

THE AZERBAIJANI PERSPECTIVE:

News from the Heart of the Silk Road

November 3, 2008 – Los Angeles, California

Joint Declaration Signed in Moscow

On November 2, President Ilham Aliyev visited Moscow to meet his Armenian and Russian counterparts, Serj Sarkissian and Dmitry Medvedev, respectively. The meeting was held at President Medvedev's invitation.

For the first time since 1994, Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan signed a joint declaration on the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. The presidents emphasized the importance of finding a peaceful solution to the conflict and the importance of continued negotiations under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group mediation. Importantly, the presidents outlined their vision for improving political climate and promoting economic development in the region.

President Aliyev Inaugurated

Following his victory in the October 15 presidential election with 88.73% of the votes and confirmation of the outcome by the Constitutional Court, President Aliyev was inaugurated for the second five-year term. Speaking at the October 24 event, Mr. Aliyev expressed gratitude to the people of Azerbaijan for their confidence. He reiterated the Government's commitment to deepening economic and political reforms as well as to increasing Azerbaijan's international profile.

President Bush and other world leaders sent their congratulations; while international monitors described the conduct of the election as a major progress. President Saakashvili of Georgia along with high-ranking officials from Poland, Russia, Turkey and other nations attended the inauguration.

Cabinet of Ministers Formed

In accordance with the Constitution, President Aliyev nominated Artur Rasizade to be Azerbaijan's Prime Minister. On October 28, Mr. Rasizade was confirmed by the Parliament, the Milli Meclis (101 – for; 2 – against). Following Prime Minister's confirmation, the President appointed his new cabinet. While most ministers retained their positions, Mr. Shahin Mustafayev, the Minister of Economic Development, joined as the new member of the Cabinet. Minister Mustafayev previously served as Deputy Minister for Taxes and Vice-President of the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan.

In other news:

*BP-Azerbaijan announced that it has begun transporting oil from Kazakhstan's major field, Tengiz, via the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline.

*The U.S.-Azeris network, a leading group of Azerbaijani-Americans, held its first major conference in Washington, DC on October 1-2. The comprehensive forum featured representatives from all Azerbaijani-American organizations, U.S. and Azerbaijani officials as well as independent analysts and experts.

*Consul General Suleymanov and Vice-Consul Baloghlanov visited Denver, Colorado, on October 19-22. During the visit, they met with Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper as well as state officials and leadership of Denver University and the Colorado School of Mines. In Colorado, Consul General Suleymanov spoke to students at Denver University and to membership of the Colorado Foothills World Affairs Council.