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Global Challenges and Azerbaijan's Political Position: Sustainability and Prospects

Abstract

The profound transformations in the political, economic and technological spheres that have taken place in the first decades of the 21st century, the reshaping of the global balance of power and the emergence of a new security architecture require states to pursue more flexible, adaptable and sustainable policies. This article will present an analysis of global challenges, Azerbaijan's responses to these processes, and prospective approaches for the future. The aim of the article is to assess how Azerbaijan's political position has been formed in the global environment, the level of sustainability, and the effectiveness of the steps taken to protect national interests in the new circumstances. The research seeks to answer the questions “What risks and opportunities do global challenges pose for Azerbaijan?”, “How is stability ensured in Azerbaijan's domestic and foreign policy?”, “What are the country's prospects against the backdrop of geopolitical dynamics?”, “In what strategic directions should Azerbaijan strengthen in the region and globally?”. For this purpose, the article will analyze current international trends, geopolitical changes in the region, economic and political indicators of Azerbaijan, as well as relevant analytical data, and put forward scientifically sound conclusions.

Keywords: Energy Resources, Global Changes, National Interests, Economic And Political Indicators

Küresel Zorluklar ve Azerbaycan'ın Siyasi Konumu: Sürdürülebilirlik ve Beklentiler

Öz

21. yüzyılın ilk on yıllarında siyasi, ekonomik ve teknolojik alanlarda meydana gelen köklü dönüşümler, küresel güç dengesinin yeniden şekillenmesi ve yeni bir güvenlik mimarisinin ortaya



çıkması, devletlerin daha esnek, uyarlanabilir ve sürdürülebilir politikalar izlemesini gerektirmektedir. Bu makale, küresel zorlukların analizi, Azerbaycan'ın bu süreçlere verdiği yanıtlar ve gelecek için olası yaklaşımları ele alacaktır. Makalenin amacı, Azerbaycan'ın küresel ortamda siyasi konumunun nasıl oluştuğunu, sürdürülebilirlik düzeyini ve yeni koşullarda ulusal çıkarları korumak için atılan adımların etkinliğini değerlendirmektir. Araştırma, “Küresel zorluklar Azerbaycan için ne gibi riskler ve fırsatlar yaratıyor?”, “Azerbaycan'ın iç ve dış politikasında istikrar nasıl sağlanıyor?”, “Jeopolitik dinamikler bağlamında ülkenin geleceği nedir?”, “Azerbaycan, bölgede ve küresel olarak hangi stratejik yönlerde güçlenmelidir?” Bu amaçla makale, mevcut uluslararası eğilimleri, bölgedeki jeopolitik değişiklikleri, Azerbaycan'ın ekonomik ve siyasi göstergelerini ve ilgili analitik verileri analiz edecek ve bilimsel olarak sağlam sonuçlar ortaya koyacaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Enerji Kaynakları, Küresel Değişiklikler, Ulusal Çıkarlar, Ekonomik ve Siyasi Göstergeler

Introduction

The 21st century entered history as the century of globalization, which elevated civilization to a qualitatively new stage. Global processes are increasingly increasing the interdependence of countries and peoples of the world, despite the differences in their levels of development, religions and cultures, and historical traditions. These processes have begun to decisively determine the fate of peoples and civilization as a whole. The trend of deep globalization, which manifests itself in economic, political and cultural-spiritual processes, is taking a greater leap in economic globalization and is leading other processes in its wake. It is no coincidence that politics has become increasingly economized. Economic globalization does not mean only the internationalization of the economy, it is a new and higher stage of that process.

Transition economies are struggling for independence under the influence of two important processes: economic transformation and globalization. While the economic transformation processes are already nearing completion, globalization is increasingly affecting their economy and economic policy. Therefore, modern trends in social development require an increasingly global approach to the problems of socio-economic development. The internal processes taking place in any country, despite their numerous specific features in terms of their content and form, do not occur in isolation (Mearsheimer, 2001). In an era when globalization has acquired a planetary nature and an irreversible character, these processes constitute the leading direction of the modern historical development of human society. Therefore, life in all its severity demands that the specific characteristics of the country be closely linked to the new conditions created by globalization. The advantage of a global approach to modern economic,

social and political problems is not that such an approach immediately tries to give the right answers to all the questions posed, but also that it allows these questions to be posed correctly. Thus, although specific economic and social transformations in any country occur under the influence of internal socio-economic forces and processes in a specific area, in the modern era of national and global problems, looking at the causes of those transformations, their essence and development prospects, only from the internal prism of that country is not enough and may lead to incorrect conclusions. Azerbaijan is not exempt from these global challenges. The region's geopolitically strategic location, rich energy resources, and location at the intersection of transport corridors increase Azerbaijan's importance in the system of international relations. At the same time, the consequences of the long-term conflict with Armenia, the formation of new realities in the South Caucasus, and geopolitical changes in the region create both challenges and new opportunities for the country. In this context, the stability of Azerbaijan's political position, the establishment of balanced relations with regional and global power centers, as well as the pursuit of an independent policy based on national interests, are of great importance. Azerbaijan's cooperation with the UN, OSCE, Non-Aligned Movement, Organization of Islamic Cooperation and other influential international organizations, as well as energy diplomacy and transport strategy, have created conditions for the country to act as an active actor on a global scale. On the other hand, global climate change, energy transition, the growing role of artificial intelligence and digital technologies, cybersecurity risks, and new socio-economic realities after the pandemic are also pushing for improvements to Azerbaijan's political and economic model. These processes require renewal not only in terms of foreign policy, but also in terms of domestic governance, security, economy, and social well-being. In the last decade of the century, with the collapse of the USSR, independent Azerbaijan, which took its rightful place on the new political map of the world, became an equal member of the world community. Political independence, achieved in conditions of fierce struggle, opened up broad prospects for solving the serious political, economic and social problems of the country that had accumulated during the 70 years of the Soviet era. The creation of an open society in Azerbaijan, which was politically and economically isolated from the world community for many years by the Soviet "iron curtain", and the development of equal and comprehensive relations with world countries play a key role in solving the socio-economic problems existing in our country, in the truest sense of the word. The idea and desire for modernization, reflected in its tricolor flag, has not remained just an idea and desire, but is also a symbol of a great movement towards the future, one of the important distinguishing features of Azerbaijani

society. This movement is clearly visible in all directions of Azerbaijan's social development (political, economic, spiritual).

Azerbaijan is a natural place that attracts the attention of the world's near and far, large and small states, international and regional organizations in terms of many vital political and economic issues. Located at the junction of two continents and in an important strategically important area, our republic is where the interests of the world's major powers clash, and there is a deep competitive struggle for influence among them. In such circumstances, the achievement of political independence, the transition from the administrative-command system to the market economy system formed an important basis for revising the old system of relations that had existed with the outside world for a long time and for establishing equal, mutually beneficial relations. The collapse of the communist empire radically changed the geopolitical situation in a large area, opening up broad prospects for Azerbaijan to take its place as an independent subject in the international arena, increase and intensify the efficiency of its foreign relations in the conditions of globalization, and use the advantages of the international division of labor in accordance with the interests of the republic. The internationalization of economic and social life, all aspects of Azerbaijan's integration with the modern world, which is taking place under difficult conditions, are creating new opportunities, as well as new problems, and sometimes even threats. The effective use of these opportunities, the timely identification of existing problems and threats are among the issues of vital importance for Azerbaijan today. At this time, two difficult problems are being solved in the form of mutual unity: 1. The creation and improvement and development of an independent modern state apparatus; 2. The implementation of democratic processes and radical market reforms on its basis.

1. The Global Political Situation in the Modern World

In the newest directions of modern science, there is a special approach to the understanding of complex systems. This approach is used by every socio-humanitarian and political science. In political science, the principles of this approach are also manifested in the works of leading researchers (Nye, 2004; Buzan & Wæver, 2003; Kissinger, 2014). In particular, in the field of epistemological-methodological intersection of philosophy and political science, one can find research on leadership (concrete examples of this are known to us). According to this approach, the world is an open, nonlinear and self-organizing complex system. The controlling parameter of this system is (factor, subsystem, component, element, etc.). The system as a whole is controlled by that force. For this, within a somewhat limited framework, there must be regulating parameters of a complex system. They operate either

autonomously or as “local aggregates”. In each variant, their main function is to make changes in the system as a whole by optimally adapting to the decision-making of the controlling parameter. In this way, the system can make transitions from chaos to order and vice versa. Further theoretical details of the issue may not be necessary for our analysis. Because their concrete practical manifestation is more important. Thus, the theory shows that a power capable of controlling the world system on a global scale is needed. The United States is a contender for this role. It, as a single center (or control point), must regulate the orderly functioning of the world as a geopolitical “organism”. However, the controlling power cannot do this alone in such a large and complex system as the world. It needs “regulating parameters-states” (Qurbanov, 2025). This point has a very important place in the modern geopolitical situation. It is not yet known who will play the role of that regulatory state. There are many contenders. Here in recent years we have seen more and more claims by groups of states to play the role of a geopolitical regulatory parameter. For example, the European Union, the Non-Aligned Movement, BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, partly the CIS, etc. However, in reality, the regulatory parameter – the state or organization – has not proven itself in practice. It is becoming increasingly clear that the current US leadership, unlike Obama and Biden, has a plan in this regard. Of course, on this path, it is hindered by organizations with ulterior motives and, in essence, illegal activities, such as USAID. Instead, Washington should identify a group of states that can play a regulatory role in the world. According to D. Trump, Great Britain is at the top of them. And what about the others? Of course, this process cannot be carried out without China, Russia, Turkey, India, or Brazil. Therefore, the current situation is both complex and risky. Against this background, D. Trump's Russia policy is quite thought-provoking.

According to information published on several websites, Trump's messages can be understood in this way (Boot, 2025): D. Trump is sending this message to Ukraine and Europe: Look at Moscow! That is, the US wants to see Russia's geopolitical role in Eurasia broader and more comprehensive in terms of its sphere of influence than it currently is. The Ukrainian factor can play a serious role here. In two aspects. First, if it is possible to give Russia the "Ukrainian piece" as it wants, a power with great potential and influence is gained that automatically accepts the US's leading role in a wide geopolitical space. Secondly, as in the 1970s and 1980s, there is an opportunity to separate Russia from China in a geopolitical context. However, this time the West is using a more far-reaching and seemingly civilized method. Moreover, it is giving Russia a geopolitical dividend that will satisfy Moscow in the long run. Moreover, it is not excluded that the US will play this game not only with Ukraine, but also with the former

USSR. For now, this is not a fact, but an assumption! The fact is that Ukraine is currently a victim in the formation of geopolitical regulatory forces. Thirdly, the West is encroaching on China's opportunities to obtain raw materials in a vast geographical area. Beijing is the only power that should play a central role in the formation of any new world order. It is not yet clear whether the United States will be able to play the role of a single ruling state. It is also unknown how it will share this role with China. Now they are engaged in a very serious and comprehensive struggle. The whole world is watching its progress. It seems that the parties are trying to use all the levers at their disposal in different regions of the world. Currently, the main factor in US-China relations is Europe and the Middle East. Of course, the Indian issue is also very important for both states. It seems that London, Paris and Berlin have gone on a "geopolitical hunt" for Delhi. But the trap of this "hunt" is the US. Washington can solve the China issue by promoting India as an alternative through the mediation of the EU, and Beijing will accept the role of a regulating parameter-state. It seems that the US-China rivalry is now at a level that could have serious geopolitical consequences for Eurasia. In this regard, the importance of two factors for both powers (the US and China) is increasing even more - first, Russia, and second, the Organization of Turkic States (OTS). For now, apparently, the TDC factor is in the background for D. Trump. They measure the "pulse of Turkish geopolitics" only by Turkey's activity in regional issues. Azerbaijan's activity in this context in recent years is surprising in a good way. Because official Baku, as a Turkish state and a TDC member, is taking political, diplomatic and humanitarian steps towards Ukraine that are of interest to the world, along with Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Middle East and the Balkans. The Russian issue is of more intense relevance for the US and China in practical terms. Washington and Beijing always keep their contacts with Moscow at the forefront. After D. Trump's attack on Ukraine, the situation in this direction began to change in favor of America. Nevertheless, Beijing warned: although the resolution of the Ukraine-Russia conflict is important, the Israel-Palestine, specifically the Gaza factor, cannot be relegated to the background in world politics! In other words, this is a warning to Washington: "We know and understand what you are doing in Eurasia, but you also have a "backyard" and you can get involved there." This uncertainty creates serious obstacles to the determination of the governing and regulating parameter-states on a global scale. Against its background, the formation of a new geopolitical world order is accompanied by new challenges, which are entirely risky. This has created a situation that we call a "double risk situation" and has a political scientific meaning. In the context of this concept, we will analyze the geopolitical activity of Azerbaijan on a regional and interregional

scale and the issues of new signs of leadership. Let us first look at the philosophical and political scientific meanings of the concept we have introduced.

The double risks of the geopolitical situation arise from the hierarchical structure and function of the global system. At the current stage, double risks express both the uncertainties and threats that manifest themselves in the geopolitical function of the world system, as well as the absence of controlling and regulating actors in a complex way. As a result, the structure of the global geopolitical landscape is not clear - in such conditions, it is not worth talking about order in the sense of H. Kissinger (Kissinger, 2014). The “double-risk geopolitical situation” complicates the entire situation for independent nation-states. Because the risks affect not only those who claim to be enforcers and intend to be leaders, but also every independent state in the world. In fact, an independent state faces the direct effects of those who claim to be leaders, in addition to the double geopolitical risks stemming from the world system. This undoubtedly creates a very complicated situation.

The system of international relations in the 21st century is characterized by complex and dynamic processes. The global challenges that have emerged in this period are not limited to the economic and political spheres, but also extend to social, technological, environmental and humanitarian aspects (Shaffer, 2011). The concept of global challenges covers large-scale problems that require a collective response from states and international organizations. Their ineffective management can lead to instability not only in a single region, but also in the entire world system.

In the modern era, global challenges can be classified into the following main groups:

- Geopolitical challenges: Regional conflicts, shifting power centers, new polarization trends.

- Economic challenges: Global trade wars, energy and resource crises, uneven development.

- Climate and environmental challenges: Global warming, water scarcity, intensification of natural disasters.

- Technological challenges: Cyber threats, information security, regulation of artificial intelligence.

- Social and humanitarian challenges: Migration flows, pandemics, human rights violations (United Nations, 2023).

These challenges are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. For example, climate change can lead to social unrest, migration and, ultimately, geopolitical tensions. One of the

main factors affecting the system of international relations in the modern era is geopolitical changes and climate risks. These two factors have a significant impact not only on the foreign policy course of states, but also on the regional and global security architecture. Their parallel and synchronous development is considered one of the priority areas on the global agenda. Uncertainties in the geopolitical environment and changes in the balance of power are particularly evident in the post-Soviet space, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and the Asia-Pacific region. Events such as the Russia-Ukraine war, the growing strategic competition between China and the United States, and the expansion of NATO have led to the formation of new configurations in world politics.

In this context, geopolitical risks can be grouped as follows:

- *Increased armed conflicts and arms races;
- *Weakening of international law and normative gaps;
- *Disruption of regional integration processes;
- *Emergence of terrorism and non-state actors;
- *Cyberattacks and information wars.

This increase in geopolitical risks limits the room for maneuver, especially for small and medium-power states, and requires a balanced approach to foreign policy.

On the other hand, global climate change is now considered not only an ecological problem, but also a strategic security problem. Reports from organizations such as the UN and the World Economic Forum list climate risks among the main problems threatening the world (World Economic Forum, 2024).

Key climate risks include:

- Rising global temperatures and extreme weather events;
- Depletion and pollution of water resources;
- Weakening food security;
- Mass migration and environmental refugees;
- Declining productivity in industrial and agricultural sectors.

These risks create a double burden, especially for developing countries – on the one hand, limited economic resources, and on the other, weak adaptive capacities (Buzan & Wæver, 2003). When these two areas of challenge are integrated, more complex threats emerge. For example, disputes over water use can lead to geopolitical tensions in certain regions. Similarly, reduced productivity due to climate change can deepen food crises and undermine domestic political stability. All this shows that security, sustainable development and peace at the global

level are possible only through comprehensive and coordinated management of geopolitical and climate risks. In this context, the effectiveness of international cooperation mechanisms and regional organizations comes to the fore.

Global challenges – including geopolitical tensions, climate change, pandemics, energy and food crises, and technological transformation – are forcing states to reshape their foreign policy strategies and diplomatic priorities in the modern era. These challenges are forcing states to define their behavior in the international arena not only reactively, but also with more proactive and strategic approaches (Cornell, 2017). While the traditional understanding of foreign policy focused on military security, diplomatic relations, and economic cooperation, in the modern stage this concept has expanded and taken on a more multidisciplinary character. As a result of global challenges, the following new priorities have emerged in the foreign policy of states:

- The rise of climate diplomacy: International agreements such as the Paris Agreement have forced states to consider environmental responsibility and “green transition” processes in their foreign policies.

- Energy security and diversification: Energy crises, especially in the context of the Russia-Ukraine war, have seriously affected the energy policies of Europe and other regions, increasing the importance of energy diplomacy.

- Food security and agricultural diplomacy: The instability in global food supply has led countries to establish strategic partnerships and include food security on the foreign policy agenda.

- Digital diplomacy and cybersecurity: Technological challenges, cyberattacks, and information warfare have brought digital security issues to the forefront of states' foreign policies.

- Health diplomacy and pandemic preparedness: As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, international cooperation in the field of health and vaccine diplomacy have become an integral part of foreign policy (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2023). Power centers such as the United States, China, Russia, and the European Union have exhibited different approaches to global challenges in their foreign policies. The United States has adopted strategies aimed at preserving a more liberal international order, supporting international initiatives, especially on climate change and human rights issues. China is trying to expand its sphere of influence through economic diplomacy with its “One Belt, One Road” strategy, while also demonstrating activity in the direction of technological and environmental diplomacy.

Russia is trying to expand its regional influence by turning traditional power politics and energy dependence into a foreign policy tool. The European Union, on the other hand, acts as a normative force in the areas of climate change, human rights, and the promotion of multilateralism (Global Energy Outlook, 2023). For small states, effective foreign policy in the face of global challenges is based on more balanced and multilateral approaches. These states cooperate with regional organizations and international institutions, and choose a policy of neutrality and diplomatic flexibility to protect their national interests in the face of global challenges. The impact of global challenges on foreign policy is not limited to the transformation of interstate relations. These changes create the basis for the formation of new formats of cooperation aimed at ensuring international law, global governance and sustainability at the planetary level. In such a context, every state, including Azerbaijan, should develop more flexible, dynamic and integrative approaches in its foreign policy. Now, against the background of these general philosophical and political theses, let us look at the specific issue of Azerbaijan.

2. The Modern Global Political Situation in Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan's leadership in the South Caucasus automatically adds new shades to its function as an independent state. Baku has a serious responsibility to adequately implement its leadership in any changing geopolitical situation. Here, of course, complete harmony between the activities of the state and the activities of the leader is a prerequisite. To put it concretely, the head of state, as an inclusive leader, should play a decisive and leading role in the activities of the state on a regional scale. It is impossible to do this without a leader. Experience shows that in every historical period dominated by risks, uncertainties and crisis situations, the fate of the country unequivocally depends on the activities of the leader. The leader leads the state out of complex geopolitical situations and recession. The society must fully implement its programs. The initiative cannot come from the society. Historical experience shows that even in the strongest state, the leader must first choose a successful course. Through it, they must mobilize their team and society. All state bodies must strictly follow the leader's programs. This ensures the unity of the leader-people, the president-society in the state in an inclusive manner.

The head of state, who has received such a leadership mandate from society, can ensure national interests on a regional scale. Therefore, the activity of Azerbaijan as a leader on a regional scale directly depends on the fully inclusive leadership status of the President within the country. Thus, the projection of the new global challenges of the 21st century onto a regional scale makes the leadership factor in independent states even more relevant. Philosophically and

politically, this logic actualizes an adequate scientific understanding of the ratio of the duties and responsibilities of the head of state as a leader and the duties and responsibilities of the regional leadership of the state as a country (Official Website of the Organization of Turkic States, 2025). To clearly imagine the impact of the new geopolitical challenges of the 21st century on political leadership, let us look at a number of features of Ilham Aliyev's leadership from 2003 to the Second Karabakh War. The system of views that will be formed in this way will serve as a basis for understanding leadership against the backdrop of new challenges.

In the period from 2003 to 2020, geopolitical challenges on a regional and global scale had their own content and goals. Here, obstacles were mainly created on the way of independent nation-states becoming strong states. There was a serious struggle for the regions between several major powers of the world. Specifically, in the South Caucasus, the West, Russia, Turkey, Iran, and "quietly" China fought. The main goal of local states in this struggle could have been to gain strength while maintaining a maximally independent position. However, practice has shown that only Azerbaijan managed to do this in the South Caucasus. Georgia completely sided with the West. This was evidenced by Georgia's desire for associate membership in the EU and its complete influence. The United States, on the other hand, played the role of the main patronizing power for Tbilisi (where the Sorosites were more active). Against this background, Georgia became a geopolitical and political enemy of Russia. The bitter result was the August 2008 war - two regions of Georgia came under Russian control. This situation has not yet been resolved. However, after the "Georgian Dream" came to power, official Tbilisi began to gradually "turn its geopolitical steering wheel" to the North. However, this process is now incomplete in political and geopolitical terms. That is, it is obvious that Georgia has not been able to adequately respond to geopolitical challenges since the beginning of the 21st century.

Armenia reacted completely unsuccessfully. In the Armenian political consciousness, the artificially created geopolitical ideas based on old criteria deepened. Armenia first fell under the full influence of Russia. Then it gradually began to give preference to the West. When the issue of associative membership became relevant, they summoned S. Sargsyan to Moscow, "twisted his ear", and he immediately made a statement that "Armenia is on Russia's side." This not only showed the futility of the Armenians' dreams of creating an independent state, but also meant taking a position that was absolutely inadequate to the challenges of the 21st century. The Second Karabakh War devastated Armenia in every sense. Against the backdrop of current challenges, Armenia hesitates, cannot choose a definite path, and has no geopolitical benefit to

the region! (Aliyev, 2023). So, in reality, in the 21st century, a successful leadership model has not been formed in Georgia and Armenia. The formula for sustainable, stable and promising leadership in these countries has not been found, its criteria have not been determined. Georgia is very important for Azerbaijan as a strategic partner, but the fact is the fact. The fact shows that our friendly neighbor does not yet have a new leadership model. Against this background, let's look at the path taken by the Azerbaijani leader. Ilham Aliyev began to develop the basic principles of strong statehood defined by Heydar Aliyev and, in this sense, "fully implement" them in the experience of state building. This was a huge choice for an independent and national state. Because serious obstacles were being created to that process from many different sources. They were trying to prevent Azerbaijan from becoming a truly independent and strong national state.

Ilham Aliyev overcame these external influences and implemented the principles of strong state-building. They included aspects such as Azerbaijaniness, multiculturalism, a strong army, unity of the government and the people, and the upbringing of patriotic youth. In foreign policy, he included developing an energy strategy, turning Azerbaijan into a "geopolitical world space" of the region, putting forward and implementing bilateral and multilateral cooperation platforms, and creating new security formats. Against this background, Azerbaijan's transformation to a fully constructive level of cooperation with the major powers of the region - Turkey, Russia and Iran, the transition to an equal cooperation platform with the European Union, and achieving maximum initiative and activity in international and regional organizations were of particular importance (Valiyev, 2022). As a result of all this, Azerbaijan faced the challenges of the 21st century as an independent national state with a clear geopolitical position by September 2020. This showed that Ilham Aliyev's leadership example fully met the criteria of perspective and the requirements of the modern era.

Thus, in the fall of 2020, it became clear that Azerbaijan had emerged as a truly independent state in the South Caucasus. At this stage, a successful leadership example elevated Azerbaijan to the status of a regional leader. Thus, the path that began in 2003 became historic and symbolized in a political sense with the state's rise to the level of a leader in the region in 2020. This analysis yields a thesis with profound political significance – at the beginning of the 21st century, Ilham Aliyev's personal leadership example became the main political factor in the rise of the Republic of Azerbaijan as an independent state to the level of a regional leader! Therefore, the leadership experience of Azerbaijan in the 21st century is a factor ensuring that

the country's leader elevates that country to the level of a leader in the region in which it is located within 20 years!

We are not aware of any other experience in the post-Soviet space. Russia, the largest and most powerful state in Eurasia, does not have this experience either (China is a state in a different category). We do not find examples of the level of success achieved by Ilham Aliyev in the independent states of Central Asia and Eastern Europe. This shows that Ilham Aliyev's leadership in 2003-2020 is a unique experience. This moment is of historical importance against the backdrop of the geopolitical challenges of the era. Starting from November 2020, new geopolitical challenges have been manifesting themselves both in the South Caucasus and globally. Against their backdrop, the political-theoretical features of Ilham Aliyev's leadership acquire particular relevance (Valiyev, 2022). After restoring state independence, Azerbaijan's foreign policy, which was formed in accordance with the principles of national statehood, continues on the basis of the principles of mutual understanding and equality. Upon his return to power in 1993, Great Leader Heydar Aliyev, who based on his rich experience of statehood and carried out a number of reforms in the republic and set the goal of fulfilling important and urgent tasks, paid special attention to the development of our foreign policy in all parameters. One of those tasks, and the most important one, was to remove Azerbaijan, which had been subjected to an information blockade by Armenia, from its isolation in the international community, to dispel the negative public opinion created about our country, and to ensure a balanced foreign policy line based on national interests by conveying the true cause of our people to the world community.

During his leadership of the republic, Great Leader Heydar Aliyev, who accelerated Azerbaijan's integration into the world community in all areas with his diplomatic efforts, increased the volume of investments allocated to our country from foreign countries through the implementation of the oil strategy he defined, and set the development of relations with various countries on the basis of a diversified format as a primary task, achieved his goal as an experienced head of state and political figure (Əliyev & Şahbazov, 1997). It can be said with certainty that the years 1993-2003 were written as a decisive period in the history of our foreign policy, as in all areas of development in our republic. It was in those years that a solid foundation of our statehood was laid, a strategic line regarding diplomatic relations was defined in new directions. Azerbaijan's integration into the world community was accelerated.

Thanks to the high diplomatic talent of President Ilham Aliyev, who successfully continues this political course, our country's cooperation with the world's leading states is at the

highest level. Today, Azerbaijan is the only country in the region that pursues a consistent and systematic policy aimed at ensuring regional security with a well-thought-out foreign policy based on national interests. Azerbaijan, which plays an important role in ensuring stability in the South Caucasus, actively participates in the peacebuilding process in the world, and whose diplomacy is supported by the international community, and is the author of important initiatives and calls, stands at the forefront of the system of international relations. It is expanding its relations and diplomatic representation network within the framework of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, strengthening its role and position in ensuring its national interests, as well as peace and security, in the region and globally. Relying solely on internal stability and sustainable development in the year 2024, which we are embarking on, Azerbaijan's prompt and effective responses to global challenges have strengthened our country's prestige in the international community and its role as a bridge between civilizations.

Taking as an example the good mood created around the world by the 29th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP29), it can be confidently said that supporting Azerbaijan's thoughtful diplomacy and recognizing our country as a strengthening political, economic, and humanitarian platform brings additional dividends to our country. After the liberation of our lands, which had been under the occupation of Armenia for nearly 30 years, each of the events held in Azerbaijan is of international importance in itself and serves to strengthen relations between peoples. The most important problems were discussed at the Informal Summit of the Organization of Turkic States in Shusha, the 3rd International Conference on "Reducing the Environmental Impact of Landmines: Mobilizing Resources for a Safe and Green Future", the 6th World Forum for Intercultural Dialogue within the framework of the "Baku Process", and the international conferences on "Increasing National and International Efforts to Clarify the Fate of Missing Persons". Azerbaijan's chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which hosted events and a number of conferences on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of our accession to NATO's Partnership for Peace Framework Document, is one of our diplomatic successes. Last year alone, President Ilham Aliyev's 4 visits to Central Asian states and 10 visits by the presidents of Central Asian countries to Azerbaijan are the logical result of mutual cooperation and are among the successes of our foreign policy, which serves to maintain stability in the region. Azerbaijan, which continues its peaceful policy towards resolving tensions and national conflicts in the world, expands its contacts, and calls for an end to civil conflict, always expresses its support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Syria (Embassy of the

Azerbaijan Republic in Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, 2024). In order to continue its activities in a wider sphere in the international world, the policy of increasing the number of diplomatic corps and consulates in foreign countries is being successfully continued. Currently, the total number of diplomatic missions of our country in foreign countries has reached 92. (69 embassies, 6 permanent representations, 9 consulates general, 7 embassy offices and 1 representative office). The Republic of Vanuatu has applied to establish its Consulate General in Baku, and the Cook Islands has applied to establish diplomatic relations.

The adoption of the Karabakh Declaration within the framework of the informal Shusha Summit of the Turkic States Organization, the declaration of the city of Lankaran as the Youth Capital of the Turkic World in 2024, and the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of the Turkish Green Vision and the Turkish Green Finance Council strengthen the rules of coexistence in the region. Azerbaijan's unanimous admission to the D-8 organization at the 11th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization (D-8) held in Cairo, the capital of Egypt, is an example of Islamic solidarity and the path opened to the Islamic world for our republic. The declaration of the city of Lachin, liberated from occupation and beautified with extensive construction works, as the CIS Capital of Culture for 2025 is a value shown in our foreign policy (World Bank, 2024). The initial establishment of a collective target on climate finance at COP29, chaired by Azerbaijan, and the support for the proposal to fully operationalize Article 6 of the Paris Agreement on carbon markets are among the successes of our country's foreign policy. The discussions at the Leaders' Summit held within the framework of COP29 on the tense geopolitical environment, the increasing influence of political forces skeptical of climate change in many countries, and the elimination of sharp contradictions between developed and developing countries are the result of President Ilham Aliyev's diplomatic efforts and a broader call addressed to the world community.

As a country suffering from mines planted by Armenia in our occupied territories, Azerbaijan is expanding cooperation with international organizations, including the UN, UNESCO, the European Union (EU), NATO, and a number of countries, to eliminate this problem, and continues its dialogue on the principle of joint action to eliminate the problem. Although events such as the 3rd International Conference on "Reducing the Environmental Impact of Landmines: Mobilizing Resources Towards a Safe and Green Future" in Zangilan and Baku, jointly organized by Azerbaijan and the UN, are new directions in our foreign policy, they play an important role in solving more important problems. Of course, the main line of our foreign policy is the delimitation and demarcation of the borders between Azerbaijan and

Armenia, the signing of a peace agreement. The return of the villages of Baganis Ayrim, Ashagi Eskipara, Kheyrimli and Gizilhajili of the Gazakh region, which were occupied by Armenia, to the sovereign control of Azerbaijan, the delimitation and demarcation of up to 13 km of the state border are the result of the will and logical policy based on international law of President Ilham Aliyev, who has further strengthened our diplomacy and gained great trust in the world community.

As a result of the systematic, consistent, and purposeful prevention of provocations by anti-Azerbaijani circles, who are jealous of the organization of COP29 in our country, states such as the US and France, and international organizations such as the EU, are unable to carry out their insidious intentions regarding the South Caucasus. Let them not forget the words of President Ilham Aliyev, who addressed the Azerbaijani people regarding the local anti-terrorist measures being taken in Karabakh, regarding the future of the South Caucasus, in the US State Department, the Council of Europe, and France: "We simply demanded that both them and the Armenian martyrs who are behind them and who are not with them in their difficult times, who are far away in Europe, know that the further they stay from our region, the more the region will breathe easier, and we propose this. We propose that the future of the countries of the South Caucasus be based on peace, security, and development. We propose that the forces, fraudsters, and corrupt politicians who are located far from our region, but who pursue their own political agenda and use the Armenian people as a tool, exploit them, and, as they say, sell them out in times of need, should abandon us. Those who sit on the other side of the world and make unfounded accusations against us should abandon us, and let the South Caucasus breathe easy. This region has been a place of strife, wars, and bloody clashes for centuries. Enough is enough! (Address to the nation by President Ilham Aliyev, 2023). Historical events also confirm that President Ilham Aliyev, who has improved our foreign policy, reflecting the will of the Azerbaijani people, in terms of state interests, firmly speaks his mind on different international platforms, stands behind what he says, and implements it. He insists on resolving the Concept of the Return of our compatriots to Western Azerbaijan and on opening the Zangezur corridor.

President Ilham Aliyev, who values his word as much as his signature, and whose wise saying "What, how, when to do" has become an aphorism, said, "That is why we have created a strong state. I have said it many times in recent years, and look, life has confirmed my words: today's Azerbaijan is the most powerful Azerbaijan in all of history, and in its centuries-old history, Azerbaijan has never been as strong as it is today. The main factor in carrying out our preparatory work was the unity of the people and the government. Because our policy is

supported by the people, there is great confidence in our policy. The war and its consequences once again convinced the Azerbaijani people that this confidence was given to us by the Azerbaijani people. Because what we said, we did," the words of our foreign policy are a warning to those with malicious intentions, as is the invincible power of our foreign policy (Prezident İlham Əliyev: Bizim sözümüz imzamız qədər dəyərlidir, 2023).

3. A Development Model Distinctive With its Progressive Aspects

Azerbaijan's comprehensive and dynamic development, independent, multifaceted and national interest-based foreign policy course have ensured that it remains the most developed country in the South Caucasus region. Today, Azerbaijan is taking consistent and systematic steps towards ensuring regional security with its well-considered and national interest-based foreign policy. Currently, the energy projects implemented by the Azerbaijani state and cooperation formats serving regional integration play an important role in ensuring stability in the South Caucasus. Thanks to the strong political will of President İlham Aliyev, a new qualitative development model of Azerbaijan, which is considered exemplary on a global scale and is distinguished by a number of progressive features, has been formed. Thanks to the continuous reforms implemented, Azerbaijan has taken confident steps towards ensuring the country's economic independence in the past period. The process of transformation into a free market economy, which responds to modern challenges and provides ample scope for creative approaches, has been successfully completed in the country. In the past period, against the background of the expansion of the country's financial capabilities due to oil revenues, fairly large investments have been actively directed to fixed capital. The economic policy and reforms implemented by Azerbaijan in recent years have turned the country into one of the leading states in the region. Under the leadership of President İlham Aliyev, all international and large-scale projects implemented in the region are implemented taking into account the national interests of Azerbaijan. Today, under the powerful leadership of President İlham Aliyev, Azerbaijan has become the center of an influential country in the world (Grynszpan & Vincent, 2024). Azerbaijan's next diplomatic success - membership in the D-8 organization - is remembered as another significant event in the history of our country's independence, among the international diplomatic successes. During the 11th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization (D-8) in the Egyptian capital Cairo, the Republic of Azerbaijan was unanimously elected a member of the D-8 organization. This is significant as the first expansion of the organization's ranks since the establishment of the D-8. Our country's membership in the so-called "Islamic Eight" D-8, which covers three continents, has a GDP of more than 4 trillion US dollars, carries out a

trade turnover of 130 billion, and its members constitute 60% of the world's Muslims (the total population is more than 1.2 billion) and has great economic potential, is a clear example of Azerbaijan's growing influence in the international community and the trust placed in our country (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2024). This is the logical result of the decisive and successful foreign policy of President Ilham Aliyev. The foreign policy strategy laid down by the architect and founder of the modern Republic of Azerbaijan, the National Leader Heydar Aliyev, is being successfully continued by the esteemed President Ilham Aliyev today. We can confidently say that the excellent foreign policy strategy prepared by the Great Leader turned Azerbaijan into an independent state with a say in all regional issues. As a result of the successful diplomatic activity of our esteemed President Ilham Aliyev, who continues the political course of the National Leader with dignity, Azerbaijan's prestige in the world community has increased even more. Today, no strategically important project in the region can be implemented without Azerbaijan's opinion. The Secretary General, who said that D-8 is an institution with great economic and trade potential, covering member states with a population of 1.2 billion people in the world, noted that the basis of its activities is the development of economic and trade relations between countries. The guest expressed his confidence that Azerbaijan will make a significant contribution to the further development of the organization and the implementation of the issues on the agenda. The meeting exchanged views on the prospects for the development of cooperation within the framework of D-8 in energy, climate action, trade, development of small and medium-sized enterprises, youth, media and other areas of mutual interest. It should be noted that the main goal of the D-8 is to increase trade relations between member countries, promote economic development and find collective solutions to common problems. The organization also aims to help developing countries take a stronger and more significant position in the world economy. The D-8 organization implements various programs to create joint trade, investment and technological cooperation between member countries. Incentive measures are taken to increase economic relations between these countries and to allow developing countries to play a greater role in world markets. The D-8 also seeks to establish cooperation in the educational, cultural and social fields, which helps to form stronger friendships and common interests among member countries. The organization's activities aim to establish a more equitable economic order on the global stage by demonstrating the collective strength of developing countries.

Our country's membership in the D-8 has once again proven that Azerbaijan is currently one of the rapidly developing states, enjoying sustainable socio-political stability, achieving

high economic indicators and gaining the support of the world community. In this context, the formation of security, stability, prosperity and mutually beneficial cooperation in our vast region, as well as the development of economic and trade relations and a number of other important directions, is of great importance (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2024). Azerbaijan, which is distinguished as one of the regional centers with its geopolitical position, broad economic potential, strategic transit points and developed transport infrastructure, is confident that its membership will further strengthen the organization. Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum, Baku-Tbilisi-Kars, TANAP, TAP and other projects implemented at the initiative of Azerbaijan characterize Azerbaijan as a country with a unique economic model in the global economy. These projects are also of great importance in terms of regional security. Azerbaijan's energy diplomacy serves regional security, international cooperation and national interests. It should be noted that the successes of Azerbaijani diplomacy have allowed it to establish close relations not only with the UN, but also with other influential organizations. In this regard, it is worth noting Azerbaijan's close cooperation with the OSCE, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Council of Europe, GUAM, the European Union, NATO and other well-known international organizations (European Commission, 2023). Azerbaijan's accession to the D-8 once again demonstrates our country's commitment to the policy of multilateralism. This will give impetus to the development of Azerbaijan's relations within the organization, both in multilateral and bilateral formats. Membership in the D-8 and membership in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation are complementary elements in our country's foreign policy. Azerbaijan stands as a supporter of ensuring solidarity in the world, as well as Islamic solidarity. Today, Azerbaijan is committed to the ideas of Islamic solidarity and the traditions of intercultural dialogue. Azerbaijan is a state committed to its beliefs and national values. Azerbaijan is a state committed to Islamic values, the Islamic religion. As a result, in our modern era, our country is experiencing a new era of Islamic values, multiculturalism and tolerance. The political processes taking place in the world, wars and conflicts in Muslim countries, and the spread of Islamophobia in some countries once again clearly demonstrate the need for solidarity in the Islamic world. The membership of Azerbaijan in the D-8, which has played a bridge role between the East and the West throughout history and is one of the main cultural, religious and civilizational centers of the Islamic world, will also be a great contribution to strengthening Islamic solidarity, promoting Islamic values in the world and combating Islamophobia.

4. Digital Diplomacy March of Azerbaijan

The head of state's approach to digital diplomacy meets the requirements of the modern era. He knows that diplomacy does not consist only of traditional forms and positively evaluates the use of digital tools to increase the global influence of our country. For example, the role of social media in the President's relations with the public is very important. The presence of the state on digital platforms is a very effective tool for disseminating information and strengthening relations, especially on international issues. Ilham Aliyev is actively using these tools to ensure that our country presents itself more strongly in the international arena (Ismayilov & Guliyev, 2021).

Azerbaijan focuses its digital diplomacy mainly on three important areas: information exchange, cultural and educational diplomacy, and energy diplomacy. In the field of information exchange through social media, Azerbaijan is communicating its position to a wider audience on a global scale. In cultural and educational diplomacy, international relations are developing more intensively and rapidly through digital platforms. Azerbaijan presents its cultural heritage, traditions and educational opportunities to different corners of the world with digital tools. Finally, we are also implementing energy diplomacy more effectively through digital tools, because the energy sector requires digital analysis and information exchange on a global scale.

Digital diplomacy is of great importance in the President's social media activity and his efforts to promote Azerbaijan worldwide. He often delivers the latest information to the world through social media. This is very important for Azerbaijan, as it is the fastest and most effective way to attract the attention of the international community and protect the country's position. For example, during the Second Karabakh War, the President's statements on social media not only presented our country's position to a wide audience, but also ensured Azerbaijan's victory in the information war (Bayramov, 2022).

There are several important factors for the further development of digital diplomacy in the future. First, Azerbaijan should cooperate more with technological innovations and strengthen its digital infrastructure. Second, the country should train its specialists so that digital tools and new information technologies can push diplomats and political leaders to make faster and more effective decisions. Finally, cooperation with international organizations, especially the UN and the European Union, through digital diplomacy should be further increased. With these approaches, Azerbaijan will become a more effective and influential diplomatic player in the future.

The combination of traditional diplomacy and digital diplomacy creates new opportunities for Azerbaijan in its international relations. The combination of diplomacy brings great advantages to our country. For example, Azerbaijan's traditional diplomacy tools are brought to the public by widely covering the international visits, meetings and agreements of the head of state on digital platforms. Also, through digital diplomacy, our country can establish a wider network of contacts in the region and the world, attracting more partners and investors. This will help increase our economy and international influence.

Artificial intelligence and blockchain technologies, which are relevant for the modern era in the development of digital diplomacy, are powerful tools for increasing the effectiveness of modern diplomacy. Artificial intelligence accelerates the analysis of large volumes of data, optimizes decision-making in diplomatic processes, and offers effective solutions in the fight against disinformation. Blockchain technology can be used to ensure the security of diplomatic documents, make international agreements more transparent and traceable. At the same time, blockchain technology can ensure the immutability and authentication of diplomatic information, which strengthens cybersecurity (United Nations Development Programme, 2021). Azerbaijan should invest in research and projects aimed at the application of artificial intelligence and blockchain technologies to accelerate the development of digital diplomacy in this area. Cooperation between state agencies and academic institutions should be strengthened, and special attention should be paid to training personnel in the field of artificial intelligence and blockchain. In addition, these technologies can be more actively used in foreign policy strategies, making Azerbaijan's international diplomatic activities more effective and innovative.

More training and development opportunities should be provided to young people in Azerbaijan in the field of digital diplomacy, especially students studying international relations and diplomacy. Currently, specialized educational programs and training in this field are very limited. Therefore, it is important to develop improved programs and special educational materials for professionals. For example, students should be provided with lessons and training on the basics of digital diplomacy, skills in building international relations through social media, digital communication and information security. At the same time, opportunities for cooperation and networking with international organizations should be created for experts to gain experience. This will help them to be more agile and effective in their diplomatic activities in the future. Azerbaijan is progressing very rapidly in this field.

4. Response to Global Challenges in Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

The global challenges of the modern era have also had a serious impact on Azerbaijan's foreign policy and have led it to formulate more flexible, pragmatic, and multifaceted diplomatic strategies in the system of international relations. Azerbaijan's foreign policy, especially in the post-independence period, has gradually become adaptive and balanced in line with the changing international environment. In response to global challenges, the following main directions have been formed:

– Strengthening multilateral diplomacy – Azerbaijan expresses its position in solving global problems by actively participating in the UN, Non-Aligned Movement, OIC, GUAM, Organization of Turkic States and other international platforms (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2024).

– Energy diplomacy and contribution to energy security – Azerbaijan acts as a strategic partner against the backdrop of global energy challenges by contributing to Europe's energy security with the "Southern Gas Corridor" project.

– Proactive approach to climate change – With COP29 being held in Baku, Azerbaijan has gained an important position in environmental diplomacy and has become one of the countries responding to global climate challenges (COP29 Azerbaijan, 2024).

– Humanitarian and health diplomacy – During the COVID-19 pandemic, Azerbaijan sent aid to a number of countries and played an active role in strengthening international solidarity.

The geopolitical changes taking place in the Caucasus region – especially the new realities emerging after the 44-day Patriotic War of 2020 – have opened new pages in Azerbaijan's foreign policy. During this period, regional cooperation initiatives have increased, and projects such as the Zangezur corridor have been put forward. The strategic alliance with Turkey has deepened, and relations between the two countries have reached a new level with the Shusha Declaration. Peace negotiations with Armenia have continued in order to ensure peace and stability, and cooperation with international organizations in their role as mediators has been strengthened.

One of the new challenges is digital transformation and technological development. Azerbaijan's activities in this area are integrated into its foreign policy in the following areas:

– International technological cooperation – Development of strategic plans for the Digital Economy and cooperation with international technology companies have been developed.

–Cybersecurity diplomacy – Participation in international initiatives within the framework of global information security and harmonization of security protocols have been in the spotlight.

– Support for the UN digital cooperation agenda – Azerbaijan has expressed its position on digital equality, internet access rights and digital literacy at the international level.

Azerbaijan is actively responding to this challenge by joining international commitments to combat climate change. Baku's hosting of the COP29 conference in 2024 proves that Azerbaijan has gained international credibility in its climate policy. The plan to create “green energy” regions in Karabakh and East Zangezur is an example of both domestic policy and environmental diplomacy.

Azerbaijan pursues a consistent foreign policy aimed at protecting the norms of international law and the principles of territorial integrity. Active chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement (2019–2023) During this period, Azerbaijan's activities aimed at developing multilateral cooperation and promoting global equality have been highly appreciated at the international level. Azerbaijan's post-conflict diplomacy with Armenia - One of the main goals in foreign policy is to achieve a peace agreement and establish lasting stability in the South Caucasus (BP Statistical Review of World Energy, 2023). Azerbaijan's foreign policy is developing along a strategic line based on flexible, multifaceted and national interests in line with global challenges. Regional leadership claim, activeness in international cooperation, proactive position in energy and climate policy are indicators of Azerbaijan's growing role in the modern international system. These approaches are of great importance in terms of protecting the country's sovereignty and strengthening its position in the global environment.

5. Azerbaijan's Sustainable Foreign Policy Strategy and Prospects

In an era of rapidly changing global and regional challenges, sustainability, flexibility, and strategic orientation have become key principles in Azerbaijan's foreign policy.

Azerbaijan's foreign policy strategy is built on several main pillars, which ensure a sustainable foreign policy course. Territorial integrity, security, economic development and energy security have been identified as the main priorities of foreign policy. Azerbaijan is strengthening its position in global issues through its active participation in international organizations. At the same time, a strategy of balanced relations with Russia, the European Union, Turkey, the United States, China and neighboring states is being implemented

(Eurasianet, 2023). The fact that internal stability and economic growth provide sustainable support for foreign policy has turned Azerbaijan into a regional powerhouse.

Against the backdrop of changing global realities, Azerbaijan is dynamically reshaping its diplomatic priorities. In this regard, the main directions are as follows:

– Post-conflict diplomacy – aligning peace initiatives and reconstruction policies with foreign relations following the victory in Karabakh.

– Prioritizing climate and energy diplomacy – Azerbaijan's claim to global leadership in this area by hosting international events such as COP29.

– Digital and cyber diplomacy – Integrating digital transformation policy with international cooperation.

– Integration with the Turkic world – Active participation in the Organization of Turkic States and joint economic, military and cultural cooperation initiatives.

Risk management in foreign policy is an integral part of a sustainable strategy. Azerbaijan's work in this direction includes a neutral and balanced approach to challenges such as the Russia-Ukraine war and instability in the Middle East, gaining diplomatic advantage by referring to the basic principles of international law in the peace process with Armenia, and maintaining Azerbaijan's position as a stable supplier against the backdrop of the global energy crisis.

The factors that ensure stability in Azerbaijan's foreign policy serve to make it a stronger player on a regional and global scale in the future. The main prospects in this direction are:

– Attracting international investment in the restoration of Karabakh – Directing foreign investment to this region will strengthen the country's economic diplomacy.

– Green energy and climate leadership – Increasing Azerbaijan's influence in energy diplomacy through green energy projects.

– Promoting new transport and logistics corridors – The Middle Corridor and Zangezur Corridor projects will increase Azerbaijan's role in the Eurasian transport network.

– Strengthening the state's image internationally – Enhancing international reputation through sports, culture and humanitarian diplomacy.

Azerbaijan's foreign policy is no longer just reactive, but also proactive and enterprising. The model of sustainable diplomacy is not limited to defensive measures against global challenges, but also encompasses a strategic vision for the future. It is precisely this sustainable and flexible policy course that has made it possible for Azerbaijan to become an increasingly active and influential actor in the system of international relations.

Conclusion

The restoration of our territorial integrity and sovereignty as a result of our Glorious Victory ensured the restoration of the legal force of our Constitution throughout the territory of our country. As a confirmation of the commitment of our people and state to the Constitutional values and principles of sovereignty, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. Ilham Aliyev, declared 2025 the “Year of Constitution and Sovereignty” in our country. Our Constitution, prepared under the leadership of the National Leader Heydar Aliyev and adopted on November 12, 1995, plays a decisive role in the formation of modern Azerbaijan as a legal, democratic and secular state. The statement made by the President of Azerbaijan to the international press during his visit to one of the European capitals, "The Azerbaijani people have restored their territorial integrity, sovereignty and dignity on the battlefield," calls on every citizen of our victorious state to continue to show determination, patriotism and professionalism in order to overcome new challenges. The combat tactics used during the Second Karabakh War, which are considered a novelty in world military history, are being studied in the textbooks of relevant higher military schools around the world. The inclusion of the US Military Academy in this list is an appreciation and confirmation of the power of our army on the international level. The international initiatives of the Azerbaijani Leader, which include peace and constructive cooperation on a global and regional scale, are also highly valued by the international community and serve to enhance the positions of our state. Under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev, Azerbaijan, which pursues a pragmatic, independent and principled foreign policy in the global arena, is perceived as a reliable partner. The continuation of the global diplomatic confirmation of what has been achieved on the front line in compliance with international humanitarian law is one of the main priorities of action. Among the issues aimed at achieving in the foreign policy sphere, the abolition of the OSCE Minsk Group stands out. This is dictated by both objective political reality and legal issues. The subject matter of the Minsk Group has completely and completely disappeared since September 2023. In order to bring this issue to its logical conclusion from a legal point of view, Armenia's continued pragmatic approach is very important. Continuing activities to transport "green energy" to Europe will contribute to both deepening relations with partners and the formation of a new sphere of cooperation in the energy and economic sphere.

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