

THE AZERBAIJANI PERSPECTIVE:

News and Season's Greetings from the Caspian's West Coast

December 21, 2006 – Los Angeles, California

First Lady's Successful U.S. Visit

In early December, Azerbaijan's First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva traveled to Washington, D.C., where she visited with the wounded U.S. troops at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center and met at the White House with her American counterpart Laura Bush.

Mrs. Aliyeva and members of the Azerbaijani parliamentary delegation held discussions with members of U.S. Congress. She led the group in her capacity of the Chairperson of the Azerbaijan-U.S. Inter-parliamentary Working Group. Mrs. Aliyeva, who also serves as president of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and UNESCO's Goodwill Ambassador, has recently become the first woman to be awarded Goodwill Ambassadorship by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO).

Speaking at the dinner organized in her honor by the U.S.-Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce in Washington, D.C. Mrs. Aliyeva highlighted the importance of the U.S.-Azerbaijan ties and Azerbaijan's tradition of religious and ethnic tolerance. She also focused on importance of education and women's rights. In turn, U.S. Senator Richard Lugar, who was the event's keynote speaker, thanked Azerbaijan for its strong support of the United States and stressed the progress achieved in building an independent, democratic and prosperous nation.

The program included a performance by Azerbaijan's youngest musicians, a tribute to the nation's tradition of musical talent.

Ambassador Aliyev Meets U.S. President

Ambassador Yashar Aliyev, presented his credentials to the U.S. President George W. Bush on December 8. Speaking at the ceremony, Mr. Bush reiterated America's support for Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and praised the establishment of the State Oil Fund as a sign of commitment to ensuring transparency of revenues from oil.

Also in December, Ambassador Akshin Mehdiyev assumed his duties as Azerbaijan's new Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York.

In other news:

*Final Declaration of the NATO Summit in Riga, Latvia, included an item asserting the Alliance's support for territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova.

*An attempt by the Armenian separatist leaders to follow an example of secessionist regions in Georgia and Moldova and to hold a 'referendum' on Azerbaijan's occupied territories was widely condemned by international organizations.

*A week-long Israeli film festival opened in Azerbaijan on November 22 with the showing of the "Syrian Bride."

*An Azerbaijani MP Asim Mollazade visited California to meet with public leaders and with the Azerbaijani and Jewish groups.

*Consul General Elin Suleymanov spoke at the December 5 event of NCSJ, a major Jewish advocacy organization, in Washington, D.C. honoring the group's outgoing Chairman Robert Meth .

WITH OUR VERY BEST WISHES THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!

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