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Armenia's Armed Provocation Aims to Overshadow Post-Election Crisis

March 5, 2008 – Yesterday the Armenian armed forces based on the illegally occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan attacked the Azerbaijani positions at the line of contact in the Terter region. The Azerbaijani forces suppressed the attack losing three servicemen. According to the preliminary information, the Armenian losses were greater as expected on the attacking side.

The Azerbaijani officials have raised serious concern with the Armenian authorities' use of a military provocation to distract attention from the deepening post-election crisis in Armenia. The recent Presidential elections in Armenia have already produced street protests and violent clashes between the Government's forces and protesters resulting in at least eight deaths in Yerevan. Although Azerbaijan adheres to the policy of non-interference in its neighbors' domestic affairs, Armenia's current leaders chose to provoke a military confrontation with Azerbaijan as an instrument of domestic policy. Thus, the Armenian leaders added both military and regional dimensions to an internal political crisis.

Such a use of military for narrow political reasons is both cynical - given the human toll - and predictable; it reflects the deepening militarization of Armenia's political system. The Azerbaijani side has repeatedly highlighted the threat posed by aggressive separatism and ethnic militancy to regional peace and security in the South Caucasus.

While the Azerbaijani armed forces stand ready to respond adequately to any provocation, the Republic of Azerbaijan is committed to reaching a long-overdue peaceful settlement to the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. The Azerbaijani side also hopes that the Armenian politicians are able to find a way to address Armenia's domestic political crisis without cynicism of artificial military confrontation with neighboring nations and without further threatening the regional stability.