



History of Azerbaijan - Turkey Relations

“One Nation-two States”

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“Turkey-Azerbaijan relations should be developed snapping a rational basis. As these relations are defined as “one nation, two states” slogan, this must also be applied to economic and foreign relations of these two states. Concrete projects must be applied beside the first steps of relations. One of the main steps of this expansion is the understanding and recognition of Azerbaijan economy and the transformations which are seen in this economy.”²

It is known that Azerbaijan and Turkey have had very tie relations during the history. From 1918 onward Turkey helped Azerbaijan to gain its independence and was the main friend and partner of Azerbaijan. Although at those times no independent “Azerbaijan Republic” existed, but I shall call by this way for easy understanding. Turkey was included to three states which recognized the independence of Azerbaijan firstly (Pakistan, Romania and Turkey).

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² “Yeni Yüzyılda Azerbaycan`ın Sosyo-Ekonomik Yapısı”. Editor: Doç. Dr. Hasan Selçuk. Authors: Hasan Selçuk, Murad İskender, Eyüp Zenqin, Gahir Mikailov, Nesimi Kamalov, Ercan Sancak, Aygün Şükürova, Osman Nuri Aras. (tasam yayınları\İstanbul)

If we look at early history, even during the existence of Ottoman Empire, Azerbaijan was keeping friendly relations with Turkey (Ottoman Empire). Let's look at "Cumhuriyet" (Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan) period of Azerbaijan. "Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan" was created in 1918, 28 May by Memmedemin Resulzade. Ottoman Empire was first who recognized the independence of Azerbaijan. In 1918, 4 June Batumi Treaty was signed between Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan and Ottoman Empire. In that treaty it was shown that Ottoman Empire recognizes full independence of "Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan" and the new created state can apply the Empire for any military help in the case of any threat. As soon as this treaty was signed Azerbaijan asked for military help. Because new state was created in Tiflis, capital was Ganja, but it needed Baku - the heart of Azerbaijan - for strengthening the state. And for reaching this aim Azerbaijan needed to the help of powerful friend. This friend was Ottoman Empire.

But what about Baku? Baku was in the hands of Bolsheviks. They even couldn't think about losing Baku. Baku had a great importance for USSR. But it belonged to Azerbaijan. Military Minister of Ottoman Empire Enver Pasha himself didn't want to let Russia to possess Baku. So he did his best for releasing Baku from Bolshevik occupation. He sent newly created "5. Caucasus Islam Army" for the help. Nuri Pasha guided the army. (That army at the same time was helping to regain Baku and also was fighting against Armenians on the Azerbaijan borders). They came together with nationals and began to move on the direction of Baku. At the beginning some hardness was seen but then they were able to reach Baku. And finally on September 15 they entered Baku. The mission was completed; Baku was now one part and the capital of ADR.

The time is moving on. In 1920, April-Baku was again captured and soon became one part of USSR (United Soviet Socialist Republics). Nearly 70 years Azerbaijan was under the control of USSR. During this period the relationship between two states nearly disappeared. Together with 14 other states Azerbaijan also lost its total independence. But at the end in 1991 Turkey again met with its brother and partner-Azerbaijan.

What happened onwards? As ever Turkey was again next to Azerbaijan. Although NATO was against, Great Britain asked to wait, USSR did not even totally collapsed, Turkey recognized Azerbaijan's independence on 9 November 1991. And the relations began with all its power. On 25.05.1991 Turkish Consulate and on 14.01.1992 Turkish Embassy opened in Azerbaijan. And at last in August 1992 Azerbaijan Embassy opened in Turkey so everything began going on as 70 years ago.

These two states are coming from the same blood, same generation. It is normal for them to be so close to each other. Their economical, agricultural, industrial relations are very tie. Also

they have relations on energy, tourism, mining, education sectors. Both Azerbaijan and Turkey need each other more than any other states. Why?

First: Azerbaijan needs Turkey. Turkey is the best friend of Azerbaijan both in the region and in the mankind. Turkey helps and supports Azerbaijan on its problems in foreign relations. As an example we can show Karabakh Conflict which actually began in 1992, but its backbones go to the deep parts of the history. From the beginning of this conflict Turkey supported Azerbaijan. It did and is doing its best for the favor of Azerbaijan. But in 2009 there was a breakpoint. I shall speak about it later.

Second: Turkey, though more and more powerful and bigger state than Azerbaijan, needs Azerbaijan. Turkey looks at Azerbaijan as an important strategic partner, as a bridge to Middle Asia and as a key state for following its important international projects. Turkey helps Azerbaijan to be more democratic, to strengthen its economy and to gain new technological achievements.

Now I want to speak about the critical situation between two countries. It can be said that relations between these two states became so critical for the first time. But what happened? In 2009 Turkey began to follow Ankara's new "zero problems with neighbors" policy. It meant that Turkey was going to refresh its relations with all neighbor countries and did not want any problem with any of them. Armenia was among these countries. Turkey was planning to sign Protocols with Armenia. By these Protocols Turkey wanted to solve its problems with Armenia and to begin normal relations. But what was the problem and what made Azerbaijan to offend? The main issue was that: Even the name of the "Karabakh Problem" was not seen on these Protocols. But how could it happen if Turkey had been supported Azerbaijan during all the stages of the Conflict? In 2009 Turkey began negotiating with Armenia about signing the Protocols. Efforts of the Prime Minister of Turkey-Recep Tayyip Erdogan to convince Azerbaijan that, no any friendly relations can be with Armenia till the agreement on Karabakh relations is reached, gave no results. Azerbaijan offended and showed it by announcing that it would raise the price of natural gas which Turkey received. Erdogan immediately visited to Baku and stated that there can be no relations and friendship with Armenia till Karabakh Problem is solved and he added that Turkey will support Azerbaijan till the end and will consult with Azerbaijan on every step of Protocols. So although the new policy of Turkey could not be completed, the critical issue came to an end and several months later, in April 2010, Turkey and Azerbaijan signed a strategic partnership agreement calling for further cooperation in military, political, security, humanitarian, economic and civil society issues.

The main relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey are on energy stage. Two pipelines: Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan and Baku–Tbilisi–Erzurum bring these two countries much closer to each other. I want to give brief information about these pipelines.

Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan: The Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline is a 1,768 kilometers long crude oil pipeline from the Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli oil field in the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. It connects Baku, Tbilisi, and Ceyhan, a port on the south-eastern Mediterranean coast of Turkey, hence its name. It means the pipeline plays an important role in the economy of 3 states: Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey. The first oil that was pumped from the Baku end of the pipeline on 10 May 2005 reached Ceyhan on 28 May 2006. The main aim of the BTC is to deliver oil to the Mediterranean Sea by the land.

Baku–Tbilisi–Erzurum: It is a natural gas pipeline from the Shah Deniz gas field in the Azerbaijan sector of the Caspian Sea to Turkey. It runs parallel to the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan pipeline. On 21 May 2006, the commissioning gas was pumped to the pipeline from the Sangachal Terminal. First deliveries through the pipeline commenced on 30 September 2006. Deliveries of gas from Shah Deniz gas field started on 15 December 2006. On 12 August 2008, the pipeline operator BP closed the pipeline for the safety reasons because of the South Ossetia conflict. Gas supplies were resumed on 14 August 2008. The first aim of pipeline is to supply Turkey and Georgia. As a transit country, Georgia has rights to take 5 % of the annual gas flow through the pipeline.

And that is **energy**. During the history was main cause of conflicts, wars: energy. And now, here we see this energy is may be the most important tie between friends even it is said “brother” countries. “One Nation-two States” is a familiar sentence to everybody. Why do we call the relationship between these two states like this? I think, the brotherhood, friendship between two states cannot be shown better than this. One nation-means both these states’ roots come from the same place. We call ourselves like that: Turks. Azerbaijanis call themselves Azeri Turks and Turks call just Turks. It means both Azerbaijanis and Turks come from the same core. But there is the second part of the sentence: Two states. During the history a lot of changes took place among the states. One state emerged, another collapsed, this was happening repeatedly. Instead of both Turkey and Azerbaijan were different states. As these changes took place, these two countries could not come together and combine as one great Turk State. So every state has its independence now. Every state has its history, and national values. But we can never deny and forget: Both states have same root and both states’ nationals have blood which belong to same ancestors.

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Authors: Hasan Selçuk, Murad İskender, Eyüp Zengin, Gahir Mikailov, Nesimi Kamalov, Ercan Sancak, Ayqün Şükürova, Osman Nuri Aras. (tasam yayınları\İstanbul)

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