

# ***THE AZERBAIJANI PERSPECTIVE:***

*News from the Caspian's West Coast*

January 30, 2007 – Los Angeles, California

## ***President Aliyev at the Davos Forum***

On January 24-28, President Ilham Aliyev joined other global leaders at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, where he spoke at the “*New Era of Petropolitics*” panel. The discussion moderated by Thomas Friedman of the New York Times focused on the energy sector’s future.

While in his remarks President Aliyev highlighted the role of energy in fueling the unprecedented 35% GDP growth in Azerbaijan in 2006, he emphasized the importance attached by the Government to diversification and development of non-oil sectors of economy. Speaking of the 520,000 new jobs outside oil sector created in the country and a 50% percent decrease of poverty level, Mr. Aliyev described “turning oil capital into human capital” as one of his key priorities.

President Aliyev further discussed efforts to avoid over-dependency on oil and to diversify economy during his meetings with *Microsoft’s* Chairman Bill Gates, *Cisco’s* CEO John Chambers and *Intel’s* Chairman of the Board Craig Barrett.

Also in Davos, Mr. Aliyev met with Swiss President Micheline Calmy-Rey, Ukrainian PM Victor Yanukovich, Israeli Deputy PM Tzipi Livni, EU Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs and British Trade Secretary Alistair Darling. Other meetings were with the Forum’s Chairman Klaus Schwab, Shell’s CEO Jeroen van der Veer, CIS and Baltic Jewish Federation head Lev Levayev, Soros Foundation’s George Soros and former Iranian President Mohammad Khatami.

## ***In other news:***

\*President Aliyev, who is currently on an official visit to France, met with his French counterpart Jacques Chirac on January 29. In Paris, Mr. Aliyev was awarded the order of “the Grand Cross of Legion of Honor.” In turn, President Chirac became a recipient of Azerbaijan’s “Heydar Aliyev Order.” In related news, the Year of Azerbaijan will be held in France in 2007.

\*In his January 19 Wall Street Journal op-ed- “Protect Us Against Bullies”- Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov stressed the Caspian’s vital importance for the European energy security. He also underlined the urgent need for progress on the still-unresolved conflicts in the region and for deepening of the Euro-Atlantic integration.

\*Azerbaijan signed two renewable energy agreements with UN’s Development Program with focus on developing hydro and energy power

\*Ministry of Communications and Information Technologies selected the US-based Booz Allen Hamilton to conduct the feasibility study for Azerbaijan’s Regional Innovation Zone project.

\*Consul General Elin Suleymanov met with Lt. Governor Brad Owen, State Secretary Sam Reed and participated in a joint session of the State Legislature on his visit to the State of Washington. He also spoke at the Seattle World Affairs Council.

\*The Foreign Ministry’s Press and Information Department launched an informal foreign policy blog at [www.azerpolicy.blogspot.com](http://www.azerpolicy.blogspot.com)