of all means laid down in international law is a key objective of the National Security Policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Occupation of territories and ethnic cleansing practices are contrary to universal and European values, as well as to the principles and ideals of peace, democracy, stability and regional cooperation.

Efforts of the Republic of Azerbaijan aimed at the settlement of the conflict with Armenia are

not confined only to reaching political agreement between the two States, but as soon as such an agreement is achieved they will be directed at establishing lasting peace and mutual understanding between the two peoples.

The Republic of Azerbaijan is committed to the peaceful settlement of the conflict in the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group with a view to eliminating the consequences of the aggression against it and ending the occupation of a part of its territory.

The legal and political grounds for the settlement of the conflict are based upon the norms and principles of international law as reflected in the United Nations (UN) Security Council resolutions 822, 853, 874 and 884 adopted in 1993, as well as the appropriate documents and decisions of the OSCE and the Council of Europe. These documents reaffirmed the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the internationally recognized borders of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The settlement should be on the following basis:

- Withdrawal of the armed forces of Armenia from all the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan;
- Restoration of the sovereign rights of the Republic of Azerbaijan in these territories;
- Return of the forcibly displaced Azerbaijanis to their native lands;
- Elaboration within the framework of a lawful and democratic process of the legal status, which would ensure peaceful coexistence of the Azerbaijani and Armenian communities of the Nagorno-Karabakh region and its high level self-rule within the Republic of Azerbaijan;
- Establishment of conditions for restoring the communications and socio-economic growth of this region in the framework of the overall economic development of the country and of the regional integration processes.

Issues related to violation of the norms and principles of international law in the territories occupied by Armenia as well as the illegal activities in these territories are under the constant attention of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Republic of Azerbaijan will continue to use available political and legal means to investigate and appraise the facts concerning the destruction of the cultural and historic heritage and distorting original features of the Azerbaijani settlements in the regions of Armenia, which used to be inhabited by the Azerbaijanis and in the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan. In this context, unlawful settlement, exploitation and misappropriation of the natural resources in the occupied territories will receive particular attention.

Integrated activities and consistent measures shall be undertaken with a view to coordinating, both domestically and in the international arena, the activities and efforts of governmental structures and civil society related to the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan; prosecuting the genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed against the Azerbaijanis during the aggression against the Republic of Azerbaijan and occupation of a part of its territory; conducting comprehensive and thorough study of the "Armenian question"; revealing the truth and bringing it to the attention of the international community; and ensuring international legal appraisal of the conflict.

4.1.2. Integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures

Integration into the European and Euro-Atlantic political, security, economic and other institutions constitutes the strategic goal of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Republic of Azerbaijan views its partnership with the Euro-Atlantic structures as a means for contributing to

security, economic prosperity and democracy in the whole Euro-Atlantic area.

The Republic of Azerbaijan works together with NATO to eliminate instability, conflicts and threats in European and the Euro-Atlantic area and, proceeding from the principle of the indivisibility of security, is determined to share the burden of building a common security system in Europe and in its own region without discrimination on geographic or political grounds.

The Republic of Azerbaijan fully utilizes available partnership mechanisms with NATO within the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) and NATO's "Partnership for Peace" programme. In this regard, the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) is an important instrument for strengthening cooperation with NATO in short and medium-term perspectives. IPAP will be further used as a mechanism for reforming security sector of the Republic of Azerbaijan to meet NATO standards, as well as for developing political dialogue.

Proceeding from the recognition of necessity to deepen its integration into the European area, the Republic of Azerbaijan has established a multi-faceted relationship with the European Union. Cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the European Union is carried out within the "Technical Assistance for CIS" (TACIS), "Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia" (TRACECA) and some other programmes. The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the European Union, which is effective since 1999 provides a favourable framework for political dialogue, support for development of democracy, economic cooperation as well as encouraging of investments.

Inclusion of the Republic of Azerbaijan into the "New Neighbourhood Policy" of the European Union and within this policy framework implementation of the Azerbaijan-European Union Action Plan adopted in 2006 strengthens political dialogue, develops cooperation in the sphere of political, economic and institutional reforms and creates a basis for raising cooperation to a qualitatively new level.

The Memorandum of Understanding on "Strategic Partnership in the Field of Energy" signed in 2006 between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the European Union will contribute to ensuring the diversification of the energy sources and transportation routes of the member-states of the European Union, development and modernization of the energy infrastructure, efficient use of energy resources and development of the renewable energy sources in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Close cooperation of the Republic of Azerbaijan with the European Union will contribute to the stability in the Caucasus and will promote the European values in the region.

4.1.3. Contribution to international security

The Republic of Azerbaijan is making sustained efforts to contribute to international and regional security by participating in joint efforts aimed at maintaining of international peace and stability.

After the 11 September 2001 attacks the fight against terrorism became one of the most important issues of the international agenda. The Republic of Azerbaijan fully supports the struggle of the international community against terrorism and undertook a number of significant steps against the terrorist activities, disregarding whatever pretexts under which they were carried out. The Republic of Azerbaijan has made its airspace and airfields available in support of the international fight against international terrorist organizations. The Republic of Azerbaijan also became a party to all conventions on combating terrorism at global and regional levels.

The Republic of Azerbaijan makes efforts to stabilize the sensitive regions of the world. The Azerbaijani peacekeepers contribute to security by participating in the peacekeeping operation in the Serbian Kosovo province, in NATO-led operations in Afghanistan, and in Iraq as a part of the international coalition.

The Republic of Azerbaijan, as a party to the relevant international arms control and non-proliferation treaties, fully supports the efforts to maintain international security. The Republic of Azerbaijan is seriously concerned about the weakening of the international non-proliferation regime and will continue to cooperate with the international community and the relevant organizations for the imposition of adequate controls.

The Republic of Azerbaijan is concerned by the fact that the arms control mechanism is not effective in its territories occupied by Armenia. Accumulation of a great number of armaments and ammunitions in these territories, which are beyond the international control, poses serious threats to regional peace.

4.1.4. Cooperation with international organizations

Active participation in the work of international organizations is of great importance for the security and foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Irrespective of their size and influence, the universal and regional international organizations increasingly play a more important role in addressing the new global threats. Thus, along with their contribution to the elimination and prevention of these threats, international organizations create opportunities for defending the national interests of the Republic of Azerbaijan in global politics. At the same time, the international organizations provide a suitable forum for attracting the attention of the partner countries to the security problems facing the Republic of Azerbaijan.

From this perspective, the existence, development and adaptation to changes in the contemporary world of the universal and regional international organizations is important for the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The Republic of Azerbaijan acknowledges the indispensable role of the UN, which it joined in 1992, in maintaining the international peace and security, and in promoting sustainable development and democracy.

The interest of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the UN is not limited to the settlement of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Republic of Azerbaijan shares the common values with the UN and expands its cooperation with this organization in the framework of human rights, economic and social development programmes. The Republic of Azerbaijan contributes to the struggle of the international community against terrorism in the framework of the UN and other organizations.

The Republic of Azerbaijan supports the reforms within the UN aimed at increasing its operational capabilities, including strengthening the international law system and enforcing the adopted decisions with a view to responding more effectively to the challenges and threats of the 21st century.

The OSCE, which the Republic of Azerbaijan joined in 1992, is the unique regional organization that embraces all the countries of the European Continent and determines the norms and principles regulating the relations between the countries and maintaining common security. The Helsinki Final Act and other documents of the OSCE constitute a principled political basis for ensuring regional peace and security.

From the viewpoint of the role the OSCE is playing in the resolution of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, cooperation with this organization takes a prominent place in the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Republic of Azerbaijan is also cooperating with the OSCE in other areas.

In view of the growing importance of the OSCE in the new political environment, the Republic of Azerbaijan is interested in increasing its role by undertaking appropriate reforms through active participation and with the good faith of all its members to raise the effectiveness of this organization, in particular with regard to respect for its principles.

The cooperation of the Republic of Azerbaijan with the Council of Europe pursues the goal of integration into the European family of nations and of benefiting from the European standards and values. The Republic of Azerbaijan joined the Council of Europe in 2001 and in the framework of cooperation with this organization adapts its national legislation to the European standards. Azerbaijan signed and ratified the key document of the Council of Europe, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its protocols, on 25 January 2001 and 25 December 2001 respectively.

As a part of the Islamic world the Republic of Azerbaijan attaches particular importance to its activities within the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). After joining the OIC in 1991, the Republic of Azerbaijan became an active participant in this organization. The OIC is a first international organization which recognized and condemned Armenia as an aggressor. The unequivocal and just position of the OIC on this vital issue created favourable conditions for promoting relations of the Republic of Azerbaijan with this organization. The Republic of Azerbaijan plays the role of the bridge between the civilizations and benefiting of both Eastern and Western cultures will continue to contribute to the dialogue among States and nations.

The Republic of Azerbaijan is interested in maintaining cooperation within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and developing economic, political, legal and humanitarian relations with the CIS member-states on a bilateral basis.

The organization "For democracy and economic development - GUAM" comprising Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine was founded in 1997 and was transformed into an international regional organization in 2006. GUAM unites the partner countries on the basis of common interests in the spheres of democracy, development and security.

The Republic of Azerbaijan attaches special importance to joining efforts and developing a common approach of GUAM member-states towards the issues of vital importance for them, particularly in regard of resolution of the existing conflicts in their territories and combating aggressive separatism.

The geographic area of the GUAM member-states, their current geopolitical and geo-economic position plays an important role in Eurasia in particular in terms of the energy issues and transportation corridors.

Implementation of the democratic and economic development concept of GUAM will positively effect the development of the member-states and their role in the international system.

Cooperation with the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) is one of the foreign policy priorities of the Republic of Azerbaijan. BSEC was established in 1992 in the format of Black Sea Economic Cooperation and in 1998 was transformed into a regional organization with a view to promoting regional and sub-regional integration processes and

economic cooperation in the area embracing the Black Sea, Caspian Sea and Mediterranean Sea.

4.1.5. Regional cooperation and bilateral relations

The Republic of Azerbaijan pursues a multidimensional, balanced foreign policy and seeks to establish friendly relations with all countries on the basis of universally accepted norms and principles of international law, such as respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, inviolability of borders and non-interference in internal affairs. The Republic of Azerbaijan has established such relations with almost all countries of the world and is continuing to develop them.

The Republic of Azerbaijan participates in joint efforts in addressing regional and global issues. Regional security, combating terrorism, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ensuring energy security are among the priority areas.

The Republic of Azerbaijan considers it important to take a number of steps for achieving peace and stability in the region. Foremost, the region should be free from weapons of mass destruction. Development of the regional relations in line with the nuclear non-proliferation norms of international law is a precondition for ensuring and strengthening stability at the regional and global level.

Absence of foreign military forces in the region would contribute to the regional security. Regional security should be achieved through mutual recognition of and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the regional countries and by abandoning militarist and aggressive policies.

The Republic of Azerbaijan will continue its efforts to ensure human rights and fundamental freedoms of Azerbaijanis living abroad, as well as to promote their national identity and values in conformity with the generally-accepted norms and principles of international law, international treaties to which the Republic of Azerbaijan is a party, and with national legislation, whilst taking into account the legislation of foreign countries concerned.

4.1.5.1. Cooperation with regional countries

The Republic of Azerbaijan attaches great importance to the development of comprehensive relations with neighbouring countries. The Republic of Azerbaijan is committed to finding solutions to outstanding problems in bilateral relations in a mutually acceptable fashion and in conformity with international law. The Republic of Azerbaijan is interested in an early finalization of the talks on the delimitation and demarcation of the borders with neighbouring countries.

Development of harmonious relations with other countries, especially those adjoining the Republic of Azerbaijan, is of great importance also for eliminating threats emanating from separatism, ethnic, political and religious extremism.

The Republic of Azerbaijan views regional cooperation as an indispensable factor for maintaining peace and stability in the region. At the same time, the aggressive policy of Armenia is a major obstacle to comprehensive regional cooperation in the South Caucasus. It is unacceptable for the Republic of Azerbaijan to cooperate with Armenia until it abandons this policy.

On the other hand, a trilateral strategic partnership and deepening cooperation between

Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey has developed into a factor of stability in the region. This cooperation, resulting in successful implementation of infrastructure projects such as Baku-Supsa, Heydar Aliyev Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan export oil pipelines and South Caucasus gas pipeline (Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum), has increased the importance of the Black Sea and Caspian Sea regions, contributed to the European and global energy security and laid the foundations for the new vital and secure energy source for Europe.

Implementation of the geo-strategically important "Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway link" project is an important step in fostering and expanding regional cooperation and at the same time creates new global opportunities.

Comprehensive relations with Turkey, which was the first country to recognize the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and which plays a special role in ensuring peace and stability in the region, is of particular importance. Bilateral relations between the two countries sharing ethnic, cultural and linguistic affinity are further expanding and deepening at the level of strategic partnership. The contributions of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkey in implementing trans-regional economic projects and the efforts of Turkey directed at settlement of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan indicate the coincidence of positions of the two countries and the advanced level of their cooperation.

Promotion of comprehensive cooperation and partnership with Georgia is of great importance for the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Republic of Azerbaijan closely cooperates with Georgia in the framework of common interests of both countries, implementation of the regional energy and transportation projects and other areas of mutual interest, and will continue further developing bilateral strategic cooperation.

Partnership of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine within the organization "For democracy and economic development - GUAM" is another example of regional cooperation.

Partnership with Ukraine and Moldova is not confined only to the GUAM framework, but at the same time is developing on a bilateral basis in political, economic, humanitarian and other spheres.

Relations between Azerbaijan and Russia constitute an important factor for regional stability and development. The Republic of Azerbaijan engages in a strategic partnership and cooperation with the Russian Federation both on a bilateral basis and in multilateral frameworks of European regional organizations, and in particular within the CIS in the political, economic, humanitarian, security fields, in combating organized crime and other areas.

The Republic of Azerbaijan is interested in peaceful and good neighbourly relations with Caspian littoral countries and in joint participation in regional projects. The Republic of Azerbaijan enjoys close neighborly relations with the Caspian littoral States of Russia and Kazakhstan. Currently, one of the routes for transportation of the Azerbaijani oil from the Caspian Sea to the European markets via the Black Sea is the Baku-Novorossiysk pipeline. In 2006 the Republic of Azerbaijan signed an agreement with Kazakhstan supporting and providing conditions for transportation of Kazakhstan oil from the Caspian Sea to the world markets through the "Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan" system through the territory of Azerbaijan.

These three Caspian littoral States have already reached agreement over division of the Caspian Sea bed. The Republic of Azerbaijan believes in reaching a similar agreement with its close neighbours of Iran and Turkmenistan, defining of the legal status of the Caspian Sea in the foreseeable future and using the Caspian Sea only for the peaceful purposes and for the

prosperity of the littoral countries.

The Republic of Azerbaijan attaches great importance to its relations with neighboring Iran. The relationship between the two countries, which share a common rich historical and cultural heritage, is one of the important objectives of the country's foreign policy. The Republic of Azerbaijan is interested in promoting mutually beneficial relations with Iran in political, economic, cultural and other areas.

4.1.5.2. Cooperation with non-regional countries

The Republic of Azerbaijan is also interested in cooperation with other countries beyond the region. Foremost, the Republic of Azerbaijan cooperates with its strategic partner the USA in the framework of the UN and Euro-Atlantic structures, in the anti-terror coalition, in combating global challenges and threats such as international terrorism, separatism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, trans-national organized crime, illegal drug, arms and human trafficking, corruption and on a bilateral basis in political, military, economic, energy security spheres and in promoting democratic reforms.

The Republic of Azerbaijan builds its cooperation with the European countries on a bilateral and multilateral basis and is interested in deepening integration into European economic and legal space and in implementing joint regional economic projects. It is important for the Republic of Azerbaijan to expand economic and political cooperation, in particular with the Baltic, East and South-East European States. Azerbaijan contributes to the policy of diversification of energy supplies and ensuring energy security in Europe and took a number of important steps in this regard.

Relations with the Central Asian countries also constitute an important objective of the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Further development of bilateral relations with the countries of this region is of particular importance.

The Republic of Azerbaijan is interested in mutually beneficial cooperation with such leading countries of the Far East and South-East Asia as China, Republic of Korea and Japan. Active participation of these countries in the economic projects in the Republic of Azerbaijan, such as realization of the "Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia" (TRACECA) project, has laid solid foundations for the development of the potential of the bilateral relations.

The emergence of new economic and political power centers in South-East and South Asia has expanded the foreign policy interests of the Republic of Azerbaijan into these regions.

The relations of the Republic of Azerbaijan with Middle Eastern countries have big potential and the efforts aimed at developing bilateral relations with these countries will be continued.

4.2. Strengthening of defense capability

The defense capability of the Republic of Azerbaijan is one of the major assets for promoting national interests of the country.

The defense policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan is aimed at developing and maintaining a democratically accountable defense capability based upon its national resources and appropriate to the current security situation. The Armed Forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan constitute the basis of the country's defense capability.

The national defense policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan is based upon the following premises:

- Peaceful coexistence with all countries;
- Respecting the sovereignty and independence of other countries, and non-interference in their internal affairs;
- Recognising the integrity and inviolability of international borders.
- Strengthening international security;
- Supporting a concept of defense sufficiency that takes into account the correlation of all relevant military postures.

The main goals of the national defense policy pursued by the Republic of Azerbaijan, which takes into account the country's historical past, the security situation, the major objectives of democratic State building and the fact of the occupation of a part of its territory by Armenia are identified as follows:

- Protecting the independence and sovereignty of the Republic of Azerbaijan, restoring its territorial integrity and ensuring control over its territory;
- Maintaining the capability of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan to mobilize and to conduct military operations for the purpose of preventing and repulsing foreign armed aggression;
- Continuing to participate in the relevant mechanisms of the NATO's "Partnership for Peace" programme, promoting mutually beneficial military cooperation with NATO member-states and other partners on a bilateral and multilateral level;
- Fulfilling the international legal obligations of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the defense field;
- Contributing to international security through appropriate policies and arrangements.

The national defense policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan is based upon the following principles:

- Unity of command and control of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan and other armed units as envisaged by the national legislation and ensuring democratic oversight over all security forces;
- Timely identification and assessment of military threats against the security of the Republic of Azerbaijan;
- Sufficiency of forces, including reserves, means and other capabilities, together with adequate planning to ensure national security by military means.

Practical activities to ensure national security by military means consist of an evaluation of basic military tasks, characteristics and objectives of likely wars and armed conflicts as well as identification of the dimensions of the potential threat, the situation of military and political forces and other factors threatening the military security of the country. These activities require also the elaboration of organizational principles of the Armed Forces and identification of ways to ensure their preparedness in preventing possible aggression.

Another important element of the national defense policy is establishing the optimal correlation between the economy and defense and developing the national defense industry.

Comprehensive development of international military-political and military-technical relations and cooperation is of particular importance in the process of strengthening the defense capability of the country. Integration into the Euro-Atlantic security system, establishment of operational forces interoperable with those of NATO member-states, and participation in peacekeeping and crisis-response operations under the mandate of the appropriate international organizations are among the main objectives of the defense policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Comprehensive defense of the territory and the citizens of the country is a requirement of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan and should be ensured by all means. To this end, the Armed Forces and other armed units envisaged by the national legislation have each capability to fulfill their specific missions.

The Armed Forces and other armed units of the State exercise the rights and carry out tasks and responsibilities stipulated in the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, national laws, other normative-legal acts, as well as in international treaties on international humanitarian law to which Azerbaijan is a party.

4.3. Promotion of security by domestic policy means

4.3.1. Strengthening of democracy

The Republic of Azerbaijan has chosen the path of development of democratic governance and civil society as the only viable means to guarantee the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Republic of Azerbaijan managed to carry out important reforms in its legislative and economic systems despite the negative effects of the occupation by Armenia of a part of its territory continuing since the re-gaining of State independence. The citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan enjoy the right of applying to the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Azerbaijan, to the European Court of Human Rights and to the UN human rights treaty monitoring bodies. With a view to protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, the Ombudsman institution was established and the independence of the courts was ensured. The legislation protecting the freedom of expression and eliminating the State control over the media and abolishing the censorship was adopted.

In the framework of ongoing democratic reform process, the Government focuses on further development of the election practices, improvement of the law enforcement mechanisms, ensuring transparency of the public agencies and of the recruitment process in these bodies, clarifying the competences of the self-governing municipal bodies and increasing their role in addressing local problems, as well as strengthening of the material-technical basis of the media and of the non-governmental organizations.

The Government will continue its efforts to increase the democratic and civil control over all security structures, ensuring transparency of their activities, fighting effectively against corruption, further strengthening the accountability of public officials, whose duty is to serve the people, and providing members of the Milli Meclis with information about the activities of those officials in their spheres of competence and facilitating access of the broad public to this information through the media.

Upholding the fundamental values of a democratic State, such as the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and achieving social justice will provide valuable support in combating attempts against the performance of the State functions and the realization of the national interests.

4.3.2. Preservation of the environment of ethnic and religious tolerance

The Republic of Azerbaijan has always been an example of the peaceful coexistence of different peoples and religions. The State of Azerbaijan considers that a rational national policy derived from the interests of the whole society, religious tolerance, ensuring the equality of all citizens

before the law, the democratic rights and freedoms for the people and the opportunity to freely exercise their rights provide the best environment to prevent transformation of the risks into real threats and for their elimination.

Preservation and promotion of the environment of ethnic and religious tolerance in the country is among the key tasks of the Government. The national policy of the State of Azerbaijan is based upon one of the main provisions of the Constitution, which stipulates that the Republic of Azerbaijan is a united and indivisible homeland for all citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

4.3.3. Scientific, educational and cultural policy and preservation of moral foundations

The policy of preservation of the science, education and moral foundations of the people of Azerbaijan aims at the protection of the cultural heritage, material and moral values, means of satisfying cultural needs and scientific-technological potential against internal and external threats and at benefiting from progressive domestic and international developments.

The Republic of Azerbaijan preserves the national cultural identity without overlooking the present trends of globalization of the world culture and creates opportunities to benefit from the global cultural heritage for the progress of its own national culture.

The Republic of Azerbaijan, in line with its international obligations, preserves the historical and cultural monuments on its territory.

Sustainable development of the country requires adequate well educated and trained professional human resources, as well as scientific-technological progress. For this purpose, the Republic of Azerbaijan is expanding cooperation with the developed countries, and benefits from international experience with a view to raising science and education to international standards and to introducing new technologies. The Republic of Azerbaijan designs and implements the long-term programmes of State policy on protection and development of the scientific potential.

4.3.4. Economic and social development

Ensuring sustainability of the economic development is a core principle of the Government's economic policy. This is a complex issue, which requires consideration of both the economic and social dimensions on an equal footing. To that end, the Republic of Azerbaijan intends to prepare and implement simultaneous and coordinated programs in both directions.

It has been possible to keep moderate inflation rates, create a stable and predictable monetary market as well as to substantially increase the strategic monetary reserves of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Structural reforms in the public administration system have been implemented and most of the enterprises have managed to increase their efficiency by realigning their manufacturing to market demand.

In order to prevent the threat of economic destabilization resulting from an overdependence on the fast growing oil and gas revenues, the need for an economic policy capable to ensure diversification has been recognized.

Entrepreneurship has experienced noticeable development and progress has been achieved in the liberalization of the economy. Economic growth should be sustained through practical measures aimed at improving the living standards of the population, undertaking structural-technological modernization and realization of the competition advantages of the country. Attainment of new achievements in socio-economic development also requires adherence to

an integrated approach in carrying out the reforms, ensuring transparency in the privatization process, modernization of the economy and encouraging social change.

The main goal of the regional economic policy within the country is to achieve the development of the non-oil sectors of the economy by efficient use of the potential of the regions, expansion of the production of manufacturing enterprises, stimulation of export-oriented goods production, further improvement of the living standards of the population through the development of the local entrepreneurship, increasing the employment rate, particularly through the creation of jobs for young people, and ensuring vibrant economic development of the country.

Attraction of inward investment plays a vital role in the long-term sustainable and balanced development of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The required quantity and quality of inward investments can primarily be assured through support of private investments. In this regard creating a favourable investment climate is one of the key tasks. For this purpose attention will be devoted to the protection of private property rights, improving corporate management, creation of conditions for fair competition for all investors regardless of the forms of the property, further improvement of the normative and legal basis regulating investment activities, stimulation of the inflow of investments into the non-oil sector and the development of the regions. At the same time, operation of the Azerbaijani companies in foreign countries and their participation in international projects will be encouraged.

Furthermore, particular attention will be devoted to strengthening the transit capabilities of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the East-West and North-South transportation corridors, to bringing modern technologies to the country and to the development of the information-communication systems.

4.3.5. Enhancing internal security

Ensuring internal security is one of the key tasks of the State. This also enhances the State capabilities to respond to international risks and threats.

Reliable internal security can only be achieved in an environment of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, development of civil society and of social well-being. Ensuring internal security by preserving public order and fighting against crime and corruption are among the main responsibilities of the relevant governmental structures. Legislation, institutional reforms and practical measures are underway with a view to increasing the efficiency of the law enforcement agencies in addressing these issues.

Intelligence and counterintelligence, being one of the crucial elements of the national security, will continue to play a significant role in ensuring the security of the State and its citizens.

4.3.6. Reinforcing border security

The sensitive geographic location of the Republic of Azerbaijan makes it vulnerable to such trans-border threats as international terrorism, illegal immigration, transnational organized crime, human and drug trafficking, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

As a result of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan 132 km of the international border with Islamic Republic of Iran and 733 km of the border with Armenia were seized by the latter. Lack of control over these borders creates fertile grounds for above mentioned crimes.

Existence of trans-border threats requires devoting particular attention to the border security of the country. A specific central governmental agency, the State Border Service, has been

established to carry out effective border security policy. In the framework of the democratic State building process and in particular of the security sector reforms, the border security concept is being revised and the radical structural reforms aimed at transformation of the State Border Service from a militarized structure into a law enforcement agency are underway. A more effective border control system, established as a result of the reforms carried out in cooperation with NATO and other foreign partners, contributes to improving the mechanisms coordinating the possible supporting role and activities of the Armed Forces and other security structures in the border security.

Border security becomes an increasingly important component of security of the oil and gas deposits and transport corridors.

With a view to increasing the effectiveness of border security, normative legal acts are being adjusted to international standards, public administration is being improved and transparent budgeting system is being established.

The Republic of Azerbaijan is expanding its cooperation in the sphere of border security in the framework of NATO, the European Union, the International Organization for Migration, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Conference on Border Management and other international organizations, as well as with other countries on a bilateral and multilateral level.

In order to advance reforms in this sphere the air and maritime control, search and rescue, and rapid response capabilities are being upgraded, the training system is being improved, land borders and control posts are being provided with modern equipment and transformation of the personnel into a professional corps is being accelerated.

The reform and construction processes envisage inclusion of the currently uncontrolled portion of the borders into the common border security system after the resolution of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan and undertaking of the appropriate security measures on these territories.

4.3.7. Migration policy

Analysis of recent trends indicates that the rapid socio-economic development of Azerbaijan, the expansion of the international energy and transportation communications and the geopolitical position of the country have accelerated the migration processes. This requires adaptation of migration policy and improvement of the management of migration processes to take into account the national interests aimed at development of the country and ensuring its security.

A State Migration Policy for 2006-2008 has been approved for the purposes of:

- Implementing State policy in the field of migration;
- Improving the national legislation to meet international norms and up-to-date standards;
- Ensuring national security and sustainable socio-economic, demographic development;
- Making effective use of the workforce and even distribution of the population throughout the country;
- Benefiting from the intellectual and labor potential of the immigrants;
- Eliminating the negative consequences of an unregulated immigration flow and preventing illegal migration, including human trafficking.

The State Migration Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan was established with a view to

implementing the State Migration Policy, developing a management system to forecast and regulate migration processes, and to ensure coherence between the activities of relevant governmental agencies.

Improvement of the mechanisms for regulating migration processes in the country requires formulation of effective immigration policy, strengthening the international cooperation, controlling emigration processes and creating of unified information database.

4.3.8. Energy security policy

Among the key activities aimed at ensuring the national security of the Republic of Azerbaijan are:

- Development and exploitation of the existing and prospective oil and gas reserves in the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea;
- Construction and installation of modern oil and gas platforms;
- Identification and assessment of the threats to the main oil and gas pipelines and terminals and taking appropriate countermeasures.

Also among the key tasks of the national security of the Republic of Azerbaijan are ensuring the security of energy transportation between the Caspian Sea, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea via the Heydar Aliyev Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan main export oil pipeline and the South Caucasus gas pipeline, as well as of the crucial facilities which ensure the geo-strategic and economic interests of the Caspian littoral States, and to this end managing and diminishing the growing risks.

With the Heydar Aliyev Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan main export pipeline becoming operational in 2006, the Azerbaijani oil became an important factor in the world market. The geography of the pipelines delivering the Azerbaijani oil to the Turkish port of Ceyhan and the gas to the Turkish Erzurum gas terminal creates certain security risks.

The Republic of Azerbaijan implements integrated measures to prevent constructed and used energy production and transportation infrastructure from exposure to natural disasters, human induced technological accidents and sabotage.

Due to the anticipated global energy supply crisis in the 21st century it was decided to develop alternative energy sources in the Republic of Azerbaijan. Given that Azerbaijan has a favourable number of sunny and windy days annually, energy needs of the country can be partially met by making use of power stations generating energy from wind, sun, biomass, lower mountain waters and by hydroelectric power stations.

4.3.9. Transportation security policy

While stimulating steadfast and rapid economic growth, the rich energy resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan have turned into one of the major factors that determine the interests of various countries in the region and generate frictions in their relations.

After gaining independence the Republic of Azerbaijan further developed its energy sector and created various transportation networks. Ensuring security of these transportation networks is one of the main tasks for the country.

In order to ensure security of the international transport corridors and the pipelines the Republic of Azerbaijan pursues the following objectives:

- Ensuring transport and transportation security;
- Providing mobilization capabilities of the transportation system;
- Strengthening security measures with a view to increase effective functioning and competitiveness of the Europe-Caucasus-Asia and North-South international transportation corridors;
- Ensuring the reliability of the transport infrastructures protection system;
- Identifying and eliminating external threats to the security of the transportation infrastructures;
- Banning or controlling the circulation of the devices, which can be used in terrorist attacks against the transportation means and the infrastructure, including pipelines;
- Preventing damage to the social and ecological environment during the construction and exploitation of the transportation facilities.

These objectives should be reflected in the activities of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan, other security structures as well as relevant governmental bodies and necessary conditions for their implementation should be established.

4.3.10. Emergency management and protection of environment and public safety

Environment-related natural disasters and human induced technological accidents may endanger internal security through harming the well-being and property of the population. These hazards should therefore be considered within the broader security context.

The Republic of Azerbaijan has established a special Ministry for Emergency Situations, responsible for formulation and coordination of measures for early warning of the emergency situations and for dealing with their consequences.

The Republic of Azerbaijan cooperates on a bilateral basis with a number of countries for sharing of experience and exchange of information on the crisis management and prevention of emergency situations. Multilateral cooperation in this area is carried out through NATO mechanisms and the Republic of Azerbaijan will continue to make effective use of these opportunities.

The Republic of Azerbaijan takes seriously the ecological problems and is aware of the emerging and potentially harmful threats, risks and challenges. Readiness against natural, human induced technological disasters and crisis situations and their prevention is among the key issues for the State.

The Republic of Azerbaijan implements active measures to prevent contamination of the population and its territory by radioactive, bacteriological and chemical substances and to avert their negative impact on the economy of the country.

Protection of the strategic State facilities, including oil and gas production and refining enterprises, terminals, major pipelines, fresh water supplies, electric power stations and hydro-technical installations against natural and human induced technological disasters as well as terror threats is one of the key tasks for the State.

Taking into account the diverse geographical and geological environment, the protection of the country's territory against natural emergency situations which may potentially cause destruction, such as earthquakes, mud slides, floods, avalanches, and hazards caused by mud volcanoes, as well as ways to handle their consequences, are all under constant attention.

Safeguarding the rich flora and fauna in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which has several climatic zones, is of utmost importance.

Particular attention is devoted to eliminating the sources of environmental pollution, to tackling the ecological problems of the Caspian Sea, to the preservation and rehabilitation of its biodiversity, and to other relevant issues.

Control over the usage of plant protection means (pesticides and biological agents) and timely quarantine inspections for early pest identification and treatments are key issues in ensuring food security.

For the purpose of protecting public safety it is important to strengthen the medication quality control mechanisms and struggle against counterfeit medications.

4.3.11. Information security policy

Ensuring the national security policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the information sphere requires integrated measures to protect the State, public and individual information resources, as well as protection of national interests in information sphere.

A national system and information infrastructure for the protection of the information and the State information resources in the country is being developed and strengthened for the purpose of ensuring the national security of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the information sphere. Credible and important data are being collected to ensure informed decisions by governmental structures and public officials.

Key issues of this dimension of national security are increasing the coherence and effectiveness of the intelligence and counter-intelligence capabilities and ensuring coordination in protecting classified information. The Republic of Azerbaijan will develop its national intelligence and counter-intelligence capabilities and will continue improving its activities aimed at protecting classified information.

Information security is regulated through improvement of the legal mechanisms for safeguarding State secrets and for ensuring a free flow of open information. Legal and administrative mechanisms will ensure individual rights and the democratic oversight over the activities of the governmental structures.

FINAL PROVISIONS

Due to its strategic location, the Republic of Azerbaijan plays a significant role in the political and economic processes of the Euro-Atlantic area, as it is manifested in realization of the energy and transportation projects in the region.

The security environment of the Republic of Azerbaijan is characterized also by the existence of such threats as armed conflicts, international terrorism, trans-national organized crime, illegal migration, human and drug trafficking, proliferation of the weapons of mass destruction, all of which are potential sources of a number of security challenges facing the country.

The present Concept lays the basis for the national security policies of the Republic of Azerbaijan, sets the tasks for the governmental structures and requires their coherent efforts for the protection of national interests.

The Concept assesses the dynamic security environment of the country, the national interests of

the Republic of Azerbaijan and indicates the main objectives of the national security policies.

The Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan will take the appropriate measures to ensure implementation of the tasks identified in the Concept.

The Concept will be regularly reviewed and updated in order to ensure more effectively the national security of the country through the internal and foreign policies of the State.

The Concept sets forth also a basis for elaborating the military doctrine, foreign policy strategy, defense review, economic concept, culture, science, education, health, transportation strategies and other policy documents related to different areas of State's activities.

The other conceptual documents in security field to be elaborated subsequently should reflect consensus across the society, be realistic and, together with this Concept, be capable to contribute to the strengthening of democracy, establishing the rule of law, developing the civil society, creating an effective and democratically controlled security sector and assist achievement of sustainable economic development and social progress.