

AZERBAIJAN - TURKEY RELATIONS (1988 – 2018): “EVALUATING  
‘ONE NATION TWO STATES’ DISCOURSE”

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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## ABSTRACT

### AZERBAIJAN - TURKEY RELATIONS (1988 – 2018): “EVALUATING ‘ONE NATION TWO STATES’ DISCOURSE”

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This thesis attempts to examine the relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan with references to “one nation two states” discourse regarding the changes and continuities in political, military, energy, economic, social and historical fields. In this study, which elaborates the strategic dimensions of the relations according to the presidential terms in Azerbaijan, relations between two countries were analyzed based on the “strategic partnership”. With the in-depth interviews and media archive analysis, the thesis also seeks to find out the perception of the Azerbaijani and Turkish state officials, academics, experts and NGO representatives among each state and its effect on the relations.

**Keywords:** Aliyev, Azerbaijan, One Nation Two States, Strategic Partnership, Turkey

## ÖZ

### AZERBAYCAN – TÜRKİYE İLİŞKİLERİ (1988 – 2018): “BİR MİLLET İKİ DEVLET” SÖYLEMİNİN DEĞERLENDİRİLMESİ

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Bu tez, Azerbaycan ve Türkiye arasındaki ilişkileri “bir millet iki devlet” söylemine atıflarla siyasi, askeri, enerji, ekonomi, sosyal ve tarihi alanlardaki değişim ve devamlılıkları göz önünde bulundurarak incelemeyi hedeflemektedir. Azerbaycan’daki cumhurbaşkanları dönemlerine göre Türkiye – Azerbaycan ilişkilerinin stratejik boyutlarının ele alındığı çalışmada iki ülke arasındaki ilişkiler “stratejik ortaklık” temelinde incelenmiştir. Derinlemesine mülakat ve medya analizleriyle tez aynı zamanda Azerbaycanlı ve Türk devlet yetkililerinin, akademisyenlerin, uzmanların ve STK temsilcilerinin her bir ülkeye yönelik algısını ve ilişkilere etkisini açıklamaya çalışmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Aliyev, Azerbaycan, Bir Millet İki Devlet, Stratejik Ortaklık, Türkiye

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIOC	Azerbaijan International Operating Company
AK Party	Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi)
AMOCO	American Oil Company
ANKASAM	Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies
ASALA	Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia
AzSD	Azerbaijan Shah Deniz
AzSSR	Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic
BP	British Petroleum
BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation
BTC	Baku – Tbilisi – Ceyhan Oil Pipeline
BTE	Baku – Tbilisi – Erzurum Natural Gas Pipeline
CHP	Republican People’s Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi)
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
CSSN	The Council on State Support to NGOs under the Auspices of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan
DEFSA	The National Natural Gas System Operator
DTK	Democratic Society Congress (Demokratik Toplum Kongresi)
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FETÖ	Fetullahist Terrorist Organization (Fetullahçı Terör Örgütü)
FIFA	International Federation of Association Football
GNAT	Grand National Assembly of Turkey
GNP	Gross National Product
GUAM	Georgia/Ukraine/Azerbaijan/Moldova - Organization for Democracy and Economic Development
HLSC	High Level Strategic Cooperation Council

IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGA	Intergovernmental Agreement
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MİT	National Intelligence Organization (Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı)
MHP	Nationalist Movement Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi)
MP	Member of the Parliament
MÜSİAD	Independent Industrialist's and Businessmen's Association (Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NICO	Naftiran Intertrade Company
OIC	Organization of Islamic Conference
OMON	Special Purpose Police Unit (Otryad Politsii Osobogo Naznacheniya)
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
PFA	Popular Front of Azerbaijan
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
RTÜK	Radio and Television Supreme Council (Radyo Televizyon Üst Kurulu)
SAM	The Center for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan
SGC	Southern Gas Corridor
SOCAR	State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic
STAR	SOCAR Turkey Aegean Refinery
TAI	Turkish Aerospace Industries
TANAP	Trans Anatolia Natural Gas Pipeline

TAP	Trans Adriatic Pipeline
TIKA	Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency
TPAO	Turkish Petroleum (Türkiye Petrolleri Anonim Ortaklığı)
TRACECA	Transport Corridor Europe – Caucasus - Asia
TÜRKSAM	Turkish Center for International Relations and Strategic Analysis
TÜSİAD	Turkish Industry and Business Association (Türk Sanayicileri ve İş İnsanları Derneği)
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNEC	Azerbaijan State Economic University
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UNOCAL	Union Oil Company of California
YAP	New Azerbaijan Party (Yeni Azərbaycan Partiyası)
WBG	World Bank Group

To My Grandmother

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Literature Review and the Research Question**

The thesis aims to analyze the bilateral relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan in terms of diplomacy, economy, military, energy and history. While delineating the relations between these two countries “one nation two states” is used as a popular discourse by the officials and people of these two countries to indicate the proximity between Turkey and Azerbaijan. This discourse has been used since Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev’s term. However, its concept has transformed and gained different dimensions in decades. To understand the historical context, firstly the thesis focuses on the relations between Grand National Assembly of Turkey and Azerbaijan Democratic Republic between 1918 – 1920. During this period, common language, the ideological perspective of Turkism and supports of Turkey and Azerbaijan to each other in war conditions played a determining role. Then, the liberation movement in Azerbaijan starting from 1988 is examined. The effects of activities of PFA who led Azerbaijani liberation movement are also analyzed in the thesis. After that, the relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan was discussed regarding “one nation two states” discourse. Turkey’s attitude in Karabakh conflict also takes place in the thesis. This work asserts that the ground of bilateral relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan has widened and deepened with the improving political relations, cooperation in energy field and joint energy and transportation projects.

The literature about Turkey – Azerbaijan relations has mainly examined the historical perspective and a specific dimension of the bilateral relations such as energy, security and diplomatic relations between two states. For instance, Musa

Qasimli puts an emphasis on the Turkey's position in Azerbaijan's foreign policy. Qasimli also analyzes the visits of the officials from Turkey and Azerbaijan to examine the historical process between two states. For him, Turkey has remarkable assistance to Azerbaijan in the independence period of Azerbaijan but he also notes that Turkey – Russia relations is a restricting factor especially regarding Karabakh issue. He uses the archives of both states to examine the historical aspect of the relations between 1991 - 2003<sup>1</sup>. In another study, Svante E. Cornell analyzes the neighborhood and brotherhood relations between two countries and examined how the “one nation two states” discourse acted during the crisis period of the unsuccessful coup attempt in Azerbaijan in 1995 and Turkey - Armenia rapprochement period between 2008 - 2010. For him, Ankara's ill-advised rapprochement with Armenia in 2009 hurt its position with Azerbaijan significantly.<sup>2</sup> It is true but the immense interaction between peoples in Turkey and Azerbaijan and its effect on bilateral relations are neglected. Nazım Cafersoy studies Azerbaijan's attitude among Turkey and bilateral relations.<sup>3</sup> In spite of including a comprehensive analysis of the relations and foreign policy of Azerbaijan, it examines only Elchibey's term not the periods of all the presidents. One of the leading scholars who studies Turkey – Azerbaijan relations; Araz Aslanlı works on several dimensions of the relations. One of his articles concentrates on the relations between civil societies which the scholars generally do not study on.<sup>4</sup>

Fariz Ismailzade asserted that Turkish – Azerbaijani relations has gone through some qualitative changes. “Political circles in Ankara are putting more emphasis

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<sup>1</sup> Musa Qasımlı, *Azərbaycan Respublikasının Xarici Siyasəti (1991-2003)*, Mütercim Publications, Baku, 2015, p. 416.

<sup>2</sup> Svante E. Cornell, *Azerbaijan: Since Independence*, M. E. Sharpe, London, 2011, p.173.

<sup>3</sup> Nazım Cafersoy, *Elçibey Dönemi Azərbaycan Dış Politikası, Bir Bağımsızlık Mücadelesinin Diplomatik Öyküsü*, ASAM Yayınları, Ankara, 2001, p. 293.

<sup>4</sup> Araz Aslanlı, Vefa Kurban, “Türkiye Azerbaycan İlişkiler ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları”, *Marmara Turkic Studies Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Spring 2016, p.1.

on pragmatic and day-to-day issues such as trade and economics, rather than ideological and vague statements on the pan-Turkic brotherhood, which was the case in 1990s.”<sup>5</sup> It is true that ideological factors like pan-Turkist aspirations did not play a primary role in bilateral relations after 2000s. However, the significance of the solidarity derived from Turkish identity was not fully removed. Cavid Valiyev, an expert who studies Turkey – Azerbaijan relations relies on the historical and geographical concerns in Turkey – Azerbaijan relations. He mentioned the first visits from Azerbaijan to Turkey in his article.<sup>6</sup> But, the content of speeches of the presidents in parliaments are not given place. He also advocates that the developments during Azerbaijan Democratic Republic contributed the relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan since 1991 and emphasized the importance of energy and transportation projects like Baku – Tbilisi – Ceyhan Oil Pipeline, Baku – Tbilisi – Kars Railway and Trans Anatolia Natural Gas Project (TANAP). He also tells that Turkey’s position in Western institutions has opened a way for integration of Azerbaijan to the West. However, the effects of the deterioration of the relations between Turkey and West are not mentioned. Lastly, Elnur Sultanov describes the attitude of political fractions among Azerbaijan. According to Sultanov:

Geopolitical traditions of Turkish political parties emphasize Azerbaijan’s prominence in Turkey’s strategies in Eurasia, although there are also some important nuances in their understanding of the particular nature of this prominence: close cultural bonds between the two nations play a critical role in the Turkic-world-centered geopolitical tradition, while the Asia-centered geopolitical tradition attributes additional, anti-imperialist, meaning to Turkey–Azerbaijan cooperation; and the Moslem-world-centered tradition, in turn, interprets Azerbaijan’s significance in Eurasia in terms of

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<sup>5</sup> Fariz Ismailzade, “Turkey-Azerbaijan: The Honeymoon Is Over”, *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Volume 4, No. 4, Winter 2005, p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Cavid Valiyev, “Azərbaycan–Türkiyə Münasibətləri: 1991-2016”, Azərbaycan Respublikasının Xarici Siyasətinin Əsas İstiqamətləri (1991-2016), SAM Publications, Baku, 2017, p. 102.

Moslem solidarity as well as crude geopolitical calculations centered on the Caspian's rich natural resources.<sup>7</sup>

This study makes an attempt to develop a comprehensive approach to examine Turkey – Azerbaijan relations regarding the different attitudes to Eurasia.

This thesis aims to examine how “one nation two states” discourse has been evolved in Turkey – Azerbaijan relations. It focuses on the milestones which affect bilateral relations and also analyzes the changes and continuities of the policies between Turkey and Azerbaijan. The international factors that has an influence on the relations have also taken into account. This study asks: “How does the “two states one nation concept” transform in Turkey – Azerbaijan relations?” The thesis tries to find an answer to this question; “What are the changes and the continuities in the discourse of Turkish and Azerbaijani presidents regarding ‘two states one nation’ concept?”

## **1.2 Conceptualization and “One Nation Two States” Discourse**

By drawing on the research question, this study examines the discourses of the governments in Turkey and Azerbaijan among each other. The ethnic kinship between two countries has maintained while the policies about security, energy and economy enriched. Joint military exercises, State Oil Company of Azerbaijan's (SOCAR) great investments in Turkey, Turkey's increasing business with Azerbaijan and TANAP can be given as recent examples. The changing atmosphere from ideology-oriented discourse to strategic partnership in Azerbaijan - Turkey relations refers to diversification of cooperation fields between two states. While cultural, linguistic and ethnic proximity have preserved their importance, the economic and political scale have improved the significance of both countries in their foreign policy perceptions. The values shared by two countries and their

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<sup>7</sup> Elnur Sultanov, *Brothers in Arms or Brothers in The Dark?*, Turkish-Azerbaijani Relations: One Nation – Two States?, Routledge Press, 2016, p. 57.

common interests have consisted a reliable ground for strategic partnership. In this point, the “strategic partnership” concept should be examined. Despite wide range of using this term in describing the bilateral relations of the states, there is no definite definition.

Concept of a strategic partnership defining a bilateral relationship was first mentioned in the Camp David Summit in 1991: the Russian President Boris Yeltsin and the US President George Bush Sr. made a joint declaration, which stated that both states no longer consider each other enemies and commit to the development of a partnership based on mutual understanding and trust.<sup>8</sup>

As it is understood from there, the concept was evolved in the post-Cold War era. Wilkins defined term “strategic partnership” as it is mentioned below:

structured collaboration between states (or other actors) to take joint advantage of economic opportunities, or to respond to security challenges more effectively than could be achieved in isolation. Strategic partnering occurs both in and between the international and domestic sectors (levels). Besides allowing information, skills, and resources to be shared, a strategic partnership also permits the partners to share risk.<sup>9</sup>

National identities are also vital for constructing the strategic partnership. The components of the national identity is so vital for establishing a strategic partnership between countries according to some academics. Ametbek asserts that:

The basis of strategic partnership is national identities. National identity means how people of a particular country see themselves, perceive others and their nation’s place in the world. Culture,

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<sup>8</sup> Ieva Gajauskaitė, Strategic Partnerships in Foreign Policy: Comparative Analysis of Polish – Ukrainian and Lithuanian - Ukrainian Strategic Partnerships, *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review*, Vol. 11, 2013, p. 190 – 191.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas S. Wilkins, Russo–Chinese Strategic Partnership: A New Form of Security Cooperation?, *Contemporary Security Policy*, 29:2, 2008, p. 363.

language, religion, history and other ideational values constitute the national identity.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to Wilkins's remarkable contribution to construction of the academic background of "strategic partnership" concept, Czechowska asserts that strategic partnership in political studies should consist these seven distinguished features;

- partnership character of the relation,
- convergence of strategic goals of parties,
- mutual conviction that combining the efforts increases the probability of implementing cohesive strategic goals,
- authentic and long-term cooperation in order to fulfil the common goals,
- preference and intensity of contacts that surpasses the ordinary level (for those states) of closeness with other partners,
- highly developed infrastructure of relations,
- positive atmosphere of bilateral relations<sup>11</sup>

When Turkish – Azerbaijan relations are evaluated in this context; it can be seen that some of these points have been existing since the establishment of the relations but some were implemented by the time. Azerbaijan and Turkey are independent states and partnership character of the relation is located in bilateral relations regarding that no party is dependent to another one. Especially, in energy field, both countries have convergent aims in the region like occurring as an alternative in the gas corridor between Europe - Asia and increasing the importance of Baku – Ankara axis in global scale. There is also a mutual conviction between two countries which was increased after constructing Baku – Tbilisi – Ceyhan Oil Pipeline. It testified to the probability and possibility of the good results of other strategic energy and logistic projects. Azerbaijan and Turkey have acted for creating long-term projects and perspectives which have not just daily basis. The establishment of High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council in 2010 between two

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<sup>10</sup> Dinmuhamed Ametbek, The Basis of Strategic Partnership, ANKASAM, July 14, 2017, <https://ankasam.org/en/basis-strategic-partnership/> (accessed September 12, 2018)

<sup>11</sup> Lucyna Czechowska, The Concept of Strategic Partnership As An Input In the Modern Alliance Theory, *The Copernicus Journal of Political Studies*, No. 2, Torun, 2013, p. 51.

countries, has supplied a stimulus for the future achievements. In line with that, the nature of strategic energy projects is vital for long-term achievements which have positive effect on evolving Azerbaijan – Turkey strategic partnership.

The other point attaches importance to preference and intensity of contacts. Turkey has occurred as a primary preference for Azerbaijan in Ebulfaz Elchibey era, due to the ruling elite's pro-Turkey tendencies. In the following terms, the relations have extended in various fields and the policies among Turkey was not reversed in Azerbaijan. The stability and flexibility with Turkey have become an ongoing trend. The frequent visits of the state officials can be shown evidences of this point. Moreover, both presidents give a significance to pay their first visits to the other country after the elections. The infrastructure of the relations was started to be developed in the mid 90s after the ceasefire of Karabakh War and the initiation of economic recovery in Azerbaijan. The internalization of energy resources in Azerbaijan and institutionalization of Azerbaijan - Turkey relations have played a crucial role in this concern. Positive atmosphere of Azerbaijan and Turkey have continued in social expense thanks to the ethnic, linguistic and cultural proximity and political concerns. The solidarity which was inherited from the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century can be counted as a pivotal issue.

Cases such as the mutual financial supports from Azerbaijan to Turkey during World War I, Turkish military support for the liberation of Azerbaijani capital Baku and the efforts of intellectuals like Yusuf Akçura, Hesenbey Aghayev and Ziya Gökalp who spread Turkism ideology which the people in Azerbaijan and in Anatolia closer between in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The historical relations between Ankara Government in Anatolia and Azerbaijan Democratic Republic have played a paramount role in establishing the brotherhood between Turkish and Azerbaijani people and creating a ultra-sensitive atmosphere. However, it is not only derived from the cultural proximity. Also sharing common security perceptions and standing together against the same enemy -Armenia- influenced the relations. This period can be counted as an important source for laying the base of “one nation

two states” discourse. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, longing between Azerbaijani and Turkish communities have come to an end. Moreover, the political relations have regained speed decades after early 1990s. Turkey’s recognition of independence of Azerbaijan gave a positive impulse to relations. Meanwhile, the political tendency of Popular Front of Azerbaijan (PFA) who is one of the leading groups during independence struggle of Azerbaijan between 1988-1993 is close to Turkey. Because of her Turkish identity, secular structure, democracy and market economy; Turkey has become a “modal state” for Azerbaijan. Afterwards, President Ebulfaz Elchibey’s policies have created an emotional sphere with his references to normative values. “One nation” part of the “one nation two states” has become more determinant in Elchibey’s presidency era.

After Elchibey period, Heydar Aliyev’s presidency period is the manifestation of “one nation two states” discourse. Rather than the romantic elements about nationalist aspirations, the relations have transformed into pragmatic fields. Improving business potential and realizing energy projects have developed the content of the bilateral relations. In Ilham Aliyev era, the Heydar Aliyev’s principle of balanced foreign policy was preserved. The development of Azerbaijan’s capacity in several areas such as energy and improving investment facilities have served an opportunity to Turkey – Azerbaijan relations. “one nation two states” discourse began to express the strategic cooperation in this term. The energy projects have enlarged with the new projects and transportation facilities. At the same time, this discourse created the main framework of the relations that prevents the escalation of the crisis between two sides. Hence, the bilateral relations have paved a way for establishing multilateral regional mechanisms. Consequently, despite of changes in the governments of both countries, the relations followed the same path with little fluctuations.

### 1.3 Methodology

This thesis is based on the fieldwork in Azerbaijan and Turkey where 19 in-depth interviews were conducted. During my studies in Azerbaijani capital Baku and Turkish capital Ankara; the respondents were selected from different fields like; politics, bureaucracy, journalism, academy and civil society. The perceptions of the ambassadors, foreign policy makers, government officials, parliamentarians, academics, NGO representatives and journalists from both countries are quite explanatory for me to understand the components of “one nation two states” discourse. Various questions are asked in order to understand the content of the bilateral relations, Turkey’s stance in Karabakh conflict, Turkey’s position in Azerbaijani foreign policy, the milestones in bilateral relations, countries’ image among each other, the role of strategic energy and transportation projects and the relations between civil societies.

The thesis includes a detailed research of media archives in Turkish press. Analyzing the interviews, speeches of the presidents in the parliaments, agreements and documents have a positive impact on pursuing a proper discussion. Additionally, mainstream Turkish newspapers was reviewed in order to understand how issues related with bilateral relations were covered. These sources including Hürriyet, Tan, Cumhuriyet and Milliyet newspapers between February 20, 1990 and February 25, 1990 to understand the social and political interactions. Between 2008 – 2010, some of news from the internet sources were also analyzed. This analysis includes websites from both Azerbaijan Turkey and also international news agencies. Third major source of the data includes the speeches of the Azerbaijani, (Ebulfez Elchibey, Heydar Aliyev and Ilham Aliyev) and Turkish (Ahmet Necdet Sezer, Abdullah Gül and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan) presidents in order to see how bilateral relations are treated and referred to the leadership of both countries. The content analysis of remarkable agreements signed during Ottoman Empire epoch and Republic of Turkey era were examined to understand their influences on Turkey – Azerbaijan relations. The military concept of Azerbaijan

and the military doctrine of Azerbaijan, the protocols signed between Turkey and Armenia in 2009, the friendship agreement between Turkey and Azerbaijan signed in 1992, agreements signed during Ottoman Empire and Azerbaijan Democratic Republic era ; such as Batum Treaty, Kars Treaty, Moscow Treaty can be given as the other examples within this regard.

#### **1.4 Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis study has seven chapters. After the introduction which consists the first part, second chapter attempts to examine the main characteristics of Azerbaijan's foreign policy with special focus on Azerbaijani-Turkish bilateral relations. The content of "one nation two states" discourse is delineated to understand its main features. This chapter also analyzes the impact of internal and external factors affected bilateral relations.

Third chapter focuses on the analysis of the historical roots of "one nation two states" discourse with reference to the relations between Ottoman Empire and the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (1918-1920). It aims to understand the nature of the history of bilateral relations and how they shaped the relationship.

Fourth chapter concentrates on the pre-independence period of the Azerbaijan SSR. It refers to the activities and peculiarities of the Popular Front of Azerbaijan (PFA) who led the independence movement by 1988, during which special meanings attributed to the relationship between Azerbaijan and Turkey. The approach of PFA leadership also influenced the theme of the bilateral relationship in the early independence period.

Fifth chapter focuses on the presidency period of Ayaz Mutallibov and some of the most important milestones of Turkey – Azerbaijan relations; the recognition of independence of Azerbaijan and conflict in the Nagorno Karabakh. Turkish

position in these issues will be discussed in order to identify factors which have impacts on bilateral relations.

Sixth chapter analyses main characteristics of Elchibey era in the context of forming up the bilateral relations and its development. The nationalist aspirations and its effects on Azerbaijan - Turkey relations are discussed.

Seventh chapter concentrates on the characteristic of Heydar Aliyev's policies. The energy factor in the relations and the declaration of "one nation two states" discourse are examined in this part of the thesis. The transformation process of personal relations between presidents of the countries into institutional mechanisms is mentioned there.

Lastly, the eighth chapter aims to show the changes and continuities in bilateral relations during Ilham Aliyev era. The improvements in strategic partnership in military, energy and transportation are evaluated. The high-cost regional projects and multilateral mechanisms are examined in this framework.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY AND AZERBAIJAN - TURKEY RELATIONS**

#### **2.1 A General Overview to Foreign Policy of Azerbaijan**

After the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), Azerbaijan re-emerged in South Caucasus as a secular, democratic state with its rich energy resources, multi-ethnic structure, strong historical references to the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic and inherited territorial conflicts. In the first years of 90s, foreign policy of Azerbaijan focused on recognition of independence and establishing equal diplomatic relations with the other states in international system. Azerbaijan set the membership to international organizations and creating multilateral relations as a priority in her foreign policy.

In general, the main factors which effect Azerbaijan's foreign policy are her location between regional powers, energy resources, multi-ethnic structure and unsolved Karabakh conflict. Azerbaijan geographically stretches in the middle of regional powers like Turkey and Iran. Additionally, one of the neighbors of Azerbaijan is Russia who has emerged as an important factor in her political relations with a strong presence and dominance in country's historical background. Besides, Azerbaijan links "North - South Corridor" from Russia to Iran. As the members of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Russia and Azerbaijan have preserved some friendly connections in economic, political, humanitarian fields. According to the stats of Azerbaijani Ministry of Foreign Affairs which was updated lastly in 2013, 166 agreements were signed between Azerbaijan and

Russia.<sup>12</sup> In the post-Soviet era, close relations with Russia have maintained but Azerbaijan's dependency to Russia has diminished in time. After Muttalibov era, Elchibey acted faraway from Russia in his foreign policy choices. In Heydar and Ilham Aliyev era, Russia has preserved her importance but dependency was decreased gradually.

On the other part, in "East – West Corridor" Azerbaijan is an important link between Europe and Central Asia. In this point, Azerbaijan's position in Turkic world is crucial concerning the connection between Turkey and the Turkic states. Azerbaijan is a CIS member but at the same time has built up its relations with Western institutions like NATO and EU. The partnership programs in many fields have been continuing. Besides, the restructuring period of Silk Road increased the strategic importance of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan spared its energy against Russia backed Armenia in Karabakh War. In the recent times of USSR, the ethnic compound of the Karabakh region where Azerbaijanis had lived for decades started to change in favor of Armenians. With the collapse of Soviet Union, the ethnic tension between Armenians and Azerbaijanis erupted inevitably. The war started after the independence demand of Armenians in 1988 and continued till 1992. During the war, 20 percent of Azerbaijani territories was annexed by Armenia and more than 1 million Azerbaijani were obliged to flee from their lands because of the war conditions and Armenian suppression. In 1994, ceasefire was signed and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group was established for the peaceful solution of the conflict.

Afterwards, Azerbaijan focused on recovering the war-torn economy and multilateral foreign policy was initiated in the following steps. The Agreement on

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<sup>12</sup> The Relations Between The Republic of Azerbaijan and Russian Federation, Republic of Azerbaijan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 29.05.2013, <http://www.mfa.gov.az/files/file/Azerbaijan-%20Russia.pdf>, (Accessed Date: 08.07. 2018).

the Joint Development and Production Sharing for the Azeri and Chirag Fields and the Deep Water Portion of the Gunashli Field in the Azerbaijan Sector of the Caspian Sea widely known as “Contract of the Century” was signed in 1994. “The 7.4-billion-dollar agreement had 11 international oil companies (AMOCO, BP, McDermott, UNOCAL, SOCAR, Lukoil, Statoil, TPAO, Pennzoil, Ramco, Delta) representing 7 countries (Azerbaijan, United States of America, United Kingdom, Russia, Turkey, Norway and Saudi Arabia) as contractor parties.”<sup>13</sup> After processing the resources, Azerbaijan transferred her oil and gas to West via Baku – Tbilisi – Ceyhan and Baku – Tbilisi – Erzurum pipelines. These strategic energy projects have contributed Azerbaijan’s foreign policy maneuvers. Then these projects were pursued by bigger pipeline projects like; Trans Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP). After all of these projects and building Baku – Tbilisi – Kars Railway, Azerbaijan has become a remarkable regional actor in Caucasus.

The energy resources of Azerbaijan which was internationalized with the Contract of the Century is the major instrument in her foreign policy. The activities of State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR) have played a determining role especially in the economic relations of the country. SOCAR has investments in Turkey, Georgia, Ukraine, Romania. The new great projects like Baku – Tbilisi – Ceyhan (BTC), Baku – Tbilisi – Erzurum (BTE) pipelines, Trans Anatolian Natural Gas Project (TANAP), Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) and Baku – Tbilisi – Kars Railway contributed Baku’s engagement to West. My fieldwork demonstrates the importance and positive effects of such strategical projects in the transformation of the Azerbaijani – Turkish relations. These projects enhanced the vision of economic opportunities and defined the strategic preferences of the countries. Utilization of energy resources in Azerbaijan have positive results regarding relations with Turkey.

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<sup>13</sup> Oil Sector, Official Web-site of President of Azerbaijan Republic, <https://en.president.az/azerbaijan/contract> (Accessed Date: 10.05.2018)

Azerbaijan's multi-ethnic structure and secular historical background have impacts on her foreign policy, too. "Reflection of multicultural values in the foreign policy is aimed at propagating the 'Azerbaijani Model of Multiculturalism' around the world."<sup>14</sup> President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev defined his country's position "not only a geographical bridge also a cultural bridge between East and West" in the 7<sup>th</sup> UN Alliances of Civilization Global Forum, in 2016.<sup>15</sup> Considering her democratic and secular identity; the heritage of Democratic Azerbaijan Republic can be counted as an important experience for Turkic and Muslim world. The establishment of the modern Azerbaijan Republic is "regaining of independence" and symbolizes the continuation at the same time. The reflection of the rhetoric to Azerbaijan's foreign policy is adopting a balanced attitude. The foreign policy makers of Azerbaijan do not give a priority to religious and sectarian factors in shaping their priorities and preferences.

Azerbaijan's position in its region and ongoing conflict with Armenia are also a prior concern for defining the security concerns of the country. The solution of Karabakh conflict is the main priority of foreign policy of Azerbaijan. Genocide committed by Armenian forces on February 26, 1992 in Khojaly town where 613 people were killed, including 106 women, 63 children and 70 elderly people,<sup>16</sup> gained an important place in foreign policy of the country. Besides, the efforts for recognition of "Khojaly Genocide" are on the main agenda of foreign policy of Azerbaijan. The unsettled Karabakh conflict has caused hostility between two sides and become a frozen dispute. Thus, Azerbaijan bypassed Armenia in regional projects and always tried to make Armenia isolated.

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<sup>14</sup> Arastu Habibeyli, Reconsidering Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy on the 25th Anniversary of Restored Independence, *Perceptions*, Vol. 22, No. 1, Ankara, Spring 2017, p. 40.

<sup>15</sup> Ilham Aliyev attended official opening of 7th UNAOC Global Forum, Official web-site of President of Azerbaijan Republic, 26.04.2016, <https://en.president.az/articles/19563/print>, (Accessed Date: 10.05.2018)

<sup>16</sup> Khojaly Genocide, Republic of Azerbaijan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://mfa.gov.az/en/content/850> (Accessed Date: 08.07.2018)

When the foreign policy of Azerbaijan is classified in accordance with the changes of the presidents, it can be easily seen that; the main foreign policy attitude in Mutallibov era is pro-Russian. Then, Ebulfesz Elchibey adopted a pro-Turkish foreign policy. Afterwards, Heydar Aliyev and his successor Ilham Aliyev pursued a balanced policy. Azerbaijan signed Partnership and Cooperation Agreement in 1999 but kept her position in CIS. “Relations with NATO started when Azerbaijan joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (1992) and the Partnership for Peace (1994).”<sup>17</sup> At the same time Azerbaijan also signed agreements in military field with Russia. Azerbaijan is the first CIS country who appealed to Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) in 1991 meanwhile she has excellent relations with Israel. Azerbaijan took part in some regional international institutions like The Organization for Democracy and Economic Development – GUAM which is consisted of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova. As it is understood from Azerbaijan’s membership to different organizations, some of which are rival to each other, Azerbaijan did not prefer one to any other. As about 10 million populated country, she tried to benefit from the opportunities of every international institutions and maximize her national interest.

In some cases, it is possible to see the effects of ethnic identity in Azerbaijani foreign policy but it is not a general principle. For instance, her membership to Turkic Council aims to enhance the ties with the other Turkic states. Besides that, Azerbaijan’s neutral position has provided opportunity to become a bridge between NATO and Russia. “General Petr Pavel, Chairman of the NATO Military Committee and General Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and First Deputy Minister of Defense met

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<sup>17</sup> Relations with Azerbaijan, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 04.05.2017, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_49111.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49111.htm) (Accessed Date: 08.07.2018)

on September 7, 2017, in Baku.”<sup>18</sup> So, Azerbaijan’s multi-vectoral balance policy gave her a chance to turn out to be a rendezvous point South Caucasus.

Karabakh problem has been in a position of primary concern in foreign policy. Azerbaijan stretches between Turkey, Iran, Armenia and Georgia and has problems about the territorial integrity of the country because of Karabakh War. Keeping in mind that US, Russia and France co-chaired Minsk Group which was established to solve this problem. Nevertheless, the group did not take a concrete step. Azerbaijan choose a way to balance the policies among Russia, US and Europe. In this point, energy resources of Azerbaijan have occurred as a useful instrument to keep this balance. Azerbaijan also put an embargo on Armenia to deter her from the occupation in Azerbaijan’s territories. Likewise, Armenia is perceived as a hostile country by Turkey in the region. Common perceptions about Armenia opened a door to improve the cooperation with Turkey.

As of 2018, Azerbaijan has established diplomatic ties with 177 countries and is represented with 91 diplomatic missions in foreign countries and international organizations, while 62 foreign diplomatic missions operate in Baku.<sup>19</sup> After building ties with several countries, Azerbaijan started to take part in regional trilateral and quadrilateral mechanisms which is important in terms of cooperation, collaboration and friendship in her region. In this point, Turkey and Azerbaijan’s bilateral relations have been an operating plunger for the creation of such mechanisms. These include Turkey – Azerbaijan – Georgia, Turkey – Azerbaijan – Iran, Turkey – Azerbaijan – Turkmenistan, Turkey – Azerbaijan – Pakistan. Without a stable Azerbaijani – Turkish relations, engaging into such mechanisms

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<sup>18</sup> Chairman of NATO Military Committee, General Pavel met with Russian Chief of General Staff, General Gerasimov, Official Website of NATO, 07.09.2017, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_146764.htm?selectedLocale=en](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_146764.htm?selectedLocale=en) (Accessed Date: 10.07.2018)

<sup>19</sup> Habibeyli, p. 40.

would be quite difficult. Thus, Azerbaijan – Turkey relations can be delineated as the core of these multilateral bodies.

## **2.2 Azerbaijan’s Foreign Policy and “One Nation Two States” Discourse**

Azerbaijan has pursued a multilateral foreign policy which is based on balancing the regional and global powers. Turkey stands in a privileged place in Azerbaijan’s relations because of sharing the same border with Nakhchivan, speaking the same language and having a common historical background. Turkey’s recognition of Azerbaijan’s independence as a first state, her support during Karabakh War, diplomatic and financial assistance to Azerbaijan in the early years of independence years made two states closer. Historical kin, cultural proximity, ethnic and religious similarity, geographical closeness and joint regional projects have paved a way for excellent relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan. Two countries are described as “one nation two states” referring the connection of the people derived from history, language, ethnicity and the distinctive legal status of independent and sovereign states. “One nation two states” discourse was firstly denounced by Heydar Aliyev officially. An academic notes that Heydar Aliyev manifested the opinion that has been formulated by the communities of two countries for years because he is an intelligent politician who can read the psychology and opinion of the people.<sup>20</sup>

In this context of my fieldwork, the respondents were asked questions about the “one nation two states” concept. It is described as not only a “symbolic motto” but also “essence of the relations”, “clear characterization of the brotherhood”, “an expression of common identity”, “a vision”, “a framework” “a historical bridge” and “a political process” by the respondents. The concept of it has different meanings according to everyone else. Its meaning has varied from political understandings to historical experiences. However, all of these definitions except

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<sup>20</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Ankara, 16.01.2018.

“symbolic motto” refers to the closeness of two states. Departing from there, it can be said that the general assumption about Turkey – Azerbaijan relations are quite positive. This thesis demonstrates that, “one nation two states” concept relies on the strategic partnership between Turkey and Azerbaijan in whose emergence phase, the historical, cultural and ethnic elements have been defined as the main components.

When the formulation of strategic partnership between Turkey and Azerbaijan is examined, mutually understanding each other has been in a respectable position. According to some scholars, language is the basic point in strategic partnership. For Ametbek:

The best example of strategic partnership based on shared language is the partnership between the US and UK. To display the significance of language over religion we can also analyse the relation between Turkey and Azerbaijan, and the relations between Iran and Tajikistan. While Azerbaijanis in terms of religion share common values with Iran, linguistically they share almost the same language with the people of Turkey. Based on these inclinations, while Azerbaijan builds good relations with Iran, the relations between Baku and Ankara has a strategic character.<sup>21</sup>

In line with that, an Azerbaijani official asserts that; “the brotherhood of Turkey and Azerbaijan relies on history, civilization and language.”<sup>22</sup> Likely, an academic and a politician asserted that national roots, civilization, language are important in forming process of “one nation two state” discourse.<sup>23</sup> The dialects of Turkish spoken in Turkey and in Azerbaijan is quite close to each other and it accelerated the cultural interactions between two sides. The mutual understanding between two communities have eased the partnership between two states. This feature improves

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<sup>21</sup> Dinmuhammed Ametbek, The Basis of Strategic Partnership, ANKASAM, 14.07.2017, <https://ankasam.org/en/basis-strategic-partnership/> (Accessed Date: 12.10.2018)

<sup>22</sup> Interview by the author with an ambassador, Ankara, 11.01.2018.

<sup>23</sup> Interview by the author with a politician/academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

Azerbaijan's position in Turkic world and makes her more distinguished than the other states in Turkish perspective. A MP in Azerbaijan argues that "there are many Turks in the world but the ones who understand each other best and have the most homologous languages are Turkey and Azerbaijan. Kazakhs, Kyrgyzs, Turkmen and Uzbeks are also Turks but Anatolian and Azerbaijani Turks have difficulty in understanding them because of the lack of the common language<sup>24</sup>". Mutual comprehension of peoples made them closer. A chairman of a NGO in Azerbaijan asserts that "Turkey and Azerbaijan is closer to each other comparing with any other Turkic communities.<sup>25</sup>" A politician/academic puts an emphasis on the linguistic proximity with these words; "When I talk in Istanbul, people ask me if I am from Erzurum, Kars or Iğdır." According to him, "Azerbaijani can be perceived as a dialect of Turkish which is generally spoken in Eastern Anatolia."<sup>26</sup> This statement can be a good example for perception among Azerbaijanis in Turkey is like no other than native Turkish citizens. There is no doubt that this insight has paved a way for evolving the mutual interaction in the relations. Speaking the close dialects of Turkish provides people to feel themselves at home when they have been to Azerbaijan or Turkey. At the same time, speaking the same language strengthens the social bonds and adopting of Latin alphabet in Azerbaijan after USSR era catalyzed educational facilities between two countries.

It is true that having the same ethnic identity and language can be determinant and have positive effects to the relations but they are not the only distinctive features. For becoming a close partner, thinking and moving similarly in foreign policy actions are quite decisive. In this point, the mutual confidence and perception which draw on the intellectuals have appeared as a key factor.

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<sup>24</sup> Interview by the author with a member of Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 21.06.2017.,

<sup>25</sup> Interview by the author with a chairman of a NGO in Azerbaijan, Baku, 22.06.2017.

<sup>26</sup> Interview by the author with a politician/academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

Another academic mentions that “the same origin, the efforts of peoples and intellectuals in the last 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century have played a substantial role in the establishment of ‘one nation two states’ concept.”<sup>27</sup> A chairman of a Baku based NGO thinks that; “in Azerbaijan, cultural figures Yunus Emre and Ashik Veysel; in Turkey, poet Almas Yıldırım have played a great role in social, political life.”<sup>28</sup> The efforts of the intellectuals were also rooted in historical events and conditions. Similarly, a member of the parliament (MP) of Azerbaijan Republic refers to the historical origins; “the communities in Turkey and in Azerbaijan are same and they are both Dede Qorqud’s grandchildren.”<sup>29</sup>

The intellectuals lived especially in Azerbaijan during 20s, benefited from the language proximity and produced articles, poems, songs which familiarized Turkish and Azerbaijan culture. The popular “Çırpınırdın Karadeniz” and “Laleler” were the poems of Azerbaijani intellectuals which were written during the Independence War period in Turkey and Islamic Army of the Caucasus’s march to Baku. Furthermore, the personal figures had a remarkable effect in building the bridge between Turkish and Azerbaijani history. During Ottoman and Safavid empires and also modern Turkish Republic and USSR; two communities have lived under the states which stand in different blocs but it did not affect the general perception of the people.

Besides these points, “geography is still so valid in today’s international relations and the geographical closeness is the main factor in the depth of the bilateral relations” for a director of a think tank in Baku.<sup>30</sup> A Turkish official put an emphasis on the culture and geography stating that “our cultural relations dating

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<sup>27</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>28</sup> Interview by the author with a chairman of a NGO in Azerbaijan, Baku, 22.06.2017.,

<sup>29</sup> Interview by the author with a MP in Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 24.06.2017.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with a director of a think-tank in Azerbaijan, 20 June 2017.

from the history and our geographical connection made us one nation”.<sup>31</sup> Turkey and Azerbaijan benefits from their geographies in bilateral relations because it is quite important in the issue of transferring military or financial support in the past when the transportation facilities were quite weaker, comparing today’s world. When important projects like Baku – Tbilisi – Ceyhan Oil Pipeline, Baku – Tbilisi – Erzurum Natural Gas Pipeline, TANAP and Baku – Tbilisi – Kars Railway are observed, it can be seen that geographical factor is so valid. If these two countries located far from each other, it would be more expensive and difficult to realize such projects and there would be no need to realize them.

Geography played a significant role in occurrence of the historical relationship and strategic partnership. The frequent visits from every part of the public and tense relations were catalyzed by the geographical position of both countries. Turkey plays a vital role for the transition of energy sources of Azerbaijan to Western markets and democratic, secular and Turkish identity of Turkey who has a free market economy is compatible with Azerbaijan’s foreign policy direction. Conversely, an academic puts particular emphasis on the soft power of Turkey rather than geographical concerns arguing that “strategic priorities of these two countries have played a determinant role in relations.”<sup>32</sup> There is no doubt that, Turkish soft power in Azerbaijan created a fertile ground for a cultural proximity but the geographical factors should be neglected in this sense. According to another scholar, “Turkey – Azerbaijan relations evolved spontaneously in its own natural process and compromised an important position in thought, daily life, politics and foreign affairs of two states. Nor Turkey neither Azerbaijan have a special effort about that.”<sup>33</sup> Many people watching Turkish television, supporting Turkish sport clubs, listening Turkish music and pursuing developments in Turkey have familiarized with the cultural elements and values in Turkey. But the main

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<sup>31</sup> Interview by the author with an ambassador, Baku, 23.06.2017.

<sup>32</sup> Interview by the author with a scholar, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>33</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Ankara, 16.01.2018.

instrument that make Azerbaijan – Turkey relations strategic are the shared history and current concerns and interests.

Consequently, the efforts of intellectuals have formed a fruitful ideological background for the proximity between Turkey and Azerbaijan. The geographical factors increased the cultural and military interactions. The language proximity opened a door to the mutual understanding and forming a social ground. All of these factors gathered and then founded an infrastructure for the close political relations. Such kind of close relations are upgraded to the strategic partnership level with the institutionalized mechanisms between two countries especially after mid 90s.

In general, Turkey – Azerbaijan relations are defined as “strategic partnership”, “unique”, “brotherhood”, “twin states”, “special”, “obligatory”, “very good”, “the most exclusive”, “natural alliance” and “strong” by the respondents. Such characterizations show that Turkey has a privileged position in Azerbaijan’s foreign policy and vice versa. Both countries see each other as reliable partners rather than ordinary neighbors. It was also based on the cooperation during the critical times like Karabakh War.

The mutually shared perceptions of threats and opportunities extended the cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey. An academic identifies that “Turkey is a single country that Azerbaijan can trust both in economic and political terms.”<sup>34</sup> In this vein, Karabakh War indicated that Turkey was the only country who stayed behind Azerbaijan in political terms. This tendency of Turkey increased her credibility among Azerbaijan. Turkish credibility did not end just after the ceasefire and then continued in diplomatic terms. A Turkish official mentions that, “Azerbaijan is a distinct country for Turkey also from the perspective of Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In general, Turkish people love Azerbaijan and it reflects to the

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<sup>34</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 24.06.2017.

official foreign policy of Turkey”. Starting from there, it can be asserted that, in Turkey there is a resemblance between the approach of the state and people among Azerbaijan.

As it is understood from the in-depth interviews, there has been a warm atmosphere in the working conditions of Turkish and Azerbaijani diplomats. A senior Turkish official also notes that “he stands in a more privileged position in Azerbaijan than all the ambassadors in the world. Because while Turkey has been facing with some problems around the world, Azerbaijan has supported Turkey and they always work with a positive agenda.<sup>35</sup>” The main feature of the relations is based on developing the political ties, enhancing the economic and touristic capacity and increasing the cultural potential of the relations rather than solving problems in these fields. These efforts serve advantages for both sides. An Azerbaijani official defines that; Turkey – Azerbaijan relations stand in the most exclusive position in the regional and global scale. He declares that he is in a more distinctive position in Turkey like Turkish ambassador’s position in Baku. Then he tells that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan welcomed him sympathetically and everybody in Turkey treat him like their own ambassador. Hence, he says that “Turkish officials offered him to give a room in the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs jokingly because he was seen just like themselves.”<sup>36</sup> As a result, such declarations and explanations mean that a healthy dialogue mechanism was formed between the ministries of foreign affairs and the institutional mechanisms of the states are able to cooperate in international relations and work to achieve mutual goals.

Turkey has always been perceived as “the most important country” in Azerbaijan both in Ebulfaz Elchibey, Heydar Aliyev and Ilham Aliyev eras. Only in Mutallibov era, Turkey was perceived as “an important country”.<sup>37</sup> Soon

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<sup>35</sup> Interview by the author with an ambassador, Baku, 23.06.2017.

<sup>36</sup> Interview by the author with an ambassador, Ankara, 11.01.2018.

<sup>37</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

afterwards the independence of Azerbaijan, the relations were put on the right track. Diminishing effect of Russian hegemony in the region and Turkey's fast recognition of Azerbaijan's independence are important facts in this regard. In line with that, the relations pursue a positive line both in Ebulföz Elçibey's, Heydar Aliyev's and İlham Aliyev's term. An academic argues that "the relations have developed on an increasing dynamism for 25 years and importance of Turkey's place in Azerbaijan's foreign policy cannot be compared with the other countries."<sup>38</sup>

Officials of the ministries of foreign affairs in both countries consider that the bilateral relations between these two countries do not have a similar type in anywhere around the world. According to one of them; it can be thought that:

The bilateral relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan is similar with Germany – Austria relations but Germany and Austria are results of German dualism. Today, Germany and Austria have emerged as two German states as a consequence of the division coming from the past but the situation in Turkey and Azerbaijan is quite different. It is impossible to talk about dualism in context of these two countries. There is a separation which is brought by historical conditions. Despite these, two countries have maintained supporting each other.<sup>39</sup>

In this point, "one nation two states" is important because "one nation" discourse of this principle rejects a dualism in relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan. From religious perspective, Turkey and Azerbaijan have a sectarian divide but it does not any remarkable negative effects on political or social relations. For a director of a think tank and a MP, "Ukraine and Russia are 'siblings' but they have serious conflicts. There is a war especially in Ukraine. Likewise, the members of EU, US – EU relations have experienced problems but there are close relations in humanitarian field, economy, politics and security between Turkey and

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<sup>38</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 24.06.2017.

<sup>39</sup> Interview by the author with an ambassador, Baku, 23.06.2017.

Azerbaijan.<sup>40</sup>” Ukraine and Russia have become hostile states even if they speak the same language with a little difference in their dialects and locate geographically close to each other. Thus, without sharing a common perspective about regional and global issues, it is not possible to become sister states. Comparing with Ukraine – Russia, uniqueness of Turkey – Azerbaijan relations can be understood better. Being “one nation” is not a guarantee for safe, permanent and stable relations as it is observed in the relations between North Korea and South Korea. Due to the ideological controversies, even relatives could not see each other who have been obligatorily separated for decades. According to an academic; “in one sense, these relations may liken the relations between US - Israel concerning the depth of the relations or maybe like Russia – Belarus relations.”<sup>41</sup> Sultanov argues these about the relations about US – Israel and Azerbaijan - Turkey relations:

Azerbaijani–Turkish relations are not comparable to US–Israeli relations. Unlike Israel, Azerbaijan has 16 percent of its territory occupied by Armenia. Unlike Israel, Azerbaijan witnessed the number of refugees from its regions occupied by Armenia (disregarding those expelled from Armenia) reaching 600,000 in the span of five years between 1988 and 1993. Unlike Israel, Azerbaijan is the country which has been militarily and politically powerless in the face of the Armenian onslaught. Unlike the US, Turkey has never supported a militarily powerful country and its military advances by providing it with military help changing the balance. As noted earlier, beyond advisers, Turkey never made any military move. Turkey supported an occupied country diplomatically and tangibly only by closing off its borders with the occupier.<sup>42</sup>

It is true that, Turkey did not intervene to Karabakh War in military terms. However, in the history of Azerbaijan – Turkey relations, liberation of Baku in 1918 and Azerbaijan’s financial support to Turkish Independence War have made

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<sup>40</sup> Interview by the author with a director of a think-tank in Azerbaijan, Baku, 22.06.2017.

<sup>41</sup> Interview by the author with a scholar, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>42</sup> Elnur Sultanov, *Brothers In Arms or Brothers In the Dark?*, Turkish-Azerbaijani Relations: One Nation – Two States?, Routledge Press, 2016, p. 41.

serious marks. On the other hand, US and Israel do not have common in linguistic, cultural, religious terms. The activity of Israel lobby in US is one of the prominent factors in US – Israel relations but lobby activities are not the major topic in Turkey – Azerbaijan relations. The economy has placed in a remarkable position regarding US – Israel relations but economic factors are the only main feature in Turkey – Azerbaijan relations. Israel wants to control American establishment in favor of themselves but there is a spontaneous sympathy to Azerbaijan in Turkey which have grown for decades.

The “one nation two states” discourse has based on the fraternal ties between two countries but having only a common historical background or kinship between two countries are not adequate for maintaining a healthy relationship. Many people from several cities of Azerbaijan came to Çanakkale to help Turkish soldiers during World War I and likely Turkish troops went to Baku to liberate the city from occupant Bolshevik and Dashnak forces. These mutual helps have instituted a ground for the friendship between two peoples. Strong relations between two sides have roots in history, but perceiving Armenia as a “common enemy” in the region especially during Karabakh War and Turkey’s geopolitical importance in transiting of resources of Azerbaijan has provided to the perpetuation of relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan. In this point, it should be clarified that; being against Armenia together do not open a way for a strategic cooperation. As Wilkins asserts:

Strategic partnerships are primarily ‘goal-driven’ rather than ‘threat-driven’ arrangements. Following from this, no ‘enemy’ state is identified by the partnership as a ‘threat’, though the partnership may be concerned with joint security ‘issue-areas’ – such as terrorism, separatism, or religious fundamentalism, for example.<sup>43</sup>

Turkey and Azerbaijan have met for consultations and negotiations in some conditions. They also acted together in Karabakh conflict, however it is not a

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<sup>43</sup> Thomas S. Wilkins, “Alignment, not Alliance: The Shifting Paradigm of International Security Cooperation”, *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 38, Issue 1, 2012, p. 61.

denominator of the strategic partnership because it is a concept which necessitate cooperation for longer terms and several subjects.

As a result, the memories of both states and ethnic kinship have paved a way for a cooperation between two states and “one nation two states” concept was born with the references to the mentioned facts. Despite the absence of a complex interdependence between these two states, “one nation two states” discourse has been enhanced with the increasing investments and military relations. The nature of Azerbaijani – Turkish relations have transformed by time like all type of bilateral relations. In particular after the ceasefire in Karabakh, the geographical concerns and regional energy and transportation projects have turned the bilateral relations into strategic partnership.

### **2.3 The International Factors Which Affect Bilateral Relations**

Azerbaijan and Turkey locate in a challenging geography. The alliances and their ties with international organizations also have impacts on both countries’ foreign policy preferences and priorities. As global powers, US and Russia, and as regional states Iran, Armenia and Georgia have effects on bilateral relations. Russia’s historical presence in the region and Azerbaijan’s neighbors; Iran and Armenia have a severe repercussion on shaping the balanced foreign policy of Azerbaijan. Turkey’s geographical position, her membership to NATO and negotiations with EU affected the policy making processes and also had influence on Turkey’s relations with Azerbaijan. Particularly, in the early years of independence Turkey’s NATO membership and experiences in United Nations contributed to the foreign policy actions of Azerbaijan. US policies in the region, have also an effect on the foreign policy of both countries. For example; the US approval of Baku – Tbilisi Ceyhan Oil Pipeline was important for both countries.

Armenia’s allegations about 1915 events and land demands from Turkey which is clearly mentioned in her official documents like constitution and independence

declaration caused tensions in Turkey – Armenia relations. Additionally, Armenian occupation of Azerbaijani lands has been still going on. Because of the mutual threat perception from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkey have acted together in several areas. Turkey stands always in a special position in Azerbaijan's foreign policy. During Karabakh War, Turkey tried to defend the thesis of Azerbaijan in diplomatic arena. While doing that, Turkey used her ties with the other countries to tell that Azerbaijan is the rightful side of the conflict. Except Turkey, international actors do not play an affirmative role about Karabakh issue. OSCE Minsk Group, which was established for the peaceful solution of Karabakh problem, did not find a permanent solution and the conflict has remained frozen. In this point, Turkish supports to Azerbaijan in Karabakh conflict made these two countries closer.

After Azerbaijan had gained the sufficient experience and improved her structural mechanisms, Turkey's role of being gate between West and Azerbaijan declined. But in the early years of independence, Turkey contributed remarkably to Azerbaijan's relations with Western community. Hence, in the post-Cold War era, Turkey attached importance to her relations with post-Soviet Turkic states and in this regard, Azerbaijan was seen as a connection point between Turkic republics and Turkey. Till the end of 90s, Turkey acted as a catalyzer in Azerbaijan's relations with Western institutions. Reversely, an academic asserts that "Turkey a negative effect on Azerbaijan's relations with West because Azerbaijan also thinks about Turkey and says 'yes' to the partnerships which do not harm Turkey's interests and limits herself.<sup>44</sup>" Turkey's ties with West have sometimes unfavorable effects on Azerbaijan – Turkey relations. During the Turkish - Armenian normalization period, EU and US have insisted on solving the problems between these two countries and the conditions irritated Azerbaijan. Thus, it had negative effects on Turkey – Azerbaijan relations. Regardless of this term, Turkey and Azerbaijan has stood in the same position against Armenia. After 2010, the

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<sup>44</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Ankara, 16.01.2018.

relations have taken serious steps. We can say that, Azerbaijan and Turkey have acted in the same direction in general. Two states have tried to have a protective position towards a threat perception and take some supportive actions to each other. An Azerbaijani official refers the “intense and immense” structure of the interactions and put an emphasis on three points while identifying Turkey’s position in foreign policy of Azerbaijan:

- NATO membership, EU negotiations and its partnership with great states; Turkey has strategic relations with the countries all around the world but Turkey – Azerbaijan relations are more strategic.
- Energy demand of Turkey; in this point Iraq can be an alternative for Azerbaijan in the region however, it is so difficult because of the problems in Iraq.
- Turkish brotherhood; Azerbaijan is the first country who supports Turkey in the most difficult times.<sup>45</sup>

Turkey’s supportive actions has improved Turkey’s image among Azerbaijani politicians during Karabakh War but the hegemon powers like Russia, US and France has become more determinant in the solution process of the conflict and it reduced Turkey’s capacity to be more effective in this issue. In this regard, an Azerbaijani MP mentions that:

Turkey’s and Azerbaijan’s mutual aim of becoming a secular Turkic country and integration to West has presented compatible goals to both sides. In the first phase of independence of Azerbaijan, Turkey’s NATO membership and her relations with EU have contributed Turkey – Azerbaijan contacts positively. If Turkey accessed to EU, Azerbaijan would benefit from that. But, nowadays Turkey has been experiencing serious disputes with European countries. So, Turkish contribution to Azerbaijan’s relations with West is not that big today.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Interview by the author with an ambassador, Ankara, 11.01.2018.

<sup>46</sup> Interview by the author with a member of Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 23.06.2017.

Turkey's accession to EU has not finalized yet and some tensions always occur in Turkey – EU relations. Therefore, Turkey's position has helped in the integration period but could not have a transformative role in Azerbaijan – EU relations.

A different academic asserts that; "Turkey is now a very different country than in 1990's. The religious factor in Turkish politics is more dominant and there is an anti-western rhetoric in Turkish politics. Relationship between President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Western leaders are not so good. Thus, for Azerbaijan Turkey is no longer a model how to build a relationship with West or EU. Azerbaijan decided to have her own way."<sup>47</sup>

NATO acts as a vital institution in Azerbaijan's relations with West. An academic indicates that:

In 90s, Turkey has stood between Azerbaijan and West with the silent approval of US and Europe. However, US and EU have changed their look to the relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey in first years of 2000s. EU and NATO preferred to established direct relationship because they noticed that Turkey's position, political dominance and image was growing in Azerbaijan. Especially US transferred Azerbaijan's NATO integration process from Turkey to Latvia.<sup>48</sup>

In this point, it can be asserted that NATO has played a restrictive role in Turkey – Azerbaijan relations. However, military relations continued and developed with the bilateral agreements. Thus, changing Latvia with Turkey did not have a remarkable impact on Turkey – Azerbaijan relations in military terms. NATO may not want more complex relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan but Latvia cannot

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<sup>47</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 21.06.2017.

<sup>48</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 24.06.2017.

serve a potential that can compete with Turkey's image and effectiveness. For another academic, Turkish role in Azerbaijan – West relations has started to be changed in 2000s. It has three main reasons:

- Azerbaijan has gained experience in developing her relations with West
- Western countries did not like establishing relations with Azerbaijan via Turkey
- Turkey and Azerbaijan have become distant because of the internal factors and foreign policy perspectives of Turkey.<sup>49</sup>

It should be noted that, expiring of the Turkish model for Azerbaijan does not implicate the end for the strategic relations between two countries because the relations do not only depend on the Turkish contribution in Azerbaijan's relations with West. The most important point regarding this issue is adopting Turkey as a model because of Azerbaijan's own structure which is suitable with the values of Turkey. In other words, it can be said that Turkish model was not imposed to Azerbaijan by any other country. Inasmuch as, Turkey's validity in Azerbaijan's foreign policy did not diminish in the other areas. By the time, the relations have focused on the regional concerns and the strategic relations were presented as a unique model to the world.

A scholar argued that "when there is pressure on Turkey from the West, Azerbaijan stands by Turkey. Similarly, when there is pressure on Azerbaijan, Turkey stands so. International pressure also brings two countries together."<sup>50</sup> A Turkish official notes that, Azerbaijan does not need support in this context anymore because she has become a strong country and defines Turkey and Azerbaijan as "two countries always stand together and support each other in all international platforms."<sup>51</sup> The

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<sup>49</sup> Interview by the author with a scholar, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>50</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 21.06.2017.

<sup>51</sup> Interview by the author with an ambassador, Baku, 23.06.2017.

main point in the change of Turkish role in Azerbaijan's ties with West is acquiring the sufficient experience and proficiency.

On the other hand, another academic argues that Azerbaijan is aware of Turkey's active policies in her Western and Eastern region. So, the relations are not only because of emotions also based on pragmatist approach. For him, "Azerbaijanis relishes when Erdoğan slams Europeans because they deserve it and Azerbaijan notices the same attitude of Europe among herself."<sup>52</sup> Azerbaijan has faced with disagreements with European countries especially about their stance in Karabakh issue. Pro-Armenian statements from European countries caused an unreliable atmosphere from time to time. Therefore, Erdoğan's rhetoric delighted Azerbaijanis because they thought that their closest partner could challenge Europe.

Recently, Azerbaijan has not fully refused the Turkish policies among Western countries but selected to act on her own as an independent state. Besides, Turkey's role in Azerbaijan's foreign policy cannot be restricted with Azerbaijan's relations with the Western countries or international organizations. Turkey clearly supported Azerbaijan also in the early 2000s during the crisis between Iran and Azerbaijan about the statue of Caspian Sea.

Azerbaijan's geopolitical position is important for Turkey's connection with Central Asia and Turkey is vital for Azerbaijan fore being a transit route to Europe. From this context, an Azerbaijani official emphasizes that; "for Azerbaijan, Turkey is a door to Europe and for Turkey, Azerbaijan is a door to Turkic world."<sup>53</sup> Azerbaijan and Turkey are perceived as connection points by each other. Azerbaijan's geographical position between Turkey and Turkic republics have increased her potential among Turkey. Additionally, in Turkish policy, Azerbaijan

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<sup>52</sup> Interview by the with an academic, Baku, 22.06.2018.

<sup>53</sup> Interview by the author with an ambassador, Ankara, 11.01.2018.

has been seen as a new emerging market alternative since the 90s and Azerbaijan's energy resources has been utilized from the beginning of 2000s. Especially about the transportation and trade, Azerbaijan and Turkey have taken a significant place in newly burgeoning ancient Silk Way which connects China, Central Asia and Europe. According to a politician/academic,

Turkey is a 'Caucasian state' and sees Azerbaijan as a 'golden bridge' to Central Asia and Eurasia. In this sense, Russia – Turkey relations have an impact not only on Turkey – Azerbaijan relations also on Turkey's relations with Turkic world. When Turkish – Russian relations are remote, it means that other Turkic states are on the hook. At the same time, the Turkic Muslims in Russia can experience some difficulties because of that.<sup>54</sup>

In this regard, it can be said that Turkey is a determinant country especially about the developments about the Muslim Turkic communities in Russia. Turkey pays attention to the issues about Turkic Muslims but the core of the relations between Turkey and Russia are mainly about energy. For instance, Turkey has supported Crimean Tatars during the annexation of Russia in 2014 and later on. But, Turkey could not change the politics of Russia over this region. While the rapprochement between Turkey and Russia has been more visible in 2018, about the situation in Syria these two states did not reach a permanent solution till now. From this point of view, the intimate climate in Turkish – Russian relations does not seem to give a tangible result on behalf of Azerbaijan in context of Karabakh. When Russia's tight relations with Armenia is considered, the possibility of any good reflection has become weaker.

There are also doubts about utilizing Azerbaijan's position in Turkish foreign policy efficiently. An academic thinks in this way and asserts that; "Azerbaijan's position as a connector between Turks in Central Asia and Anatolia cannot be used

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<sup>54</sup> Interview by the author with a politician/academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

enough.<sup>55</sup>” It has some reasons; because of Karabakh War, Azerbaijan steered her energy into this conflict for a long period of time. Secondly, before the establishment of Turkic Council, the international institutions which were founded by the Turkic republics had not been so ascendant. Third, having no solution in the statue of Caspian Sea for long years built a barrier in front of advancing the relations. Turkey had endeavored to enter the Turkic geography on her own just after the end of Cold War but did not encounter with the expected outcomes.

In a globalized world, it is impossible to direct the bilateral relations without any effects of foreign powers. US and Russia are the important global powers which are also effective in South Caucasus. For a MP, “both of them do not want Turkey and Azerbaijan to transform into a stronger country because of that, they put obstacles.<sup>56</sup>” An Azerbaijani official notes that “some foreign circles do not perceive the progress of Turkey – Azerbaijan relations as positive developments.<sup>57</sup>” As it is understood from the responses to the question about the impacts of the roles of external actors during the in-depth interviews; a robust relations between two countries were not preferred. Therefore, they leave the occupation in Karabakh which disturbs both Azerbaijan and Turkey in limbo. Here it should be also emphasized that an academic’s delineation of Karabakh as a “black stone” placed between Turkey and Azerbaijan. Karabakh conflict has disrupted the finalization of the “Turkish line” in the region. Instabilizing the region by way of Karabakh has provided leverage to Russia. At the same time, it is a “mine” for preserving the Russian hand there.<sup>58</sup> Russia has sold weapons to both Armenia and Azerbaijan and gained economic advantage while she has continued her efforts in terms of enduring political hegemony in Caucasus.

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<sup>55</sup> Interview with an academic, June 19, 2017.

<sup>56</sup> Interview by the author with a member of Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 23.06.2017.

<sup>57</sup> Interview by the author with an ambassador, Ankara, 11.01.2018.

<sup>58</sup> Interview by the with an academic, Baku, 22.06.2018.

Interfering the connection between Turkey and Azerbaijan by the occupation of Karabakh has decreased the level of geopolitical engagement between two countries. Meanwhile, it lengthens the highway connection between two states which have also have adverse effects in trade.

As well as Armenia, the Armenian diaspora which intends to harm both Turkey and Azerbaijan has bad effects. Regarding the US, the efforts and attempts of Armenian diaspora aimed to decrease Turkey and Azerbaijan's role in the region. Armenian lobby in US, do not want Azerbaijan and Turkey to create good relations with US. An academic states that "in addition to the global ambitions of US and Russia, the other two countries in the region Iran and Armenia do not prefer excellent Azerbaijan – Turkey relations."<sup>59</sup> In the gas supply of Turkey, Iran and Azerbaijan are rivals. Thus, Iran does not want Azerbaijan to prosper in the region. US and Russia keep Azerbaijan close to themselves rather than improving her facilities which make her act independently.

Turkey's position between Western countries/alliances and Azerbaijan in the first re-independence years has positive effects to Azerbaijan's Western ties. Like this, Azerbaijan had endeavors to become a negotiator between Turkey and Russia during the war jet crisis between two countries when Russian Su-24, an all-weather attack aircraft, was shot down by Turkish F-16s in the Turkey-Syria border in 2015.<sup>60</sup> According to an academic, "President Ilham Aliyev contributed to Turkish – Russian relations with efforts of reconciliation between Erdogan and Putin."<sup>61</sup> The better Turkish Russian relations means Azerbaijan can act more comfortably in her policies among her two significant partners. Otherwise, Azerbaijan's

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<sup>59</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 24.06.2017.

<sup>60</sup> Turkey Shoots Down Russian Warplane on Syria Border, BBC, 24.11.2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-34907983> (Accessed date: 25.09.2018)

<sup>61</sup> Interview by the with an academic, Baku, 22.06.2018.

frequent interactions with one of them can disturb the other. Another academic claims that

Azerbaijan supports Turkey strongly during this period. One of the best indicators of this attitude is his pool which was conducted in 14 universities in Azerbaijan. Results show that about 90 percent of the participants acknowledged Turkey to be right.<sup>62</sup>

It also shows that Turkish sympathy among young generation is quite high. Before 2010s, Turkey also took up a position in such incidents in favor of Azerbaijan. For example, tension between Iran and Azerbaijan in 2001 about the controversy in Caspian Sea is the first fact that comes to the mind. “British intelligence provided Azerbaijan with satellite photos showing Iranian planes making sweeps over Azerbaijan waters, according to Azerbaijani officials.”<sup>63</sup> Just after Iran’s violations of Azerbaijani air zone, Turkish F-16 falcons presented a glamorous show during Commander of Turkey Joint Forces Hüseyin Kıvrıkoğlu’s Baku visit. Kıvrıkoğlu’s visit to Azerbaijan was perceived as an “explicit support” of Turkey to Azerbaijan.<sup>64</sup>

In the beginning of 90s, Russia was still a strong actor in her region according to the USA. “First Russia” policy adopted by USA prioritizes to establish relations with Caucasus via Russia. Despite the reluctance of USA, Turkey did not hesitate about recognition of Azerbaijan’s independence but did not fully get involved in some cases like Karabakh War. US as a global power has also impacts on the bilateral relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan. During the successful implementation process of Baku – Tbilisi – Ceyhan Oil Pipeline, US incentives

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<sup>62</sup> Interview with an academic, 19 June, 2017.

<sup>63</sup> Iran and Azerbaijan Argue Over Caspian's Riches, New York Times, <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/08/30/world/iran-and-azerbaijan-argue-over-caspian-s-riches.html> (Accessed Date: 06.07.2018)

<sup>64</sup> Kıvrıkoğlu Bakü'de, Hürriyet, 25.08.2001, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/dunya/kivrikoglu-bakude-12156> (Accessed Date: 10.05.2018)

have positively contributed this project. “In addition, by focusing on pipelines that will transport the Caspian Basin’s oil resources to the United States, Israel and Western European markets, Washington also aims to exclude Iran and Russia.”<sup>65</sup> On the contrary, US encouragement of Turkey – Armenia normalization process between 2008 – 2010 culminated in a negative atmosphere in Turkey – Azerbaijan relations. Especially during Turkish – Armenian rapprochement process, it can be observed that, “one nation two states” discourse deterred both countries from sharp actions which can harm Turkey - Azerbaijan friendship. In general, this discourse is the framework for doing the right things and a frame for abstaining from the wrongs.<sup>66</sup> In Azerbaijan – Turkey relations, US endorsed Baku – Tbilisi – Ceyhan Pipeline but did not endorse the construction of Baku – Tbilisi – Kars Railway. It failed to win financial backing from the U.S. and the European Union because the railway deliberately avoided passing through Armenia, whose Soviet-era track would have offered the most direct route to Turkey.<sup>67</sup> It can be said that, US has played a role for turning Azerbaijan’s face to West in 90s but sets limit to her support in 2000 and 2010s.

In the final analysis, the international factors have played both restrictive and facilitative role in Turkey – Azerbaijan relations. There is no doubt to say that; geographic factors are determinant. Regarding political and economic issues, Azerbaijan - West are connected by Turkey while Azerbaijan builds up Turkey – Central Asia link. Because of having high cost energy and transportation projects, Turkey and Azerbaijan want a stable sphere in the region. Turkey’s membership to Western alliances, her relations with NATO and EU have provided a chance to Azerbaijan for integrating to the West. By the time, Azerbaijan has become more

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<sup>65</sup> Özden Zeynep Oktav, American Policies Towards the Caspian Sea and The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline, *Perceptions*, Spring 2005, p.31.

<sup>66</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>67</sup> A New Asia-to-Europe Railway Route Is Opening Up, Bloomberg, 30.10.2017, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-10-30/azerbaijan-to-open-railway-planned-as-new-europe-china-corridor> (Accessed Date: 01.08 2018)

experienced and developed so her need of Turkish assistance in international relations has been lowered. Moreover, Azerbaijan had tried to play a mediator role between Russia and Turkey after the jet crisis in 2015.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **OTTOMAN EMPIRE ERA AND AZERBAIJAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC: THE ROOTS OF “ONE NATION TWO STATES”**

#### **3.1 The Intellectual and Ideological Factors Shaping Bilateral Relations Between Ottoman Empire and Azerbaijan Democratic Republic**

The roots of the bilateral relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan dates back to the first years of 20<sup>th</sup> century. On May 28, 1918, Azerbaijan Democratic Republic which is the first democratic, secular republic in the Islamic world was established. Ottoman Empire was the first state in international area who recognized the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. In era of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic; mutual assistance between Turks in Anatolia and in Azerbaijan demonstrate the specialty of the relations. The support from Azerbaijan were mainly in economic field and support from Anatolia has military aspects. Besides that, the ideological aspect has constructed a backdrop for the strong relationship.

The ties between Turkish and Azerbaijani intelligentsia are one of the primary elements that formed “one nation two states” between two countries. Especially, the elites of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic have visited Turkey and spared time there. For an academic, “the intelligentsia in Anatolia and Azerbaijan endorsed the spread of Turkism ideology. The intellectuals’ references to era of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic have played an important role in bilateral relations.”<sup>68</sup> Another academic underlines that “the precursors of the Turkish enlightenment are Azerbaijan Turks. Ahmed Aghayev, Huseyinzade Ali Bey, Mehmet Emin Resulzade, Nesib Bey Yusufeli, Ali Merdan Topçubaşı, Hacıbeyli Brothers and

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<sup>68</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

Hüseyin Cavit Turan did not write only about Azerbaijan, they worked for the development of the whole Turkic world.”<sup>69</sup> Likewise, according to a Turkish official; “Many Azerbaijani arrived Anatolia for education and this paved way for coming Ismail Gaspiralı’s ideas that advocates the unity of Turkic people to Azerbaijan. Thus, it can be seen as a part of interactions in Turkic world.”<sup>70</sup> In this term, “thinkers like Yusuf Akçura, Hesenbey Aghayev and Ziya Gökalp has a serious impact on the founding ideology of Turkish Republic and especially on Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.”<sup>71</sup> Atatürk’s aim of reaching the stage of modern civilizations has similar motivations with the principles of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. The background of the cooperation between Ankara Government and Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was established by Turkism ideology. Hence, it is important to note that, this ideological perspective was formed by the intellectuals from both Anatolia and Azerbaijan. Intellectual atmosphere in Turkey played a vital role in the establishment period of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. The founder of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, Mehmet Emin Resulzade was impressed by the intellectual life in Turkey. His grandson Reis Resulzade states that the base of Mehmet Emin Resulzade’s “Müsavat” Party was laid in Istanbul:

Resulzade came to Turkey in 1911. He first met with “Türk Yurdu” Journal and Türk Ocakları. His article “Iran Turks” drew a considerable interest which was published firstly in “Türk Yurdu” and then “Sebilürreşad” journals. The reactions in Istanbul and dispatches with his friends in Baku persuaded Rezulzade to found a political organization.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Ankara, 16.01.2018.

<sup>70</sup> Interview by the author with an ambassador, Baku, 23.06.2017.

<sup>71</sup> Interview by the with an academic, Baku, 22.06.2018.

<sup>72</sup> Reis Resulzade, “Resulzade’nin Gerçekleşen Arzusu Azerbaycan Cumhuriyeti 100 Yaşında”, *Türk Dünyası Tarih Dergisi*, Vol. 63, No. 377, İstanbul, 2018, p. 4-5.

There is a resemblance between the ideas of Atatürk and Mehmet Emin Resulzade. Resulzade defined Atatürk as “symbol of free East”.<sup>73</sup> As it is very well-known, the flag of modern Azerbaijan, inherited from Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan has three colors besides crescent and star; blue, red and green. Blue represents “Turkishness”, red presents “modernization” and green means “Islam”. When the orders of famous founder of the Turkism Ziya Gökalp was considered, the same principle can be noticed easily. “Turkization, Islamization, Modernization” was the characteristic of his civilization concept.

The ideological background of the relationship was based upon Turkism ideology in the establishment era of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. The increasing level of interaction between two sides paved a way for the foundation of fraternal ties. When the Russian pressure escalated in Azerbaijan before the establishment of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, many of Azerbaijani intellectuals came to Turkey. Hereby, Turkish cities has perceived as the second homeland to Azerbaijani intellectuals. They found a fertile ground in Turkey to maintain their studies and Turkey became the one of the most nutritious centers of Azerbaijani enlightenment.

### **3.2 Political Roots of “One Nation Two States” Discourse**

During the war times in these two countries, fighting with a common enemy and mass massacres against them are the other main factors which make them together. After the Bolshevik revolution in October 1917, the actions of Baku Commune have paved a way for ethnic cleansing of Azerbaijanis under cover of fighting against counter-revolutionary elements in March of 1918.

Armenians committed huge genocides on March 31, 1918 being in the first place in Baku, Shamakhi, Quba, Kurdemir, Salyan and

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<sup>73</sup> Mehmet Emin Resulzade, “Kurtulan Doğunun Sembolü”, *Azerbaycan Dergisi*, Ankara, 1953, Vol. 8-9, p.20-21.

Lenkeran. 12 thousand Turks killed in Baku just in a day. Due to some foreign sources, this data is more than 25 thousand.<sup>74</sup>

80 years later, on March 26, 1998, those horrific events received a proper political assessment when President Heydar Aliyev signed the ‘Decree on the Genocide of Azerbaijanis’, March 31 was declared the “Day of Genocide of Azerbaijanis”.<sup>75</sup> Mass massacres on Azerbaijanis opened the way of marching of Islamic Army of the Caucasus to Baku. During these years, Turks in Anatolia were exposed to violence of Armenians, too.

Erupting of 1917 October Revolution in Russia caused a dissolution in Russian Army, Armenians and Georgians started to be effective in the fronts in East Anatolia. Therefore, after this date, Armenian massacres have turned into be more systematic and comprehensive. Huge Slaughters in Erzincan, Bayburt, Erzurum, Kars, Ardahan and Iğdır were led by “Murat from Sivas” who committed massacres against Turks in Sebinkarahisar before World War I, Antranik who gained reputation as “Sasun Monster” and Arshak who committed Muş Massacre.<sup>76</sup>

Batum Treaty based on peace and friendship was signed on June 4, 1918 between Azerbaijan Democratic Republic and Ottoman Empire. With this, Ottoman Empire has become the first state who recognized Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. According to Article 4 of Batum Treaty, Ottoman Empire committed to give armed aids for providing the stability and security inside the country when the government

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<sup>74</sup> Sinan Oğan, 31 Mart Azerbaycan Türklerine Yapılan Soykırım Günüdür, TÜRKSAM, 31.03.2018, <http://www.turksam.org/tr/analiz-detay/45-31-mart-azerbaycan-turklerine-yapilan-soykirim-gunudur> (Accessed Date: 04.05.2018)

<sup>75</sup> Blood Memory, Official web-site of President of Azerbaijan Republic, <https://static2.president.az/media/W1siZiIsIjIwMTgvMDMvMDkvNGRlaTB5OGZqcF9RYW5fWWFkZGFfX0VORy5wZGYiXV0?sha=ed911e7939bf0b93> (Accessed Date: March 4.03.2018)

<sup>76</sup> Doğu Anadolu’da Ermeni Mezalimi, Turkish History Institution, [http://dunyasavasi.ttk.gov.tr/upload/files/Ermeni\\_Dosyasi/Ermeni\\_Isyanlari/DoguAndlErmeniMzlm.pdf](http://dunyasavasi.ttk.gov.tr/upload/files/Ermeni_Dosyasi/Ermeni_Isyanlari/DoguAndlErmeniMzlm.pdf) (Accessed Date: 5.05. 2018).

of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic applied to Ottoman Empire.<sup>77</sup> This article is very important in the future of the relations because it is the legal basis of Islamic Army of the Caucasus's march to Azerbaijan. Like Article 4, Article 5 of Batum Treaty indicates that; Turkish government pledged to avoid and expel the armed gangs which are inside the borders of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. While the massacres committed by Russian and Armenian militias were continuing in the territories of Azerbaijan, Islamic Army of the Caucasus led by Nuri Pasha liberated Baku from the occupation of Bolshevik - Dashnak forces on September 15, 1918. After the Mudros Ceasefire Agreement, Nuri Pasha's troops left Azerbaijan. From this framework, one of the motives of the strong bilateral relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan is sharing a common fate; "friendship" and "being together against an enemy".<sup>78</sup> Turkish forces were perceived as saviors in the eyes of Azerbaijani community. The commanders of Turkish forces have become respectful figures, the image of Turkish soldiers and mightiness of Turkish army have fostered in Azerbaijan. Meanwhile, Azerbaijanis came to support the Ottoman Empire Army in the battles in Çanakkale during the World War I. Since then, Azerbaijani people have always referred to these incidents and such efforts played a paramount role in the occurrence of the mutual memories.

In addition to the close relations between governments, public sensibility for Anatolia was very high in Azerbaijan. One of the most important factors in developing the relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan is the sentimental behaviors of Azerbaijani Turks. Many Azerbaijani women sold their rings and necklaces, then sent their money to Anatolia during World War I.<sup>79</sup> A non-governmental charity organization called "Bakü Müslüman Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi" played an active role in the organization of donating the sufferers of the World War

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<sup>77</sup> Musa Gasimov, "Bakü'nün Kurtarılması Uğruna Türk Diplomasininin Mücadelesi: 1918 Yılı", *Avrasya Dosyası Azerbaycan Özel Sayısı*, Vol. 7, No: 1, Spring 2001, p.19.

<sup>78</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>79</sup> Interview by the author with a chairman of a NGO in Azerbaijan, Baku, 22.06.2017.

I in the eastern province of Anatolia like Ağrı, Kars, Iğdır, Erzurum and also in Batum. Some events in theatres, operas were organized under the campaign of “Brother Assistance” (Qardaş Qöməyi) and a journal was released in the same name.

The purpose of publishing “Brother Assistance”, which was composed in Turkish with Arabic letters, was mentioned as it follows; a politic, literal, social journal which is published by the authors for giving away its revenue to the war victims.<sup>80</sup>

Besides that, the senior Turkish officials had efforts to develop the bilateral relations with Azerbaijan as it was understood from their writings. The East Fronts Commander Kazım Karabekir Pasha said these in his cryptic telegraph to Chair of Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) Mustafa Kemal Pasha on 21 July 1920: “It is very necessary to locate an ambassador in Baku and I ask for sending urgently.”<sup>81</sup>

Then, Memduh Şevket Esendal was charged as representative of Grand National Assembly of Turkey to Azerbaijan. This appointment was very important since he is the first representative of government in Ankara who serves in a foreign country. After the necessary dispatches with Russia, in June 1921 İbrahim Abilov was appointed as a fully-entitled representative of Azerbaijan in presence of Ankara Government.<sup>82</sup> Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s photograph which was signed by him with these words: “To Esteemed Ambassador of Azerbaijan, to my brother Abilov” The way how Atatürk called him shows the closeness of people and states.<sup>83</sup> In

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<sup>80</sup> Qardaş Kōmāyi (Kardeş Yardımı), İpəkyolu Nəşriyyatı, Bakı, 2011, p. XIII.

<sup>81</sup> Bilal Şimşir, Atatürk ve Yabancı Devlet Başkanları - I, Türk Tarih Yayınları, Ankara, 1993, p. 399.

<sup>82</sup> Eldar İsmayılov, “Atatürk Döneminde Azerbaycan-Türkiye Diplomatik İlişkileri (1920-1922)”, Beşinci Uluslararası Atatürk Kongresi (8-12 Aralık 2003-Ankara), Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, Yayınları, Cilt: II, Ankara, 2003 p. 1508.

<sup>83</sup> Zarife Dulayeva, Atatürk’ün İmzası: “...Azerbaycan’ın Büyükelçisine, Kardeşim İbrahim Abilov’a”, *İRS Miras*, No:7, Bakı, 2013, p. 37.

addition to the embassy in Ankara, Azerbaijan had also consulates in Anatolia in the first 20's. Government of Azerbaijan opened consulates in Trabzon and Samsun after Abilov's proposal.<sup>84</sup> On October 18, in the opening of the representative of Azerbaijan in Turkey, Azerbaijan flag was raised by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.<sup>85</sup> In the opening ceremony of the embassy of Azerbaijan in Ankara, Atatürk's words indicated the cordial relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan. Atatürk's description of Azerbaijan as "brother" was noteworthy; "Gentlemen, it was aimed to raise the Greeks', the enemy's, flag in Ankara. Thanks God, our enemies did not get that opportunity. Here, we are happy to hoist the flag of the brother government, brother nation."<sup>86</sup>

The relations have also a financial aspect. After the creation of Soviet Government in Azerbaijan, the bilateral relations were preserved. Soviet Azerbaijan also helped to Turkish Independence War which was continued under hard conditions in Anatolia. In the cryptic telegram which was sent to 15<sup>th</sup> Corps Commander Kazım Karabekir by Mustafa Kemal Pasha the demand of aid from Azerbaijan was clearly mentioned on May 3, 1920; "For now, any internal resources cannot be found. Till having access to sources from other sides, I request investigating and providing the assistance in maximum limits from the government of Azerbaijan."<sup>87</sup>

Turkish leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's request of debt from Azerbaijan was responded positively by Neriman Nerimanov administration. The letter was transmitted to Neriman Nerimanov on March 17, 1921. 500 kilograms of gold was given to Ankara Government aiming to help Turkish Independence War. Besides,

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<sup>84</sup> Dulayeva, p. 38.

<sup>85</sup> Türkiye - Azerbaycan Siyasi İlişkileri, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Bakü Büyükelçiliği, 26.02.2016, <http://baku.be.mfa.gov.tr/Mission/ShowInfoNote/170188>, (Accessed Date: 19.03.2018)

<sup>86</sup> Bilal N. Şimşir, Ankara'da Açılan İlk Azerbaycan Temsilciliği, IRS Tarih, <http://irs-az.com/new/pdf/201312/1386944848824816094.pdf> (Accessed Date: 24.04.2018)

<sup>87</sup> Elnur Hasan Mikail, Atatürk Dönemi Türkiye-Azerbaycan İlişkileri (1919-1938), İstanbul, 2014, s. 149.

on 23 March 1921, Soviet Azerbaijan Government sent Kars 30 tanks of oil, 2 tanks of petrol and 8 tanks of kerosene as a gift to Turkey.<sup>88</sup> Nerimanov's popular quote in his answer; "A brother do not owe to his brother" is generally referred while examining the history of bilateral relations. According to an Azerbaijani official, these are the facts that prove the historical brotherhood and partnership.<sup>89</sup>

During this period, Turkish parliament led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk took attention to Turks living in Azerbaijan and Central Asia. Atatürk attached an importance to the linguistic and cultural dimension of the relations with Turkic world. After the Soviet occupation in this geography, a delegation consisted of 4 members; Tevfik Rüştü, İsmail Suphi, Ali Fuat and Besim Atalay was sent to Moscow for investigating the general situation of Turks under Soviet rule after a decision on September 11, 1920.<sup>90</sup> Delegation prepared a report about the Turks in Azerbaijan. While reading this report in Grand National Assembly of Turkey; many members of the parliament cried loudly and shed tears.<sup>91</sup> This example clearly shows that, members of the parliament bear high emotions to the Turks living abroad. like the public sentiment.

Kars Treaty was signed on October 13, 1921 between Turkey, Azerbaijan Armenia and Georgia. In this agreement, the exact eastern border of Turkey was defined. Batumi was given to Georgia. The status of densely Azerbaijani Turk populated Nakhchivan was defined as autonomy. Nakhchivan's autonomous feature was protected with Moscow Treaty signed on March 16, 1921. Article 3 of the treaty

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<sup>88</sup> Abdulla M. Şimsutdinov, *Kurtuluş Savaşı Yıllarında Türkiye – Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri*, Cumhuriyet Yayınları, 2000, p. 66.

<sup>89</sup> Interview by the author with an ambassador, Ankara, 11.01.2018.

<sup>90</sup> Ercan Çelebi, "Atatürk and Turkish World", *Kastamonu Education Journal*, January 2010, Vol. 18, No. 1, p. 203.

<sup>91</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Ankara, 16.01.2018.

tells that; Azerbaijan will never compromise its patronage right to a third state. The autonomous structure of Nakhchivan and patronage of Azerbaijan was reaffirmed.

Moreover, Anatolian Turks occurred as a determinant factor in Azerbaijan's foreign policy. Azerbaijani policy makers took the exiled Turks into account while signing agreements. In 1919 – 1920; Britain exiled 145 senior Turkish soldiers, statesmen and intellectuals to Malta. An academic argued that; “it is also very important to mention about the oil contract between Azerbaijan and Britain has played a role in releasing the exiled Turks from there.”<sup>92</sup> Despite being under the Soviet rule, Azerbaijan mooted releasing of Turks in Malta as a condition and then they were swapped with the British captives. On November 1, 1921, Malta exiles came to İnebolu and greeted with Atatürk's welcome telegraph.<sup>93</sup>

In 1924, Turkish representation in Baku was closed because of the Soviet rule in the country. There are secret intelligence records about Memduh Şevket Bey; acting as a key person for establishing the Istanbul – Baku – Iran relations of Müsavat members.<sup>94</sup> So, it can be assumed that; the activities of Memduh Şevket Esendal made Soviet administration anxious.

Turkey's relations with Soviet Union had some reflections on Azerbaijani Turkish politicians in Turkey like Resulzade. The acceleration of Turkish – Soviet relations narrowed the field of Azerbaijan's place as a different topic in the agenda.<sup>95</sup> Resulzade moved to Europe and published journals in European countries about Azerbaijan. Despite being far from there, Azerbaijani immigrants preserved their

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<sup>92</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Ankara, 16.01.2018.

<sup>93</sup> Bilal N. Şimşir, *Malta Sürgünleri*, Bilgi Yayınevi, Ankara, 2009, p. 403.

<sup>94</sup> Aygün Attar, *Sebahattin Şimşir, 1830-1930 Yılları Arasında Çeşitli Nedenlerden Türkiye'ye Göç Etmış Azerbaycan Türkleri*, Berikan Yayınları, Ankara, 2013, p. 120.

<sup>95</sup> Nesiman Yagublu, Mehmet Emin Resulzade Encyclopedia, Azerbaijan Culture Association Publications, Ankara, 2015, p. 81.

contacts with Turkey. After World War II, immigrants succeeded to gather in Turkey's capital Ankara.<sup>96</sup> Resulzade continued his works in Turkey under the organization of Azerbaijan Culture Association; founded in 1949. Then, he passed away in 1955 in Ankara.

The establishment period and the presence of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic are important in building up the "one nation two states" discourse. After Russian Empire's long-lasting presence; two sides have found a chance to come closer. This period is also vital for showing mutual support in social, political, economic, diplomatic and cultural terms. The intellectual atmosphere in Turkey has a big effect in establishment period of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. As well as Nuri Pasha's march to Baku, Neriman Nerimanov's financial aid to Turkey and participation of soldiers from Baku to Dardanelles Front in World War I can be counted as important occasions in forming the core values between two sides. The increasing potency of Turkism should be taken into consideration while analyzing the emotional intimacy between Turkey and Azerbaijan. The affinity between Azerbaijan and Anatolia Turks was very high. Combatting against the same enemy; Armenian gangs and Russian troops made two sides closer in this term. In addition to the ideological analogy, the interests of both sides necessitated acting together. During this interval, the public support to each other can never be neglected.

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<sup>96</sup> Vefalı Enserov, "The Published Journals Of Azerbaijan Political Immigration In Turkey Under The Leadership Of Mehmet Emin Resulzade", *INIF E-Journal*, May 2018, No:3, p. 110.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT IN AZERBAIJAN: “REACTION TO OCCUPATION”**

#### **4.1 The Situation in Soviet Azerbaijan and Relations with Turkey**

The General Secretary of Soviet Communist Party Mikhail Gorbachev denounced “perestroika” (restructuring) and “glasnost” (openness) policies in 1986 as a new strategy for economic and internal structure in USSR. Regarding the ascent of the human rights discourse in USA and European countries, desire for democracy has been started to discussed more often in Soviet countries including Azerbaijan. The signing of Helsinki Accords in 1975 started a détente period between West and USSR. At the same time, nationalist aspirations in Soviet Union were started to be shown more clearly. Increasing demands of freedom have returned into a challenge to Soviet hegemony in Azerbaijan. The oppression of Soviet communism and the rising effects of Russian dominance in Azerbaijani way of life triggered a nationalist reaction. According to Cornell:

Especially in cosmopolitan Baku, the use of the Azerbaijani language among youth had dwindled by the late 1970s. An Azerbaijani intellectual related how hearing children speak Russian among themselves on the streets in the early 1980’s made many patriotically minded Azeris seriously worried about the survival of their nation.<sup>97</sup>

The military occupation in historical Azerbaijani territories by Armenians and the cultural occupation of Russian Soviet values such as in social life had brought a

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<sup>97</sup> Svante E. Cornell, *Azerbaijan: Since Independence*, M. E. Sharpe, London, 2011, p. 46.

reaction in Azerbaijan. Meanwhile, Turkey was started to be discussed between people in Azerbaijan more than before.

In the pre-independence period in modern Azerbaijan, one of the most crucial points is the Azerbaijani - Armenian conflict. Tensions began to rise after mid 80's in Karabakh region. Many Azerbaijanis were obliged to leave their hometown and thousands of Azerbaijanis fled to the capital city, Baku. Ongoing disputes and conflicts between Azerbaijanis and Armenians have played a determining role in the tone of patriotism in Azerbaijan. An academic noted that:

The professors and students of Yerevan University have organized several rallies with the slogans of 'Genocider Turkey' and declared that they wanted 'Great Armenia' with the posters of Ağrı Mountain in 1987. These protests were responded by the professors and students of Baku State University with slogans of "Terrorist Armenia" and "Turkey – Azerbaijan, one heart, one spirit".<sup>98</sup>

it can be found out that, Armenian protest contained an anti-Turkey tone besides their enmity towards Azerbaijan. According to the same academic:

With their historical hatred to Turks, Armenia attacked the Turks in Soviet republics because they could not attack Turkey. They did the worst things in Azerbaijan because they shared the same border. Karabakh Conflict was born in Azerbaijan because of the "Armenian Question."<sup>99</sup>

Slogans in Baku State University "one heart one spirit" brought the solidarity between Turkey and Azerbaijani community to light. It can be also perceived as a pre-mature version of "one nation two states" discourse. It was just a reaction based on the common historical values without any strategic dimension.

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<sup>98</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Ankara, 16.01.2018.

<sup>99</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Ankara, 16.01.2018.

Besides the global context, the inadequate representation of Azerbaijanis in Soviet bodies administrative structures paved a way for Armenians to denounce their voice more soundly in Soviet politburo. After resigning of Heydar Aliyev, Azerbaijan's arguments were not emphasized in Soviet politburo.

Heydar Aliyev was an extremely important high-ranking Soviet political figure, having been the first secretary of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan (1969-1982) who later served as a member of the Politburo (1982-87) until Mikhail Gorbachev dismissed him from the office.<sup>100</sup>

Especially, Heydar Aliyev's fall from his office affected on Karabakh dispute. It is notable that organized Armenian claims on Karabakh began very shortly after Heydar Aliyev fell from grace with the Gorbachev regime in 1987.<sup>101</sup> After the appointment of Abel Aganbekyan, Armenian thesis about Karabkh region was announced more soundly. Abel Aganbekyan and Armenians braced up by the force that he represented, organized protests in Nagorno Karabkh and Armenia to demand separation of Nagorno Karabakh from Azerbaijan, starting from 1988. Between February 1 and February 11, 1998 Armenians revolted and chanted "one nation, one state" in Hankendi (Stepanakent) and then the armed attacks began.<sup>102</sup> The historical chain of exile of Azerbaijanis from their motherlands has entered one of the most tragic phases. As a result of it, approximately 200 thousand Azerbaijanis were forced by Armenians to leave from their motherland.

Researching and protecting the cultural ties between Azerbaijan and Turkey have played another paramount role in the development of "one nation two states" principle. But, there was an information blockade on Azerbaijan to keep Turkish

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<sup>100</sup> Ayça Ergun, "Post-Soviet Political Transformation in Azerbaijan: Political Elite, Civil Society and the Trials of Democratization", *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Volume 7, No 26, Summer 2010., p. 77-78.

<sup>101</sup> Svante E. Cornell, *Azerbaijan: Since Independence*, M. E. Sharpe, London, 2011, p. 48.

<sup>102</sup> Cemalettin Taşkıran, *Geçmişten Günümüze Karabağ Meselesi*, Genelkurmay Yayınevi, Ankara, 1995, s. 122.

influence away from the country. Even sending or receiving letters was under strict control. It has two main reasons; Turkey's NATO membership and Turkish identity. An Azerbaijani MP tells about Soviet regime and Turkish desire of Azerbaijani people with these words:

We took our radio and climbed to the top of the mountains just to hear a word a Turkish music till 1991. At that times, there was no high buildings like these houses. Turkish song 'Arım Balım Peteğim' was very popular. Oh my God! We held our radio to our ears to hear the voice of a Turkish person. We did not see a Turkish person. Russian – Soviet regime was a like a closed prison.<sup>103</sup>

In that vein, an NGO representative also told one of the radios that they listened in Karabakh was Turkish radio.<sup>104</sup> For another Azerbaijani MP, the reasons of the Turkish sympathy in Azerbaijan can be found in the longing of Turkey during Soviet era. He noted that; “when a Turkish cinema came to the big screen, our shirts were torn in the queues.<sup>105</sup>” Similarly, an academic claims that “people watch Turkish actress Türkan Şoray's films secretly.<sup>106</sup>” While there has been a low-level of political contact, the popular culture was the most distinguishing factor during the Soviet era.

The references to the nationalism and historic ties have surged in the pre-independence period of modern Azerbaijan. There is an emotional and historical link between Turkey's perspective of 1915 Events and Azerbaijani perception of Karabakh conflict. Tussle between Turkey and Armenia has continued in the alarming level between 1975 – 1985 because of the terrorist attacks of Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA). The ethnic tension between

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<sup>103</sup> Interview by the author with a MP in Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 24.06.2017.

<sup>104</sup> Interview by the author with a chairman of a NGO in Azerbaijan, Baku, 22.06.2017.

<sup>105</sup> Interview by the author with a politician/academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>106</sup> Interview by the with an academic, Baku, 22.06.2018.

Azerbaijanis and Armenians were taken by Turkey as Armenia's attacks to Turkey's brothers next to her border. During independence movement, Turkey occurred as the only ally who has ethnic, linguistic and historical proximity with Azerbaijan.

Especially after the events in the last months of 1988, tens of thousands of Azerbaijanis escaped from their native land and these developments were resulted as a huge protest at Azadlıq Square in Baku on November 17, 1988. The protests have spread around the country and started in other cities like Ganja and Sumgait. The main driving force of this 18 days long protest is the elites of PFA. Soon after that, PFA became popular with the mass protests all around the country. PFA officials organized mass rallies and galvanized the popular support for their most devastating tactic yet: a total rail blockade against Armenia. Eighty-five percent of Armenia's rail traffic came from Azerbaijan, and the embargo caused shortages of petrol and food in Armenia.<sup>107</sup> PFA officials underscored the importance of Azerbaijanis living in Iran's "North Azerbaijan" province where they called as "Southern Azerbaijan". The elites of PFA advocated the unification of Azerbaijanis living in Iran and Azerbaijan with the idea of forming the "Greater Azerbaijan". "Southern Azerbaijan" discourse, which was observed in the last months of 1989, would be more prominent during Elchibey's presidency. In the last period of 1989, the "Berlin Wall of the Caucasus" was fallen by the Azerbaijanis. Elin Suleymanov delineates this occasion as it is mentioned below:

The two Azerbaijanis. In late 1989, Azerbaijani protesters tore down the fences on the USSR's border with Iran along the river Araz (Araxes), and for the first time in many decades relatives from both sides could meet each other. This very emotional moment brought people of northern (then Soviet) and southern (Iranian) parts of historic Azerbaijan together. In one of its first issues, the then newly

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<sup>107</sup> Thomas De Waal, *Black Garden, Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War*, New York University Press, New York, 2003, p. 87.

established Moscow newspaper Kommersant called the fences along the Araz “another Berlin Wall.”<sup>108</sup>

In the pre-independence period, references to the Turkish identity of Azerbaijanis have increased significantly. It has two main reasons; one of them is ongoing tensions between Armenians and the other one is the reaction to the Russification of culture under Soviet rule. There was a longing to Turkey in Azerbaijan. Post-Soviet Turkic republics occurred as a new field for Turkish foreign policy. However, Turkey’s policy-makers were confronted with a situation for which they were not prepared—in fact, Turkey was distinctively unprepared.<sup>109</sup> Referring to “Turkish” identity has increased Turkey’s importance and reminded that Turkey and Azerbaijan communities are “one nation”.

#### **4.2 The Main Pillars of PFA and Its Effect on Turkey – Azerbaijan Relations**

PFA emerged as a nationalist, secular, democratic, new organization which represents the opposition of Azerbaijan. PFA’s main demands were based on the interpretation of new Soviet paradigms with the domestic concerns but PFA was deeply influenced by the perception of unjust treatment in Karabakh conflict which made them distinct. The main principles of the program of PFA was inspired by the Estonian program.<sup>110</sup> Altstadt argues that:

The front has emphasized putting perestroika into practice, local control over economic and political life, measures to protect the ecology and civil liberties for all citizens of the republic. These are demands similar to those of popular fronts in the Baltic and elsewhere and, like them, are directed against conditions of Russian rule. Azerbaijani demands have included the retention of the

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<sup>108</sup> Elin Suleymanov, “Azerbaijan, Azerbaijanis and the Search for Identity”, *Analysis of Current Events*, Vol. 13, No. 1, February 2001, p.4.

<sup>109</sup> Svante E. Cornell, “The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict”, *Department of East European Studies, Report*, No: 46, Uppsala University, 1999, p. 63.

<sup>110</sup> Thomas de Waal, *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War*, New York University Press, 2003, p. 82.

Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous region, which Azerbaijan regards as part of its historic homeland, sometimes called the ‘cradle’ of Azerbaijan's artistic and literary heritage.<sup>111</sup>

A new national identity in Azerbaijan was tried to be built with the references to Western values, ADR and Müssavat Party. The officials of PFA renamed themselves to show the refusal of Soviet rules and at the same time it can be seen as an effort for turning back to their original traditions from the Russified values. Many Azerbaijanis thought that the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic (AzSSR) did not represent them. Nominal Party leader Vezirov had lost all authority - the crowds on Azadlıq Square (Lenin Square in USSR epoch) mockingly Armenianized his name by calling him “Vezirian” and carried his effigy in a woman’s dress through the streets.<sup>112</sup> As it is understood from this instance; the charisma, prestige and the image of Abdurrahman Vezirov, leader of the Communist Party in Azerbaijan, was exactly finished. For example; a member of Azerbaijani parliament said:

People in Turkey and Azerbaijan are from the same nation and ‘Azerbaijani/Azeri’ was not written on ID cards in Azerbaijan. Before the World War II, Stalin gave a decision and then all the ID cards were teared apart. The word “Azerbaijani” was created in a single night.<sup>113</sup>

People started to drop Russian suffixes (male: “-ov”, female: “-ova”) from their surnames or use Turkic suffixes like “-li”, “-zade”. It is notable that Elchibey’s previous surname was “Aliyev” in this point. The first time that he used it was after the hot conflict between Soviet regime and Azerbaijani people on January 20, 1990. When the protest letter was written to UN Secretary General and to the

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<sup>111</sup> Audrey Altstadt, To Azerbaijanis, Conflict Isn't Religious, 31.01.1990, <http://www.nytimes.com/1990/01/31/opinion/1-to-azerbaijanis-conflict-isn-t-religious-011590.html> (Accessed Date: 06.012018)

<sup>112</sup> Thomas De Waal, Black Garden, Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War, New York University Press, New York, 2003, p. 87-88.

<sup>113</sup> Interview by the author with a MP in Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 24.06.2017.

attention of global community, he signed with the name of “Ebulfez Elchibey”. Elchibey which means “emissary” was a bit different from the other changed surnames. Such incidents show the fact that Azerbaijanis have considerable efforts for making out the original Turkish language forms.

During Gorbachev era in USSR, the escalating tension in Karabakh region was followed carefully by Turkish community even if the political reaction was on a lower level. It can be asserted that, Soviet Union reduced Turkey’s actions in Azerbaijan in the last 80’s. In this time period, the cadres of PFA led the field about the liberalization and the democratization of the country. PFA members’ affiliation to Turkey affected relations positively because Turkey’s structure was appeared as a good prototype of their ideas about democracy, secularism and Turkism.

#### **4.3 “Black January” and Its Effects on Turkey – Azerbaijan Relations**

While PFA officials were trying to challenge USSR during the pre-independence period in Azerbaijan, Soviet rulers did not want to lose the control in Baku. “The Moscow emissaries and the Popular Front leadership played a game of bluff.”<sup>114</sup>

It was initially justified by Soviet officials as a necessary measure to stop inter-ethnic violence and protect the Armenian population of Baku, but was more likely aimed at suppressing the national movement that emerged in Azerbaijan in response to the Karabakh conflict that had erupted two years earlier.<sup>115</sup>

On 19-20 January, 26000 Soviet troops have entered to Baku just after the declaration of state of emergency. The crackdown caused many casualties.

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<sup>114</sup> De Waal, p. 93.

<sup>115</sup> Leyla Sayfutdinova, “The Alley of Martyrs: Deaths, Memory and the Nation”, *Caucasus Analytical Digest*, No. 66, 2014, p.14.

More than 130 people died from wounds received that night and during subsequent violent confrontations and incidents that lasted in February; the majority of these were civilians killed by Soviet soldiers. More than 700 civilians were wounded. Hundreds of people were detained, only a handful of whom were put on trial for alleged criminal offenses. Civil liberties were severely curtailed.<sup>116</sup>

This conflict is commemorated as “Black January” in Azerbaijan. It is an important milestone in the restoration of independence of Azerbaijan after 70 years Soviet period. Following the Soviet intervention to Baku in the aim of suppressing the freedom demands of Azerbaijani people, the main attitude of the other states was evaluating the event as internal affairs of USSR. Regarding the relations between Baku and Moscow; it is the start of the entire disengagement. While analyzing the relations between Armenians and Azerbaijanis, this action can be defined as an end of the limited dialogue. “Thousands of Communist Party members publicly burned their party cards and even the chairwoman of the Supreme Soviet, Elmira Kafarova, denounced the actions of army criminals.”<sup>117</sup> Black January grabbed the public attention in Turkey and caused a strong opposition. Events like Black January and Azerbaijanis’ descending status in and around Nagorno Karabakh also increased patriotism and nationalism into a level higher.

In this period Turgut Özal’s statement toned with sectarian points provoked the people in Turkey. Referring to events in Azerbaijan, Özal’s statement; “Azerbaijanis are closer to Azeris in Iran than Turkish folks in Anatolia. They are Shite, we are Sunni” was strictly criticized because of indicating his sectarian views on the events. In those days, the main intention of this statement was Özal’s will for positioning out of the conflict. PFA Leader Ebulfaz Elchibey responded Özal with a note, sent via telefax to Hurriyet News Agency’s Erzurum Bureau saying;

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<sup>116</sup> Black January In Azerbaijan, Administrative Department of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Presidential Library, [http://files.preslib.az/projects/aggression/meqale\\_en.pdf](http://files.preslib.az/projects/aggression/meqale_en.pdf), (Accessed Date: 02.05.2018)

<sup>117</sup> De Waal, p. 94.

Mr. President is mistaken. At first, we are Turks even if we are Shite. We are a secular nation. We are not fundamentalists. Religion is different, nation is different. Our expectation from Turkey is supporting our rightful struggle against Armenians.<sup>118</sup>

The protests in Turkey just after the January 20, 1990 were quite attention grabbing which was an instrument to show the solidarity. In Istanbul, approximately 10 thousand people condemned the USSR's military operation in Azerbaijan by walking from Taksim Square to Galatasaray.<sup>119</sup> Protests in several states in Turkey were messages to Soviet Union forces to withdraw and to Turkish politicians to look Azerbaijan within context of "one nation" rather than two different sects. At the same time, these big protests were the first indicators that clearly showed sympathy to Azerbaijan in Turkey.

In a short time period, Özal recovered the relations with the friendly, supportive statements. Former Minister Namık Kemal Zeybek claimed in his column that Özal said "I was taken unaware. There were Armenian journalists in front of me. I could not think that it would take place in our press and be heard in Azerbaijan."<sup>120</sup> during his conversation with him. Later on, the officials and communities understood each other well and this statement did not have a destructive effect on the relations but it was true that both the people in Turkey and in Azerbaijan complained about these words.

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<sup>118</sup> Hürriyet, 21.01.1990.

<sup>119</sup> Milliyet, 22.01.1990.

<sup>120</sup> Namık Kemal Zeybek, Özal'dan Erdoğan'a, *Radikal*, 10.11.2007.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **AYAZ MUTALLIBOV ERA: RECOGNITION**

#### **5.1 The Main Attitude of Mutallibov's Foreign Policy Towards Turkey**

As a result of the protests organized by PFA, 73 years after the declaration of independence of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, on October 18, 1991 Supreme Council of the Republic of Azerbaijan adopted a constitutional act about the independence of the country. Then, Ayaz Mutallibov became the first president of the Republic of Azerbaijan. After gaining the independence, Azerbaijan has faced with huge problems like Karabakh war, political fragmentation in domestic politics and he encouragement of the separatist actions of ethnic minorities in Azerbaijan by the foreign forces. The main efforts of the country were concentrated on internal problems.

Mutallibov's foreign policy relied on a full engagement with Moscow. Mutallibov did not prefer to change the direction of Azerbaijan's foreign policy from Moscow to West. The main characteristic of this era is pro-Russian attitude which attempts to establish close relations. In general, Azerbaijan's priority in her international relations is membership to international organizations and establishing diplomatic ties with her neighbor countries. In this point, it should be remembered that Mutallibov signed the Alma-Ata Treaty for the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Because of the instability inside the country which was a consequence of ongoing conflict with Armenia, Azerbaijan did not take a further step in her relations with Western countries. Unlike the PFA's discourse about "South Azerbaijan", Mutallibov did not stand far from Iran and paid a visit to Iran in his presidency term.

In Mutallibov term, Turkey was considered as a “neighbor country” rather than a “sister state” and did not take a prior place in Azerbaijan’s foreign policy. The kinship between two countries did not grab an important attention. From the perspective of “one nation two states” discourse, the determinant factor is being two independent states during this era. Proximity between two communities did not differentiate Turkey in political level but played a role in developing relations with Turkey.

## **5.2 Establishment of the Diplomatic Ties Between Turkey and Azerbaijan**

“Turkey was the first country to recognize Azerbaijan’s independence as early as 9 November, 1991.”<sup>121</sup> “The diplomatic relations were established on January 14, 1992 and the Turkish Consulate General in Baku was upgraded to Embassy level.”<sup>122</sup> Many respondents asserted that the most important step between two states was Turkey’s position as a state who recognized Azerbaijan first. It can be counted as a significant milestone in bilateral relations. Moreover, during the war with Armenia, Turkey appeared as a reliable partner in Azerbaijan’s foreign policy.

There was an internal debate about the recognition of Azerbaijan. Acting Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz was an interim PM and thought about the immediate recognition. Conversely, President Süleyman Demirel is more hesitant about the Russia’s position and possible reactions. As a result, Turkey decided to recognize the independence of Azerbaijan. However, an academic argues that:

Recognition of Azerbaijan is not a critical point regarding the relations. Turkey also recognized the independence of Armenia. Thus, recognition of modern Azerbaijan’s independence is not a privileged act. The important thing is the attitude of the state officials

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<sup>121</sup> Rovshan Ibrahimov, Turkish – Azerbaijani Relations and Turkey’s Policy in the Central Caucasus, *The Caucasus and Globalization*, Vol. 5, No. 3-4, 2011, p. 15.

<sup>122</sup> Relations Between Turkey and Azerbaijan, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-azerbaijan.en.mfa> (Accession Date: 03.11.2017)

of Turkey and Azerbaijan in the occasions which steer bilateral relations after the recognition.<sup>123</sup>

In the early years, diplomatic help and support of Turkey played a vital role and Turkey's policy toward Azerbaijan was guided by five priorities:

- support for Azerbaijan's independence
- support for Azerbaijan's sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh
- a desire to prevent or limit a Russian return to the South Caucasus
- participation in Azerbaijani oil production and the export of Azerbaijani oil through Turkey
- preservation of a friendly, though not necessarily pan-Turkish government in Baku.<sup>124</sup>

For a NGO representative, "Turkey tried to establish her relations with the post-Soviet states through Azerbaijan after the dissolution of USSR."<sup>125</sup> Azerbaijan was the first contact in the post-Soviet geography for Turkey because she took the first step towards the region with the recognition of Azerbaijan. Turkey started to pursue a three-step process in her policy among Azerbaijan and the other Turkic states; "recognition, establishment of diplomatic relations and opening embassies."<sup>126</sup> In this regard, the policy makers of Azerbaijan could not contribute to Turkey's interactions with post-Soviet Turkic states but the roadmap of the recognition of Azerbaijan consisted a guideline for Turkey.

Mutallibov paid visits to countries like Iran, Russia and Turkey. During President Mutallibov's visit to Turkey on January 23-34, 1992; issues in several issues were negotiated between two countries. The military cooperation between two countries

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<sup>123</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Ankara, 16.01.2018.

<sup>124</sup> Süha Bölükbaşı, "Ankara's Baku-Centered Transcaucasia Policy: Has It Failed?", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 1, Winter 1997, p.80.

<sup>125</sup> Interview by the author with a director of a think-tank in Azerbaijan, Baku, 22.06.2017.

<sup>126</sup> Musa Qasımlı, *Azərbaycan Respublikasının Xarici Siyasəti (1991-2003)*, Mütərcim, Vol. 2, Baku, 2015, p. 427.

came to the agenda in Muttalibov's press conference in Turkey. Mutallibov expressed that the necessity of setting up an army to defend Azerbaijan. He denoted that he met with Turkish officials and Turkey would help Azerbaijan in this subject. However, this speech did not go beyond and turn into reality.<sup>127</sup>

Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Good Neighborhood was signed and then published in the Official Gazette on March 21, 1993. As it is stated in the Article 1; the treaty contained the cooperation in politics, economy, trade, agriculture, science, transportation, culture, informatics, tourism, sport. When all of the 11 articles are examined it can be seen that cooperation, partnership, alliance or education about military issue are out of the context. It should be mentioned that; there has been a chaos in Azerbaijan and has been no regular army. Azerbaijan's major need was the military profession but Turkey stayed distanced from the hot conflicts in the region because of Russia's hegemony in Caucasus. Turkey's non-interventionist policy in military terms was reflected to the treaty. Moreover, Muttalibov's policies were closer to Russia than Turkey and Turkey was not the priority for him. As a result, Turkish support to Azerbaijan remained limited in military terms. In this term, the integration process that the Republic of Azerbaijan has been involved with are also economic and cultural rather than military-political.<sup>128</sup> Its reflections on Turkey - Azerbaijan relations can also be observed when the content of the agreement is analyzed.

Article 1 of the treaty is the main framework which refers to development and widening of cooperation in political, economic, business, agricultural, science, transportation, cultural, information, tourism, sport and in other fields on the basis of vis a vis interest, trust and cooperation. In Article 5; cooperation in the education of experts especially in field of economy and diplomacy; exchange of students,

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<sup>127</sup> Nazım Cafersoy, Araz Aslanlı, *Azerbaycan – Türkiye Askeri İlişkileri*, Azerbaycan-Türkiye: Dostluk, Kardeşlik ve Strateji Ortaklık, Berikan Yayınevi, Ankara, 2011, p. 157.

<sup>128</sup> Habibbeyli, p. 34.

experts and teachers are mentioned. In the same article, rising the capacity of trade volume and making/implementing the joint investment projects are underlined. In this line, Mutallibov came to Turkey with many businessmen from Azerbaijan to enhance economic relations. The diplomatic solidarity between Turkey and Azerbaijan was built by the programs mentioned in this article. At the same time, it can be analyzed as a rehearsal of “Grand Student Project” initiated in 1992-1993 academic year. In the framework of this project, international students were brought to Turkey especially from Central Asia to enhance Turkey’s role over this region. Article 7 is about culture. People of Turkey and Azerbaijan was defined with the term; “people who have common cultural heritage”. In Article 8, Turkish and Azerbaijani people are described with the word; “sibling”. These words in formal documents show that the history is an important factor in the first phase of the relations.

The treaty, which was based on a wide range of subjects from politics to health, between Turkey and Azerbaijan can be seen as an infrastructure of the cooperation in the following years. In addition to the will of developing relations with Azerbaijan, the main opinion was saving Azerbaijan from Russia’s influence.<sup>129</sup> However, Azerbaijan’s urgent need was support in military context at the moment. Turkey could not intervene to the conflict because she did not want to be seen as a rival to Russia and at the same time Turkey’s support and mediation in Karabakh War was not preferred by Azerbaijan. The importance of the treaty is being the first official text that describes two states as “siblings”. So, it has a symbolic meaning in Azerbaijan - Turkey relations. The fields mentioned in the treaty are mainly about daily subjects and do not compromise a strategic feature.

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<sup>129</sup> Güner Özkan, “Türk Dış Politikası (1919-2008)”, Kafkaslar ile İlişkiler, Ankara, 2008, p. 835

### 5.3 Turkey's Stance in Karabakh Conflict

Turkey's foreign policy attached a significance to South Caucasus and gave importance to the stability in the region. After the Cold War, Turkey had a desire to become the leader of post-Soviet Turkic states. Besides, the oil and gas resources were beneficial for Turkey. The conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia had a negative effect on Turkish security perceptions. Turkey proposed mediation between Azerbaijan and Armenia to Mutallibov in his visit but it was rejected by him stating that "Karabakh is our internal problem."<sup>130</sup> It can be asserted that, Muttalibov administration abstained from close moves towards Turkey because of Russia. It means that, in the early period of Azerbaijan Russia has maintained its "restrictor" position both for Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Military losses of Azerbaijan in Karabagh War –especially mass massacre in Khojaly on February 25-26, 1992- triggered public protests in Baku and forced Mutallibov to resign on March 6, 1992. Then, Mutallibov went to Russia. Yaqub Mammadov became the acting president of the country for a short term, till the inauguration of Ebulfesz Elchibey. In the history of modern Azerbaijan, ethnic cleansing as a result of the bloody attacks against civilians in Khojaly town affected the perceptions about Armenians in Azerbaijani public and marked an eternal disengagement between two communities. A MP in Azerbaijani Parliament stresses that "the Muslim identity of Azerbaijan is one of the reasons of Karabakh conflict and Khojaly Genocide."<sup>131</sup> The official statistics of Azerbaijan claims that:

613 people killed, including: 63 children; 106 women; 70 elderly. 8 families completely annihilated; 25 children lost both parents; 130

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<sup>130</sup> Hürriyet, 29.02.1992.

<sup>131</sup> Interview by the author with a MP in Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 24.06.2017.

children lost one parent; 487 wounded; 1275 taken hostage; 150 still missing.<sup>132</sup>

Turkish Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel adopted an uncompanionable attitude among Khojaly issue. But, Turkish politicians especially opponent figures gave a strong reaction to the Armenian attacks in Khojaly town. In general, Turkish politicians regardless of the political spectrum have united against Armenian aggression. Despite being officially out of the conflict, some volunteer paramilitary forces went to Karabakh region from Turkey called; “Wind Union” (Rüzgar Birliği). The group is affiliated with Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) in Turkey. On the other hand, President Turgut Özal criticized the government’s policy about Karabakh saying “Armenians should be frightened” and told Financial Times that “Turkey can blockade Armenia to deter her in Karabakh”.<sup>133</sup> “Özal also demands more decisive steps to counter Armenian atrocities in Azerbaijan. Hinting at the possibility of armed confrontation, he ponders using Turkish military forces to halt the Armenian expansion.”<sup>134</sup>

Turkish public watched the unpleasant situations in Azerbaijan carefully. After the massacre of Azeri civilians in the Karabakh town of Khojaly in late February 1992, huge anti-Armenian demonstrations were held in Turkey, with hundreds of thousands of people demonstrating in favor of an intervention on Azerbaijan's behalf.<sup>135</sup> Just like the demonstrations after Black January events, Turkish media gave place to the protests in Turkey. The Turkish press was filled with criticism of the government's mild stance on the Armenian advances, and generally of the

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<sup>132</sup> How It Happened, Website of Justice for Khojaly Campaign, <http://www.justiceforkhojaly.org/content/how-it-happened-0> (Accessed Date: 07.03.2018)

<sup>133</sup> Cumhuriyet, 08.03.1992.

<sup>134</sup> Hürriyet, 05.03.1992.

<sup>135</sup> Svante E. Cornell, “Turkey and the Conflict in Nagorno Karabakh: A Delicate Balance”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 1, 1998, p. 60.

feeble performance of Turkey in the Caucasus and Central Asia compared to its aims of becoming a regional leader.<sup>136</sup>

The protests played a vital role in increasing the public awareness and created a public pressure on policy makers to determine the political stance infavor of Azerbaijan in 90s Turkey. Turkey continued her endeavors about Karabakh issue in international organizations.

Fearing that a one-sided Russian mediation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was in the offing, Ankara was instrumental in convening the Prague meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) on 28 February1992, which confirmed that Karabakh was part of Azerbaijan.<sup>137</sup>

Recognizing Khojaly as a “genocide” in Turkey has become a burning question. While Armenia pursues a policy about recognition of so-called Armenian genocide as their “national aim”, Turkey has a principle not to discuss such events in parliaments and prefers them to be discussed in the committees about history. Generally municipalities and NGOs recognized the massacre in Khojaly as a genocide in Turkey. There is no legal obstacle about it. A respondent delineates the events in Khojaly as “reality of today” rather than a historical occasion. In this regard, a MP in Azerbaijan notes that, “100 years before” is history but “20 years before” is a twinkle.<sup>138</sup> Likewise, another member of Azerbaijani parliament declares that “Do not look for a genocide in the far history. Khojaly Genocide occurred in the recent time. Let’s recognize it and investigate the other occasions with the historians.<sup>139</sup>” These responses indicates that, the attitude among 1915 events and mass massacre in Khojaly should differentiate. They have right

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<sup>136</sup> *Ibid*, p. 61.

<sup>137</sup> Bölükbaşı, p.84.

<sup>138</sup> Interview by the author with a MP in Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 24.06.2017.

<sup>139</sup> Interview by the author with a member of Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 23.06.2017.

concerning that the Convention on The Prevention and Punishment of The Crime of Genocide was adopted by the general assembly of the United Nations on December 9, 1948. According to *lex praevia*, which is one of the main principles of law, agreement or articles cannot be implemented for the events occurred before it enacted.

The public favor and sympathy to Azerbaijan in Turkey has been always in an ultimate level but it should be indicated that occupation of Karabakh disrupted Azerbaijan's image in Turkey. Many of the people did not know anything about the political and military aspects of the situation and thought that how could 2,5 million populated Armenia could occupy the territories of 9 million populated Azerbaijan.

Just after the resignation of Mutallibov, Minsk Group was established by the Initiative of OSCE to encourage the peaceful resolution of the conflict. The co-chairs are United States of America, Russian Federation and France. The other members of the group are; Belarus, Germany, Italy, Portugal, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland. Armenia and Azerbaijan are also in Minsk Group. As a member of the group, Turkey has always supported the thesis of Azerbaijan but because of the fact that Turkey is not in a co-chair position, function of Turkish support to Azerbaijan remained limited. Although the passivity of the group was discussed and criticized by Turkey and Azerbaijan many times. Karabakh conflict showed that "Turkey could not help Azerbaijan get rid of the pressure of the great powers and this made a road to diminish the confidence to Turkey among the community in Azerbaijan a little bit."<sup>140</sup>

The main specialty of this term is the recognition of Azerbaijan by Turkey before the other Turkic republics in Central Asia, following the demise of Soviet Union. Not recognizing Khojaly massacre as a "genocide" has been criticized time to time

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<sup>140</sup> Interview by the author with a member of Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 23.06.2017.

from both Turkey and Azerbaijan but reaction of Turkish public to Khojaly massacre showed the common stance of two communities. Before Khojaly protests, Soviet intervention to Baku on January 20, 1990 had been heavily condemned by the mass protests in Turkey as it is mentioned in previous chapter.

A scholar claimed that “Mutallibov is not close to Turkey in general but in the presidency of Yaqub Mammadov was not as same as his era. In his short acting presidency term, the idea of getting involved with Turkey as a confederation was discussed in the parliament of Azerbaijan.<sup>141</sup>” PFA’s political dominance soared in this term. Elchibey had reportedly even been ready to accept a federation with Turkey, and often spoke of the reunification of North and South Azerbaijan.<sup>142</sup> As it is understood from such instances, just after Mutallibov period, the relations with Turkey and expectations increased immediately.

Turkey’s main attitude in Mutallibov era is supporting Azerbaijan with the statements in Karabakh issue but stayed distanced to intervene in the hot conflicts. Turkey’s pro-Azerbaijan tendency is quite worthy for Azerbaijan to find a state who support her in the conflict when the silence in international field was taken into account. However, Turkey could not find a chance to set the tone of Karabakh conflict because of Russia’s existence in the region, not being a co-chair of Minsk Group and Mutallibov administration’s hesitance. In this time period, Turkey’s public opinion was closer than policy makers to Azerbaijan. The recognition of Azerbaijan’s independence and the treaty signed between Turkey and Azerbaijan are symbolically valuable because of being the “first”. “One nation two states” discourse was not used but in the official documents like good neighborhood treaty; but also being “one nation” was not officially refused by two states.

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<sup>141</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Ankara, 16.01.2018.

<sup>142</sup> Svante E.Cornell, *Small Nations And Great Powers: A Study Of Ethnopolitical Conflict In The Caucasus*, Routledge Curzon Press, 2001, p. 282.

## CHAPTER 6

### EBULFEZ ELCHIBEY ERA: IDEOLOGICAL ASPIRATIONS

#### 6.1 Main Peculiarities of Elchibey's Foreign Policy

After the independence of Azerbaijan; Ebulfez Elchibey has become a leading figure in Azerbaijani politics. Elchibey, who is the leader of Popular Front of Azerbaijan (PFA) and a scholar was elected as a president with a free-fair election on June 7, 1992 and took an oath. The main peculiarities of his foreign policy can be seen in two documents. One of them is the election program of Elchibey and the other one is the party program of Popular Front of Azerbaijan which was adopted in their congress on January 25-27, 1992. According to the party program of PFA, the points that should be given importance in Azerbaijan's foreign policy are as it follows;

- Solving the sources of the tension in Caucasus by negotiations, mutual solidarity with Caucasian people who fight for the national independence against the forces defending empire, freedom and democracy; hence establishing "Caucasian House" which aims close cooperation with them in economic, cultural and other terms,
- Providing solidarity for the freedom and independence struggle of dependent people and defending their struggle,
- Close cooperation with Turkic republics in all fields, investigating the national and moral value system correlatively, establishing Turkic cultural union to protect these values for the coming generations,
- Close cooperation in all fields with the Islamic states in the world,
- Building multilateral relations with the states who have democratic regimes for developing peace, security and humanity.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> AHC Meramname ve Nizamnamesi, I. Siyasi Bölüm, Baku, 1992, p. 7-8.

As it is understood from the PFA's party program; the priority of Azerbaijan was the protection and preservation of independence. It is noteworthy to say that; cultural elements were seen as a leading factor in way of making relations closer with the Turkic states. Hence, the program did not neglect the Islamic identity of Azerbaijanis. It should be noted that, democracy is the other prominent point in PFA's program.

In this point, Elchibey's views towards other Turkic republics should be examined. He came up with democracy as well as Pan-Turkism. Rather than establishing relations with the states, he wanted to impose his idealist opinions in Central Asia. He wanted to be an example for the other states in their democratic transition after Soviet hegemony. Thus, his aspect to the leaders of Turkic republics was not so positive. In his interview with journalist Thomas Goltz, he asserted that the leadership of the Central Asian states were terrified because of his democratic administration and continued:

When Mutallibov was restored to power on the May 14, the supporters of Islam Kerimov in Moscow were delighted – they said it is over, a 'real democrat' has to come to power. Now they will see what real democracy is. We didn't die and go away. We are very much alive. Now, apparently Islam Kerimov can't sleep at night. If we can have five months of peace, free of war with Armenian, our economy will start to develop and then you will see the democratic movement begin in both South Azerbaijan and Central Asia. It will be impossible to stop this movement. It has already begun in southern Azerbaijan.<sup>144</sup>

While PFA's program foresees a cultural union, Elchibey has an ideal to export his ideas to Turkic states as it is seen from the abovementioned interview. It can be said that, Elchibey's personal views about foreign relations with Turkic states present more than just a "cultural union". Supporting the independence movements in the region while being in a scarcity because of war conditions, did not seem so

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<sup>144</sup> Thomas Goltz's Interview with Azerbaijan President Abulfaz Elchibey, 10 June 1992.

viable. Despite his desire and passionate views about Turkic union, Elchibey slammed the presidents like Kerimov. Keeping in mind that, Kerimov ruled in Uzbekistan for decades, Elchibey's rhetoric spontaneously became an obstacle for stable relations.

Elchibey's election program has a similar tone with the PFA's party program and presents a more balanced tone than his interviews. The most important points there are the emphasis on joining the international organizations as an independent and equal state. In the program, ethno-cultural union with the Turkic world has its own place. Besides, in the program the best foreign policy for Azerbaijan is the "armed neutrality".<sup>145</sup> His foreign policy decisions caused a threat perception especially in Iran and Russia.

## **6.2 The General Overview: Turkey – Azerbaijan Relations During Elchibey Era**

Euphoria and ideological aspirations are important factors in bilateral relations in Elchibey's era. In the initial years, there was a romantic atmosphere and nostalgic thirst for reconnection, reunification. Many people in Azerbaijan saw Turkey as "big brother" or "big supporter". Turkey saw Azerbaijan as a "lost brother" or "brother who has been separated for many years". Turkey took the premier position in Azerbaijan's foreign policy. In contrary to Soviet autocracy, Turkey has a democratic structure and adopted Western principles. In the first years of independence, Soviet regime was delineated as invader of Azerbaijan territories but Turkey emerged as a brother who supports Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. In accordance with Elchibey's administration and Azerbaijani people, Turkey presented a secular model which was different from Iran. On the other side, economic projects between two countries were also on the agenda. The

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<sup>145</sup> Nazım Cafersoy, Elçibey Dönemi Azerbaycan Dış Politikası, Bir Bağımsızlık Mücadelesinin Diplomatik Öyküsü, Avrasya Stratejik Analizler Merkezi Yayınları, Ankara, 2001 p. 70.

conveniences about investments and tax reductions were provided to Turkish businessmen aiming to enhance Turkey - Azerbaijan economic relations by the signed agreements.<sup>146</sup> Hence, Eximbank gave loans to Azerbaijan for the reconstruction of the country.

The major pillars of Elchibey's foreign policy are the pan-Turkism and the ongoing war between Russia-backed Armenia and Azerbaijan in the first years of the republic. Elchibey strongly opposed to join Commonwealth of Independent States led by Russian Federation and his rhetoric about creating a union with Azerbaijan Turks in "Southern Azerbaijan", created serious concerns in Rafsanjani's administration in Iran. As Dilip Hiro argued;

Rafsanjani realized that in the long run, Azeri nationalism would prove as problematic for the Islamic regime in Tehran as it was proving then for the Communist administration in Moscow... The emergence of a strong, independent Azerbaijani republic — whether Islamic or not — would fan the flames of Azeri nationalism within Iran.<sup>147</sup>

Rather than Russia and Iran, Elchibey stood closer to Western countries. Turkey remained as only loyal partner in the region for Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan saw Turkey like a geographical and diplomatic gate to Western states. While Turkey was trying to open Azerbaijan's way to grow her relations with West, Armenian diaspora was working in the opposite direction. As a result of activities of Armenian lobby, US Congress passed Section 907 of Freedom Support Act which prohibits American assistance and aids to Azerbaijan.

Turkish foreign policy makers gave an exclusive place to Turkic republics in Central Asia after the dissolution of USSR. The newly emerged Turkic states have

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<sup>146</sup> Araz Aslanlı, Haydar Aliyev Dönemi Azerbaycan Dış Politikası, Platin Yayınları, Ankara, 2005, ss. 42-143.

<sup>147</sup> Dilip Hiro, Between Marx and Muhammad: The Changing Face of Central Asia, Harper-Collins, London, 1997, p. 293.

become one of the priorities of Turkey. Demirel described the geography “from Adriatic to the Great Wall of China” as a “Turk’s area”. Then, Central Asia and Turkic republics started to be seen as an “opening” area. Turkish President Turgut Özal described the future attitude of the foreign policy by saying; “21<sup>st</sup> century will be the century of Turks” in 1992. But Russia has limited Turkish access to Turkic republics and her existence in Central Asia.

Ankara considers Azerbaijan the most strategically located Turkic state: a gateway to Central Asia, a potential economic partner with huge petroleum resources, and a natural ally in containing Russian influence in the Trans-Caucasus.<sup>148</sup>

In the foreign policy making processes during this era; emotional factors like brotherhood between Anatolian Turks, Azerbaijan Turks in Iran and Azerbaijan has been one of the priorities. Elchibey defined Turkish populated region in Iran as “Southern Azerbaijan” and saw Azerbaijan as the northern part of his “Greater Azerbaijan” idea. Iran perceived Elchibey’s discourse as a direct threat. Claims of “Greater Azerbaijan” was not fully accepted by the Turkish government.

In that case, even if Turkey does not seek to provoke it, Iran will inevitably view Turkey as the beneficiary 'in these evolving relationships that so directly affect Iran's territorial integrity', could, in turn, get into a high-stake conflict with Turkey by inciting the Kurds to greater separatism.<sup>149</sup>

It is true that there has always been a regional rivalry between Turkey and Iran and relations have always been fluctuant. However, Turkey did not want problems with Iran because of Turks in Iran but it does not mean that this area was fully neglected. Turkish government did not hamper Elchibey’s “Southern Azerbaijan” rhetoric but did not react positively. In general, this field was seen like a “mined terrain”.

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<sup>148</sup> Bölükbaşı, p. 81.

<sup>149</sup> Mustafa Aydın, “Turkey and Central Asia: Challenges of Change”, *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 15 No. 2, 1996, p. 170.

Relations with Armenia also have influence in Turkish – Azerbaijani relations. At first, Turkey recognized Armenia as an independent state and opened her borders. Turkish government agreed to sell 100,000 tons of wheat to Armenia in September 1992 which means a remarkable amount in Armenian consumption. Turkey also did not close railway connection to Armenia. Despite critics from Azerbaijan, Turkey tried to maintain a modest stance and signed a deal about supplying electricity to Armenia while blockade on Armenia was continuing. Azerbaijani foreign minister, Tevfik Kasimov characterized the energy protocol as “a stab in the back”.<sup>150</sup> After that in a short time period the protocols were annulled. This was the first “protocol crisis” in Turkey – Azerbaijan – Armenia triangle.

An agreement was signed in the second visit of Ebulföz Elçibey on December 2, 1992 about cooperation between two states. The agreement reaffirms the ties in history, culture, tradition, language and friendship. Such elements constitute the necessary ground for multilateral cooperation. Article 1 of the agreement gives us the information about the content of it. Agreement covers the areas of politics, economics, commerce energy, health, environment, agriculture, science, education and technic, transportation, maritime, communication, culture, informatics, statistics, tourism, sport and all other fields. Yet, there was no special emphasis on military which was the essential problem in Azerbaijan.

Elçibey’s anti-Russian ideology had also effects on financial field. Elçibey annulled energy contracts with Russia. In the first years of the independence of Azerbaijan, the relations were very positive and in the First Turkish Speaking Head of States Summit on 30-31 October 1992 in Ankara, only leader who supported President Turgut Özal’s Turkish Common Market and Turkish Development and

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<sup>150</sup> Hürriyet, 12.12.1992.

Investment Bank ideas was Ebulfez Elchibey.<sup>151</sup> In March 1993, Elchibey sent President of SOCAR Sabit Bagirov to Ankara to make a contract for transferring Azerbaijan's oil to Ceyhan.<sup>152</sup> Because of the change in the presidency, this contract did not come into force but Baku – Tbilisi – Ceyhan Oil Pipeline would be finalized in the next decade. Starting from Elchibey era, Azerbaijan gave the priority to Turkey in transportation of oil and gas resources to the global markets. It has four main reasons;

- it is also advantageous for Azerbaijan's interests for integrating into the West,
- there are proximities between two states in terms of culture, ethnicity and language,
- Turkey is geographically available for it,
- historical ties between two countries.

As a result, in Elchibey era, Azerbaijan wanted to reach Western markets via Turkey but it was not successful because of the complex situation inside the country. The government officials did not concentrate on the energy issues because of the war in Karabakh. During this time period, Armenia occurred as an affecting factor in Azerbaijan – Turkey relations because Azerbaijan did not want Turkey to open way for any assistance while Karabakh War was continuing. The initiatives like “wheat” and “electricity” in Turkey - Armenia relations were not positively perceived.

### **6.3 Tightening Cultural Ties with Turkey**

In his address in Turkish Grand National Assembly on June 26, 1992, Elchibey stated that; “The struggle for democracy in Azerbaijan was made by the Popular Front of Azerbaijan. He also underlined that; with realizing the democracy, their

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<sup>151</sup> Cagla Gul Yesevi, Burcu Yavuz Tiftikcigil, “Turkey-Azerbaijan Energy Relations: A Political and Economic Analysis”, *International Journal of Energy Economics and Policy*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2015, p. 41.

<sup>152</sup> Lale Sariibrahimoğlu, Kurt Kapanında Kısır Siyaset, Ankara, İmge Yayınevi, 1997, s. 24.

ideals were based upon Muhammed Emin Resulzade.<sup>153</sup> This speech was an evidence of historical continuity from Azerbaijan Democratic Republic to modern Azerbaijan. Elchibey defined himself as “soldier of Atatürk” so it means that his personal attitude among Turkey is the prime factor. The discourse of "one nation two states" which was dictating official relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan beared features of a pan-Turkic logic in presenting Turkishness as the natural link.<sup>154</sup>

On December 22, 1992 Azerbaijani parliament took a decision for adopting “Turkish language” as official language of the state. In order to make sense of the relationship between Azerbaijan and Turkey, cultural factors should be taken into consideration more than the previous presidency period. In Elchibey’s term, the ideologic assumptions shaped the general framework among Turkey. Besides that, in areas like culture, education and media; Turkish values were started to be adopted in Azerbaijan.

The cultural policy of the PFA government can be summed up in one phrase: the Turkeyisation of Azerbaijan.” The term; “Turkeyisation of Azerbaijan”, refers to the cultural policy pursued by the PFA government, which implemented salient policies such as broadcasting Turkish television programs, taking the crucial steps for passing to Latin alphabet, using Turkish vocabulary in speeches.<sup>155</sup>

Adopting the Latin alphabet accelerates the mutual contacts but Turkish Latin Alphabet was not fully indigenized by Azerbaijan. Turkish Latin alphabet was not directly transferred to Azerbaijan and it delimitates in front of the mutual

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<sup>153</sup> Journal of Minutes of Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 19th Legislative Term, Year 1, Vol. 19, p. 178.

<sup>154</sup> Burcu Gültekin Punsman, “Turkey's Interest and Strategies in the South Caucasus”, South Caucasus 20 Years of Independence, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Publications, p. 294.

<sup>155</sup> Kyle L. Marquardt, “Framing Language Policy in post-Soviet Azerbaijan: Political Symbolism and Interethnic Harmony”, *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 2011, p.183.

understanding. According to an Azerbaijani MP who was policy adviser of Elchibey at that time and his special envoy to Turkey between 1995 – 1998: “I think that without common alphabet, creating a common thought is very difficult. If we could have done this, we would not live such difficulties.”<sup>156</sup>

Relations between two states in several fields like; economy, energy, commerce have gained currency in this term. The common values have played a determining role in bilateral relations. For example; the Great Student Project was launched in 1992 between Turkey and Central Asia. Many students came to Turkey for education and young generation who were educated in Turkey played an important role in Azerbaijan for developing fraternity between Turkey and Azerbaijan. After graduating from Turkish universities, these people started to work in the important positions in Azerbaijani state bodies. Their sympathy and knowledge about Turkey contributed to the relations. The cooperation in the field of education have continued expandingly in the following years.

#### **6.4 Turkish Assistance to Azerbaijani Diplomacy: “A Gate Country”**

In the first years of independence of Azerbaijan, Turkey’s place in Azerbaijan’s foreign policy can be summarized as an essential country who defends Azerbaijan’s issues in international area; UN and in Europe. Turkey was seen as Azerbaijan’s interpreter. Secondly, Turkey is perceived as “a country who helps Azerbaijan in her difficult times”.<sup>157</sup> The best examples of that can be seen in diplomatic activities. Elchibey’s first trip to a foreign country was to Turkey for attending Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) Summit in Istanbul on June 24, 1992. During his second nine-day trip to Turkey, between 28 October and 5 November 1992 he gave a speech at the Turkic Speaking Countries Summit in Ankara on 31 October but his pro-Turkish rhetoric was not applauded by the other

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<sup>156</sup> Interview by the author with a member of Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 23.06.2017.

<sup>157</sup> Interview by the author with a member of Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 23.06.2017.

Turkic states.<sup>158</sup> In the framework of this trip, The Embassy of Azerbaijan to Ankara was opened on November 2, 1992; between two countries, agreements on collaboration and cooperation, business, transportation, transfer of criminals were signed.<sup>159</sup> In the opening ceremony of embassy of Azerbaijan, President of Turkey Turgut Özal reminded that the first Embassy of Azerbaijan in Turkey was opened by Atatürk and stated:

Azerbaijan flag; today rising in Ankara has a place in all of our hearts. All the necessary thing will be done not to fall that flag one more time. Independent and democratic Azerbaijan state will receive all kind of Turkey's aid.<sup>160</sup>

Turkey endorsed Azerbaijan's thesis in Nagorno Karabakh issue in international meeting and organizations. Also, Turkey had significant aids to newly independent Azerbaijan while establishing diplomatic bonds with the other states. A Turkish official expresses that "Turkey helped and encouraged Azerbaijan during her integration to European/Atlantic organizations."<sup>161</sup> Ultimately, it can be said that Azerbaijan chose Ankara as a "diplomatic center"<sup>162</sup>. According to Onur Öymen's statements with his meeting with Heydar Aliyev in April 25, 2000; during the opening period of Embassy of Azerbaijan in Germany, Turkey gave place to Azerbaijan in Turkish embassy and he has worked with Ambassador Hüseynaga Sadıqov together. They have worked one-two years together in the same building. Then they moved to their own headquarter.<sup>163</sup> A politician/academic's words are

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<sup>158</sup> Süleyman Elik, *Iran-Turkey Relations, 1979-2011: Conceptualising the Dynamics of Politics, Religion and Security in Middle-Power States*, Routledge, 2013, p. 110.

<sup>159</sup> Cavid Valiyev, *Azərbaycan–Türkiyə Münasibətləri: 1991-2016*, Azərbaycan Respublikasının Xarici Siyasətinin Əsas İstiqamətləri (1991-2016), SAM Publications, Baku, 2017, p.107.

<sup>160</sup> Hüseynbala Mirelemov, Viktor Andriyanov, *Heydar Aliyev*, Baku, 2008, p. 461.

<sup>161</sup> Interview by the author with an ambassador, Baku, 23.06.2017.

<sup>162</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>163</sup> Türkiyənin NATO-dakı Daimi Nümayəndəsi Səfir Onur Öyməni Qəbul Edərkən Söhbətindən, [http://files.preslib.az/projects/toplu/v2/f3\\_10.pdf](http://files.preslib.az/projects/toplu/v2/f3_10.pdf) (Accessed Date: 15.11.2017)

also in the same direction: “After Azerbaijan’s membership to UN, Azerbaijan had no room there, but Turkey gave a room to Azerbaijan’s delegation committee in her permanent mission to UN.<sup>164</sup>” Turkish government gave instructions to all his diplomatic missions and ambassadors to help Azerbaijan’s relations. A politician/academic says that, they have gone abroad with the support of Turkey and Turkish diplomats welcomed them in the airports and picked them up to their hotels while he was working in the international relations department of parliament.<sup>165</sup> An Azerbaijani MP also underlines Turkey’s support to Azerbaijan in diplomatic field.<sup>166</sup> Turkey also aided Azerbaijan in terms of training diplomats in the first years of her independence. Moreover, some of Turkish diplomats started to work in Azerbaijan’s diplomatic missions. Turkey has acted as a gate country for Azerbaijan particularly in her relations with the Western countries. Both in the education of Azerbaijani diplomats and forming the infrastructure of Azerbaijani diplomatic missions, Turkey played a crucial role.

## **6.5 Diplomatic Solidarity Between Turkey – Azerbaijan and Karabakh Conflict**

Nagorno Karabakh conflict has served a ground to regional and global actors to achieve their interest among Azerbaijan. Russia and Iran endorsed Armenia in the conflict because the ideas of Elchibey are quite far from these countries. Lack of knowledge of American elites about Azerbaijan combined with the Armenian lobby activities in US and it caused decision about prohibition of American support to Azerbaijan. On the other hand, US and Russia did not prefer a regional power to intervene in the conflict.

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<sup>164</sup> Interview by the author with a politician/academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>165</sup> Interview by the author with a politician/academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>166</sup> Interview by the author with a MP in Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 24.06.2017.

First of all, it should be underlined that Turkey shares the same border with Azerbaijan and because of that, she perceived a threat from Armenia during Karabakh War. Azerbaijan's financial problems, occupation of Karabakh and internally displaced people (IDP) in Azerbaijan did not minimize the significance of Azerbaijan in Turkish foreign policy.<sup>167</sup> Turkey and Azerbaijan continued to act in joint projects after the armed conflict in Karabakh region had come to an end. According to an academic, Turkey had both direct and indirect support to Azerbaijan in Karabakh issue but the diplomatic side of this process was reflected.<sup>168</sup> So, Turkey officially did not play a role in Karabakh in military context but it does not mean that Turkey is completely out of the situation. "In 1993, Turkish media reported that about 160 Turkish current and retired military officers were aiding the Azerbaijani army and that Turkey had extended a 30 million dollar credit for Turkish arms to Azerbaijan."<sup>169</sup> Besides that, Turkey provided humanitarian aids to Azerbaijan considering the fact that nearly a million people have become internally displaced in Azerbaijan. Turkey has been instrumental in Azerbaijan solving the refugee and IDP crisis. Starting from the early 1990s, Turkey provided humanitarian aid to Azeri IDPs and set up Turkish camps in central Azerbaijan to provide relief aid to the war victims.<sup>170</sup> Turkey sent soldiers to conflict zone for the military training and they did a good job but in general, Turkey did not have a potentiality to influence this subject.<sup>171</sup> Contrary, a journalist supposed that "a strong country like Turkey has stood behind Azerbaijan in the international area. If Turkey was not there, developments might have gone

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<sup>167</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 24.06.2017.

<sup>168</sup> Interview by the author with a scholar, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>169</sup> Carol Migdalovitz, *Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, CRS Issue Brief for Congress, 08.08.2003, <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/crs/ib92109.pdf> (Accessed Date: 05.10.2018)

<sup>170</sup> Fariz Ismailzade, "Turkey-Azerbaijan: The Honeymoon Is Over", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 4, Winter 2005, p.6.

<sup>171</sup> Interview by the author with a member of Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 23.06.2017.

through a different process.”<sup>172</sup> This point of view refers to the importance and determinant position of Turkey in Karabakh conflict even if Turkey did not send troops to Azerbaijani territories.

Turkey’s place in Azerbaijan’s foreign policy increased because Turkey was the only country who defended Azerbaijan. Karabakh issue has affected it, too. An academic underlines that, “Turkey is the sole country who has a ‘straight line’ and always sees Armenia as an occupier.”<sup>173</sup> In the same vein, Turkey is the only country which closed border with Armenia. For instance; Azerbaijan’s other neighbors Iran and Georgia did not close the border with Armenia but Turkey closed the gate in response to occupation of Azerbaijani territories.

In Elchibey era, Turkey also tried to play a mediator role in Karabakh conflict but it did not work out. Because of Turkey’s close relations with Azerbaijan, it was not accepted by both Russia and Armenia. Russia tried to continue the negotiation period with Kazakhstan during Karabakh conflict. In March 1992, Turkey presented a plan which relied on a possibility of territorial swap including the following concessions;

- Sending part of the NKAO to Armenia, with the area controlling the headwaters of the river flowing to Baku and areas of Azerbaijani population remaining in Azerbaijani hands; and
- Transferring the Armenian-controlled land bridge between Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan to Azerbaijani control.<sup>174</sup>

Turkey supported Azerbaijan in all international meetings for the peaceful resolution of Karabakh conflict and closed her borders with Armenia after the occupation of Kelbejar.

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<sup>172</sup> Interview by the author with a journalist, Baku, 24.06.2018.

<sup>173</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>174</sup> Paul A. Goble, Coping with the Nagorno-Karabakh Crisis, *The Fletcher Forum*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 1992, p. 26.

Ankara did indeed undertake numerous diplomatic initiatives, mainly in the UN and at the CSCE. Turkey conveyed its views to the five permanent members of the UN, saying that Armenia was not complying with UN resolutions and that its expansionist policy was unacceptable.<sup>175</sup>

Decision about “diplomatic attack” was taken during “Azerbaijan Summit” in Çankaya on July 25, 1993. In this regard, “telephone diplomacy” was launched to reorganize the stances of foreign countries against Armenia.<sup>176</sup> “Telephone diplomacy” showed that Turkey was with Azerbaijan but it did not give outcomes in international field. After the attacks on the Fuzuli and Jabrayil regions, Turkey appealed UN Security Council on August 17, 1993 and opened a door to UN Security Council’s declaration about withdrawal of Armenian forces.

Occupation of Kelbajar can be marked as a milestone in Karabakh War and in Turkey – Azerbaijan – Armenia triangle. During this period, Turkey watched the steps in UN Security Council about the occupation of Kelbajar, responded with closure of her airspace and cutting railway connection. President Özal threatened Armenia and clearly expressed Turkish support to Azerbaijan with his statement on April 8, 1993:

What would happen if during military exercises three of our bombs fell in the Armenian territory? What would happen if we sent 1-2 military brigades to Nakhijevan? We are bound to Nakhijevan with an agreement. What would happen, who would do us anything, who would come to intervene?<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Freddy De Pauw, “Contested Borders in the Caucasus”, *Turkey’s Policies in Transcaucasia*, VUB Press, 1996, <http://poli.vub.ac.be/publi/ContBorders/eng/ch0801.htm> (Accessed Date: 03.05.2018)

<sup>176</sup> Demirel ve Çiller’den Telefon Diplomasisi, *Milliyet*, 26.07.1993.

<sup>177</sup> *Hürriyet*, 08.04.1993.

Turkish PM Süleyman Demirel is more restrained than President Özal considering the military operation to Karabakh. Demirel tried to appeal President Bush to intervene and mediate the conflict but it does not have any significant effect on the course of the events.<sup>178</sup> On the other hand, Turkey restrained to use “hard power” in Karabakh region. While affirming that Turkey has a fully pro-Azerbaijan stance, an academic advocates that “Turkish policies among Karabakh has no pro-active feature.”<sup>179</sup> Turkey gave weight to policies that excluded interventionism. We can say that Turkish diplomacy had a quite pro-active vision but the official military perspective of Turkey was more passive.

Russia endeavored to keep Turkey out of the conflict so it also affects Turkish – Russian relations. Tensions between Turkey and Russia in the region were most apparent in May 1992. Turkish armed forces engaged in maneuvers when the possibility of Armenian attack to the Azerbaijani autonomous region of Nakhichevan was observed. Meanwhile, Commander of the CIS Armed Forces, Marshall Yevgeny Shaposhnikov, declared that Turkish military intervention would bring about the outbreak of a third World War. Turkish interference could remarkably change the direction of the occasions in Karabakh. However, Turkey preferred to stay out of the conflict in official level but sent military advisors to the region unofficially not to confront with Russian pressure. On August 11, 1992, Cooperation on Military Education Agreement between Turkey and Azerbaijan was signed between two states. It should be mentioned that; the agreement is about education of military staff rather than collaboration in war. An academic asserts that:

“The second turning point after recognition of independence of Azerbaijan in Turkey – Azerbaijan relations is the falling short of

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<sup>178</sup> Svante E. Cornell, “The Undeclared War: Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Reconsidered”, *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol 20, No. 4, Summer 1997, p.15.

<sup>179</sup> Interview by the with an academic, Baku, 22.06.2018.

high expectations. Comparing with the fact that Russia militarily supported Armenia, it remained as an “unsatisfied expectation”.<sup>180</sup>

Azerbaijan faced with the fact that, for all its shortcomings, Turkey was still the only state it could count on as an ally against Armenia.<sup>181</sup>

Like protests after the massacre in Khojaly committed by Armenian militias, the situation in the country and public anger after the occupation of Kelbejar opened a door for toppling Elchibey. Because of the instability of the country, foreign policy makers could not find a possibility to use rich energy resources as a tool in her international relations. In the foreign policy attempts all the doors were closed to Elchibey. Turkey clearly defined her pro-Azerbaijan position in diplomatic field and supported Azerbaijan’s thesis in Nagorno Karabkh conflict but Turkey’s involvement in his conflict was contradictive in some points. Turkey’s reluctance about being active in military field in Karabakh caused a frustration in Elchibey administration. In his interview with Turkish journalist Mithat Bereket which was broadcasted in TV program 32. Gün (32<sup>nd</sup> Day) he said that; he demanded helicopters from Turkey regarding humanitarian reasons, for the evacuation of Kelbejar but he was refused<sup>182</sup>. For a NGO representative, “Karabakh problem could be solved in the starting phase if Turkey gave a severe response. However, at that times Turkey did not have all of these facilities.”<sup>183</sup> “Turkey’s Karabakh policy was shaped with good intentions but contained some deficiencies. Besides that, one of the Turkey’s prior problems in international area was the groundless allegations about so-called Armenian genocide. “Without solving these mutual questions, the opportunity of going ahead is limited”, according to an Azerbaijani

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<sup>180</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>181</sup> Svante E. Cornell, *Azerbaijan: Since Independence*, M. E. Sharpe, London, 2011, p. 372.

<sup>182</sup> 1993 In Azerbaijan’s Frontline, 32. Gün, <http://32gun.com/1993-azerbaycanda-cephe-hattinda>, February 20, 2018.

<sup>183</sup> Interview by the author with a chairman of a NGO in Azerbaijan, Baku, 22.06.2017.

MP.<sup>184</sup> Turkey has reasons to refrain from taking military actions in Karabakh War.

Cornell lists it in seven topics:

- First, the doctrine of Kemalism explicitly prohibits military adventurism abroad
- A domestic balance between opposing opinions neutralized any impulse toward strong action.
- Third, Turkey's freedom to act was tightly limited by its ties to the West; indeed, this was perhaps its most important constraint.
- The fourth factor was Russia. Every time Turkey signaled its intention to increase its involvement in Karabakh, Moscow responded promptly.<sup>185</sup>
- The stigma that Armenian communities in the West have succeeded in attaching to Turkey made it difficult for Ankara to put action behind its verbal support for Azerbaijan.
- Sixth, Turkey in the early 1990s was hardly a harmonious and peaceful society: its military was fighting the most vicious and powerful Kurdish insurgency in decades, and during 1992–93 the government effectively did not control large swaths of southeastern Turkey where the presence of the separatist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) was particularly strong.
- Finally, the international reaction that Turkey faced after invading Cyprus in 1974 had imparted a lesson.<sup>186</sup>

The main problem in Turkey's restricted freedom of act in Karabakh conflict was the capacity problem of the country. On one hand, Turkey wanted to become a leading country in the conflict on the other hand Turkey did not favor a hostility with Russia whom she has tight commercial ties. Turkey did not prefer a disaccord with NATO and European institutions. Regarding the economic possibilities, Turkish economy was not enabled to race with global powers in any probability of escalation of the conflict. Turkey deemed Karabakh significant because of her security concerns in the region. The verbal reactions soared when Turkey faced with a threat perception especially to her border in Nakhchivan. The other

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<sup>184</sup> Interview by the author with a member of Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 23.06.2017.

<sup>185</sup> Svante E. Cornell, *Azerbaijan: Since Independence*, M. E. Sharpe, London, 2011, p. 371.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid*, p. 372.

importance of Karabakh derived from Turkey's new sight to Turkic republics. Turkey gave precedence to newly independent Turkic states and had aspirations about becoming a leader state of this geography. However, her inconclusive efforts that could not change the result of the conflict in advance of Azerbaijan disrupted her image. It should be highlighted that; the main reason of the limits of Turkey's role was the pressure of the other states. Turkey's forces as the second biggest army in NATO had a capability to combat both terrorism inside the country and launching border front operations at the same time. But, Turkey might pay a price for her operations.

Karabakh conflict, the lack of governmental and administrative experiences of the PFA officials, instability due to these reasons and Russia's hostile policies against the PFA government were the basic factors which paved a way for the fall of Elchibey.<sup>187</sup> Elchibey emerged as a revisionist leader who openly challenges the leaders of the other Turkic republics in Central Asia. Such a tone made the relations more difficult with post-Soviet Turkic republics. The poverty in Azerbaijan reached an alarming level as it was understood from the address of Elchibey; "Tomorrow, there is no flour for the bread in the country."<sup>188</sup> The undisciplined army of Azerbaijan and the loss of coordination between several fractions in the army defeated in some regions in Karabakh and it caused new upheaval in the country. The weakening of the central control in the country gave an opportunity to the separatist tendencies of Talishs in southern and Lezgis in northern Azerbaijan.

In Elchibey period, the Russian bases in Azerbaijan were closed and Russian troops withdrew from the country. It has also effects on Karabakh conflict. Anti-Russian position increased the Russia's support to Armenia. Leaving the weapons of the last Russian division who left on May 26, 1993; to the leader of June 4 Coup which

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<sup>187</sup> Beyazit Erkin, "The Rise and Fall of Popular Front of Azerbaijan", TASAV, 2013, p. 8.

<sup>188</sup> Interview by the author with a MP in Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 24.06.2017.

should be given to the Defense Ministry of Azerbaijan was the triumph of this period.<sup>189</sup> On 4 June 1993, ex-colonel Suret Huseinov marched from Ganja city to Baku with his private troops. After that, Elchibey was forced to resign. Turkey denounced its support to legitimate President Elchibey in June 4 Coup but it did not go further than a diplomatic statement. Turkey moved also slowly in terms of diplomatic involvement to this process.<sup>190</sup>

Consequently, it can be said that Elchibey era passed with great expectations from Turkey but both Turkey and Azerbaijan had its own capacities in terms of engagement. The bilateral relations have experienced a capacity problem especially about Karabakh issue. Apart from Turkey, no country supported Azerbaijan in military, diplomatic and social grounds. Referring to “one nation two states” concept, it can be said that Elchibey’s presidency term was focused on the “one nation” side of this discourse. The cultural ties were strengthened and Turkish way of life was discovered more broadly by Azerbaijanis. In Turkey, the war conditions, the political vulnerability and suffering of the people were discussed about Azerbaijan so the discussion was a bit different than in Azerbaijan. There is no doubt that Turkish people saw Azerbaijanis as their brothers but the main direction of the discussions in Turkey is more political than cultural. Turkey’s feature of being the only country who supported Azerbaijan regardless of the shortages in Turkish foreign policy and high expectations of Azerbaijan, made a remarkable contribution in the construction of “one nation two states” discourse.

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<sup>189</sup> Nazım Cafersoy, Elçibey Dönemi Azerbaycan Dış Politikası, Bir Bağımsızlık Mücadelesinin Diplomatik Öyküsü, ASAM Yayınları, Ankara, 2001, p. 293.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid*, p. 131

## CHAPTER 7

### HEYDAR ALIYEV ERA: TRANSITION - TRANSFORMATION

#### 7.1 Main Tenants of Foreign Policy in Heydar Aliyev Era

Heydar Aliyev pursued a “balance policy” with the regional and global actors in international relations. Rather than putting the ideological concerns as a primary issue in foreign policy, Haydar Aliyev prioritized the interest of Azerbaijan especially in politics and energy with a multi-vectoral approach. During Heydar Aliyev’s period, pragmatism took the place of ideological elements in foreign policy making mechanism. “President Aliyev saw that, Russia guided foreign policy finished the era of Mutallibov and pro-Turkey policies of Elchibey’s caused the end of his rule. These policies were not harmonized with the realpolitik.”<sup>191</sup> He reconstructed the deteriorated relations with a new perception. After Elchibey’s presidency, Heydar Aliyev established a strong leadership. In the beginning of 90s, Azerbaijan was a young independent state which just started to improve her energy relations with Turkey, West and her neighbor countries. Domestically; first aim was to cope with the instability in the country. At first, the foreign policy makers of Haydar Aliyev administration also focused mainly on Nagorno – Karabakh conflict. Ceasefire with Armenia affected the internal stability of the country positively. According to Cabbarli; signing of the ceasefire between Azerbaijan and Armenia on May 11 1994, gave an opportunity to stabilize the domestic and foreign policy.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Interview by the author with a scholar, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>192</sup> Hatem Cabbarli, Vusale Abullayeva, “Azerbaycan Dış Politikasının Temel Özellikleri (1991 – 2009)”, *21. Yüzyıl Dergisi*, June 2009, p. 83.

An experienced leader who worked in several important positions during Soviet era, Heydar Aliyev took the control of the state. He restored the authority of the state and appointed those from his hometown Nakhchivan to the critical positions. Ergun asserts that; “his term in the office between 1993 and 2003 had four major achievements: a cease-fire between Azerbaijan and Armenia in 1994; signing of agreement of Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan main export pipeline, suppression of ethno-national upheavals and elimination of any alternative power rivalries.”<sup>193</sup>

Heydar Aliyev has focused firstly on the internal stabilization process. In politic terms; ceasefire with Armenia and in economic terms; internationalizing the energy sources of the county with a balanced attitude played an important role in this concern. Foreign policy of his era has some tenants;

- Balancing of relations among regional and global powers
- Neglecting the religious, ethnic and other identity factors in foreign policy
- Not serving a vassal state of any other regional power
- Reinforcing transportation and energy policies
- Resolution of Nagorno – Karabakh Conflict<sup>194</sup>

After declaration of the independence, Azerbaijan has spared her energy in Karabakh War and did not benefit from the energy resources in the country. Haydar Aliyev tried to settle Azerbaijan in a detached position while preserving ties with both Russia and West. In 1993, he was concentrated on normalizing the deteriorated relations with Russia, the most salient signal of it was the re-membership to CIS. Azerbaijan accessed to CIS on September 24, 1993, on account of the fact that it would remove the internal instabilities originating from

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<sup>193</sup> Ergun, p. 74.

<sup>194</sup> Brenda Shaffer, “Azerbaijan’s Foreign Policy Since Independence”, *Caucasus International Review*, Vol. 2, No.1, Spring 2012, p. 72.

Russia and contribute to stop Armenia's occupant attacks.<sup>195</sup> Azerbaijan's membership to CIS has met suspiciously by the opponents of Heydar Aliyev but he clarified the foreign policy direction of Azerbaijan with these words in his inauguration speech;

I want also to note that some circles try to present the alliance of Azerbaijan with CIS as a dangerous step. This is not correct. Being a CIS member, Azerbaijan will defend its independence all the time and its alliance with CIS can never prejudice its independence. As an independent state Azerbaijan will follow the way of democracy, obey the international democratic norms. We shall never re-establish the former communist ideology, communist regime in Azerbaijan.<sup>196</sup>

A new vision of relations with Russia did not mean that Azerbaijan would stay out of Western world. In the 1990's, "Heydar Aliyev acted on the assumption that a firm relationship with the West and in particular the United States would be a strong anchor for his country's new statehood."<sup>197</sup> In 1993, Azerbaijan started to develop her relations with US which were disrupted by the Section 907 of Freedom Support Act. Hafız Pashayev was sent to Washington DC as Azerbaijan's first Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the US. In the following years of this era, US endorsement would be noticeable especially in realizing BTC. US wanted to diminish Russia's role and take Azerbaijan out of the periphery of Russia with the West-oriented projects in 90s.

Improving relations with Russia was important for the stability in the country when the Russian role in Nagorno Karabkh was considered. Also, the West was

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<sup>195</sup> Araz Aslanlı, Azərbaycan'ın BDT'ye Üyelik Sürecinde Temel Dinamikler, *Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, Vol. 3, Winter, 2017, p. 99

<sup>196</sup> Inauguration Speech of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev, Baku, Republican Palace, 10.10.1993, <http://lib.aliyev-heritage.org/en/66679364.html> (Accessed Date: 29.04.2018)

<sup>197</sup> Thomas De Waal, Azerbaijan at Twenty-Five: A New Era of Change and Turbulence, Carnegie Europe, 23.09.2016, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/2016/09/23/azerbaijan-at-twenty-five-new-era-of-change-and-turbulence-pub-64671> (Accessed Date: 20.04.2018)

necessary for Azerbaijan for the economic development in terms of energy projects. Because of these reasons, Heydar Aliyev initiated a rapprochement process with Russia just after this inauguration and then started to get in touch with West. Turkey was seen as an important country in Heydar Aliyev's period, too. Hence, Turkey's position as a "gate country" in Azerbaijan's relations did not diminish especially in the first half of 90s. For example, Demirel made a great effort for organizing Aliyev's Paris visit in 1993.

Azerbaijan's balanced foreign policy between Russia and her Western neighbors continued with allocating of Azerbaijan's energy resources to international energy companies. Economic development of the country was built on the oil and gas resources.

They have become one of the most effective instruments at her disposal in her efforts to resolve the Karabakh conflict. First, they have served since the early 1990's to focus the interest of the US (and later also of the European Union) in underpinning regional stability, and specifically in undercutting the influence in the South Caucasus of Russia and Iran. Secondly, the successful exploitation and the export of Azerbaijan's oil and gas via a pipeline network beyond Moscow's control has provided the cash needed to modernize, train and re-arm Azerbaijan's armed forces with the possible long-term objective of launching a military offensive to win back control over Nagorno Karabakh.<sup>198</sup>

Heydar Aliyev's foreign policy has attached importance to the Nagorno Karabakh issue. The negotiation period with Armenia was started and Azerbaijan put emphasis on the peaceful solution of the conflict. For an Azerbaijani MP:

There are four mainlines in the solution of Karabakh Conflict; international law, economic outline, demographic feature and military power." The international institutions like OSCE, UN and NATO adopted strong resolutions about Karabakh. Azerbaijan is richer than Armenia and considering demographic force; Azerbaijan

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<sup>198</sup> Elizabeth Fuller, "Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy and the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict", *Istituto Affari Internazionali Working Papers*, Vol.13, No. 28, August 2013, p. 4.

is 10 million but Armenia is just 2 million. Azerbaijan's military is stronger than Armenia. According to her, "Azerbaijan succeeded in all these points but the war is not only between Azerbaijan and Armenia but Azerbaijan will win by the time."<sup>199</sup>

In this regard, measuring the might of a state with her population does not seem so rational. On the other hand, the current political situation in Armenia is so complicated and the economic problem of the country have become bigger. When these two countries are compared with each other, Azerbaijan is more powerful than Armenia but the will of Minsk Group co-presidents has not made the solution possible till now.

The cultural provision of Azerbaijan was also transformed in this era. Elchibey's "Pan-Turkism" concept was changed with Aliyev's "Azerbaijanism". Azerbaijanism does not refuse the Turkic ties of Azerbaijan but regarding the ethnic upheavals of Talishs and Lezgis, Azerbaijanism was built as a roof that can collect different ethnicities and cultures. Turkish culture and history were still very precious for Azerbaijan. While Azerbaijanis defined themselves officially as "Azerbaijani" the emphasis on "Turkishness" in relations with Turkey has perpetuated. In this context, being as an "Azerbaijani" was not designated a challenge to Turkism. The most important reason of implementing the Azerbaijani identity is discarding any ethnical rivals or threat in politics and daily life. By the way, Atatürk sympathy in Azerbaijan has proceeded also in Heydar Aliyev's term. Upon Aliyev's decree on March 9, 2001, Atatürk Centre was opened in Baku.<sup>200</sup>

In his address to the First Congress of World Azerbaijanis on November 9, 2001, Heydar Aliyev, characterizing policy of the Azerbaijani state, outlined priorities of this policy: The main idea of the independent Azerbaijani state is Azerbaijanism. Each Azerbaijani should be proud of his national identity, and we should

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<sup>199</sup> Interview by the author with a MP in Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 24.06.2017.

<sup>200</sup> Yavuz Donat, Atatürk Merkezi, Sabah, June 24, 2004.

develop Azerbaijanism - language, culture, national-cultural values, customs and traditions of Azerbaijan.<sup>201</sup>

The re-evaluation of the cultural outlook has influenced the foreign policy of the country. The concept reflected to the foreign policy of Azerbaijan as “balance policy”. Aliyev made foreign policy of the country free from any ethnic and religious factors. Unlike Elchibey’s irredentist assumptions, Aliyev worked on the territorial integrity of the country. Aliyev’s perspective which neglected the religious identity in domestic and foreign policy, was guided for protecting the country from Iran’s will of exporting of Islamic Revolution and increasing her power in religious groups. While balancing the regional and global powers, Azerbaijan enhanced her capacity of carrying out an independent policy.

## **7.2 Relations and Tensions Between Turkey and Azerbaijan**

The relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan can be characterized on the basis of friendship and partnership referring both the cultural proximity of the communities and cooperation between states in Heydar Aliyev’s presidency term. This era also can be concerned as the beginning of the strategic cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey. During Muttalibov era, Turkey – Azerbaijan relations are based on the “neighborhood relations” and did not contain a priority. In Elchibey period, Turkey located on the number one position in foreign policy of Azerbaijan which was not accorded with realpolitik. At first, Aliyev’s foreign policy which was driven by his personal decisions, chose to tranquilize Russia and then made a balanced foreign policy.<sup>202</sup> Turkey was seen as a balance to Russia – Iran axis in foreign policy of Azerbaijan. The foreign policy of Azerbaijan was diversified and it is true that Turkey was not the only actor. Turkey’s previous role was shared by the other regional and global actors but it does not mean that “Turkish modal” for Azerbaijan

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<sup>201</sup> Azerbaijanism, 22.11.2017, [http://multiculturalism.preslib.az/en\\_a2.html](http://multiculturalism.preslib.az/en_a2.html) (Accessed Date: 20.02.2018)

<sup>202</sup> Interview by the author with a scholar, Baku, 19.06.2017.

lost all its significance. The Turkeyisation period ended with Elchibey but Turkey protected its own place in the modernization of Azerbaijan. The popularity of Turkey among Azerbaijanis did not reduce. Bağcı claims that; President Aliyev's well-organized "routine visits" to Turkey create a common understanding for Azerbaijan domestic as well as foreign problems in Turkish public opinion.<sup>203</sup> Heydar Aliyev visited Turkey shortly after his inauguration, from February 8 to February 11, 1994. On his visit, he was accompanied by an 80-person strong delegation, reflecting the importance he attached to closer relations with Turkey.<sup>204</sup>

Heydar Aliyev's speeches delivered in Turkish parliament as a guest president are examined in the context of Azerbaijan -Turkey relations in this study. The analysis of his addresses focused on the notions that he used while describing the relations without underestimating the developments in bilateral/international relations and developments in both countries during these years. In Heydar Aliyev's first address in Turkish Grand National Assembly on February 9, 1994, he indicated the cruciality of Turkish parliament and Turkey's feature of being an "example" for Azerbaijan. It was worthwhile because some circles in Turkey were sceptic about the future of the relations after the beginning of his ruling era. Heydar Aliyev denounced at the general assembly of Turkish parliament in 1994: "In general, now 70 years history of Turkey is an example of an example and an experiment for independent Azerbaijan Republic. We make use of your experiences and then we will make use of them."<sup>205</sup>

In his second address in Turkish Parliament in 1997, he affirmed the same emphasis with these words;

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<sup>203</sup> Hüseyin Bağcı, Turkey's Support for Aliyev, Turkish Daily News, 19.03.2001.

<sup>204</sup> Freddy De Pauw, Contested Borders in the Caucasus, *Turkey's Policies in Transcaucasia*, VUB Press 1996; <http://poli.vub.ac.be/publi/ContBorders/eng/ch0801.htm>, (Accessed Date: 03.05.2018)

<sup>205</sup> Journal of Minutes of Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 69<sup>th</sup> Session, 9 February 1994, Vol. 53, p. 17

Turkey has a great democracy experience. Turkey's existence as a republic, a democratic state, a secular state –you say “laic” we say “secular”- is an example for all the other Turkic speaking countries. Your road that you go in your republic history is also an example for us, your state establishment is example for us, your democracy is example for us. Your laws and principles are also example for us.<sup>206</sup>

In 1997, he expanded the field of Turkish position in regard of being an example for Azerbaijan. Perceiving Turkey as an example for the Turkic world also means appreciation of Turkish experience and power. Heydar Aliyev's views about Turkey did not change in 2001 as it is understood from his speech in Turkish parliament. He made an emphasis on the growth and strong financial structure of Turkey again, reiterated the democracy, secularism and rule of law and stated that; “...at the same time, life in Turkish Republic is an example for us, a center and a source of experience for us.”<sup>207</sup>

In the previous term, Turkey was seen as the only modal for Azerbaijan. In Heydar Aliyev's era, Turkey kept her significance but she is just one dimension among a multilateral concept in Azerbaijan's foreign policy. This study demonstrates that, in Heydar Aliyev's term, Turkey was not the only modal any more but still an important example for Azerbaijan. It should be emphasized that the relations were delineated as “one nation two states” by Heydar Aliyev. According to a MP, “it is a “message” to the friends of two countries and to the ones who do not like Turkey and Azerbaijan.”<sup>208</sup> It can be understood as a message to Armenia in the regional scale but the evolution of the discourse did not depend just being on the opposite of Armenia. The transformation of “one nation two states” discourse has relied on common historical references and current interests.

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<sup>206</sup> Journal of Minutes of Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 89<sup>th</sup> Session, 6 May 1997, p. 22.

<sup>207</sup> Journal of Minutes of Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 68<sup>th</sup> Session, 13 Mart 2001, p.481.

<sup>208</sup> Interview by the author with a MP in Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 24.06.2017.

The relations have followed stressful phases because of the war in Azerbaijani territories and countries did not focus on the cooperation in security issue. Changing of the governments in Turkey did not affect relations with Azerbaijan negatively. However, the political disputes in Azerbaijan retarded the discussion of the cooperation with Turkey because the politicians concentrated on internal affairs. It can be claimed that, the stability in Turkey – Azerbaijan relations were ensured after Heydar Aliyev's policies. Two countries noticed that their interests were matched and a natural partnership was created between them. In this context, the historical, cultural and linguistic kindship helped improving these relations to strategic partnership. Furthermore, personal connection of the presidents had a remarkable influence on Turkey – Azerbaijan relations. As Ismailzade advocates there is a special point in relations between two countries;

For Aliyev and for Demirel, Turkish - Azerbaijani relations were more important than relations between two ordinary states. It was more like a relation between two brothers. Always noticing the positive potential of the relationship and the bigger picture rendered the relationship a special partnership, though sometimes not the most pragmatic.<sup>209</sup>

In the early years of Heydar Aliyev's presidency, his personal dialogue with Suleyman Demirel played a determining role. Having said that, their acquaintance started in 1967, the mighty friendship between them were founded in 90s.<sup>210</sup> As Akyol tells, Demirel was interested in even the results of Aliyev's consultations and Turkish doctors took care of Aliyev when he had problems about his health.<sup>211</sup> The mutual confidence and friendship between Suleyman Demirel and Haydar Aliyev moved up the relations between two countries from "personal relations

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<sup>209</sup> Fariz Ismailzade, "Turkey-Azerbaijan: The Honeymoon Is Over", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 4, Winter 2005, p.4.

<sup>210</sup> Hüseyinbala Mirelemov, Viktor Andriyanov, Haydar Aliyev, Baku, 2008, p. 465.

<sup>211</sup> Taha Akyol, Aliyev'in Sağlığı, *Milliyet*, 20.01.1999.

between leaders” to “institutionalized relations between states” in time.<sup>212</sup> Heydar Aliyev’s visit in 1997 took the relations one step further. The beginning of the institutionalization also refers to the first steps of strategic partnership between two countries. On the 5th of May, President Heydar Aliyev was rewarded with “State Order” of the Republic of Turkey. In his speech in the ceremony, Heydar Aliyev stated: “I have already said these words, and today I am repeating: we are one nation, but two states. As a member of one nation it is an honor to be awarded by the leader of the other nation.”<sup>213</sup>

“The ‘Declaration on Deepened Strategic Cooperation’ signed in May 1997 between Turkey and Azerbaijan to move to upgrade their bilateral relations to a ‘strategic partnership’ is of critical importance.”<sup>214</sup> After the implementation of the projects like BTC and BTE, the lack of confidence drawing on coup allegations was diminished. In line with that, starting from 1999 bilateral military relations gained speed. Firstly, the emotional type relations have developed on the basis of energy and education. After that, political relations were added there. Then, military issues have come to the agenda.<sup>215</sup> The main feature of this era that makes “one nation two states” discourse valuable is the beginning of expanding military cooperation and launching energy projects.

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<sup>212</sup> Mitat Çelikpala, “İlham Aliyev Dönemi Azerbaycan Dış Politikası: Sorunlar, Öncelikler ve İlişkiler”, *Kafkasya’nın Yükselen Yıldızı: İlham Aliyev Döneminde Azerbaycan* (ed. Çağrı Erhan), Atatürk Araştırmalar Merkezi, Ankara, 2013, p. 276.

<sup>213</sup> Official Visit of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev to the Republic of Turkey, Heydar Aliyev Heritage International Online Library, 05.05.1997, <http://lib.aliyevheritage.org/en/96196110.html> (Accessed Date: 14.05.2018)

<sup>214</sup> Mitat Çelikpala, Cavid Veliyev, “Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey: An Example of a Successful Regional Cooperation”, *Kadir Has University Center For International Relations and European Studies Policy Brief*, Vol.4, November 2015, p. 6.

<sup>215</sup> Interview with an academic, June 19, 2017.

After Suleyman Demirel, Ahmet Necdet Sezer was elected as the new president who was Chief of the Supreme Court by the court's board in 2000. Sezer was a “jurist figure” on the contrary to Demirel’s “politic character”. After Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Baku was the second station of Sezer. “Aliyev was lucky because after former President Suleyman Demirel his chemistry with President Ahmet Necdet Sezer was also very good and Aliyev was intelligent enough to make the best of it.”<sup>216</sup> On June 11, 2000 two leaders gave a message of continuity of the cooperation in bilateral relations. In his address in Azerbaijan Milli Majlis, he put emphasis on Armenian occupation in the 20 percent of Azerbaijani territories and IDPs. Sezer reaffirmed Turkish stance in Karabakh conflict by marking: “Turkey does not consent any solution that Azerbaijan does not consent.”<sup>217</sup> He identified Turkey as a European state and Turkish position in Azerbaijan’s relations with West; “Going into Turkey from Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan is entrance to Europe”<sup>218</sup>

Turkey is delineated as an opening door to Europe. In his address, he delineated the people living in Azerbaijan and Turkey as the same community with references to mutual support of two sides during the establishment period of Turkey and Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. As it is understood from Sezer’s speech, Turkey was aware of the increasing importance of Eurasia and underscored that Turkey and Azerbaijan would take their places there. Sezer’s speech also indicated that the negotiations with EU had reflections to Turkish foreign policy because 1999 was the year when Turkey was recognized an official candidate for EU. At the same time EU-Azerbaijan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement was also signed in 1999. Thus, EU was important for both countries in these years.

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<sup>216</sup> Hüseyin Bağcı, Turkey's Support for Aliyev, *Turkish Daily News*, 19.03.2001.

<sup>217</sup> Cumhurbaşkanı Ahmet Necdet Sezer’in Azerbaycan Milli Meclisi’nde Yaptıkları Konuşma, 12.07.2000, <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/konusmalari-ahmet-necdets-zer/1721/7426/azerbaycan-mill-meclisinde-yaptiklari-konusma.html> (Accessed Date: November 30.11.2017)

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*

In military field, Turkey's membership to NATO alliance contributed to develop NATO – Azerbaijan relations. Turkey played a significant role in reaching of Azerbaijani military schools to the NATO standards. The agreements in military field which were signed between 1999 – 2000 have effects on winning a more vibrant character of military relations between two countries and increasing the potential of Azerbaijan army.<sup>219</sup> Turkey; non-oil exporting NATO member country; acted as a gate also in military issues. Turkey is also important for Azerbaijan in terms of integration to the alliance. Turkey has been serving as a link between Azerbaijan and Partnership for Peace (PfP) program since Turkey is liaison country for Azerbaijan in NATO.<sup>220</sup> In 1999, an agreement signed between Turkey and Azerbaijan about the statue of the Azerbaijani troops sent to Kosovo. Then NATO Secretary General Lord George Robertson thanked to Azerbaijan and emphasized the special position of Azerbaijani troops in NATO. Serving inside the Turkish battalion there had an effect in paying attention to Azerbaijani troops.<sup>221</sup>

Turkey also supported Azerbaijan when in July 2001 Iranian military gunboats confronted a BP research vessel exploring the Araz-Alov-Sharg field in the Azerbaijani section of the Caspian Sea, which Iran demanded. The Chief of the Turkish General Staff, General Huseyin Kivrikoglu, visited Baku soon after the event.<sup>222</sup> Aerobatic show performance of 10 Turkish F-16s in Baku skies is perceived as a message to Iran. Some columnists in Turkey labelled it as “acrobatic

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<sup>219</sup> Əli Həsənov, *Müasir Beynəlxalq Münasibətlər və Azərbaycanın Xarici Siyasəti*, Bakı, 2005, p. 569.

<sup>220</sup> Elkhan Mekhtiev, *Security Policy in Azerbaijan*, NATO, <https://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/99-01/mekhtiev.pdf> (Accessed Date: 24.05.2018)

<sup>221</sup> Aygün Askerzade, “NATO Çərçəvesində Azərbaycan-Türkiyə Askerî İşbirliyi və Bölgesel Güvenlik Sorunları”, *Karadeniz Araştırmaları*, No. 20, Winter 2009, p. 6.

<sup>222</sup> Zeyno Baran, “The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline: Implications for Turkey”, *The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline: Oil Window to the West*, (ed. S. Frederick Starr and Svante E. Cornell), Uppsala, 2015, p. 141.

diplomacy<sup>223</sup>". This performance prevailed the close relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan but keeping in mind that about 1 million people watched it in the streets of Baku, it fostered Turkey's prestige both in Azerbaijan and the region. Thereby, Turkish army's "strong image" was advanced with it. Regarding regional rivalry between Turkey and Iran, it can be alleged that Turkey took a successful step. Turkey protected its feature as being an ally and appeared as a balance actor in this term. Therefore, according to an academic, "Turkey's support to Azerbaijan should be counted as a vital case."<sup>224</sup>

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev outlined Baku's position that the establishment of a NATO base in Azerbaijan would serve to "strengthen peace and stability" in the region. The defense minister added that the Russian military presence in Armenia posed a threat to Azerbaijan and contributes to an overall lack of "Azerbaijan, Georgia to step up bilateral cooperation, security in the South Caucasus. Foreign Minister Vilayet Guliyev affirmed the defense minister's call and stated that Azerbaijan would welcome a NATO base or a Turkish military base to bolster the region's balance of power."<sup>225</sup>

These statements are a clear message to Iran and show that, Azerbaijan was not distanced with West. NATO is a balance factor against Russia. Turkey is considered as a "regional Western neighbor" who can back Azerbaijan in case of any confrontation with Iran. In 1996, an agreement about education, technical and scientific cooperation in military field was signed between two countries. This agreement opened a door to enrich the ground of the agreement about military education which was signed in 1992. On June 10, 1996, Safar Abiyev who was the Minister of Defence of Azerbaijan defined the signing of the agreement as an

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<sup>223</sup> Erdal Güven, Akrobatik Diplomasi, Radikal, 26.08.2001.

<sup>224</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>225</sup> Svante E. Cornell, Roger McDermott, William O'Malley, Vladimir Socor, S. Frederick Starr, Regional Security in the South Caucasus: The Role of NATO, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, 2004, p. 71.

“historical occasion” in the life of people and military forces of Azerbaijan.<sup>226</sup> In 1997 another agreement concerning the regulation of the civil and military flights in their territories was signed. After signing an agreement in 2001, Turkey gave 3 million dollars financial aid to Azerbaijan. First of all, it is important because this grant indicated the enlarging concept of military cooperation. Secondly, like Nerimanov’s financial aid to Ankara Government in the first decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century, Turkey’s outright to Azerbaijan Armed Forces showed a remarkable point in the first years of the millennium.

### **7.2.1 Turkey’s Attempts of “Normalization” With Armenia**

Turkey’s relations with Armenia have always impacts on Turkey – Azerbaijan relations which are generally negative. Turkey stopped the diplomatic relations and closed the borders because of the Karabakh War. After this initiatives, solution of Karabakh conflict has become intertwined both countries. For example, Turkish air corridor to Armenia was opened in 1995 but the border gates remained closed. In 1997, Tansu Çiller’s statements about opening of the border gates, disturbed Azerbaijan. In her tour to Kars and Iğdır, Çiller answered a citizen’s “When will the doors open?” question saying; “The keys are in Azerbaijan’s hand. We will discuss it with Aliyev and try to get it over”. This news deeply disturbed Haydar Aliyev and blamed Çiller for “making concessions to Armenia in vain”<sup>227</sup> Then, Minister of Foreign Affairs İsmail Cem and State Minister Ahad Andican went to Azerbaijan to receive Azerbaijan’s approval in the issue of border opening with Armenia on 7-8 September 1997.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Ayın Tarihi, BYEGM, 10.06.1996, <http://ayintarihi.byegm.gov.tr/turkce/date/1996-06-01> (Accessed Date: 19.01.2018)

<sup>227</sup> DYP’nin ‘Kapı’ Çarkı, Hürriyet, 20.08.1997, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/dypnin-kapi-carki-39260494> (Accessed Date: 10.12.2017)

<sup>228</sup> Qasimli, p. 472.

Turkey tried to mediate between Armenia and Azerbaijan several times but always faced with Armenian veto. Karabakh was concerned as a security issue for Turkey and solution of this conflict would serve the stability of Caucasus in line with the policy of Turkey. In the first half of 90's, Turkey initiated her Turkic state centric foreign policy. In this regard, solving a problem of a Turkic state would increase Turkey's prestige in Central Asia. Solution of Karabakh conflict also serves a ground for increasing the capacity of bilateral relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan. Normalization of Turkish – Armenian relations would also strengthen Turkey's hand in relations with US and European countries presuming the decline of the efforts of Armenian diaspora about so called Armenian genocide issue. Because of all these reasons, Turkey had efforts in mediating Azerbaijan – Armenia conflict and normalizing Turkey – Armenia relations.

In Turkey, Armenian attacks against Azerbaijan has triggered nationalist wave and MHP who frankly supported Azerbaijan in Karabakh issue was a important political figure in organizing the public protests. One of the primary steps were taken by MHP Leader Alparslan Türkeş. Türkeş's meeting in Paris on March 12, 1994 with Armenian President Levon Ter Petrosyan was the first dialogue mechanism established by a Turkish leader. The meeting was programmed by Armenian businessman Samson Özararat who was born in Konya/Turkey and resident in France. In his interview Özararat defines Türkeş as “a key person” in the dialogue between Turkey and Armenia. According to him, there are a few milestones in Turkish – Armenian rapprochement. Alparslan Türkeş's acceptance to his meeting was one of the biggest steps.<sup>229</sup> Regarding that the nationalist reaction to dialogue process from Turkey was so strong, Türkeş – Petrosyan meeting seems surprising. Trans-Caucasia Highway and prisoner exchange between Turkey and Armenia was the major topics in addition to Türkeş's six proposals in this meeting;

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<sup>229</sup> ‘Tehcir tasvip edilemez’ demek büyük bir adım, Hürriyet, 23.12.2013, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/tehcir-tasvip-edilemez-demek-buyuk-bir-adim-25423232> (Accessed Date: 05.11.2017)

- Immediate ceasefire
- Withdrawal of Armenian soldiers from Azerbaijani territories
- Vis a vis recognition considering today's boundaries and the establishment of diplomatic relations
- Contact without intervention in domestic affairs and land demand
- Opening of Lachin Corridor, guaranting and controlling of the observer delegation
- Handling the problem in a larger time after ceasefire by leaving Karabakh conflict to later times or Minsk meeting<sup>230</sup>

Turkey went on her efforts under the roof Minsk Group but she was also aware of any solution could not be found there. The international organizations like Black Sea Economic Cooperation was ineffective and four resolutions of UN Security Council did not give a concrete contribution. Both Ankara and Baku were informed about these talks but Petrosyan refrained from discussing this agenda in domestic affairs. It was not also publicly discussed in Turkey. Meetings continued in the third country; France also in 1994 within the knowledge of government but Türkiye's groundbreaking discourse and initiative did not give fruitful results.

About Nagorno Karabkh issue; Turkish endorsement to Azerbaijan in diplomatic field was proceeded. While doing that, reconciliation with Armenia was still on the agenda. In the later Heydar Aliyev era; the "tea diplomacy" in 2002 is another attempt of Turkey to act as a broker in the peace processes. In Reykjavik, Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs İsmail Cem Azerbaijani Minister of Foreign Affairs Vilayat Guliyev, Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Vartan Oskanian met for discussing the regional conflict and cooperation. The trilateral format between Turkey – Azerbaijan – Armenia was proposed by Turkey in the meeting. Ankara has 4 essentials in this process; Yerevan should stop maintaining genocide allegations. She should give approval to the necessity of leaving it to historians. Armenia should remove the article about the land demand from Turkey from her

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<sup>230</sup> Can Dündar, Türkiye, Ermeni Sınırına Anıt Dikmeyi Düşünmüştü, Milliyet, 17.10.2009, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/yazarlar/can-dundar/turkes--ermeni-sinirina-anit-dikmeyi-dusunmustu-1151297/> (Accessed Date: 05.12.2017)

constitution. Armenian forces should withdraw from occupied Karabakh. A security corridor should be established between Turkey and Armenia.<sup>231</sup>

If only to admit that we will not witness any concrete results soon, just the fact of a civilized communication between the Foreign Ministers of the three countries was already a big achievement. It was difficult even to think in the past that Oskanian, Cem and Guliyev could peacefully sit at one table during a press conference and tell about the results of their meeting.<sup>232</sup>

Besides trilateral dialogues between Turkey – Azerbaijan – Georgia; the efforts about building such a format with Armenia was one of the aims of Turkish foreign policy. According to an Azerbaijani academic/politician, it was a normal and good step taken by Turkey from her perspective but it was unsuccessful because of the fact that Armenia is “not an independent state”.<sup>233</sup> It is true that, Armenia has been ultra-dependent to Russia and the main controversy in the failure of the mediation processes was the divergence of the approaches. Turkey and Azerbaijan have been trying to change the current situation in Karabakh region in line with the resolutions of international organizations but Armenia seem so reluctant and wanted to protect the status quo in the region. Because of that; Turkey and Azerbaijan preferred a policy of isolating Armenia from the regional projects.

### **7.2.2 1995 Coup Attempt in Azerbaijan and Its Effects on the Relations**

The first important tension between Azerbaijan and Turkey occurred in 1993 but the problems were solved in a year time. In September 1993, Aliyev annulled many agreements signed between the Elchibey administration and Turkey, ordered

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<sup>231</sup> Buzul Ülkesinde Çay Diplomasisi, Hürriyet, 16.05.2002, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/buzul-ulkesinde-cay-diplomasisi-38379961> (Accessed Date: 03.12.2017)

<sup>232</sup> The Meeting In Reykjavik Inspires Big Hopes, <http://diplomaticobserver.com/haber/the-meeting-in-reykjavik-inspires-big-hopes> (Accessed Date: 02.12.2017)

<sup>233</sup> Interview by the author with a politician/academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

Turkish nationals to seek visas before entering Azerbaijan, and dismissed Turkish military experts serving in the country.<sup>234</sup> Aliyev thought that, the extremely pro-Turkish attitude in Azerbaijan's foreign policy can harass global powers, especially Russia. At first, Aliyev's actions for calming down Russia caused concerns in Turkey.

When the Elchibey government was ousted in June 1993 by the coup which, although orchestrated by Colonel Surat Husseinov, brought Heydar Aliyev to power, this development was seen as Turkey's loss and Russia's gain, as it was in a way a repetition of a phenomenon which had occurred in other former Soviet republics such as Georgia and Lithuania, that is a former Soviet leader returning to power. Only a year later, Aliyev courted Ankara and expressed his confidence in the brotherhood existing between the two countries.<sup>235</sup>

An academic argues that some political parties in Turkey thought that Heydar Aliyev would pursue a policy just opposite to Elchibey and approach to Russia. The time period between 1993 and 1997 can be counted as an exam for the Turkish opinion leaders. They achieved to comment about Azerbaijan in a national level rather than Elchibey – Aliyev dichotomy.<sup>236</sup> Even if Elchibey's discourse was more pro-Turkey than Aliyev in the first half of 90s, Turkey did not insist on Elchibey and address official remarks to Heydar Aliyev. In general, Turkey preferred the perpetuation of stability in her relations with Azerbaijan. In Azerbaijan's foreign policy, we can observe the same behavior, too. In line with the main principles of Turkish foreign policy, Turkey did not intervene Azerbaijan's internal affairs. It can be said that; 1995 unsuccessful coup attempt against Haydar Aliyev can be seen as an exception but the dialogue between the presidents of these states prevented it in the last phase.

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<sup>234</sup> Svante E. Cornell, "Turkey and the Conflict in Nagorno Karabakh: A Delicate Balance", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 1, January 1998, p. 62.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid*, p. 62.

<sup>236</sup> Interview by the with an academic, Baku, 22.06.2018.

In Aliyev's address in Turkish parliament on May 6, 1997, he stated that members of the several political parties participated to the coup attempt in Azerbaijan with giving their names.<sup>237</sup> Aliyev clearly explicated his disappointment regarding this issue. According to the 1995 Susurluk Report of Turkish National Intelligence Organization (Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı – MİT) claims that President of Turkey Süleyman Demirel was notified about the coup plot and just after that he informed Haydar Aliyev. The report claims that:

In March 1995, with the ratification of Tansu Ciller; State Minister Responsible From Turkic Republics Ayvaz Gokdemir, Director General of Public Security Mehmet Agar, İbrahim Sahin, Korkut Eken planned but the coup attempt was failed by reporting of MIT to Suleyman Demirel and President's informing to Aliyev.<sup>238</sup>

In Copenhagen, Demirel warned Aliyev about the necessity of turning back to Azerbaijan before than it was planned to prevent the coup attempt. Aliyev went to Baku before the expected time and took measures. The leader of the coup Rovshan Javadov who was the Commander of Special Purpose Police Unit (OMON) was killed during the incidents. Turkish Ambassador Altan Karamanoğlu and some Turkish officials were taken back from Baku administration with a private flight after huge efforts of intelligence officials and statemen.

When the relations between two states are examined, it can be noticed that after such tensions, problems were solved in a short time period and the relations have improved to a higher level. These tensions were overcome and big regional projects like BTK, BTE were initiated in Haydar Aliyev's presidency. The beginning of this process was the Contract of the Century which means the re-distribution of energy sources of Azerbaijan.

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<sup>237</sup> Journal of Minutes of Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 89<sup>th</sup> Session, 6 May 1997, p. 18.

<sup>238</sup> Susurluk Report of National Intelligence Organization, <http://akgul.bilkent.edu.tr/Dava/susurluk/mit/>, (Accessed Date: 30.05.2017)

## 7.3 Energy as a Foreign Policy Instrument

### 7.3.1 Contract of the Century

The balanced foreign policy of Haydar Aliyev era made itself evident in energy policies. The production from the biggest oil field of Azerbaijan; Azeri – Chirag and Guneshli was opened to the operation of the international oil companies by The Production Sharing Agreement. The main aim of these discussions was transferring Azerbaijani oil to Western markets. This agreement which is also known as “Contract of the Century” due its importance, has become the core of the energy relations of Azerbaijan. It also stays in the most important place regarding Turkey – Azerbaijan energy relations. According to a parliamentarian/academic, “if the Contract of the Century was not signed, BTC, BTE, BTK and TANAP would not be realized.”<sup>239</sup> Energy has a distinguished place in bilateral relations. An Azerbaijani state official notes that, “relations have emotional and political aspects but energy and transportation projects make the ties of Turkey and Azerbaijan inseparable.”<sup>240</sup> An academic denounces that “Contract of the Century can be counted as a zenith in economic relations and laid the basis of energy relations between two countries.”<sup>241</sup> Contract of the Century is important for Turkey – Azerbaijan relations because it was the first serious attempt for transforming cultural – historical ties to strategic investments. Meanwhile, Turkish energy companies found a possibility to operate in Azerbaijan and increase its profession. While internationalizing Turkish energy company, Contract of the Century has also opened a way for institutionalizing the bilateral relations. Being a part of the agreement also decreased the concerns about Aliyev’s administration in Turkey.

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<sup>239</sup> Interview by the author with a politician/academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>240</sup> Interview by the author with an ambassador, Ankara, 11.01.2018.

<sup>241</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 24.06.2017.

We can say that, the core of relations in energy field is Contract of the Century and it has impressions for both sides. Azerbaijan started to emerge as a key player in energy field with the signing of this contract. This contract has paved the way for the signing of other 26 contracts with 41 oil companies from 19 countries.<sup>242</sup> The biggest shareholder was BP in the contract which would be valid for 30 years. Turkey gained a 1.75% stake in the contract in the first phase. Then in February 1995, Azerbaijan International Operating Company (AIOC) was founded. AIOC was composed of 11 international companies from 11 states for the implementation of the agreements.

The Contract of the Century has underpinned Azerbaijan - Turkey energy relations. Like the other international actors, Turkey's interest in Azerbaijan's energy sources officially started with it. But, Turkey saw 1,75 % inadequate and insisted on having more stake in the agreement. After that, Turkey's stake was increased to 6,75 %. On April 12, 1995, President Heydar Aliyev said these words in the ceremony of signing the agreement between Turkey and Azerbaijan in Gulistan Palace in Baku; "Taking into consideration those appeals and fraternal and brotherly relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan decided to cede 5 % of its share to Turkey."<sup>243</sup> According to an Azerbaijani MP, such initiatives created the "one nation two states" discourse and set the rules of it.<sup>244</sup>

Besides its economic benefits, signing Contract of the Century has increased Turkey's strategic importance in the region. "After Cold War era, Turkey's role in southern wing of NATO has staggered but Heydar Aliyev has increased Turkey's

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<sup>242</sup> The President of Azerbaijan, Contract of Century, <http://en.president.az/azerbaijan/contract>, (Accessed Date: 20.11.2017)

<sup>243</sup> Speech by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev at the High-Level Signing Ceremony of the Treaty on Cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey on Oil Sector – Gulistan Palace, April 12, 1995, Heydar Aliyev Inheritance International Online Library, <http://lib.aliyev-heritage.org/en/6428457.html> (Accessed Date: 21.11.2017)

<sup>244</sup> Interview by the author with a MP in Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 24.06.2017.

role by the Contract of Century and passing BTC pipeline through Turkey”, according to a parliamentarian/academic.<sup>245</sup>

Heydar Aliyev used energy resources for the development of the country. Signing of this agreement was a clear echo of the balanced foreign policy. It has positive effects in the foreign policy of Azerbaijan regarding relations with Turkey. Contract of the Century formed a basis for the energy projects like BTC and BTE. While the negotiations with Armenia concerning Karabakh has been in a dilemma, Baku did not want to create an enemy to itself because of sharing of oil stakes. Thus, the stakes were tried to be given to different partners in a wide range.

### **7.3.2 Baku – Tbilisi – Ceyhan Oil Pipeline and Its Effects**

The main aim of Baku – Tbilisi – Ceyhan Oil Pipeline project is transporting Azerbaijan’s oil from Azeri – Chirag – Guneshli field to Western markets. In this sense, linking Sangachal Terminal to Ceyhan Terminal means also connecting Caspian Sea to Mediterranean Sea. Totally 1,768 km long BTC runs 443 km through Azerbaijan, 249 km through Georgia and 1,076 km through Turkey to the Ceyhan Marine Terminal.<sup>246</sup> Azerbaijan’s relative isolation from world markets and its landlocked location have been obstacles to the exportation of its natural resources.<sup>247</sup> With this geographic atony, there has also been some political opportunities and difficulties of Azerbaijan. The main intention of the country was transferring oil resources to the West rather than Russia. In this point, Turkey has emerged as a “key country” in the region for Azerbaijan. For the transportation of

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<sup>245</sup> Interview by the author with a politician/academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>246</sup> British Petroleum, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) Pipeline, [https://www.bp.com/en\\_ge/bp-georgia/about-bp/bp-in-georgia/baku-tbilisi-ceyhan--btc--pipeline.html](https://www.bp.com/en_ge/bp-georgia/about-bp/bp-in-georgia/baku-tbilisi-ceyhan--btc--pipeline.html) (Accession Date: 19.11.2017)

<sup>247</sup> Pınar İpek, Azerbaijan: Oil Boom and Challenges, [https://www.academia.edu/813070/Azerbaijan\\_Oil\\_Boom\\_and\\_Challenges](https://www.academia.edu/813070/Azerbaijan_Oil_Boom_and_Challenges), (Accession Date: 03.08.2018)

Azerbaijani oil; Russia has been insisting on Baku – Novorossiisk Pipeline and US has stood closer to Baku – Supsa line.

The Novorossiisk and Supsa routes require that tankers transport Azerbaijani oil exports through the straits in order to access the Mediterranean and, hence, the Western European markets. But the Ceyhan option would avoid the Black Sea and the Bosphorous Straits altogether.<sup>248</sup>

Moreover, Iran was not the ideal way route due to her serious problems with West. Russia was a rival of US and had their own resources. They have been either making pressure on Azerbaijan to act together in energy issues rather than entering in to a rivalry in the region in energy context. In other words; they did not want a alternative to themselves. On the other hand, Turkey as a NATO ally and a county negotiating with European Union for accession wanted to decrease its energy dependency from Russia. BTC was initiated with Iran and Russia's opposition and American support. US prioritized the "pipeline diplomacy" in South Caucasus in mid 90s. An academic points out:

It is very well-known that all of the neighbors of these two countries do not prefer good Turkey – Azerbaijan relations. For a short time, Western countries have wanted a healthy relation between Turkey and Azerbaijan because of tending pipeline towards West. But, even in this term they did not aspire for mutual interdependence between two countries and tried to keep it in a limited level.<sup>249</sup>

The relevance of the two states in various areas for instance; history, language, culture and their similar political attitudes in the regional matters and same position among Armenia paved the way for cooperation in commercial, political, military subjects and also energy transportation. As Aras points out; "Turkey's relations with Azerbaijan play an important role in determining relations with other

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<sup>248</sup> Joffe Joseph, Pipeline Diplomacy: The Clinton Administration's Fight for Baku – Ceyhan, <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a360382.pdf>, (Accession Date: 20.11.2017)

<sup>249</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

countries in the region. For instance, its relations with Azerbaijan have a significant impact on its relations with Armenia.<sup>250</sup>” As a result of this attitude, bypassing Armenia from regional projects was started with BTC. The aggressive policies against Azerbaijan in Karabakh and the offensive policy against Turkey about Armenian Genocide allegations caused isolation of Armenia in the region.

BTC is a strategic choice of Azerbaijan for transferring her energy resources. Cornell and Ismailzade advocates that, BTC is a preference of Aliyev leadership. These two authors define the impacts of BTC to Azerbaijan’s foreign relations as it is mentioned above:

The fact that Azerbaijan’s leadership has preferred this Western route over Russian or Iranian routes shows the limited nature of Baku’s trust in its northern and southern neighbors and its desire to secure the country’s independence and sovereignty with the help of Turkey and the West. It is widely believed that should BTC be completed, Azerbaijan will gradually integrate and merge with Turkey and Western Europe in the economic, energy and security fields. At the same time, BTC has been instrumental in developing and strengthening the so-called “East-West” energy, transport and telecommunications corridor. As this corridor would eventually bypass Armenia and deepen its political and economic isolation, BTC has also served as a negotiation tool for Baku in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.<sup>251</sup>

Ankara Declaration can be counted as a first step in implementing this oil pipeline project. US Energy Secretary Bill Richardson (as an observer) and the presidents of Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan signed Ankara Declaration on October 29, 1998. This declaration implies the expression of

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<sup>250</sup> Bülent Aras, “Turkish-Azerbaijani Energy Relations, Global Turkey in Europe”, April 2014, [http://ipc.sabanciuniv.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/GTE\\_PB\\_15.pdf](http://ipc.sabanciuniv.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/GTE_PB_15.pdf) (Accessed Date: 14.01.2017)

<sup>251</sup> Svante E. Cornell, Fariz Ismailzade, “The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline: Implications for Azerbaijan”, *The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline: Oil Window to the West*, S. Frederick Starr, S. Frederick Starr (ed.), Central Asia - Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program - A Joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center, Washington, 2005, p. 62.

support to BTC. Then in November 1999, in OSCE Summit held in Istanbul, between Azerbaijan and Georgia Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) was signed. Besides these three countries, US and Kazakhstan reaffirmed their support in Istanbul Declaration. In October 2000, signing of Host Government Agreement, Turnkey Agreement and Government Guarantee were finalized between Turkey, Georgia and Azerbaijan.<sup>252</sup> All of these agreements constituted the legal, technical frame of the project. Moreover, protocols were vital to show the political will of the states. For an academic, BTC is a “reliance project” rather than a “oil project”.<sup>253</sup> Selecting Turkey as a transit country was not a coincident for Azerbaijan. Turkey supported Azerbaijan in various fields and appeared as a trustworthy neighbor in the region. It is true that Azerbaijan has gained a high-income from BTC but the distinguished feature of this project was settling Azerbaijan’s direction towards Europe in her energy policies. By realizing this project, Azerbaijan demonstrated that she would not be a vassal state of Russia and built up a substantial alternative way for her.

In addition to all of these technical and political points, BTC was significant for Turkish community. Especially from Turkey’s perspective, realizing BTC played a role for proving a cordial approach of Azerbaijan to Turkey in economic and social aspects. BTC has served a serious amount of employment opportunities in Eastern provinces of Turkey. Hereby, it has also fostered Azerbaijan’s image in Turkey. Before, Azerbaijan was seen as a sister state in bad conditions because of war. But with BTC, Azerbaijan was perceived as neighbor country who had rich resources that Turkey benefited from. A scholar defines the “one nation two states” discourse as an “emotional infrastructure” and ties in energy and economy as a “cement” of the bilateral relations.<sup>254</sup> In the same line, an academic delineates the

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<sup>252</sup> Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan COPL Project Directorate, Project Chronology, <http://www.btc.com.tr/eng/chronoloji.html>, (Accessed Date: 15.11.2017)

<sup>253</sup> Interview by the with an academic, Baku, 22.06.2018.

<sup>254</sup> Interview by the author with a scholar, Baku, 19.06.2017.

“one nation two states” as a “historical bridge” but put an emphasis on its carriage capability. So, the capacity of the relations was improved with BTC and the other energy projects. In this regard, energy projects kept this discourse high-spirited and at the same time contributed the relations in economic, political, strategic and military fields.<sup>255</sup> This is the first project that makes up the framework of strategic partnership between Turkey and Azerbaijan.

In economic terms; BTC has brought advantages to three countries. Turkey’s construction companies attended to the project and the construction of the pipeline also made way for increasing the employment potential in eastern Turkey. Besides, Turkey became a transit country with the pipeline. In Azerbaijan, BTC opened road to monetize its resources. The main importance of this pipeline is manifesting the strategic preference in energy transportation routes. Azerbaijan’s position as an energy hub and Turkey’s geographical role in energy transition have gathered in the context of BTC. While Azerbaijan’s oil has come to the agenda of the global energy market, Turkey showed that she can be efficient between Central Asia and Europe market.

Finally, in Heydar Aliyev era Azerbaijan’s route to West was charted like Elchibey’s desires but on the other side the balance with the other actors were taken into account unlike his term. The investments have prepared an extensive base for the future large scaled investments of Azerbaijan in Turkey. In this project “two states” have become under “one umbrella”. An Azerbaijani MP claims that “transferring Azerbaijani energy resources to world markets via Turkey means that; two countries were not satisfied with flowing the same blood in their veins, they also decided to flow the same ‘black blood’ (oil) in their pipes.<sup>256</sup>” The project also played a functional role in operationalizing the trilateral mechanisms. “Turkey – Azerbaijan – Georgia” led by “one nation two states” has become an important

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<sup>255</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>256</sup> Interview by the author with a member of Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 23.06.2017.

example in the region. “Baku – Tbilisi – Ceyhan can be counted as a first serious international step not just for the bilateral relations, but also for the beginning of the interaction between South Caucasus energy sources and European region.”<sup>257</sup> As a result, Turkey has emerged as a transit country between European and Central Asia energy market and Georgia has become a bridge between Azerbaijan - Turkey.

### 7.3.3 Baku – Tbilisi – Erzurum Natural Gas Pipeline and Its Implications

The construction of BTE relied on the same concerns and interests like BTC. BTC oil pipeline is one of the biggest pipelines in the world. According to Roberts, while the BTC oil pipeline is already one of the world’s biggest and most successful mega-pipeline projects, carrying close to 800,000 barrels of oil a day, the BTE gas-line remains its “smaller brother.”<sup>258</sup> The main aim of the project was not different from BTC. We can say that, the type of energy resources that was transferred to West was diversified with BTE. While transporting oil with BTC, BTE was used for the transportation of natural from Shah Deniz field to Turkey. 980 km long pipeline started to pump gas in March, 2007.

The pipeline has a capacity to transfer 8.8 billion cubic metres gas per year. Shah Deniz participating interests are BP (operator – 28.8 percent), AzSD (10.0 percent), SGC Upstream (6.7 percent), Petronas (15.5 percent), Lukoil (10 percent), NICO (10 percent) and TPAO (19 percent).<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>257</sup> Ahmet Gencehan Babiş, A Glimpse of Azerbaijan’s Energy Investments In Its Neighborhood, TÜRKSAM, 27.05.2018, <http://turksam.org/a-glimpse-of-azerbaijan-s-energy-investments-in-its-neighborhood> (Accessed Date: 25.09.2018)

<sup>258</sup> John Roberts, “The Southern Corridor: Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan’s Gas Legacy”, *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 11 No. 2, p. 79.

<sup>259</sup> BP Presents 2016 Year-End Results, Azer News, [https://www.azernews.az/oil\\_and\\_gas/109235.html](https://www.azernews.az/oil_and_gas/109235.html), (Accessed Date: 26.11.2017)

Baku -Tbilisi –Erzurum pipeline agreement were signed on 12 March 2001. The significance of BTE was being as a first step of Azerbaijan's gas accession to West. Before finalizing this project, Azerbaijan exported gas to Iran and Russia. Turkey has become a transit country in transportation of Azerbaijani gas to Europe. In this sense, implementation of BTE can be taken as the preparatory step of TANAP.

In Heydar Aliyev era, energy projects were used as a tool for economic development, reducing dependency on Russia and integrating to the West. Azerbaijan has received incomes from such projects but the main importance of two pipelines was their strategic feature. Azerbaijan's energy policy became the major determinant of directing her foreign policy in this era. The projects were mutually advantageous for Turkey and Azerbaijan. Turkey found an alternative source to Russia in the aim of reducing gas dependency. Azerbaijan built an alternative way to Russia by selecting Turkey as a transit state. Hence, strategic partnership of Turkey and Azerbaijan in regional projects was a message to Armenia. The preference of Azerbaijan proved that Turkey played a role in connecting Azerbaijan to West not only in diplomacy, politics and military. Turkey also linked West and Azerbaijan in energy projects and it made Turkey more valuable in the region. Besides that, Azerbaijan used the transition of energy sources also as a tool for isolating Armenia in the region. While energy has consisted the biggest share in the bilateral relations, the stability has been formed in business of entrepreneurs and firms.

#### **7.4 Restoration of Azerbaijani Economy and Trade Relations with Turkey**

After fall of USSR, Azerbaijan has transmitted from state controlled socialist system to liberal market economy. This transition period started in 1991 has stirred up many economic problems.

Price liberalization begun in 1992 led to hyperinflation, which reached an annual rate of 1.664 percent in 1994. The early transition period (1991-1994) was marked by a drastic decline in national

income from 35,006 million dollar to 1.031 million dollar, the falling of the gross national product (GNP) per capita from 6675 dollar to 192 dollar, a decrease in industrial and agriculture output and acute unemployment.<sup>260</sup>

In Azerbaijan, restoration in economy began in 1996 but the trade relations were started just after her independence which was promoted by Turkey. For instance, Eximbank gave loans to Azerbaijan for restoring the structure. Since 1991, more than 2000 agreements, treaties and official documents were signed. In 1992, Trade, Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement was signed which was followed by Prevention of Double Taxing Agreement in 1994 and Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments Agreement in 1995.

At first, a flight was organized by the initiative of Istanbul based Turkic World Research Foundation (Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı – TDAV) with participation of the business people to enhance the economic relations. The economic interaction between Turkey and Azerbaijan started with the shuttle trade via charter flights to Georgia. After the independence of Azerbaijan, the economic relations commenced with the border trade between Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and İğdır city when Heydar Aliyev was ruling in Nakhchivan. In the first phase of the relations; the relations between business people were more determinant comparing with the relations between states. First business people entered into market and then states.<sup>261</sup> The trade between Turkey and Azerbaijan started with charter flights continued with the border trade and then it has upgraded to the investments of business people. After all of these, states have signed high-cost energy agreements and implemented oil and natural gas pipeline projects.

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<sup>260</sup> Michael J. Baranick, Rena Salayeva, "State-Building in a Transition Period: The Case of Azerbaijan", Analysis for New and Emerging Societal Conflicts, p. 213, [http://www.thecornwallisgroup.org/pdf/CX\\_2005\\_12-Baranick2-CX-July17.pdf](http://www.thecornwallisgroup.org/pdf/CX_2005_12-Baranick2-CX-July17.pdf), (Accessed Date: 10.10.2017)

<sup>261</sup> Interview by the author with a former Turkish MP, Ankara, 10.01.2018.

The regulatory conditions of the business were prepared with the agreements. During Heydar Aliyev era; two agreements about reciprocal encouragement and protection of investments were signed in 1996 and 1997.<sup>262</sup> Starting from 1995, economic facilities were put forward. States focused their attention on pragmatic business issues rather than just “symbolic brotherhood”<sup>263</sup>. Aliyev’s visit in 1997 to Turkey affected business positively like many other fields. The relations have improved especially after 1997.

Starting from 1997, the two countries held joint economic commission meetings covering various bilateral economic issues, ranging from Turkey’s assistance to Azerbaijan in the development of small and medium scale businesses to transportation issues. A survey of various items on the agenda clearly indicates that Turkey was acting in the spirit of a “role model”, working to share its experience with Azerbaijan to assist the Baku’s integration with international standards.<sup>264</sup>

Besides, Turkish businessmen played a vital role in entering Azerbaijan’s products to Western markets. A government official provides justification to that with four points:

- Turkey’s geographical position
- Turkey’s deeper relations with Europe
- Turkish business people’s integration to Europe
- Custom Union between Turkey and European Union.<sup>265</sup>

After mid 90s, the main relations in economic issues were based on the cooperation in energy fields and Turkish engagement in agreements about oil and gas resources

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<sup>262</sup> Ali Mesimov, “Bağımsızlık Yıllarında Türkiye – Azerbaycan İlişkileri”, *Avrasya Dosyası, Azerbaycan Özel Sayısı*, Vol. 7, No 1, Spring 2001, p. 276.

<sup>263</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 21.06.2017.

<sup>264</sup> Saban Kardas, Fatih Macit, “Turkey-Azerbaijan Relations: The Economic Dimension”, *Journal of Caspian Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 2015, p. 26.

<sup>265</sup> Interview by the author with a government official, Baku, 22.06.2017.

in Azerbaijan. The investments of Azerbaijan in Turkey are generally based on energy sector. On the contrary, Turkey's potential about energy companies was not high in Azerbaijan so the investments were centered upon construction, banking system, telecommunication and technical infrastructure. Azer – Türk Bank was the first example of the cooperation in banking field which was established with the participation of Ziraat Bank.<sup>266</sup> After that, many banks started to operate in Azerbaijan. The stats show that Turkish investments in Azerbaijan had placed into an important position in a short period of time. Turkey has become the largest investor in Azerbaijani non-oil sector. In the end of 2000; 1,327 Turkish companies acquire legal entity status but many of them did not work actively. 400 of them were carrying on business in Azerbaijan. The investment value of them are 1,5 billion dollars and it is estimated that 30000 people were employed by them. Turkish companies consisted 6 % of the budget of Azerbaijan.<sup>267</sup>

Besides close political ties, Turkey played a crucial role especially in the mid 90's in the development of Azerbaijan. Keeping in mind that Heydar Aliyev had passed away in 2003, during his term; the economic relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan is one of the prior points in the agenda.

Between 1993 and 2001, Turkey was the third largest investor in Azerbaijan, preceded by the USA and the United Kingdom. The total value of its investments was 3.8 billion dollar, which was equivalent to 12.6 percent of all foreign direct investment (FDI). Western investments in Azerbaijan's energy sector have clearly increased in recent years. This trend has caused a significant reduction of Turkey's share in foreign direct investments. Nevertheless, Turkey is still one of the major investors in the country.<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> Sinan Oğan, "Azerbaycan'ın Tanımlanamayan Ekonomisi ve Türkiye ile Ekonomik İlişkileri", *Avrasya Dosyası, Azerbaijan Özel Sayısı*, Vol. 7, No. 1, Spring 2001, p. 78.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>268</sup> Jerzy Rohozifski, "Azerbaijan and Turkey: The Light and Shade of 'Turkish' Brotherhood", *CES Report: Turcja After the Start of Negotiations With the European Union – Foreign Relations And The Domestic Situation Part II*, Centre for Eastern Studies, Warsaw, 2008, p. 12.

In this point, the importance of Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) should be regarded. The structures of the investments in two countries have complemented each other. Besides the subsidiary role of the Turkish and Azerbaijani investments, the other outstanding feature of the business between two countries was gaining experience and professionalizing for both sides. Most remarkably, investment in Azerbaijan offered a major learning experience in terms of the internationalization of Turkish energy companies.<sup>269</sup> Likewise, Azerbaijani entrepreneurs learned a lot from Turkish entrepreneurs about setting up a business and especially about construction.<sup>270</sup> Turkey has become one of the most important countries in Azerbaijan in this sector. For example, in highway, airport and energy fields, big Turkish companies took place.<sup>271</sup>

Regarding the regional context, Karabakh conflict can be seen as a considerable obstacle and threat to the regional stability, on the other hand the mutual stance against Armenia in Karabakh conflict gathered two countries. The aim of isolating Armenia from the projects in the region has been succeeded. Armenian economy devastated by the economic embargo. The cultural and linguistic ties catalyzed the economic relations. For a journalist, “the strategic feature of Turkish investments in Azerbaijan is putting money there during the hardest times of the country.”<sup>272</sup> Turkish assistance to Azerbaijan when the country was in economic chaos played another important role in advancing “one nation two states” discourse. In addition to the cultural ties, establishing economic ties between two countries made their relations tighter. Turkey’s foreign policy which prioritizes improving economic and political relations with Turkic republics during 90s has lent an impetus in this

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<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>270</sup> Interview by the author with a government official, Baku, 22.06.2017.

<sup>271</sup> Interview by the with an academic, Baku, 22.06.2018.

<sup>272</sup> Interview by the author with a journalist, Baku, 24.06.2018.

field. Turkey has become an example for Azerbaijan in non-oil sector. Turkish business people tended towards Azerbaijan and tried to make themselves a place in a new emerging Azerbaijani market. The entrance of Turkish private sector to Azerbaijani market increased the interactions between business people. While the link between business people have been evolving, Turkish state expenditures and credits in Azerbaijan has focused on creating a feasible economic structure and a convenient atmosphere for market economy.

## CHAPTER 8

### ILHAM ALIYEV ERA: STRATEGIC COOPERATION

#### 8.1 The Atmosphere of the Bilateral Relations: Azerbaijan - Turkey

Heydar Aliyev passed away in 2003 and his son Ilham Aliyev became the president of the Azerbaijan. Ilham Aliyev maintained the main foreign policy principles of Heydar Aliyev with no doubt. In all eras, the relationship between Turkey and Azerbaijan represented a primary and special place in the foreign policy agendas of two countries. During Ilham Aliyev's term, the main principles did not controversially change. His ongoing term's basic arguments has been going in line with his processor Heydar Aliyev. In his speech after the presidential elections in 2003, Ilham Aliyev said that:

On October 5, Azerbaijani people who came to voting centers, voted Heydar Aliyev's policies They voted to peace, tranquility, progress, development and stability. In Azerbaijan, this policy has no alternatives.<sup>273</sup>

It is understood from his speech that voting him means voting Heydar Aliyev's policies so, the foreign policy concept would remain the same. This discourse of Ilham Aliyev claims that there would not be a significant difference with the Heydar Aliyev's term.

He paid his first visit to Turkey in April 2004. During his visit, he gave a speech in Turkish parliament. In his address, he identified the relations as "fraternal relations" and declared them as "priority issue of Azerbaijan". Aliyev also

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<sup>273</sup> Araz Aslanlı, "İlham Aliyev Döneminde Azerbaycan Dış Politikası", 09.09.2011, <http://ekoavrsya.net/duyuru.aspx?did=14&pid=10&lang=tr> (Accessed Date: 28.05.2017)

underlined the mutual perspectives of these two countries by saying; “Turkey’s strength is Azerbaijan’s strength and Azerbaijan’s strength is Turkey’s strength.”<sup>274</sup>

In addition to that he touched on the economic growth, social policies, integration to international institutions and democratization process in Azerbaijan. He gave an emphasis to Karabakh conflict, BTC and BTE. In his first trip, Aliyev’s cordial words indicated that Turkey’s importance in Azerbaijan’s foreign policy would continue:

I have been to Turkey several times. I am bond with Turkey and I love this country very much. I see Turkey like a motherland to myself but it is my first trip as a president. I was waiting this trip with a great excitement. Today, I can definitely say that; this visit will play a great role in evolution of the relations between two countries and proceed it to a new stage.<sup>275</sup>

Relations with Turkey went on in the same direction like Ilham Aliyev era. During this term, both regional and global actors have also some impacts on Azerbaijan - Turkey relations. In a certain period in Ilham Aliyev’s era, France was in the central position in Azerbaijan’s foreign policy while Turkey has protected its own importance. The most important indicator of it was the Azerbaijani president’s visit paid to France just after the elections in 2004. It had some reasons. France is a co-chair of Minsk Group and has close relations with Armenia because of the large Armenian diaspora inside the country. Azerbaijan preferred enhancing cultural and economic ties with France. An Institut Français was established in 2004 in Baku and French oil company TOTAL started to become more active in Azerbaijan. The reason of improving relations with France was finding a solution to Karabakh issue. In an interview with Paris based magazine Ilham Aliyev said these;

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<sup>274</sup> The Journal of Minutes of Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 14 April 2004, p. 15.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid*

In 1993, Heydar Aliyev also paid his first official visit to France. We pay particular attention to our bilateral relations. We are very hopeful that France will play more active role in settlement of Armenia-Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.<sup>276</sup>

Considering the first visits of Azerbaijani presidents after elections, Ilham Aliyev's attitude changed in 2008. He paid his first visit to Turkey after elections in 2008, 2013 and 2018. It should be also emphasized that Aliyev's first visit after becoming the Prime Minister was paid to Turkey. In addition to the importance of the visits, Turkey evolved into a pivotal country for Azerbaijan in his ongoing term.<sup>277</sup>

In 2008, he delivered one more speech in Grand National Assembly of Turkey and underlined that it was his first trip after presidential elections in Azerbaijan. This time he delineated the relations as "splendid". Additionally, he gave information about the financial development of his country and mentioned the growing economic capacity in Turkey – Azerbaijan relations. He concentrated on finalization of BTC and noted these words; "We turned legend into reality<sup>278</sup>".

In his speech in Turkish parliament in 2008, he congratulated Turkey for becoming a member of non-permanent member of UN Security Council. Aliyev also portrayed it both Turkey's and Azerbaijan's success. The other prominent factor in his address was the emphasis on joint actions of the diaspora organizations of two countries. It can be asserted that, the efforts of enlarging the field of "one nation two states" discourse could be observed abroad these two countries.

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<sup>276</sup> Interview of President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev To French Monthly Magazine "Arabi", Azertag, 30.04.2004, [https://azertag.az/en/xeber/INTERVIEW\\_OF\\_PRESIDENT\\_OF\\_AZERBAIJAN\\_ILHAM\\_ALIYEV\\_TO\\_FRENCH\\_MONTHLY\\_MAGAZINE\\_ARABI-552851](https://azertag.az/en/xeber/INTERVIEW_OF_PRESIDENT_OF_AZERBAIJAN_ILHAM_ALIYEV_TO_FRENCH_MONTHLY_MAGAZINE_ARABI-552851) (Accessed Date: 04.05.2018)

<sup>277</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>278</sup> Journal of Minutes of Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 23<sup>rd</sup> Term, 14<sup>th</sup> Session, Vol. 30, p. 599.

It is noteworthy that, only three foreign presidents have delivered a speech as a guest in GNAT and two of them are the presidents of Azerbaijan. As a president of TRNC, Rauf Denktaş addressed to the general assembly in Turkish parliament 6 times. He is pursued by 3 speeches of Heydar Aliyev in 1994, 1997 and 2001. According to the data of Turkish parliament, Ilham Aliyev spoke in Turkish parliament two times in 2004 and 2008 whose presidency is ongoing at the moment.<sup>279</sup> In the light of these stats, Heydar and Ilham Aliyev stand in a privileged position. Such facts can also be taken as a clue of the tense interaction and close relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan which are the prominent peculiarities of being a strategic partner.

The relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan have based on institutionalized ground in a large context stretching from politics to energy. A scholar notes:

It is true that Turkey – Azerbaijan relations are on a very high-level but the weakest point is its development upon the presidents/prime ministers. In Elchibey's term the relations were advanced by Turgut Özal and Ebulfaz Elchibey. Then, Heydar Aliyev and Süleyman Demirel were introduced as the architects of the relations. Of course, presidents have initiatives, attempts and supports regarding the bilateral ties but improving political and economic relations upon mechanisms could give more successful results in the long term.<sup>280</sup>

The mechanisms have been created both in regional level and bilateral relations. However, the role of the presidents in shaping the foreign policy is notably high in Azerbaijan and Turkey. In the decision-making processes the position of two presidents have become quite dominant in both states especially after the referendum in Azerbaijan which was held in 2016 for constitutional amendments and the referendum about strengthening the authorities of the presidency in Turkey

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<sup>279</sup> Yabancı Konuk Devlet Adamlarının Genel Kurul Konuşmaları (İsim Sıralı), The Official Website of Grand National Assembly of Turkey, [https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/tutanak\\_erisim.yabanci\\_konuk\\_liste](https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/tutanak_erisim.yabanci_konuk_liste) (Accessed Date: 28.05.2017)

<sup>280</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 24.06.2017.

in 2017. In this point, the communication between two presidents is unignorable. Some respondents who were asked the relations between these countries, have touched the communication between presidents. Nearly all the answers are positive in this context. The relationship between Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Ilham Aliyev can be summarized as “nice friendship”, “brotherhood”, “good chemistry”, “positive relations”, “intimacy” according to some of the respondents.

In Ilham Aliyev’s term, the interactions between two countries have gained speed and hundreds of visits were paid in both countries in ministry, prime ministry and presidency level. All of the presidents and Turkish ministers have underlined the concept of “one nation two states” regardless of their political backgrounds. This trend did not change in Ilham Aliyev’s presidency. In this context, Turkish President Abdullah Gül attended to the parliamentary session in Azerbaijani parliament and spoke there about the relations in 2007. Gül declared that the most important denominators of Turkey – Azerbaijan relations are unity of ancestry, language and belief. According to Gül, this dimension gives the special character to the relations which cannot be seen in the relations between other countries.<sup>281</sup> Gul also gave a cleat message to Armenia in his speech with these words:

The ones who are contended with watching the positive steps in the region and the ones who prefers to be out of the mentioned projects (BTC, BTE) will understand the cost of their mistakes are heavier than they think.<sup>282</sup>

Gul also declared that Turkey was not responsible from the obstacles that prevented establishing diplomatic relations between Turkey and Armenia. He underlined the importance of Eurasia and described Azerbaijan - Turkey relations as a “backbone

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<sup>281</sup>      Azerbaijan      Milli      Meclisi'nde      Yaptıkları      Konuşma,      07.11.2007,  
<http://www.abdullahgul.gen.tr/konusmalar/371/56517/azerbaycan-milli-meclisinde-yaptiklari-konusma.html> (Accessed Date: 02.04.2018)

<sup>282</sup>      Azerbaijan      Milli      Meclisi'nde      Yaptıkları      Konuşma,      07.11.2007,  
<http://www.abdullahgul.gen.tr/konusmalar/371/56517/azerbaycan-milli-meclisinde-yaptiklari-konusma.html> (Accessed Date: 02.04.2018)

of Eurasia geopolitics”. However, Turkey’s initiative in terms of Armenian rapprochement process harmed the credibility towards Turkey in Azerbaijan. During the crisis because of the football diplomacy period, Erdoğan went to Baku and delivered a speech in Azerbaijani parliament. When Erdoğan’s address in 2009 is evaluated, like Gül he also stated that he “feels like at home with his brothers”.<sup>283</sup> in Azerbaijan Milli Mejlis. This attitude also had a similarity with İlham Aliyev’s description of Turkey as “his motherland” in Turkish parliament in 2004. It is worthy of note that Erdogan addressed the Azerbaijani parliament in a nervous atmosphere after Gül’s visit to Yerevan and aimed to guarantee that Turkey was standing with Azerbaijan like before. He also emphatically said that the relationship between Turkey and Azerbaijan was a “real brotherhood”. As a very good orator, he gave places to the poets Bahtiyar Vahabzade and Yavuz Bülent Bakiler and ended his speeches with the national anthems of two countries. He made references to the historical ties between Azerbaijan – Turkey. Erdoğan specified that Mehmet Emin Resulzade’s tomb was in Turkey. He emphasized the unique feature of Turkey – Azerbaijan relations and stated: “We do not let anyone turn the closeness of Turkey and Azerbaijan and common fate of two countries into a discussion subject. There should not be any place for instigation and malice between us.”<sup>284</sup>

Erdoğan’s speech can be interpreted as a confidence building effort between two sides. Because of that, he affirmed that Turkey did not give up his thesis about Azerbaijan’s Karabakh region and declared that the border gate would not open till the withdrawal of Armenian troops. He also noted the pragmatic sides of the relations citing that Turkey has become a biggest investor in Azerbaijan’s non-oil sector. His address verifies that US has played a vital role in the normalization period between Turkey and Armenia. Erdogan mentioned that the primary topic in

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<sup>283</sup> 11<sup>th</sup> Session of Republic of Azerbaijan Milli Mejlis, 13.05.2009, <http://www.meclis.gov.az/?/az/stenogram/173> (Accessed Date: 30.03.2018)

<sup>284</sup> 11<sup>th</sup> Session of Republic of Azerbaijan Milli Mejlis, 13.05.2009, <http://www.meclis.gov.az/?/az/stenogram/173> (Accessed Date: 30.03.2018)

his meeting with US President Obama is not only Turkish – American relations. Azerbaijan – Armenia relations and Karabakh conflict was discussed there. Erdogan claimed that they reiterated Turkey's support to Azerbaijan and hereby Nagorno Karabakh issue entered to the near future agenda of US foreign policy. Erdogan's speech has created a warm short-term period but Sargsyan's visit to Turkey turned this atmosphere out to a more strained climate.

As it was previously emphasized, Ilham Aliyev pursued the same policy of Heydar Aliyev in relations with Turkey. In the addresses of the presidents, the most important issues are appeared as Nagorno Karabakh conflict, joint regional projects and immense social and cultural relations. The emphasis on the projects have grabbed larger place in Ilham Aliyev's policies. It shows the deepening and enlarging feature of the bilateral relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Except the normalization period between Turkey and Armenia, the other two topics were discussed as a burning question in Azerbaijan - Turkey relations; recognition of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and visa regulation. In the ruling period of Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi - AK Party) led by Erdoğan, the first tension between two sides was about Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). The issue of Northern Cyprus further increased tensions in Azerbaijani - Turkish relations in May 2004, when a scandal broke out at the session of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly in Strasburg. During voting on a bill that would allow the unrecognized TRNC to establish its representation at the Council of Europe, all Azerbaijani delegates except one were absent. The bill was defeated and the Turkish delegation accused their Azerbaijani "brothers" of betraying them.<sup>285</sup> Azerbaijan's main concern in taking such a decision was about Nagorno – Karabakh issue rather than her reluctance of endorsement of Turkish thesis. Azerbaijan has acted always carefully not to give

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<sup>285</sup> Fariz Ismailzade, "Turkey-Azerbaijan: The Honeymoon Is Over", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 4, Winter 2005, p. 8.

opportunity to recognition of occupied Nagorno – Karabakh in international arena. Like the other disputes, solving the voting crisis did not take a long time. Northern Cyprus issue was on the agenda of Erdogan’s Baku trip in June 2005. Aliyev stated that he gave instruction for charter flights to TRNC and Azerbaijani companies would open branches there. About a month later than Aliyev’s statement; first charter was arrived to Ercan Airport. The “voting crisis” did not leave a big detriment in bilateral relations. Quite the reverse, Azerbaijan’s relations with Northern Cyprus has improved in the period after this incident. Such that, a MP argues that “from the perspective of Azerbaijan there is ‘one nation two states’ discourse but TRNC can be added there easily. As a result, from Turkey’s perspective, it is “one nation three states”.<sup>286</sup> About the motto of “one nation three states” , a similar attitude can be observed in TRNC. In 2009, President of TRNC Derviş Eroğlu emphasized the discourse of “one nation two states” saddens the people of TRNC because they are “one nation three states”<sup>287</sup>. In social level, there is an affinity between Azerbaijan and TRNC and the “one nation” discourse has a board repercussion in both countries. Although positive perceptions were grown in both Azerbaijan and TRNC among each other, the problem was the narrow reflection of these perceptions to political relations. For instance, President of TRNC Rauf Denktaş’s visit to Baku in 2005 was organized as a personal trip rather than an official state visit. It can be said that, Karabakh conflict made Azerbaijan – TRNC relations more difficult in political concerns.

One of the most discussed issues in the agenda of the bilateral relations are the visa regime between two countries. Even if the procedure of getting visa from diplomatic missions of Azerbaijan in Turkey is much easier comparing with the Western countries and the other Turkic states like Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan; *vis a vis* visa regime is the other burning question. Turkish citizens

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<sup>286</sup> Interview by the with an academic, Baku, 22.06.2018.

<sup>287</sup> Derviş Eroğlu: "Bir Millet, İki Devlet" Söylemi Kıbrıs Halkını Üzüyor, Haberler.com, 17.03.2018 <https://www.haberler.com/mersin-kktc-cumhurbaskani-dervis-eroglu-bir-millet-2598914-haberi/>, (Accessed Date: 10.11.2018)

can get their visas to Azerbaijan without paying in a few days. Hence, e – visa system initiated by State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan eased the procedures. Despite all these simplicities, the visa regime puts obstacles to a more comfortable business sphere. A government official claims that “visa free regime can contribute positively to the economic bilateral relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan.”<sup>288</sup> An Azerbaijani MP gives justification to the current circumstance with security concerns regarding ISIS presence in the region and underlines that citizens of Turkey and just a few countries can get their visas from the airport. In this point, she also emphasizes the narcotic incidents in Iran.<sup>289</sup> Sultanov classifies the reasons of continuation of visa regime between Turkey and Azerbaijan as it follows:

Regarding the visa-free regime demand by Turkey, here too it needs to be kept in mind that Azerbaijan is a country at war and such moves are viewed with caution. More specifically, it has been made clear through different channels that a visa-free regime towards Turkey will add legitimacy to the relentless Iranian pressure to open up the gates of Azerbaijan to its southern neighbor as well. Azerbaijan is already concerned with the influence of Iran through its substantial religious and intelligence network in the country; without the visa barrier, the situation could worsen.<sup>290</sup>

At first, the visa regulation between Turkey and Azerbaijan serves to Azerbaijan’s balanced foreign policy. The abortion of visas with Turkey would probably cause Iran’s demands of abrogation of visa regime. The sectarian influence of Iran can increase in Azerbaijan which is problematic in terms of Azerbaijan’s secular state structure and the stability of the country. Thus, Azerbaijan did not lift visa requirements however made the regulations much easier. In this point, Azerbaijan may think that, by the visa regime she can protect herself from the refugee wave which was directed to Turkey from Syria. Now, Azerbaijan hosts about 1 million

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<sup>288</sup> Interview by the author with a government official, Baku, 22.06.2017.

<sup>289</sup> Interview by the author with a MP in Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 24.06.2017.

<sup>290</sup> Sultanov, p. 43.

IDPs from Karabakh region in her territories. It should be underlined that the country did not receive sufficient funds from international organizations to handle this humanitarian issue.

In this era, the relations between both sides has continued more independent from US policies comparing with the previous terms. The “pipeline diplomacy” of US stimulated BTC pipeline to help integration of Baku to West and did not have a bad effect in Turkey – Azerbaijan relations. In Ilham Aliyev’s era, US attitude about regional projects have deteriorated. It was declared that Baku – Tbilisi – Kars project would not be assisted by US because of bypassing Armenia. The American efforts in rapprochement process between Turkey and Armenia also had a negative impact. Ilham Aliyev era can be perceived as a period when the relations have improved especially in economic terms. Besides, the relations in economy have become more institutionalized. The strategic partnership which was began in Heydar Aliyev era has upgraded to high level strategic partnership. In this sense, common points in countries’ security perception were noticed.

## **8.2 Azerbaijan and Turkey’s Common Stance Among Their Security Concerns**

The main characteristic of Ilham Aliyev’s foreign policy can be seen in two documents; National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan which was adopted on May 23, 2007 and Azerbaijan’s Military Doctrine which was ratified on June 8, 2010. The concept has drawn the outline of the foreign policy of Azerbaijan in the new millennium with references to threats and interests. The aggressive policy of Armenia is perceived as a prior threat in the document. The restoration of the territorial integrity and integration of Euro-Atlantic are seen as the two significant strategic goals. The settlement should be on these five-main bases according to Azerbaijan’s national security concept:

- Withdrawal of the armed forces of Armenia from all the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan;
- Restoration of the sovereign rights of the Republic of Azerbaijan in these territories;
- Return of the forcibly displaced Azerbaijanis to their native lands;
- Elaboration within the framework of a lawful and democratic process of the legal status, which would ensure peaceful coexistence of the Azerbaijani and Armenian communities of the Nagorno-Karabakh region and its high-level self-rule within the Republic of Azerbaijan;
- Establishment of conditions for restoring the communications and socio-economic growth of this region in the framework of the overall economic development of the country and of the regional integration processes.<sup>291</sup>

In addition to that, concept contains the regional issues about trans-regional projects, bilateral relations and the other organizations. The concept has also given a place to relations with Turkey with the words mentioned below;

Comprehensive relations with Turkey, which was the first country to recognize the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and which plays a special role in ensuring peace and stability in the region, is of particular importance. Bilateral relations between the two countries sharing ethnic, cultural and linguistic affinity are further expanding and deepening at the level of strategic partnership. The contributions of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkey in implementing trans-regional economic projects and the efforts of Turkey directed at settlement of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan indicate the coincidence of positions of the two countries and the advanced level of their cooperation.<sup>292</sup>

The Military Doctrine, consisted of 75 articles, is the re-evaluation of the security concept of Azerbaijan. The timing of adopting is quite remarkable because the abortive negotiations with Armenia, 2008 Russia – Georgia War, discussions about

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<sup>291</sup> National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2007, p. 13.

<sup>292</sup> National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2007, p. 13.

the Western intervention of Iran and 2009 Turkish – Armenian rapprochement process have increased the security concerns of Azerbaijan. The doctrine emphasizes the probability of military operation to the conflict zone against Armenia. The document can be counted as the demonstration of the rising military might of Azerbaijan in international field. After Russia's Gabala Radar Base's closure, Azerbaijan did not let opening any military bases in her territories. It was reiterated in the doctrine as it follows;

Azerbaijani Republic does not allow placing of foreign military bases within its territory, except the cases stipulated in the international treaties, which it supports. However, in case of fundamental changes in military, political conditions, Azerbaijani Republic has a right to place foreign military bases within its territory or temporarily to allow foreign military participation in other form.<sup>293</sup>

“Turkey” is not specifically mentioned as an ally in the document. Doctrine also does not delineate another state as an ally. It can be interpreted as an indicator of Azerbaijan's balance policy. In Ilham Aliyev's era, Azerbaijan's relations with Turkey have developed not just because of balancing Russia and Iran. At first, relations with Turkey have presented economic and political contribution to Azerbaijan. Secondly, strengthening and feeling more secure have made a way for Azerbaijan to act more independently. The military relations between two states have an ever-growing structure. Comparing with the previous eras, the relations have become deeper and the practical steps continued on the ground. Azerbaijan - Turkey military relations started with cooperation in the field of education. Then, military cooperation has gained a greater ground including economic dimension in Heydar Aliyev era. It can be argued that, in Ilham Aliyev era the military cooperation has progressed and the armies of these two countries performed several joint military exercises. For example, “Caucasus Eagle” drills were held between Turkey – Azerbaijan and Georgia have grabbed public attention of three

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<sup>293</sup> Azərbaycan Respublikasının Hərbi Doktrinasının Təsdiq Edilməsi Haqqında Azərbaycan Respublikası Milli Məclisinin Qərarı, p.6.

countries. In context of NATO, Turkish and Azerbaijani armies have conducted training programs. The innovations in Turkish military sector has influences on the relations, too. Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) was to sell 60 combat helicopters T-129 ATAK to Azerbaijan as part of the contract for 3 billion dollars.<sup>294</sup> For an Azerbaijani MP, the military liaison is also a message to the enemy that marks that two countries can act together.<sup>295</sup> Turkey's developing military industry has started to produce good quality products which were tested by Azerbaijan. An academic thinks that "security field is one of the most fundamental points and because of some reasons arising from internal and international area, conventions in the expected level have not come into force yet. For that reason, both countries should do more about it."<sup>296</sup> When the stats about military expenditure of Azerbaijan is analyzed, it can be easily seen that Azerbaijan's military purchases from Russia are much more than Turkey. Russia has wanted to exclude Turkey from the South Caucasus since the beginning of the Karabakh War and preserved her control there. As a result of this policy, Turkey's military sales to Azerbaijan remained in a lower cost. Beyond this fact, there is no exaggeration to say that Russia's technology in this field is in a higher level than Turkey.

The indicators of the strategic partnership are not only economic investments, trade, energy/transportation projects. Also sharing the security concerns is one of the most important features of the partnership and friendship. In this context, Azerbaijan recognized PKK as a terrorist organization and Turkey supported Azerbaijan in Karabakh conflict. The main attitude of both countries is the maintenance of stability in addition to improve common cultural values. The treacherous July 15 failed coup attempt can be seen as an indication of this attitude.

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<sup>294</sup> Azerbaijan Buys Turkish Helicopters, News.az, 5 October 2015, <https://news.az/articles/politics/101644>, May 20, 2018.

<sup>295</sup> Interview by the author with a member of Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 23.06.2017.

<sup>296</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 24.06.2017.

Preserving stability and sharing Turkey's security threats paved a way for combatting FETÖ. A president of a NGO in Baku expressed that "Azerbaijani people felt very sorry and kept standing in July 15 night.<sup>297</sup>" According to a statesman, "Azerbaijan set her position in the coup attempt concretely and showed that they were with Turkish state and people.<sup>298</sup>" Azerbaijan has become so active in countering against FETÖ after July 15 failed coup attempt in Turkey. The operations in context of fighting with FETÖ was mainly focused on four sectors where the terrorist organization was quite strong; bureaucracy, business, media and education. According to an academic, "combatting with FETÖ, which can be counted as 'postmodern gang', is an exam for the two countries and both of the countries passed it honorably.<sup>299</sup>" Some false allegations like not recognizing PKK as a terrorist organization have confused the minds of Turkish people. The joint attitude in countering FETÖ also boosted the image of Azerbaijan.

On July 16, 2016 Ilham Aliyev sent a letter to Erdogan condemning the coup attempt in Turkey which covered cordial sentiments. Azerbaijan closed a private television channel; ANS TV because of a broadcast of an interview with FETÖ ringleader Fetullah Gülen. The shutdown of this television was even before the closure of FETÖ-linked media organs in Turkey. "Azerbaijan's National Television and Radio Council on July 18 announced on its website that it was temporarily suspending the operations of private-owned ANS television while also filing legal action to revoke the station's license."<sup>300</sup> It should be noted that Radio and Television Supreme Council (Radyo Televizyon Üst Kurulu – RTÜK) in Turkey took the similar decision one day later. Council annulled licenses of FETÖ-

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<sup>297</sup> Interview by the author with a chairman of a NGO in Azerbaijan, Baku, 22.06.2017.

<sup>298</sup> Interview by the author with a chairman of a NGO in Azerbaijan, Baku, 22.06.2017.

<sup>299</sup> Interview by the with an academic, Baku, 22.06.2018.

<sup>300</sup> Azerbaijani TV Station Closed Over 'Interview' With U.S.-Based Turkish Cleric Accused By Ankara In Coup, Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty, 19.07.2016, <https://www.rferl.org/a/azerbaijani-tv-station-shut-down-gulen-interview-turkey/27867890.html> (Accessed Date: 28.11.2017)

linked radios and channels by consensus in its extraordinary meeting held on July 19, 2016.<sup>301</sup> Following these occasions, FETÖ-linked newspaper Zaman was closed down on June 20, 2016. Azerbaijan's Press Council issued a statement saying: “Azerbaijan's Press Council calls for the Azerbaijani media to show sensitivity on the vital incident in (our) sister country Turkey.”<sup>302</sup>

The other main area that Azerbaijan efficiently fights with FETÖ is education. 13 schools, 1 university and 13 prep schools linked to FETÖ had been operating in Azerbaijan.<sup>303</sup> The FETÖ cleanup in Azerbaijan was started immediately after the 17-25 December Incidents in 2013. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan made his first foreign trip to Azerbaijan after the local elections in Turkey in April 2014. One of the top topics of the agenda was FETÖ schools. He went to Baku with a special file about FETÖ schools. While telling the recent developments before the elections, Erdoğan requested from Aliyev to take measure against FETÖ schools in Azerbaijan.<sup>304</sup> Azerbaijan noticed the urgency and reacted positively and immediately to Erdoğan's request. SOCAR, which had already taken over the expropriated education institutions of FETÖ, announced closing down the schools. Just a few days after July 15, first private university in Azerbaijan Qafqaz University was shut down on June 20. The contracts of the academics of the university was not renewed. Elmar Gasimov, the rector of the state-run Baku

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<sup>301</sup> RTÜK, FETÖ ile İlişkili Radyo ve Televizyonların Lisanslarını İptal Etti, Anadolu Agency, 19.07.2016, <http://aa.com.tr/tr/15-temmuz-darbe-girisimi-rtuk-feto-ile-iliskili-radyo-ve-televizyonlarin-lisanslarini-iptal-etti/611202> (Accessed Date: 28.11.2017)

<sup>302</sup> Gulen-affiliated University Closed in Azerbaijan, Anadolu Agency, 20.06.2017, <http://aa.com.tr/en/todays-headlines/gulen-affiliated-university-closed-in-azerbaijan-/611990?amp=1> (Accessed Date: 27.11.2018)

<sup>303</sup> Azerbaijan Shuts Down ‘Gülen-linked’ Schools, Hürriyet Daily News, 19.07.2014, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/azerbaijan-shuts-down-gulen-linked-schools-----67988> (Accessed Date: 28.11.2017)

<sup>304</sup> Aliyev'e ‘Cemaat Okulları’ Ricası, Milliyet, 05.04.2014, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/aliyev-e-cemaat-okullari-ricasi/siyaset/detay/1862396/default.htm> (Accessed Date: 28.11.2017)

Higher Oil School stated that “the Turkish teachers will leave the country by the end of August<sup>305</sup>” Aslanlı noted that:

When the academic circles in Azerbaijan assess the July 15th coup attempt in Turkey, they emphasize that coups constantly take the country back, suspend democracy. They criticize the coup attempt because the law goes under the influence of certain circles and the military power of the state is directed against the national will of the Turkish nation.<sup>306</sup>

Erdoğan’s Azerbaijan visit in April 2014 was a turning point for FETÖ organization in Azerbaijan. It was said that Erdoğan gave a FETÖ list to İlham Aliyev. After his visit, struggle against FETÖ-linked bureaucrats and business people started in the country. Azerbaijani authorities organized simultaneous operations to FETÖ suspects. Many officers were fired in government services. According to an Azerbaijani MP, “FETÖ has played a role also in Turkish – Armenian rapprochement process and there are tens of FETÖ linked organizations which want to disrupt bilateral relations.”<sup>307</sup>

Operations to the main bodies of FETÖ were almost concluded less than a week in Azerbaijan after the failed coup attempt. Considering the fact that; FETÖ opened first abroad schools in Azerbaijan, it is quite noteworthy. One of the reasons was that; the ideological opinions of the FETÖ was not adopted with the principles of secular Azerbaijani administration. The second reason is idea of protecting stability in Turkey. Azerbaijan is the largest investor in Turkey regarding its activities in energy. Third, the collective actions against Turkish government *bete noire*; FETÖ

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<sup>305</sup> 50 Turkish Academics Dismissed From Azerbaijan College Over Gülen Links, Hürriyet Daily News, 17.08.2016, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/50-turkish-academics-dismissed-from-azerbaijan-college-over-gulen-links-102942> (Accessed Date: 28.11.2017)

<sup>306</sup> Araz Aslanlı, A View From Azerbaijan To The July 15 Coup Attempt, 26.08.2016, [http://birimler.dpu.edu.tr/app/views/panel/ckfinder/userfiles/145/files/ARAZ\\_ASLANLI\\_ENG.pdf](http://birimler.dpu.edu.tr/app/views/panel/ckfinder/userfiles/145/files/ARAZ_ASLANLI_ENG.pdf), (Accessed Date: 27.11.2018)

<sup>307</sup> Interview by the author with a MP in Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 24.06.2017.

was also a demonstration of solidarity with Turkey. Fourth, the averseness of Russia and Iran is already known. Thus, by eliminating FETÖ institutions, the Aliyev administration can score diplomatic points not only with Turkey, but also Russia and Iran.<sup>308</sup>

In Heydar Aliyev's period; the most remarkable issue is Turkish participation to energy markets in Azerbaijan and starting regional energy projects. A Turkish official labels Azerbaijan's Turkey choice as a transit country as a "strategic decision".<sup>309</sup> During Ilham Aliyev's era; it can be seen that finalizing the projects like BTC, BTE; implementing TANAP, TAP and BTK are the primary goals. In addition to that; Azerbaijan has become a major player in Turkish market. Investments for Star Refinery and PETKIM makes Azerbaijan the greatest foreign investor in the republic history in Turkey. Besides, the fingertips of newly emerging "strategic partnership" in Heydar Aliyev's era has upgraded to "high level strategic partnership". The bilateral relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan has formed a basis to trilateral and quadrilateral mechanisms in the region.

### **8.3 The Gestures Between Azerbaijan and Turkey**

The diplomatic solidarity between Turkey and Azerbaijan has proceed with the mutual supports in international meetings. An Azerbaijani MP remarked that; "when he is in foreign countries, if anyone talks opposite of Turkey, he perceives that these words are also against him."<sup>310</sup> There has been many examples to the diplomatic solidarity between Azerbaijan and Turkey in the recent era.

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<sup>308</sup> Azerbaijan: Marching in Lockstep with Turkey in Cracking Down on Gulen, Eurasianet, 09.08.2016, <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/80061> (Accessed Date: 28.11.2017)

<sup>309</sup> Interview by the author with an ambassador, Baku, 23.06.2017.

<sup>310</sup> Interview by the author with a member of Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 21.06.2017.

In 2012 so called “Armenian genocide denial decision” in France triggered the anger in Turkey. GNAT Turkey – Azerbaijan Inter Parliamentary Friendship members visited Baku and demanded Baku’s support. Group member MHP Iğdır MP Sinan Oğan said government, opposition, press in Azerbaijan did everything about the issue and shared Aliyev’s statement with media:

We are brothers, we showed our support to Turkey. We see that move as an insult not only to Turkey, also to Azerbaijan and Turkic world. We do not have a concern to announce what we did to Turkish public. Do we need to advertise a brother’s help to his brother? I will call the presidents of Turkic republics. I will ask their support, too.<sup>311</sup>

Hence, Aliyev’s answer to Armenian President Sarghsyan in EU Eastern Partnership Program on 24 April 2014, earned huge sympathy in Turkey. Turkey was not represented in the summit and Sarghsyan accused Turkey because of “denial” of so-called Armenian genocide. After heavy critics of Sarghsyan, Ilham Aliyev took the floor and said these words to Armenian President:

Unfortunately, the Armenian President has taken advantage of the opportunity to launch another attack on Turkey. It is easy to do so because there are no Turkish representatives around this table. But I am here and I can tell you why the Turkish-Armenian border remains closed.<sup>312</sup>

The special relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan also provides opportunities to both states as it was seen in 2015 G-20 Summit in Antalya. As a host country Turkey had a chance to invite one country as a guest to the summit. Turkey preferred to invite Azerbaijan. Even though Azerbaijan is not G-20 country President Aliyev paid a visit to Antalya and found a chance to meet with many

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<sup>311</sup> Gardaşın Gardaşa Yardımını Reklam mı Yapacaktık?, Hürriyet, 27.01.2012, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gardasin-gardasa-yardiminin-reklamini-mi-yapacaktik-19781209> (Accessed Date: 03.12.2017)

<sup>312</sup> Ilham Aliyev addressed the Summit Dedicated to the Fifth Anniversary of the European Union’s “Eastern Partnership” Program, The Website of the President of Azerbaijan Republic, 25.04.2014, <http://en.president.az/articles/11533/print> (Accessed Date: 01.12.2017)

presidents. For an academic, “it's an extra opportunity and help. Azerbaijan also feels the same in NATO. Every time Turkey invites and supports Azerbaijan in the high-profile events in NATO.”<sup>313</sup>

Just 2 days before the fifth meeting of Turkey-Azerbaijan HLSC planned to be held in Baku on 15 March 2016, a terror attack took place in Ankara in which 37 people died. President Erdoğan cancelled his trip to Baku because of this unpleasant situation. Then, Ilham Aliyev decided to come to Ankara during hard times in Turkey.

Turkish officials have continued to defend Azerbaijan in the international meetings. On November 21, 2016 in NATO Parliamentary Assembly Meeting in Turkey, Armenian MP Koryun Nahapetyan blamed Turkey for supporting ISIS and criticized Turkey's pro-Azerbaijan stance. Turkish minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu severely responded:

Did I occupy Azerbaijan's lands? Did I occupy Karabakh? You occupied, why don't you leave (occupied territory)? We gave some advice, made offers to you. We said we'll open borders if you leave Karabakh. You said why do we put Azerbaijan as a condition? We answered Azerbaijan is our fraternal country and its problem is our problem.<sup>314</sup>

During the global crisis like US President Donald Trump's decision about opening an embassy in Jerusalem, two countries adopted a similar stance. Ilham Aliyev came to Turkey after Erdoğan's call for an extraordinary summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on the issue of Jerusalem. Even Azerbaijan has retained close ties with Israel, Ilham Aliyev did not hesitate to attend the meeting. Two countries have supported each other and declared it

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<sup>313</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 21.06.2017.

<sup>314</sup> Cavusoglu Criticizes Armenia Over Its Aggressive Policy, Azer News, 21.11.2017, <https://www.azernews.az/aggression/105395.html> (Accessed Date: 30.11.2017)

publicly not only during negotiations, also about the hot conflicts. The best example of it in recent years are “April War” and “Olive Branch Operation”. The day after the April War started between Azerbaijan and Armenia in the frontline, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan emphasized that Turkey was with Azerbaijan with these words; “We pray our Azerbaijani brothers will prevail in these clashes with the least casualties<sup>315</sup>”

In 2018, Azerbaijan strongly supported Turkey’s Olive Branch Operation to the terrorist groups in Syria’s Afrin. The spokesperson of the Azerbaijan Ministry of Foreign Affairs Hikmet Hacıyev declared that “Turkey has faced terror attacks many times and a lot of lives were lost during these attacks. Azerbaijan understands Turkey’s concerns<sup>316</sup>” Many senior officials from Azerbaijan denoted their endorsement also in meetings of international institutions. The head of Azerbaijan’s delegation to Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) Samad Samadov expressed Azerbaijan’s support to Turkey by opposing to the ideas of some members who defined the operation as “invasion”. He said these concerning Olive Branch Operation: “It is neither an invasion not an attack. It is an operation against terrorism. It is an operation launched against two terrorist organizations; PKK and ISIS and it aims eradicating terrorism in the region.<sup>317</sup>”

In the final analysis, diplomatic support between Turkey and Azerbaijan used to be mainly about the technical assistance in diplomatic field and generally Turkey was the country who voiced the problems of Azerbaijan in international area. Turkey’s technical and political support to Azerbaijan in diplomatic issues were

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<sup>315</sup> Turkish President Backs Azerbaijan in Conflict with Armenia, Independent, 03.04.2016, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/turkish-president-backs-azerbaijan-in-conflict-with-armenia-a6966376.html>, (Accessed Date: 03.02.2018)

<sup>316</sup> Azerbaijan Backs Turkey’s Operation In Syria’s Afrin, Yeni Şafak, 23 January, 2018.

<sup>317</sup> AKPM Azərbaycan Heyəti Başkanı Seyidov: Türkiyə Yalnız Türkiyə İçin Değil, Avropa İçin də Savaşıyor, Haber Türk, 26.01.2018, <http://www.haberturk.com/akpm-azerbaycan-heyeti-baskani-seyidov-turkiye-yalniz-turkiye-icin-degil-avrupa-icin-de-savasiyor-1813080> (Accessed Date: 28.01.2018)

counted as an important subject. In Ilham Aliyev epoch, Azerbaijan started to speak out about the issues regarding Turkey soundly. Azerbaijan's support in international meeting showed the close relations between two countries and at the same time increased the public favor to Azerbaijan in Turkey. Adopting a common stance against Armenia was one of the reasons in compromising this attitude but it was not the only point. Also, the security concerns of Turkey and Azerbaijan were overlapped in the region.

#### **8.4 SOCAR's Investments and the Energy, Logistic Projects Between Turkey and Azerbaijan**

##### **8.4.1 PETKIM and STAR Refinery**

In Ilham Aliyev's period Azerbaijan's the concept of Azerbaijan's "energy diplomacy" has enriched. In addition to pipelines, Azerbaijan started to invest in energy infrastructure in the region. Using the pipelines as a core instrument, SOCAR has initiated her investments in Georgia and Turkey. Moreover, Azerbaijan tried to enter the European energy market by purchasing 66 % of Greek gas grid operator DESFA. The privatization of DESFA was unsuccessful because of the decision of European Commission stating a reason of the purchase was against European rules. Azerbaijan tried to become an actor in gas supply of Bulgaria. In Sweden and Romania, SOCAR's investments are generally liquid assets which can be withdrawn in any problematic circumstance. Whereas, the situation in Turkey is different. The investments in Turkey has a long-term strategic aspect.<sup>318</sup> The profitable outcomes of the pipelines and reliance on Turkey have brought about the strategic investments in Turkey.

In Turkey, the SOCAR Turkey Aegean Refinery and purchasing 51% of Turkish petro-chemistry holding PETKİM consist the greatest foreign direct investments.

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<sup>318</sup> Interview by the author with a government official, Baku, 22.06.2017.

In 2011, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and İlham Aliyev broke the ground for STAR. “In 2014, SOCAR Turkey Energy Company has signed a 3.29 billion dollar credit deal for its STAR refinery project, Turkey's biggest refinery project with an annual crude oil processing capacity of 10 million tons.”<sup>319</sup> The refinery is built in PETKİM peninsula and costs about 6 million dollar. After finalizing this project in 2018, it is estimated that Azerbaijani investments in Turkey will be about 17 billion dollars. In December 2017, it was stated that 96,4 of STAR was concluded and about 1000 people would be employed there.<sup>320</sup> The timing of this great investment is also remarkable. When the Western countries labelled Turkey as a risky country and reduced their investments there, significance of Azerbaijan’s investments increased. The investments of Azerbaijan in Turkey generally belong to big companies and they are mainly strategic businesses. Hence, SOCAR’s investments in Turkey encouraged thousands of small enterprises in Azerbaijan to invest in Turkey.<sup>321</sup> Generally, small and medium sized enterprises of Azerbaijan do not work in Turkey like they do in Russia. For example, in service sector, restaurant, trade of vegetables and fruits, hotel management, tourism Russians are not successful and Azerbaijanis has filled the gaps there.<sup>322</sup> It shows the fact that the compound of Azerbaijani investments are more strategic which is appropriate for the identity of strategic partnership between two countries.

In the previous presidency terms; the relations expanded in various fields. İlham Aliyev era can be counted as deepening of the relations between both sides. The shuttle trade and border trade in the beginning of 90’s has evolved into giant

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<sup>319</sup> Billion Dollar Credit Deal for Turkey's STAR Refinery, Anadolu Ajansı, 30.05.2014, <http://aa.com.tr/en/economy/billion-dollar-credit-deal-for-turkeys-star-refinery/155225> (Accessed Date: 09.12.2017)

<sup>320</sup> STAR’ın Yüzde 96,4’ü Tamamlandı, Aliğa Ekspres, 27.11.2017, <http://www.aliagaekspres.com.tr/guncel/28/11/2017/starin-yuzde-964u-tamamlandi> (Accessed Date: 08.12.2017)

<sup>321</sup> Interview by the author with a government official, Baku, 22.06.2017.

<sup>322</sup> Interview by the author with a government official, Baku, 22.06.2017.

investments. Now, Azerbaijan and Turkey can be referred as strategic economic partners. It implies the rising economic affinity between two countries in light of these investments. As well as the energy projects and investment on the improving transportation facilities also gained importance. AzExport stats shows that Turkey is in the top three regarding the purchase orders from the country. A state official claims that Turkey is perceived as a country where Azerbaijan can economically and politically integrate in the future.<sup>323</sup> In this regard, Aegean Port which is constructed in PETKIM peninsula enhances the maritime facilities in the region with regards to energy transportation.

#### **8.4.2 Baku – Tbilisi - Kars: “The Heart of Iron Silk Road”**

During Heydar Aliyev’s presidency, the relationship transformed from interactions relied on ideological aspirations to cooperation within the regional projects. His successor Ilham Aliyev sees Turkey as a strategic partner in the region and the projects has gained boarder ground with new projects like BTK and TANAP. A statesman notes that, “these projects are not just pipelines but also strategic projects which connect two communities.”<sup>324</sup> While connecting Beijing and London, BTK which is described as “Iron Silk Road” Railway Project has increased the global importance of both Turkey and Azerbaijan. In its initial phase, this railroad is projected to carry 1 million passengers and 6.5 million tons of goods per year. By 2034 its capacity is estimated to reach 3 million passengers and 17 million tons of goods per year.<sup>325</sup> The Asia – Europe connection was concluded with this line so it can be delineated as “the heart of Iron Silk Road”. BTK is a successful result of the regional trilateral mechanism between Azerbaijan - Turkey and Georgia. From Turkish aspect; the connection between Central Asian countries and Turkey was

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<sup>323</sup> Interview by the author with a government official, Baku, 22.06.2017.

<sup>324</sup> Interview by the author with a statesman, Baku, 21.06.2017.

<sup>325</sup> Ünal Çeviköz, Turkey in a Reconnecting Eurasia: Foreign Economic and Security Interests, Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2016, p. 26.

strengthened by BTK. At the same time, Azerbaijan's ties with the West was tightened. In other words, Turkey's relations with East and Azerbaijan's relations with West achieved a strategic goal with the project. The agreement on launching the project was signed on 2007, it was foreseen that the ending of the project would be in 2010, it was revised many times. The Ossetia War, which negatively influenced the stability in the region, erupted in 2008. Moreover, the difficulties in the field which was not estimated during the preliminary infrastructural studies, problems with the contractors and its reflection on legal processes are the other factors. An academic notes that "Azerbaijan's short, middle and long-term policies among Turkey has been sustaining slowly like a turtle but with decided certain steps."<sup>326</sup> These slow motion in the relations between Azerbaijani – Turkish relations do not mean that the interaction between the bodies of governments are not so frequent. Reversely, a lot of visits in several areas are organized and realized. So, we can say that short term policies are put into practice without serious problems. However, a huge budget is needed for such kind of long-term projects and some unforeseen cases can cause technical problems. Therefore, delays and taking long time of such incidents are understandable in great projects.

Here, it should be noted that BTK was constructed against the restrictions of the regional and global powers. 7-year delay of the projects has some international reasons. The project is funded by two countries' own budget. From this context, it can be seen as a native project without any foreign support. Russia is the most reluctant country in this sense because her own routes lose its unique specialty.

BTK is be the first Caucasian railway not under Russian domination since Russian rail construction began there in the late 1800's. The project of a railroad linking Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey was first discussed in July 1993, following the closure of the Kars-

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<sup>326</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 24.06.2017.

Gyumri-Tbilisi railroad in the wake of the Azerbaijani-Armenian conflict.<sup>327</sup>

It means that the Russian dominance on transportation has reduced with the project especially in two post-Soviet countries; Azerbaijan and Georgia. BTK occurs a considerable alternative to Russian routes from East to West because it is much shorter. Besides, BTK is a tool for isolation of Armenia in the region. The railway has the same features in transportation like what BTC has in energy field. BTK is “BTC of the transportation projects” but BTK is “more native” than BTC when the international reactions were observed. First of all, by the Armenian lobby effect the financial support was cut from West. Given the fact that the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railway bypassed Armenia, the US Congress prevented US financial institutions from providing fund for the project as a result of the of Armenia’s lobbies’ effort. On July 12, 2005, the US Congress passed a bill banning financial support for the BTK project. Therefore, the transit countries had to take on the financial funding of the project.<sup>328</sup> The project was started in the framework of Transport Corridor Europe – Caucasus - Asia (TRACECA) project but excluding Armenia from BTK Railway Project was strongly criticized by European side and the project continued with three countries own capabilities and initiatives. Georgian part of the project was constructed with Azerbaijan’s credit to Georgia.

The project has domestic benefits for the countries and leverages to both Turkey, Georgia and Turkey for increasing the regional dominance. Keeping in mind, a short bridge called “Umid” (Hope) between Turkey and the Nakhchivan region connecting Dilucu and Sederek which was opened in 1992, it can be said that the land connection evolved into substantial regional projects. Meanwhile, the

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<sup>327</sup> John C. K. Daly, Will Kazakhstan Become a Full Partner in the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railway?, *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 11, No. 7, 14.01.2014, <https://jamestown.org/program/will-kazakhstan-become-a-full-partner-in-the-baku-tbilisi-kars-railway/> (Accessed Date: 25.11.2017)

<sup>328</sup> Mitat Çelikpala, Cavid Veliyev, Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey: An Example of a Successful Regional Cooperation, *Kadir Has University Center for International and European Studies Policy Brief*, November 2015, p.17.

historical understanding that Aras River separates the two countries has changed into a new idea that pronounces the river has become a meeting point of the countries.<sup>329</sup>

It can be also said that; Turkish – Azerbaijani relations which places in the core of Turkey – Azerbaijan – Georgia trilateral mechanism, is the locomotive of the railway project. One of the most remarkable features of this project is its funding. Mainly, financial resources of Azerbaijan and Turkey are used in the construction of BTK. It shows the growing capacity of the relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan. Two countries have reached a potential that can shape the region. While serving economic benefits to the countries, the impact of the region in global affairs increased with this project. Azerbaijan - Turkey corridor in the region has become connector of two continents.

#### **8.4.3 Trans Anatolian Pipeline Project (TANAP)**

In İlham Aliyev’s era, brotherhood of these two states has eased the cooperation in several areas in both policy and economy. Two states have participated in many transportation and pipeline projects which have made their ties stronger. Azerbaijan’s rich energy sources and Turkey’s strategic position between West and Azerbaijan opened a door to construct new pipeline projects like TANAP which are important not only for these two countries but also for their region. The strategically important BTE and BTC were just an opening way to West but TANAP is an instrument in tangible integration with European market. Such energy and transportation projects can be also counted as a “security belt”.<sup>330</sup>

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<sup>329</sup> Ahmet Gencehan Babiş, Kardeşliğin Demir Bağları: Bakü – Tiflis – Kars Demiryolu, TÜRKSAM, 28.11.2017, <http://www.turksam.org/tr/makale-detay/1565-kardesligin-demir-baglari-baku-tiflis-kars-demiryolu> (Accessed Date: 20.12.2017)

<sup>330</sup> Interview by the with an academic, Baku, 22.06.2018.

The initial capacity of the pipeline is about 16 bcm. The capacity of TANAP will annually exceed 31 billion cubic meters of gas in 2026.<sup>331</sup> With such projects, Azerbaijan aims to become a leading actor in energy field in the region utilizing her resources. With the establishment of TANAP, Turkey wants to enrich the importance of her geo-strategic position among energy corridors. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev came to attend the opening ceremony of approximately 10 billion dollar cost TANAP with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on March 17, 2015. Turkish President Erdoğan's words in the ceremony claim this fact: "We plan to establish Turkey as the energy distribution hub of the region."<sup>332</sup>

On the other hand, European Union wants to decrease its dependence to Russian gas with TAP which is the European phase of TANAP. However, 10 bcm which represents just 2 per cent of the 500 bcm Europe consumes every year. Russia's Gazprom sells 15 times that amount to Europe.<sup>333</sup> This data shows that TAP is an alternative but current potential of it is not enough for the rivalry. The decision for TANAP is a "win-win" project in the region. According to Punsmann, "TANAP is likely to remove bilateral relations from the realm of emotions, and clearly mark out the interests of both sides, thus transferring cooperation between the two states onto healthier ground based on win-win pragmatic dealings."<sup>334</sup>

The "energy diplomacy" of Azerbaijan brought her to an exclusive stage. While establishing energy ties with Turkey and Georgia, Azerbaijan preserved her bonds

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<sup>331</sup> TANAP Capacity to Hit 31 bcm in 2026: SOCAR, 12.05.2014, [https://www.azernews.az/oil\\_and\\_gas/66922.html](https://www.azernews.az/oil_and_gas/66922.html) (Accessed Date: 08.12.2017)

<sup>332</sup> Azerbaijani, Georgian Presidents In Turkey For TANAP Ceremony, RFE/RL, 17.03.2015, <http://www.rferl.org/content/turkey-tanap-azerbaijan-georgia-turkmenistan-gas-european-union/26905698.html>, (Accessed Date: 07.12.2017)

<sup>333</sup> Azerbaijan Gas Pipeline Aims to Carve out a Niche Across Europe, 01.01.2014, <https://www.ft.com/content/174b403e-6c87-11e3-ad36-00144feabdc0> (Accessed Date: 07.12.2017)

<sup>334</sup> Burcu Gültekin Punsmann, "Implications of Turkish-Azerbaijani Relations for Regional Security and Development", *Istituto Affari Internazionali Working Papers*, Vol.13, No: 12, April 2013, p. 7.

with Russia. According to an Azerbaijani MP, “Ilham Aliyev was forced to realize Nabucco project but he did not prefer it.”<sup>335</sup> Azerbaijan became the only country who exports energy to three countries; Turkey, Georgia and Russia. As it is known that Turkey is an energy-dependent state, TANAP appears as an alternative to Russia, Iran and Iraq from Turkish perspective. Turkey’s overdependence to Russia encouraged her to diversify the routes of energy supply. The instability in the northern region of Iraq always keeps Turkey’s suspicion alive and the opinion divergence between Turkey - Iran can emerge so often about regional and global affairs. In the first phase of TANAP’s construction, it was defended that TANAP could be a “game changer” in Turkey’s relations with EU.<sup>336</sup> Unfortunately, the bilateral tension between Turkey and several EU countries have emerged and the relations have become more problematic. TANAP was not given opportunity to solve them. Theme of the conflicts is generally about politics and continue totally in a different line.

A statesman asserts that “TANAP has changed the landscape of the region in terms of energy and contributes to increase Turkey’s and Azerbaijan’s strategic importance.”<sup>337</sup> The Southern Gas Corridor (SGC) is planned to expand with the implementation of TANAP. With its control over TANAP, Azerbaijan appears to be calling the shots over the initial running of the SGC. Ankara will benefit from transportation revenues, but Turkey as a transit state will have little say over which gas from what sources enters TANAP.<sup>338</sup> Comparing with Turkey, Azerbaijan seems like more dominant actor in the project. It is normal because Azerbaijan’s sources and gas sector is more developed than Turkey. Currently, SOCAR holds

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<sup>335</sup> Interview by the author with a MP in Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 24.06.2017.

<sup>336</sup> Azeri Pipeline to ‘Help’ Turkey in Talks With EU, *Hürriyet Daily News*, 24.08.2012, <http://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/azeri-pipeline-to-help-turkey-in-talks-with-eu-28467> (Accessed Date: 08.12.2017)

<sup>337</sup> Interview by the author with a statesman, Baku, 21.06.2017.

<sup>338</sup> Gareth Winrow, “Realization of Turkey’s Energy Aspirations Pipe Dreams or Real Projects?”, *Brookings Turkey Project Policy Paper*, April 2014, p. 10.

58 percent, BOTAŞ 30 percent, and BP 12 percent of the shares in the company. When the stakes of the energy companies of Turkey and Azerbaijan are summoned, it is seen that 88 percent of the stakes belong to these two countries.

BTE pipeline between Turkey – Azerbaijan – Georgia trio can be seen as a practice of TANAP. BTE's scale has been enlarged by TANAP. All of the previous projects have ended in Turkish territories but TANAP interlinks with TAP at Turkish border and accesses to EU member countries. Constructing the pipeline with the budget of Turkey and Azerbaijan can be seen as the sign of Azerbaijan's development in 25 years.

## **8.5 Zurich Protocols with Armenia: A Break Up or A Better Restart**

### **8.5.1 “Football Diplomacy”**

Zurich Protocols caused the biggest crisis in Azerbaijani - Turkish relations. The rapprochement process between Turkey and Armenia is seen as “an insincere attempt”, “Armenian desire to split Turkic world”, “useless economic effort”, FETÖ action”, “ill effect”, “true decision but cannot explained to Azerbaijan properly” and “a discourage”. The bilateral relations have lost momentum during the time between the start of the football diplomacy and the establishment of High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council with Azerbaijan.

“Football diplomacy” started with Turkish President Abdullah Gül's visit to Yerevan upon Armenian President Serj Sarkisyan's invitation on September 6, 2008. Two presidents watched 2010 World Cup qualifying match between Armenia and Turkey together. It was the highest-level visit to Armenia paid by a Turkish official. President Gül was the second senior Turkish official who have been to Yerevan. 73 years before that, Prime Minister İsmet İnönü paid a visit to

Yerevan for 5-6 hours to have a breakfast there.<sup>339</sup> Both İnönü's and Gül's visit are programmed as working visits rather than official visits.

Despite the protocols, Azerbaijan - Turkey ties were never totally cut. On November 5-6, Aliyev paid his first visit after the elections in Azerbaijan and gave a speech in Turkish parliament. He underlined the featured bilateral relations as it follows; "Really, Azerbaijani - Turkish relations are an example in world. I do believe that; there is no sincere and nice relationship between any other countries in the world."<sup>340</sup> While Heydar Aliyev delineated Turkey as an example for Azerbaijan, İlham Aliyev figured Turkey – Azerbaijan relations as an example in international relations. So, the concept of being an example has changed because Azerbaijan reached a potential to establish more strategic relations with Turkey. Unlike the previous speeches of Azerbaijani presidents in Turkish parliament; İlham Aliyev focused on the projects realized by Turkey and Azerbaijan like; BTC, BTK and BTE rather than defining the brotherhood between two states and did not say anything about the Turkish - Armenian rapprochement process. The content of Aliyev's address also indicates the transformation in Turkey – Azerbaijan relations. He also gave information about the development process in Azerbaijan, peace process about Karabakh and expressed his intention to do more in regional projects:

Today's reality is that; as a result of strengthening Azerbaijan - Turkey, increasing our economic and political potential a new condition is created in the region. Today, we should enlarge the frameworks of cooperation in Caspian Sea and Black Sea.<sup>341</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> 73 Yıl Sonra Ermenistan'a ikinci tarihi ziyaret, Hürriyet, 04.09.2009, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/73-yil-sonra-ermenistana-ikinci-tarihi-ziyaret-9819895> (Accessed Date: 12.09.2018)

<sup>340</sup> The Minutes of Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 14<sup>th</sup> Session, Vol. 30, November 6, 2008, p. 599.

<sup>341</sup> The Minutes of Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 14<sup>th</sup> Session, Vol. 30, November 6, 2008, p. 602.

The visits of Azerbaijani MPs were continued but Ilham Aliyev cancelled his visit to Turkey for Istanbul Summit of the Alliance of Civilizations in early April, 2009. It was counted as an indicator of the tension between Azerbaijan - Turkey and Western pressures on rapprochement period. Soon afterwards, the joint statement of Turkish, Armenian and Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a joint statement on 22 April 2009. Due to statement:

The two parties have achieved tangible progress and mutual understanding in this process and they have agreed on a comprehensive framework for the normalization of their bilateral relations in a mutually satisfactory manner. In this context, a roadmap has been identified.<sup>342</sup>

In this period Turkey tried to protect his close attitude to Azerbaijan. Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu went to Azerbaijan after OIC Meeting in Damascus with his Azerbaijani counterpart Elmar Mammadyarov in the same plane and stated that “like one nation two states we have become one nation two delegations.”<sup>343</sup> However, such delineations did not play a great role in winning Azerbaijan’s confidence while negotiations with Armenia was going on.

On October 10, 2009, the protocols between Turkey and Armenia were signed with 3 hours delay in Zurich. “US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton later said the US would build on the ‘milestone’ that had been achieved but admitted ‘concerns on both sides’ had delayed the signing.”<sup>344</sup> “Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, European Union Foreign Policy Chief Javier Solana, and French Foreign Minister

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<sup>342</sup> Joint Statement of The Ministries of Foreign Affairs of The Republic of Turkey, The Republic of Armenia and The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, 22.04.2009, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_-56\\_-22-april-2009\\_-press-release-regarding-the-turkish-armenian-relations.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-56_-22-april-2009_-press-release-regarding-the-turkish-armenian-relations.en.mfa) (Accessed Date: 02.12.2017)

<sup>343</sup> Davutoğlu: Minsk, Karabağ'da İlerleyemiyor, NTV, 25.05.2009, <https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/davutoglu-minsk-karabagda-ilerleyemiyor,N56cMaZgS0uG3kAvbh9B5w> (Accessed Date: 20.02.2018)

<sup>344</sup> Armenia and Turkey Normalise Ties, BBC, 10.10.2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8299712.stm> (Accessed Date: 30.11.2017)

Bernard Kouchner attended the ceremony in Swiss capital Zurich.”<sup>345</sup> Two protocols; “Protocol on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey” and “Protocol on development of relations between of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey” were signed.

When the protocols were analyzed, it can be seen that there are some ambiguities. According to the protocol on the establishment of the diplomatic relations; “the mutual recognition of the existing border between two countries as defined by the relevant treaties of international law<sup>346</sup>” was confirmed by the parties. However, Armenia did not change the articles in her constitution which clearly demands Turkish provinces and defines them as “Armenian lands”. The Declaration of Independence of Armenia is also against this sentence. Non-intervention in internal affairs of other states, territorial integrity and inviolability of frontiers were reconfirmed in the protocol. But, Armenian occupation in Karabakh and 7 Azerbaijani districts is not harmonious with this point. Moreover, the most serious problem is the article about decision to open the common border and establishing diplomatic relations. The main reason of closing border checkpoints and cutting the diplomatic ties are the Armenian occupation in Karabakh. However, protocols mean that Turkey came to the negotiation table without any pre-conditions about this issue. According to a representative of an NGO in Baku, Azerbaijan’s expectation was signing protocols only under the condition that Armenia withdrew its troops from the occupied territories.<sup>347</sup>

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<sup>345</sup> Azerbaijan Attacks Deal With Armenia, The Independent, 12.10.2009, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/azerbaijan-attacks-deal-with-armenia-1801349.html> (Accessed Date: 25.09.2018)

<sup>346</sup> The Protocol on the Establishment of the Diplomatic Relations Between Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Armenia.

<sup>347</sup> Interview by the author with a chairman of a NGO in Azerbaijan, Baku, 22.06.2017.

A politician/academic argues that “the protocols were the Western attempt for kicking Turkey out of Caucasus aiming to increase their own hegemony because the deterioration of Turkey – Azerbaijan relations strengthen Iran, Russia and Western countries in the region”. An academic summarizes this protocol period with these words; “losing Azerbaijan and not getting better with Armenia”. Just because, a strategy about normalizing Turkish – Armenian relations which is against Azerbaijan cannot be counted as a successful attempt in Turkish foreign policy.<sup>348</sup> It is true that; Turkey - Azerbaijan cooperation has harmonized well in the region and forsaking it could have reduced the capacity of these two countries.

A director of a think-tank mentions that the development of relations in security, politics, economy and in humanitarian context are abreast.<sup>349</sup> While enlarging the field and deepening the concept of the relations, Turkish stance in Karabakh conflict has remained same. Turkey continued to support Azerbaijan. It is noteworthy that a Turkish official defines the issue as a “common problem” for both countries and mentions the necessity of reviewing Minsk Group’s structure which did not find a solution to this problem for 25 years.<sup>350</sup> An Azerbaijani MP asserted that “Turkey has no Karabakh policy in general but she has given reactions to Russia’s Karabakh policy.”<sup>351</sup> We can say that Turkish stance towards Karabakh issue is one of the most important points in ensuring the mutual reliance in political concerns. Turkey’s peculiarity of being the single country which supports Azerbaijan during and after the conflict has supplied a convenient ground for improving the friendship for both sides. Turkey’s initiative for the normalization with Armenia were not suitable for Turkey’s thesis.

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<sup>348</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 24.06.2017.

<sup>349</sup> Interview by the author with a director of a think-tank in Azerbaijan, Baku, 22.06.2017.

<sup>350</sup> Interview by the author with an ambassador, Baku, 23.06.2017.

<sup>351</sup> Interview by the author with a member of Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 23.06.2017.

The change in Turkey's traditional point of view has confronted with a highly skeptical insight of Azerbaijan. An academic underlines that the negotiations are in deadlock and Turkey needs to develop kind of a model or a trilateral strategic initiative to change Armenian attitude but while doing these Turkey should not hurt Azerbaijan.<sup>352</sup> Many respondents who gave answers in my in-depth interviews think that it was not the way that Turkey could solve such a problem.

A representative of a Baku based NGO notes that Turkey should be in the central position during the negotiations.<sup>353</sup> From the negotiations it can be understood that, Armenia was in the central position because of the Western mediation. Integrating Armenia to West is the main objective according to Western envisage. Turkey was a tool in this Western-made strategy.

#### **8.5.2 Tension in Bilateral Relations and Reactions from Turkey and Azerbaijan**

The social, linguistic, historical and geographical proximity opened a door to come up with solutions to crises between two sides. As a reaction to Armenian invasion of Azerbaijani territories, Turkey closed her borders with Armenia and her diplomatic relations were pending. US-initiated, Swiss-mediated "normalization" process between Turkey and Armenia deteriorated Azerbaijani - Turkish relations but recovery period started in a short time. The greatest crisis since the beginning of the relations is experienced by the states because of the rapprochement efforts. The first reason of this circumstance is deeply rooted problems between Turkey and Armenia derived from so-called genocide allegations. Second is the ambiguity of Azerbaijan's position in new era Turkish-Armenian relations. Concerning the occupation of Karabakh; Armenia's tough stance never changed in this process. It

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<sup>352</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 21.06.2017.

<sup>353</sup> Interview by the author with a chairman of a NGO in Azerbaijan, Baku, 22.06.2017.

can be said that; Turkey did not estimate the reaction of Azerbaijan correctly.<sup>354</sup> In general, there was no profit / loss analysis regarding this process. Third factor is the lack of information in Azerbaijani side about the dialogues. Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSB) official Bondarenko's visit to Azerbaijan can be marked as a turning point. During this visit he apparently met with President Aliyev to inform him about the Turkish-Armenian talks.<sup>355</sup> It caused a frustration in Azerbaijan side and paved way for occurring connection/communication problem between Turkey and Azerbaijan. For an academic, "the lack of coordination" between Turkey and Azerbaijan has deepened the crisis. Azerbaijan saw itself out of the Armenian opening equation and felt betrayed because of this. Then Armenia, Western countries, some dynamics in Turkey and Russia used it as an item of sabotage and provocation.<sup>356</sup> Fourth is the failure of gaining Turkish public will. The majority of Turkish people thought that historical enemy Armenia was preferred over their close brother Azerbaijan. Another academic asserts that, anything against Turkey in Azerbaijan and anything against Azerbaijan in Turkey cannot be done.<sup>357</sup> In this point, an Azerbaijani official states that "any wrong steps opposite of the other one in any country would not be accepted by the public of that country."<sup>358</sup> Fifth and the most important deficiency of this policy is absence of a long-term strategy. The global powers forced Turkey to start the talks to open borders but neglected the national and regional conditions. Lastly, although the Turkish foreign policy has a rich theoretical background, "zero problem with neighbors" policy is not suitable for current situation in the region. As a result of these points, the heaviest crisis was experienced between Turkey and Azerbaijan.

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<sup>354</sup> Interview by the author with a scholar, Baku, 24.06.2017.

<sup>355</sup> Zaur Shiriyeve, Celia Davies, "The Turkey-Armenia-Azerbaijan Triangle: The Unexpected Outcomes of the Zurich Protocols", *Perceptions*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 2013, p. 190.

<sup>356</sup> Interview by the author with a scholar, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>357</sup> Interview by the author with a scholar, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>358</sup> Interview by the author with an ambassador, Ankara, 11.01.2018.

An academic from Azerbaijan defines the process as “a discouragement in the relations after 120 years.”<sup>359</sup>

The main opposition party CHP and nationalist opposition party MHP sharply criticized government's policy. Another opposition; pro-Kurdish DTK supported the process. Besides, business circles defended Turkey's recently changed Armenian policy. Turkish bourgeoisie was in favor of these initiatives. Turkish wealthy business people represented by TUSIAD and business circles like MUSIAD endorsed the process with their statements. In Azerbaijan both government and opposition parties were against Armenian opening policy of Turkey. In the early years of AK Party government, the pivotal point of foreign policy is EU accession. Then, the orientation of Turkish foreign policy was directed to Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region with beginning of Arab Spring. Turkey endorsed Azerbaijan in UN Security Council non-permanent membership elections, contributed the establishment of Turkic Council, accomplished regional projects in South Caucasus, organized officials visits to Baku often. Even though, South Caucasus never became a premier topic.

When the attitudes of international actors are observed; EU, US and Russia's support can be seen. The initiative was driven mainly by US. Russia used this process to enhance its relations with Baku. “Azerbaijan was frustrated by what it saw as a shift in US regional engagement, whereby the Georgian-Azerbaijani tandem was replaced by a focus on the Turkish-Armenian rapprochement.”<sup>360</sup> Russia's intervention to Georgia was also an influential factor in a new search of West. Russia was a hegemon actor in Caucasus and Iran was an undesired party. One of the main struggles was taking Armenia out of this triangle. Azerbaijan has been using Western route as a main energy. Considering that, Armenian normalization process served an opportunity for Russia to sign energy contracts

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<sup>359</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>360</sup> Shiryev, Davies, p. 187.

with Azerbaijan. In addition to the political attitudes, the civil society of Turkey was financially supported for the preparation of the normalization process. The Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission, started in July 2001 by David L. Phillips, director of the Program on Peace Building and Rights at Columbia University's Institute for the Study of Human Rights and the Turkey-Armenia Business Development Council were important in initiating the links between the two countries and opening space for engagement by the civil society groups.<sup>361</sup> According to a director of a think-tank, "there was a huge financial flow during Turkey – Armenia normalization process both from EU and US which is about 5-6 million dollars per year. In Turkey, there were many NGOs propagating for them and actively working for the opening of the borders between Turkey and Armenia." In the same line, a professor argues that, EU funds were used especially in NGO field for creating the convenient atmosphere for normalization between Turkey and Armenia.<sup>362</sup> But, the pleasing fact is that; the many NGOs in Turkey opposed this initiative without receiving even one qapik (coin).<sup>363</sup> Regardless of the opinions of the ruling elites, Turkey – Azerbaijan relations is the epiphany of "one nation two states" discourse. If anyone from any state recants from it, he/she will face with the public reaction.<sup>364</sup> It reveals that "one nation two states" discourse depends on the grassroots of Turkish community and therefore reshaping it with financial tools in a short time is almost impossible.

Women Azerbaijani parliamentarians; Ganire Pashayeva, Guler Ahmadova, Lale Abbasov, Gültekin Hajibeyli, Melahat Ibrahimqızı and Aynur Guliyeva visited Turkey to meet with the leaders of political parties and state officials including

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<sup>361</sup> Diplomatic History: The Turkey-Armenia Protocols, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 17.04.2012, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2012/04/17/diplomatic-history-turkey-armenia-protocols-event-3630>, (Accessed Date: 12.02.2018)

<sup>362</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Ankara, 16.01.2018.

<sup>363</sup> Interview by the author with a director of a think-tank in Azerbaijan, Baku, 22.06.2017.

<sup>364</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Ankara, 16.01.2018.

President Gül and Speaker of Turkish Parliament Köksal Toptan, visit NGOs and tell Azerbaijan's opinions to media representatives in April 2009. During their visit, media gave an important attention, invited them as a guest speaker to TV programs and broadcasted many of their activities like never seen before. Azerbaijani MPs also met with representatives of Turkish newspapers Radikal, Ortadoğu, Hürriyet, Türkiye, Yenicağ, Sabah, Tercüman as well as Star, TGRT, TV 8, Avrasya, Sky Turk and other TV channels.<sup>365</sup> Pashayeva told Azerbaijan's view about the normalization process between Turkey and Armenia on Show TV's *Siyaset Meydanı*, Haber Türk's *Teke Tek* which are the most watched discussion programs in Turkey.

The delegation visited the Speaker of Turkish Parliament Köksal Toptan and gave him a soil which was brought from Karabakh, the books about Karabakh and a carpet as a gift. Toptan stressed the discourse of "one nation two states" in the meeting and underscored that the opening of the borders gate was impossible while 1 million people deported from Karabakh have been still suffering.<sup>366</sup> Guler Ahmadova asked to build a momentum in Çanakkale for Azerbaijanis who fell martyr with Turks. Azerbaijani MP Pashayeva reiterated two conditions of Azerbaijan about the opening of border; Armenia should end the occupation in Azerbaijani territories and recognize Turkey's territorial integrity. Besides, she said that the opening of the borders with Armenia was a disappointing factor for Azerbaijani public. Pashayeva stated "Unless the occupation in Azerbaijani territories finishes, this border should not be opened. Otherwise, our people will sadden."<sup>367</sup>

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<sup>365</sup> Azerbaijani Women MPs Visit Turkey, Azertag, 23.04.2009, [https://azertag.az/en/xeber/AZERBAIJANI\\_WOMEN\\_MPS\\_VISIT\\_TURKEY-582442](https://azertag.az/en/xeber/AZERBAIJANI_WOMEN_MPS_VISIT_TURKEY-582442) (Accessed Date: 23.05.2018)

<sup>366</sup> Azeri Vekillerden Tokat Gibi Armağan, Hürriyet, 16.04.2009, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/azeri-vekillerden-tokat-gibi-armagan-11439699> (Accessed Date: 24.05.2018)

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid.*

Gül accepted the delegation of Azerbaijani parliamentarians after their meeting with Köksal Toptan, CHP Leader Deniz Baykal and MHP Leader Devlet Bahçeli. Gül soothed the delegation and emphasized that Turkey was with Azerbaijan and Turkey was not doing anything behind her. In the meeting Azerbaijani MPs said to Gül that; “Opening borders means ignoring Azerbaijani - Turkish brotherhood.”<sup>368</sup> This visit did not influence positively to bilateral relations. After a short while, Erdoğan’s speech was striking in 50<sup>th</sup> AK Party Widened Provincial Chairmen Meeting;

Factionous elements do not stand by and are working. Somebody came here from Azerbaijan. They want to create trouble here with lies and fake things. Somebody goes to Azerbaijan from here to create trouble with lies and fake things. We will be sad if the high-level administrative staff will be deceived.<sup>369</sup>

Later on, a newspaper alleged Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said that Azerbaijani women MPs have relations with “deep circles” in Turkey.<sup>370</sup> Then, MHP MP Şenol Bal who invited Azerbaijani MPs, castigated Erdoğan and reacted saying that; “He should tell what he knows.”<sup>371</sup> Azerbaijani MPs also declared that they felt discomfort with this news. Afterwards, Turkish Prime Ministry and Turkish Embassy in Baku denied the news.<sup>372</sup> As a result, the tension has decreased. This visit aimed to gain Turkish public’s authority and show that Armenian opening has

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<sup>368</sup> Azerileri Gül Yatıştırdı, Radikal, 17.04.2009, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/azerileri-gul-yatistirdi-931605/> (Accessed Date: 23.05.2018)

<sup>369</sup> Erdoğan'dan Obama'ya Cevap, Vatan, 27.05.2009, <http://www.gazetevatan.com/erdogan-dan-obama-ya-cevap-235243-siyaset/>, (Accessed Date: 23.05.2018)

<sup>370</sup> Erdoğan'dan Şok Sözler, Milliyet, 22.05.2009, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/erdogan-dan-sok-sozler--siyaset-1097627/> (Accessed Date: 27.05.2018)

<sup>371</sup> Derin İlişki Tartışması, Hürriyet, 22.05.2009, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/derin-iliski-tartismasi-11702372>, (Accessed Date: 28.10.2018)

<sup>372</sup> Azeri Vekillerden 'Derin Dairelerle İlişki' Tepkisi, CNN Türk, 22.05.2009, <https://www.cnntrk.com/2009/turkiye/05/22/azeri.vekillerden.derin.dairelerle.iliski.tepkisi/527732.0/index.html>, (Accessed Date: 25.05.2018)

been going on without Azerbaijan's consent. Turkish media was used by the visiting delegation so properly and the figures from the ruling party and opposition confirmed that the borders could open only if Armenia would withdraw from the occupied Azerbaijani territories. Symbolic gifts like the soil of Karabakh region were concentrated on reminding the Armenian occupation. Turkish government did not welcome this meeting but at the same time Erdoğan did not choose to increase the tension with high-level Azerbaijani officials.

Although Turkey and Armenia do not have diplomatic relations, behind-the-scene diplomacy continues between both sides. Groups within the two states approve or oppose to these secret talks. Turkey's response to Iran's mediation offer, i.e. that "we already talk to Armenia," uncovered the hidden diplomacy.<sup>373</sup>

Despite the formal dialogue process was recently announced; the talks had been continuing in the backstage.

### **8.5.3 Flag Crisis**

The first stage was met with public opposition from both Turkey and Azerbaijan. Nevertheless, the second stage of football diplomacy was more problematic. The decision of banning Azerbaijani flags in Bursa Atatürk Stadium disturbed the majority of Turkish population and got negative reaction of Baku. Turkey could not manage the situation and tell it properly to media and public. Before the game on September 14, the developments became a puzzling issue. At first, Bursa Mayor Şehabettin Harput who was arrested in context of FETÖ investigation in 2016 stated a week before the match that: "This is not a struggle that Turkey made in cooperation with Azerbaijan. Thus, coming with Azerbaijan flag will be supremely

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<sup>373</sup> Bülent Aras, Fatih Özbay, Turkish-Armenian Relations: Will Football Diplomacy Work?, *SETA Policy Brief*, No. 24, September 2008, p. 4.

false.<sup>374</sup>” Then another statement from Bursa Mayor indicated that the flags would not be inhibited. After that, UEFA President Michel Platini discussed the issue with the UEFA Vice President Şenes Erzik and a FIFA delegate told that negotiations with the security forces were going on to restrict the entrance of Azerbaijan flag.<sup>375</sup> The last decision of Turkish authorities was in favor of prohibition because of the directives of FIFA. It triggered Azerbaijan’s anger and Turkish flag in Martyrs Alley in Baku was removed. In Atatürk Stadium; Turkey won Armenia but lost Azerbaijan. Turkey put a ban on Azerbaijan flags in Bursa and Azerbaijan gave a heavy reaction to this move by lowering Turkish flag in Baku. Flag crisis is an exception in Azerbaijan – Turkey relations but is a routine in Armenia. It should be noted that Turkish flag was burnt during the so-called genocide protest on 24 April, 2009 in Yerevan and frequent insult to Azerbaijan flag in Armenia is very well-known.

For a professor, the emotion in Turkey – Azerbaijan relations is disproportionate and the ties are very intertwined. For this reason, a very little mistake can cause big problems.<sup>376</sup> Azerbaijan’s first reaction to Turkey’s statement about Armenian opening was the closure of Turkey’s Religious Affairs Administration’s Mosque in Martyrs’ Alley by the reason of restoration.<sup>377</sup> “Flag crisis” was the zenith of the tensions between Turkey and Armenia during rapprochement period. Azerbaijan’s ruling New Azerbaijan Party (YAP) claimed that FIFA did not have such prohibition methods. YAP MP Mubariz Gurbanli said these:

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<sup>374</sup> Azerbaycan Bayrağıyla Maç Seyredilmeyecek, Hürriyet, 09.10.2009, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/azerbaycan-bayragiyla-mac-seyredilmeyecek-12658578> (Accessed Date: 28.11.2017)

<sup>375</sup> Yine Bayrak Krizi, [https://www.ntv.com.tr/spot/yine-bayrak-krizi,3h1TZ5S9WUuY\\_-SFZIfGg](https://www.ntv.com.tr/spot/yine-bayrak-krizi,3h1TZ5S9WUuY_-SFZIfGg) (Accessed Date: 14.09.2009)

<sup>376</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Ankara, 16.01.2018.

<sup>377</sup> Bir Millet Ayrılıyor, Hürriyet, 19.10.2009, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/bir-millet-ayriliyor-12720855> (Accessed Date: 12.05.2018)

I believe Turkey's decision was very wrong. When the flag of so-called Nagorno Karabakh Republic was raised in Yerevan, the Turkish side did not express their protest. Why were they silent? Why did not FIFA respond? This flag was the flag of non-recognized separatist and criminal regime.<sup>378</sup>

The flag crisis marked a turning point in the Turkish-Azerbaijani-Armenian dynamic. Prior to the insult at Martyrs' Alley, Turkish public opinion was for the most part pro-Azerbaijani.<sup>379</sup> The flag crisis has caused a disappointment in Azerbaijan and criticism in Turkish opposition. Right wing MHP Leader Devlet Bahçeli came to the parliament with a rosette of Turkish and Azerbaijani flags and said that; "Even if you put on Azerbaijani flag in stadiums it is in the parliament."<sup>380</sup> CHP Leader Deniz Baykal adopted the same attitude who is a leftist politician in Turkey. He emphasized that these words in his speech; "While PKK flags have been waved in the borders, Azerbaijan's flag was prohibited in Bursa."<sup>381</sup>

The reactions from Azerbaijan revealed the disillusion there. The speaker of Azerbaijani Parliament Oktay Asadov also declared that he felt humiliated because of the flag occasion in Bursa.<sup>382</sup> Following the football match in Bursa, Azerbaijan responded with sending a note to Turkey and removing Turkish flags in Martyrs' Alley in Baku on October 15, 2009. Afterwards, tension escalated when Turkish flag in front of Religious Service Office of Turkish Embassy in Baku was removed.

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<sup>378</sup> Azerbaijani Ruling Party Protests Against FIFA's Decision, Trend, 20.10.2009, <https://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/society/1562509.html> (Accessed Date: 30.11.2017)

<sup>379</sup> Shiriyeve, Davies, p. 201.

<sup>380</sup> 'Yıkım Troykası'nı CHP Tamamlıyor, Hürriyet, 14.10.2010, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/yikim-troykasi-ni-chp-tamamliyor-12684711> (Accessed Date: 20.05.2018).

<sup>381</sup> Baykal: PKK Bayrağı Serbest Azeri Bayrağı Yasak, NTV, 20.10.2009, <https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/baykal-pkk-bayragi-serbest-azeri-bayragi-yasak,gZatm90BBU2x7hhAfJ4ZWw> (Accessed Date: 24.05.2018)

<sup>382</sup> Esedov: Gururuma Dokundu, Posta, 20.10.2009, <http://www.posta.com.tr/esedov-gururuma-dokundu-4509> (Accessed Date: 30.05.2018)

Turkey chose to send a note to Azerbaijan about this issue. High-level officials also responded to such incidents in Azerbaijan. State Minister Egemen Bağış compared flag crisis with Cyprus issue and declared that Turkey never gave an attitude to Azerbaijan because of not recognizing Northern Cyprus.<sup>383</sup> While saying these, he did not openly challenge Azerbaijan and put an emphasis on the “one nation two states” discourse. During this time period, the tendency in Turkish media among Azerbaijan has traced a negative tendency. For example, Turkish journalist Soli Özel expressed that Azerbaijan was unjust in Armenia issue and removing Turkish flags was a serious action mistake.<sup>384</sup> Conversely, an elder diplomat and CHP Vice Chairman Onur Öymen asserted that signing protocols was a wrong. According to Öymen, if things continue to happen like this, the brotherhood will be broken down.<sup>385</sup> Cihan Paçacı from MHP said that, Turkey and Azerbaijan are “one nation two states” however such behaviors can harm both states.<sup>386</sup> He thought that both Turkey and Azerbaijan acted incorrectly during this period.

In the time of crisis, Azerbaijan’s tone became firmer. In line with that, Azerbaijan introduced her gas resources as a foreign policy tool. The “flag crisis” between Turkey and Azerbaijan paved a way for “gas crisis” between two states. İlham Aliyev stated that, Azerbaijan has been selling gas to Turkey for one third, 30 percent, of the market price. Then Aliyev noted: “We want to sell our gas for a price close to the market price, if not for the market price. If we are not paid equal to the price paid for Russian gas, then let it be 8 percent, 10 percent lower, but not 50 percent lower.”<sup>387</sup>

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<sup>383</sup> "Biz Azerbaycan'a Tavir Yaptık mı?", Haber Türk, 19.10.2009, <http://www.haberturk.com/polemik/haber/180328-biz-azerbaycana-tavir-yaptik-mi> (Accessed Date: 23.05.2018)

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>387</sup> President İlham Aliyev: For Many Years Azerbaijan Has Been Selling Gas to Turkey For 1/3 Market Price, APA, 17.10.2009, <http://en.apa.az/azerbaijan-politics/domestic-news/president->

From this perspective, it can be claimed that the rapprochement process had brought an extra financial burden to Turkey. Besides, Assistant to the President for Public and Political Issues, Department Head Ali Hasanov claimed that the flags were removed in the context of a law that regulates the places of the foreign countries in Azerbaijan. Hasanov said removing flags is not a reprisal to the events occurred in Bursa and also told that Turkey should think about it when Azerbaijani flags were thrown into rubbish.<sup>388</sup> During the nervous times, some Azerbaijani parliamentarians came up with a request of declaring 15 September as “Turkey – Azerbaijan Friendship Day” to end this crisis.<sup>389</sup> As it is understood from this proposal, the efforts of finding a solution and decreasing the tension did never come to an end in this period. The frustration in Azerbaijan was tried to be compensated by such suggestions to amend the ties and turn back to the old days.

In October 2009, a parliamentary delegation from Azerbaijan came to Turkey again and met with Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Samad Seyidov expressed the gladness of the delegation after the meeting.<sup>390</sup> Moreover, other members of the delegation answered the questions of the press. Member of the Azerbaijani delegation to PACE Gültekin Hajibeyli said Azerbaijani-Turkish brotherhood would never end; “This is genetic and everlasting brotherhood”<sup>391</sup>. Replying the question “If Turkey

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[ilham-aliyev-for-many-years-azerbaijan-has-been-selling-gas-to-turkey-for-1-3-market-price.html](http://ilham-aliyev-for-many-years-azerbaijan-has-been-selling-gas-to-turkey-for-1-3-market-price.html)  
(Accessed Date: 10.05.2018)

<sup>388</sup> “Azerbaycan Bayrağını Çöpe Atarken Düşünselerdi”, T 24, 22.10.2009, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/azerbaycan-bayragini-cope-atarken-dusunselerdi,58529> (Accessed Date: 23.05.2018)

<sup>389</sup> Esedov: Gururuma Dokundu, Posta, 20.10.2009, <http://www.posta.com.tr/esedov-gururuma-dokundu-4509> (Accessed Date: 30.05.2018)

<sup>390</sup> Başbakan Erdoğan Azeri Milletvekillerini Kabul Etti, Haberler.com, 14.10.2009, <https://www.haberler.com/basbakan-erdogan-azeri-milletvekillerini-kabul-2-haberi/> (Accessed Date: 11.05.2018).

<sup>391</sup> Samad Seyidov: “We Return From Turkey With Great Hopes”, News.az, 17.10.2009, <https://news.az/articles/politics/228> (Accessed Date: 20.05.2018)

doesn't keep its promise, what Azerbaijan will do", member of the delegation Fazail Aghamali said:

It will end the brotherhood, friendship and strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and Turkey. Turkey will become an ordinary neighbor country for Azerbaijan. What Turkey will feel, if Azerbaijan establishes relations with PKK. Armenia hurt Azerbaijan more than PKK.<sup>392</sup>

As it is clearly understood from this statement, the perception in Azerbaijan among Armenia is no more different than a terrorist organization because of the suffering in the war times and the mass massacres of Azerbaijani people starting from the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The point that Turkey missed was the explicitness of the failure of the process since Azerbaijan's view on Armenia has not changed yet. The formal Azerbaijani thesis about the protocols refers that the process should be taken forward in line with Karabakh issue. While one of the members of Azerbaijani delegation put emphasis on the strength of the relations another one warned about the brotherhood could have an end. The delegation expressed not only rich concept of the relations but also called Turkey to keep her promise. Finally, it should be underlined that the main problem of the football diplomacy is the lack of conversation and coordination with Azerbaijan. No mechanism was built during the process to hear Azerbaijan in this concern.

Azerbaijan's response triggered a reaction in Turkey and "one nation two states" discourse was started to be questioned. In a short time, flag crisis was solved and Turkish flag was raised. An Azerbaijani statesman emphasizes that protocols show that any third party cannot intervene into Turkey – Azerbaijan relations because root of the relations are formed by the peoples.<sup>393</sup> An Azerbaijani MP points out the fact that; "governments come and go but communities in two countries are

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<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>393</sup> Interview by the author with a statesman, Baku, 21.06.2017.

forever. Treating a heart break among people is impossible. If the crisis between Turkey and Azerbaijan took longer, there would be a frustration among people but it did not take such a long time.”<sup>394</sup> About a week later, Turkish flags were raised again. The Chairman of Turkish Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee Murat Mercan emphasized the happiness of him and Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesman Burak Özügergin, told that unpleasant developments were just a parenthesis and closed in this morning on October 29, 2009.<sup>395</sup> The process showed that the status quo cannot be changed in the region without Azerbaijan’s approval. Thanks to the main framework of “one nation two states” discourse both sides abstained from detrimental statements which could disrupt relations.

#### **8.5.4 The End of Rapprochement Period Between Turkey and Armenia**

The “balance factor” and “energy card” in Azerbaijani foreign policy showed itself during normalization process. With regard to Baku’s trump card, on October 14, 2009, the SOCAR signed an agreement to sell 500 million cubic meters of gas a year to Russia’s Gazprom starting in 2010, at a price of 350 dollar per thousand cubic meters. Turkey ensured that Baku’s demands should have been met in her negotiations with Armenia otherwise Azerbaijan would continue to come close with Russia and send her Caspian energy supplies elsewhere. The threat and concrete action posed significant political and economic sanctions as punishment for Turkey’s policy shift.<sup>396</sup> Even though, it should be stated that, Azerbaijan has sold Turkey oil at a low oil price for a long time.

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<sup>394</sup> Interview by the author with a MP in Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 24.06.2017.

<sup>395</sup> Azerbaycan ile Bayrak Krizi Sona Erdi, CNN Türk, 27.10.2009, <https://www.cnnturk.com/2009/dunya/10/27/azerbaycan.ile.bayrak.krizi.sona.erd/549485.0/index.html> (Accessed Date: 14.05.2018)

<sup>396</sup> Shiriyeve, Davies, p. 194.

One of the theses in this period was the possibility of economic boom in Turkey's eastern provinces because of beginning the border trade with Armenia. Comparing with the huge projects realized with Azerbaijan like BTE, BTC, BTK and TANAP the regeneration of economic ties with Armenia would remain very weak. An Azerbaijani parliamentarian make references to the importance of oil, natural gas, logistical projects in global economy and mentions that selling tomatoes, potatoes, pastas and clothes to Armenia is not profitable and beneficial for Turkey.<sup>397</sup> For a government official, "protocol process between Turkey and Armenia did not have a negative effect on trade between Turkey and Azerbaijan."<sup>398</sup> The business people were not intensively affected from that but it had effects in Turkish energy sector because Turkey used to buy Azerbaijani gas in a very cheaper price before the football diplomacy period.

Turkey served the withdrawal of Armenian forces from Nagorno – Karabakh as a precondition which was refused. In Armenia, the protocols were first examined by the Constitutional Court and passed. Speaking of the constitution, it should be mentioned that Article 13 of the Armenian Constitution defines Ağrı Mountain which is within the borders of Turkey, as the national symbol. Moreover, it should be notified that Armenia's Military Doctrine defined "the strategic alliance of Turkey and Azerbaijan" as an "external threat"<sup>399</sup>. The ratification issue of protocols in Armenia has become an enigma. The Constitutional Court of Armenia decided that the protocols are in conformity with the Armenian Constitution on January 12, 2010. However, the reluctance of Armenia was prevailed in the ratification of Armenian parliament. On April 22, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan issued a decree whereby the ratification procedure of the Armenia-Turkey protocols on normalization of relations between the two countries

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<sup>397</sup> Interview by the author with a MP in Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 24.06.2017.

<sup>398</sup> Interview by the author with a government official, Baku, 22.06.2017.

<sup>399</sup> The Military Doctrine of the Republic of Armenia, 28.04.2015, <http://www.mil.am/media/2015/07/825.pdf> (Accessed Date: 03.04.2018)

“suspended”. Accordingly, on April 26, the bill on ratification of these protocols was withdrawn from the agenda of the National Assembly. In a televised message on April 22, Sargsyan declared that this decision was made due to the policy of Turkey “to protract time” aimed at undermining the process of ratifying the protocols “in a reasonable time and without preconditions”, as previously agreed.<sup>400</sup> Later in 2012, speaking to the Armenian youth, Sargsyan said “We took back Karabakh, it is up to you to take back Ararat”, which drew heavy reaction from Turkey and signaled that the process was now over. Another piece of evidence regarding the lack of sincerity in the process, which became known as “football diplomacy” because presidents Abdullah Gül and Serj Sargsyan watched football matches in Yerevan and Bursa together, was that the Mount Ararat symbol on the logo of the Armenian Football Federation was removed before Gül’s visit and reinstated afterwards. Similarly, upon being invited to the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Victory at Çanakkale in 2015 by Turkey, Sarkisyan responded “Before holding commemorations, Turkey should recognize the genocide”. The lack of mutual trust was never alleviated in the process and allegations of so-called genocide continued with Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian finally gave the signals of finalizing the process by saying ‘We’ll greet spring 2018 without the protocols.’ Despite all this, Turkey did not want to be the side leaving the table and the protocols were kept on the agenda of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the GNAT.

The protocols were signed during the 23<sup>rd</sup> legislative period of the GNAT and in keeping with procedure, they were debated by the GNAT Foreign Affairs Commission before being presented to the general assembly. Although Armenia had announced their suspension, the protocols were kept on the commission’s agenda, in order to show the world public that Turkey is not the party avoiding understanding. The protocol on the establishment of diplomatic ties and

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<sup>400</sup> Armenia Suspends Ratification Of Protocols With Turkey, CACI Analyst, 29.04.2010 <http://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/field-reports/item/12048-field-reports-caci-analyst-2010-4-29-art-12048.html> (Accessed Date: 03.11.2017)

development of relations which were brought before the Commission on Foreign Affairs for the first time on October 21, 2009, were also brought before the commission on October 1, 2011, in the 24<sup>th</sup> legislative term. As the 25<sup>th</sup> legislative period was under a temporary government; no crucial undertakings were carried out. The y were brought before the Commission on Foreign Affairs again on February 18, 2016, in the 26<sup>th</sup> legislative term. During this time, with the efforts of the Armenian diaspora, the draft bill criminalizing the denial of the so-called genocide was accepted by the French parliament in 2011, Turkish flags were burned in Armenia on April 24<sup>th</sup> which is commemorated as the anniversary of the so-called genocide and Armenian representatives continued their hostile attitude and statements against Turkey on international platforms. In addition, Armenia did not end its occupation of Azerbaijan's Karabakh region, which was the reason why Turkey has closed down its border crossing and continued its massacre of civilians. In 1993, with Armenia in difficulties, Turkey has sold wheat and played an important role in the provision of electricity. In 1995, Turkey had opened up its airspace to Armenia, with no change of attitude on the Armenian side. Most recently, the Armenian diaspora has held joint meetings in the USA with members of the PYD on Operation Olive Branch which Turkey undertook against terrorist positions in Afrin. Armenian diaspora also took poor relations between Turkey and the Netherlands as an opportunity and expended a lot of effort to get the so-called genocide recognized.<sup>401</sup> In a short time period, Zurich protocols and "football diplomacy" were failed. However, residues were left on the relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan. Academics mention that, a little bit of suspicion has left on Azerbaijan's side in case of repeating this period.<sup>402</sup> "If a similar crisis is experienced between Turkey and Azerbaijan, the relations will not be like before" says an academic.<sup>403</sup>

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<sup>401</sup> A. Gencehan Babiş, "Game Over! The Football Diplomacy Between Turkey and Armenia Failed", *Diplomatic Observer*, April 2018, p. 50.

<sup>402</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 21.06.2017.

<sup>403</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 19.06.2017

First, the protocol crisis seemed like a break up between Turkey and Azerbaijan, but later it was understood that the end of the crisis was a better restart. An academic put forward that, such crises do not have a capacity to influence Turkish – Azerbaijan relations.<sup>404</sup> But, it should be noted that it was the most serious crisis ever. The crisis did not take a long time and relations have recovered in a short period. The officials hesitated adopting a sharp discourse while criticizing each other. In this point the economic projects, historical relations and cultural interactions between sides have played a significant role. “One nation two states” principle was used to protect the core of the relations rather than symbolizing a development in this term. Despite of the criticism, no hostile remarks were mentioned both from Azerbaijan and Turkey. The rapprochement process and reactions of Azerbaijan brought Turkish foreign policy to a preference between Azerbaijan and Armenia. In this regard, Armenia’s potential of economy was quite little and did not serve an opportunity to Turkey. Moreover, historical, cultural and social factors are all in advance of Azerbaijan. Like the previous tensions occurred between the two sides; the trend in bilateral relations was pursued on a higher level, the fraternalism between two sides was not destroyed, reversely gained strength. Besides, in energy field, cooperation actives have become more immense. The dialogue mechanism has turned into a high-level strategic cooperation.

## **8.6 Establishment of High-Level Strategic Cooperation (HLSC) Between Turkey and Azerbaijan**

In Azerbaijan – Turkey relations, one of the most phenomenal success achieved by these two countries are establishment of the HLSC.

The comprehensive development of collaboration with its strategic partners is one of the priority directions for Azerbaijan’s foreign

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<sup>404</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 24.06.2017.

policy. Since its independence, Azerbaijan has signed treaties of strategic cooperation with 17 different countries.<sup>405</sup>

These 17 countries include countries from Europe, Turkic world and post-Soviet countries. After the unsuccessful rapprochement period between 2008 – 2010, both Turkey and Azerbaijan understood the strategic importance of their brotherhood better. After Russian intervention to Georgia Azerbaijan felt the threat near her borders and during the US initiated normalization process between Turkey and Armenia, she drifted toward Russia as a result of her balance policy. However, in this time period Russia enhanced her dominance in Armenia. Armenia houses a Russian military base in its territory, with a lease that was extended to 25 years by a landmark military deal in August. Russia then announced that it had deployed the S-300 missile defense system to Armenia in the same month. Meanwhile, no such plans were made for Azerbaijan, and Baku was increasingly nervous about the budding Armenian-Russian security relationship to its immediate west.<sup>406</sup> The immense Russian – Armenian ties made Azerbaijan re-think about the regional circumstance and opened a road to revive Azerbaijani - Turkish closeness. Furthermore, high level strategic cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey can be observed as a natural result of the high-cost projects. For Ibrahimov, the more developed economic capacities the more quality in the bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey. He asserts that: as Azerbaijan's and Turkey's economic capabilities have developed, the quality of relations between the two countries have also changed. Formats are being sought for creating stronger relations between the sides.<sup>407</sup>

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<sup>405</sup> Habibleyli, p. 37.

<sup>406</sup> Turkey and Azerbaijan Achieve a Strategic Partnership, Stratfor, 22.12.2010, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/turkey-and-azerbaijan-achieve-strategic-partnership> (Accessed Date: 28.03.2018)

<sup>407</sup> Rovshan Ibrahimov, "Turkish – Azerbaijani Relations and Turkey's Policy in the Central Caucasus", *The Caucasus and Globalization*, Vol. 5, No: 3-4, 2011, p.19.

The improving business between two sides and the high energy investments have stirred up the new institutional mechanisms. Aliyev visited Turkey on November 17, 2010 for the 10<sup>th</sup> Summit of Turkic-Speaking Countries which was held in Istanbul. During his visit, a framework agreement for the high-level strategic cooperation was signed. So, the relations have reached the peak of the institutionalization level. In the ceremony, Erdogan cited to “one nation two states” discourse and Aliyev put an emphasis on these words:

This is a legal and, at the same time, very genuine document. This is not merely an agreement between two states. It is a work that unites hearts and peoples and expresses our good intentions. It will make us wealthier and happier.<sup>408</sup>

On December 21, 2010; 10 years valid document was put to the vote and passed with 93 for. Reversely, just 1 one Azerbaijani MP voted against it. The meetings were started to be held since 2011. Establishment of the high-level strategic cooperation council between two states indicated the close partnership. A Turkish official admits that the relations are better now incomparably.<sup>409</sup> According to an Azerbaijani official; protocols resemble a virus and made the immune system of the relations healthier now.<sup>410</sup> As it is understood from there, the officials of both sides think in the same direction about the improvement in relations after football diplomacy period.

Strategic partnership of the countries covers several fields but the most noteworthy point in the high-level strategic cooperation agreement is the security point. Both Turkey and Azerbaijan pledged that they will support each other “using all possibilities” in the case of a military attack or “aggression” against either of the

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<sup>408</sup> Azerbaijan, Turkey "Unite Hearts" In Key Deal, Dünya, 17.11.2010, <https://www.dunya.com/gundem/azerbaijan-turkey-quotunite-heartsquot-in-key-deal-haberi-125882> (Accessed Date: 02.04.2018)

<sup>409</sup> Interview by the author with an ambassador, Baku, 23.06.2017.

<sup>410</sup> Interview by the author with an ambassador, Ankara, 11.01.2018.

countries. Plans to upgrade hardware for joint military operations, cooperation in “military-technical” areas, joint military exercises and training sessions are also specified, but details are not provided.<sup>411</sup> It reminds UN Charter Article 51 which gives the right of collective self-defense to the member states. It was understood that, Turkey has determined her side next to Azerbaijan in any possible attack of Armenia to Azerbaijan. It also means upgrading of the military ties between two countries. The military exercises like “TURAZ Hawk” in Konya and “TURAZ Eagle” in Nakhchivan are the most remarkable developments. The military relations which was started with the education of soldiers in Azerbaijan and then Turkey built a bridge between Azerbaijan and NATO. The military relations gained ground in Haydar Aliyev’s period. The mutual actions, financial aid and technical transfer from Turkey were built up the distinguished part of the relations. The military assistance has turned into a military partnership and with the establishment of HLSC. The strategic concept of this military cooperation was formed even though it was still not tested in any hot conflict.

Economic relations have also gained ground after HLSC. As of 2018, there are about 3,000 Turkish investors while about 2,000 Azerbaijani business people are active in Turkey. A Turkish official claims that, “the economic ties between two countries are found on trade and then investments about production has taken place.”<sup>412</sup> According to an Azerbaijani parliamentarian, “economy plays the substantial role in bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey. Implementing Turkish experience of market economy in Azerbaijan led to a progress in economic cooperation.”<sup>413</sup> Here, a state official specifies the fields that economic partnership can grow easily like; information technologies, banking

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<sup>411</sup> Azerbaijan-Turkey Military Pact Signals Impatience with Minsk Talks – Analysts, Eurasianet, 18.01.2011, <https://eurasianet.org/s/azerbaijan-turkey-military-pact-signals-impatience-with-minsk-talks-analysts> (Accessed Date: 20.03.2018)

<sup>412</sup> Interview by the author with an ambassador, Baku, 23.06.2017.

<sup>413</sup> Interview by the author with a member of Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 23.06.2017.

system. He also underlines that removing barriers would enhance the economic potential.<sup>414</sup> For an academic:

Azerbaijan is not so favorable for Turkish investors because of bureaucratic and maybe some corruption problems. Issues related with the related to lack of competitive environment may affect this attitude. So, Azerbaijan needs to change and reform to open up to Turkish investors.<sup>415</sup>

The problems between Turkey and Azerbaijan are generally technical issues that can be overcome by the government experts rather than complex political issues. Considering the economic relations, a government official from Azerbaijan says that the “concept is compatible with the political processes but some practical implementations should be done in economic terms.”<sup>416</sup>

Some statements<sup>417</sup> disclose possibility of trade in national currencies between two countries. The plunging of Turkish lira after the crisis with US in 2018 prompted Turkey to focus on this issue. In this regard, Azerbaijan is one of the most likely country that Turkey can realize this strategy.

When the trade between Turkey and Azerbaijan in 2017 is examined, it is seen that Turkey places in the 2<sup>nd</sup> place after Russia with 1.273.709.100 dollars in Azerbaijan’s imports and similarly, in exports of Azerbaijan, Turkey has the 2<sup>nd</sup> place with 1.366.337.100 dollars after Italy.<sup>418</sup> While the first country changes in Azerbaijani trade, Turkey keeps in her position in her import and export. It should

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<sup>414</sup> Interview by the author with a government official, Baku, 22.06.2017.

<sup>415</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 21.06.2017.

<sup>416</sup> Interview by the author with a government official, Baku, 22.06.2017.

<sup>417</sup> Turkey, Azerbaijan May Switch to Trade In National Currency, News.az, 19.04.2018, <https://news.az/articles/economy/130518> (Accessed Date: 07.07.2018)

<sup>418</sup> Import and Export by the Countries, The Statistical Committee of Republic of Azerbaijan, <https://www.stat.gov.az/source/trade/?lang=en> (Accessed Date: 11.09.2018)

be noted that, membership to CIS positively impacts to economic relations between Russia and Azerbaijan in addition to Russia's historic presence in the region. Concerning Italy's primary position, energy plays a key role. Meanwhile, the 2017 official statistics of Turkish trade shows that export to Azerbaijan is 1.356.999.000 dollars that indicates Azerbaijan is ranked as 25<sup>th</sup> in the list and the import from this country is 350.870.000 dollars which means that Azerbaijan is 60<sup>th</sup> place in Turkey's imports.<sup>419</sup> The statistics disclose the fact that, Turkey's position in Azerbaijan is more important than Azerbaijan's in Turkey. At the same time, it reveals the asymmetrical feature of the trade relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan.

In the aim of improving the trade capacity, Dilucu Border Gate was modernized in 2015 and re-opening of it enhanced the economic potential between Nakhchivan and Turkey. In October 2017 Turkish Minister of Economy Nihat Zeybekçi announced that Turkey would give incentives to businesses in Nakhchivan for selling their products in Turkey without taxes. "We will allow the purchase of 43 products from Nakhchivan as if it is trade from inside Turkish borders," said Zeybekçi.<sup>420</sup> In addition to the great strategic investments, border trade has taken steps after these regional projects. Consequently, tight ties have formed an appropriate stage for upgrading the relations from bilateral to multilateral aspect.

## **8.7 Formation of Trilateral and Quadrilateral Mechanisms**

"One nation two states" has become the most referred discourse and underlaid the high-level strategic partnership. The deepening and expanding process of the bilateral relations directed two states to make regional policies. In this regard,

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<sup>419</sup> Ülkelere Göre İthalat ve Ülkelere Göre İhracat, Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, [http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt\\_id=1046](http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt_id=1046) (Accessed Date: 11.09.2018)

<sup>420</sup> Turkey Announces Incentives for Azeri Exclave Investments, Hürriyet Daily News, 29.10.2017, <http://www.hurriyetcailynews.com/turkey-announces-incentives-for-azeri-exclave-investments-121541> (Accessed Date: 20.02.2018)

Turkey – Azerbaijan relations have consisted a fertile ground for regional multilateral mechanisms. The first example of it is Turkey – Azerbaijan – Iran trilateral meeting in Azerbaijan Turk-populated Iranian city Urmiah in 2011. This meeting was followed by meetings in Nakhchivan, Azerbaijan in 2012, and Van, eastern Turkey in 2014, Ramsar, Iran in 2016.

The comprehensive step was taken with Trabzon Declaration on June 8, 2012. Bypassing Armenia has presented Georgia as a reliable partner in the region for both Turkey and Azerbaijan. For realizing the goals in energy and transportation fields, Tbilisi has become a link between Ankara and Baku. Considering Azerbaijan and Georgia, it can be said that the integration of international institutions have almost concluded. Moreover, after the hot conflicts like the war in Karabakh, Abkhazia and North Ossetia, regional stability was provided by these countries again. Especially, Russia – Georgia War in 2008 has dramatically changed the security perceptions in the region. This conflict showed the low effect of EU in the region and Georgia selected route of Turkey for accessing to West despite Russia's increasing pressure. For Azerbaijan, transferring oil and natural gas to Western markets via Turkey and Georgia and forming a mechanism without Armenia could be a meaningful message. From Turkish side, increasing her influence and enhancing stability in his periphery were remarkable points. The fruitful consequences of energy and transportation networks have contributed to the mutual interest and future aspirations of the countries positively. Çelikpala and Valiyev argues that:

Through these mechanisms, it is possible to achieve the agreed upon objectives and which legal and institutional measures to take and how to overcome gridlock by discussing them at the most top-level. These mechanisms have also allowed for trilateral presidential or ministerial meetings as well as trilateral business council meetings with the participation of both public and private sector representatives. The declarations and statements issued after these meetings could be regarded as documents that demonstrate how the parties perceive this cooperation and whereby their public and the

international community are informed about the improvement of this partnership.<sup>421</sup>

An Azerbaijani official notes that “strengthening Azerbaijan and Turkey means reinforcing the multilateral mechanisms in the region which can contribute to security.”<sup>422</sup> Azerbaijan - Turkey cooperation has created a unique model of regional cooperation in Southern Caucasus, Khazar and Black Sea basin.<sup>423</sup> Somehow, an academic claims that “the neglected part of the relations is the connection between Caspian and Black Sea. Turkey and Azerbaijan have taken mutual foreign policy steps in the region. Both countries have serious attempts in Turkic Council which is consisted of Central Asian states. Not only with bilateral relations supporting the trilateral and quadrilateral mechanisms are certain parts of Turkey – Azerbaijan relations. It also makes a way for Georgia’s development. Besides, a director of a think-tank figures out the fact that the cooperation of Turkey and Azerbaijan is not against a third party.”<sup>424</sup> An academic underlines that, Turkey – Azerbaijan relations shape wealth and security in the region. On the other hand, he emphasizes that the topics about Meskhetian and Borchali Turks should be announced in this point. The investments especially in agricultural and animal husbandry has paved a way for the economic integration.<sup>425</sup> The mechanism attached importance to the military issues to prevent any possible threat to the pipelines and railways. Eternity – 2017 military exercise between these three countries can be given as a best example of it.

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<sup>421</sup> Mitat Çelikpala, Cavid Veliyev, Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey: An Example of a Successful Regional Cooperation, *Kadir Has University Center For International Relations and European Studies Policy Brief*, Vol. 4, November 2015, p. 18.

<sup>422</sup> Interview by the author with an ambassador, Ankara, 11.01.2018.

<sup>423</sup> Interview by the author with a statesman, Baku, 21.06.2017.

<sup>424</sup> Interview by the author with a director of a think-tank in Azerbaijan, Baku, 22.06.2017.

<sup>425</sup> Interview by the author with a scholar, Baku, 19.06.2017.

After Turkey – Azerbaijan – Georgia trio, on May 26, 2014 the foreign ministers of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan gathered in Baku. The parties issued the Baku Statement after the meeting. Taking into account that both Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan are energy-rich countries, Baku Statement “underlined the importance of expansion of relations in mentioned spheres and participation in joint large-scale projects with the aim of ensuring the energy security and energy diversification.<sup>426</sup>” Talks cover several fields in international relations but “identity of Turk” consists a potential of improving the cultural heritage.

Turkey - Azerbaijan – Georgia mechanism has been a good example for the other trilateral mechanisms. Turkey-Azerbaijan-Georgia and Turkey-Azerbaijan-Turkmenistan trilateral meetings are elevated to the level of presidents. Lastly, Turkey – Azerbaijan – Pakistan’s ministers of foreign affairs have gathered under one roof to discuss the regional issues on November 30, 2017. The meeting of “three crescents and stars” can be analyzed as an implication of the historical fraternity and forming a new front against Armenia in view of the fact that Pakistan does not recognize Armenia as a state. Hafizoğlu argues that; Azerbaijan’s support for Turkey and Pakistan can be considered as an example of Islamic solidarity against the Armenian aggression.<sup>427</sup>

After implementation of these quadrilateral mechanisms, a new quadrilateral format was born in 2018; Turkey-Azerbaijan-Georgia-Iran. As it is stated in the press release of Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

Quadrilateral Cooperation Mechanism is complementary to  
Trilateral Cooperation Mechanisms between Turkey-Azerbaijan-

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<sup>426</sup> Baku Statement of the First Trilateral Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Turkey and Turkmenistan, Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 26.05.2014, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/baku-statement-of-the-first-trilateral-meeting-of-the-ministers-of-foreign-affairs-of-the-republic-of-azerbaijan\\_-the-republic.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/baku-statement-of-the-first-trilateral-meeting-of-the-ministers-of-foreign-affairs-of-the-republic-of-azerbaijan_-the-republic.en.mfa) (Accessed Date: 29.03.2018)

<sup>427</sup> Rufiz Hafizoğlu, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Pakistan – New Trilateral Co-Op Format, Trend, 30.11.2017, <https://en.trend.az/other/commentary/2828553.html> (Accessed Date: 20.03.2018)

Georgia and Turkey-Azerbaijan-Iran and aims to create a new synergy in our region on the basis of mutual benefit and common interests. The concept and field of this multilateral mechanisms can be extended.<sup>428</sup>

After the meeting in Baku, a statement regarding this quadrilateral format released. In addition to the transportation, regional security and energy issues, economy has grabbed an important place in the Baku Statement of this quadrilateral meeting. The clues of endorsing the neighbors in some international bodies were also decided in this meeting. It was stated that:

Agreed to positively evaluate the candidatures of four countries in the international or regional organizations and in this vein, welcomed the candidature of Baku for hosting World EXPO-2025; further took note that Baku is also candidate city for hosting Annual Meetings of the Board of Governors of the World Bank Group (WBG) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2021.<sup>429</sup>

In future, these quadrilateral formats can be also built in different versions. According to an academic, a quadrilateral mechanism between Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia can help solution of Karabakh conflict.<sup>430</sup> Turkey and Azerbaijan's role in the region has enriched by the multilateral mechanisms. It has effects on decreasing the role of global powers. These mechanisms have constituted an appropriate base for the discussion of the problems and the possibilities of the partnership. In this regard, these mechanisms helped countries to handle regional problems. Meetings of high-level officials from Turkey – Azerbaijan – Georgia, Turkey – Azerbaijan – Iran, Turkey – Azerbaijan –

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<sup>428</sup> Press Release Regarding the First Quadrilateral Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Turkey-Azerbaijan-Georgia-Iran, Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 12.03.2018, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_-70\\_-turkiye-azerbaycan-gurcistan-iran-disisleri-bakanlari-dortlu-toplantisi-hk\\_en.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-70_-turkiye-azerbaycan-gurcistan-iran-disisleri-bakanlari-dortlu-toplantisi-hk_en.en.mfa) (Accessed Date: 04.04.2018)

<sup>429</sup> Baku Statement: First Quadrilateral Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Turkey, Georgia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://mfa.gov.ge/getattachment/News/baqoshi-azerbaijani,-saqartvelo,-iranisa-da-turqet/Baku-Statement.pdf.aspx> (Accessed Date: 04.04.2018)

<sup>430</sup> Interview by the author with a scholar Baku, 19.06.2017.

Turkmenistan, Turkey – Azerbaijan – Pakistan increased the importance of strategic partnership of Turkey and Azerbaijan. It is important because trilateral mechanisms show that the stability and strategic partnership between Turkey – Azerbaijan bilateral relations are effective in determining the direction of the regional relations and multilateral mechanisms.

### **8.8 Interaction Between Azerbaijan and Turkish People**

When the answers of the respondents are analyzed it can be seen that Azerbaijan's image in Turkey is "not objective", "good", "very positive", "brother", "opportunistic merchants", "Russified", "rich state" and "oil country". The evaluation level of Turkish policies in Azerbaijan has also changed by the years. Once upon a time, Turkey – Azerbaijan relations have emerged as a topic which grabbed the attention of opposition parties and elites. But, now relations have become an involving issue of the ruling party and the community in Azerbaijan. In this point, an academic claims that the people educated in Turkey has also played a crucial role.<sup>431</sup> According to 2017 Results of the Survey on Turkish Foreign Policy which was conducted by Kadir Has University, the stats show that Azerbaijan was the most reliable country and closest friend.<sup>432</sup> When asked "Which country is Turkey's closest friend?", the participants once more ranked Azerbaijan first, with a 12 percent increase from the previous year. In 2016, 59.3 percent defined Azerbaijan as the 'closest friend' while 71.3 percent agreed on the amity between Azerbaijan and Turkey in 2017.<sup>433</sup> An Azerbaijani official argues that,

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<sup>431</sup> Interview by the author with a scholar, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>432</sup> Kadir Has University Announces the 2017 Results of the Survey on Turkish Foreign Policy, <http://www.khas.edu.tr/en/news/270> (Accessed Date: 26.05.2018)

<sup>433</sup> Public Perceptions on Turkish Foreign Policy, Kadir Has University Center for Turkish Studies, Istanbul, July 2017, p. 11

regardless of political views and different regions in Turkey, Turkish public stands by Azerbaijan.<sup>434</sup>

Turkey's image in Azerbaijan is a "strong country", "reliable partner", "number one", "sister state" and "more conservative", "nationalist". It can be seen that; Zurich Protocols caused an image problem of Turkey in Azerbaijan and tried to be manipulated by the global actors but the consciousness of Turkishness is so high in Azerbaijan.<sup>435</sup>

For an Azerbaijani parliamentarian, in the last years, Turkey's effectiveness in the region has reduced comparing with the previous periods.<sup>436</sup> But, a director of a Baku based NGO points out that Turkey geo-politically stays in the intersection of global powers' interests and has transformed into a country who has a say in the region.<sup>437</sup> According to an Azerbaijani parliamentarian and an academic from Baku, one of the most important feature of Turkey is her strong army. At the same time, a parliamentarian underlines that he is against Turkish army's falling from grace because it was born from the heart of nation. He underscores these words; "Turkey is always right even if she is not. That is all about our look to Turkey."<sup>438</sup> An academic put an emphasis on the democracy and the high-level national feeling in Turkey as Turkey's most vital specialties from Azerbaijani perception.<sup>439</sup> In the same line, another academic said that patriotism and nationalism of Turkish people

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<sup>434</sup> Interview by the author with an ambassador, Ankara, 11.01.2018.

<sup>435</sup> Interview by the author with a scholar, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>436</sup> Interview by the author with a member of Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 23.06.2017.

<sup>437</sup> Interview by the author with a chairman of a NGO in Azerbaijan, Baku, 22.06.2017.

<sup>438</sup> Interview by the author with a politician/academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>439</sup> Interview by the with an academic, Baku, 22.06.2018.

are appreciated by Azerbaijanis.<sup>440</sup> Likewise, for a different academic, Azerbaijani people perceive Turkish people as “enthusiastic and stubborn”.<sup>441</sup>

Generally, people in Turkey think that Azerbaijan is not very democratic because first Heydar Aliyev and then his son Ilham Aliyev became president. People might think that Azerbaijan has authoritarian system of governance. Some people who haven't been to Azerbaijan they assume that Azerbaijan is less developed. On the opposite but those who travel there say that Azerbaijan is much more secular and much more different than Turkey.<sup>442</sup> A scholar noted that:

Azerbaijan image in Turkey was bad during 1991 – 1995. Azerbaijani people were perceived as “an opportunist merchants who wanted to maximize their incomes”. It was created by the intelligence services of the foreign countries but then this circumstance was noticed by Turkey and corrected by the messages in several fields especially in cinema. It can be said that the social recognition between two sides were started after 1995 and in 2000's. In Azerbaijan, people began to know Turkish culture better with the translation of Turkish books. In this regard, Nobel Laureate Turkish scientist Aziz Sancar has become a good figure.<sup>443</sup>

The people of Turkey and Azerbaijan have a big sympathy to each other. The linguistic proximity and the historical kinship are the main factors in this regard. In last decade, the sport contests have paved the way for increasing the sympathy. Some athletes celebrate their victory with the flags of Turkey and Azerbaijan. Galatasaray's UEFA Cup Championship was the clearest example of it in 2000. Azerbaijani TV reported that the streets of Baku were in uproar after the game, celebrating an event "the Turkic world should be proud of", in the words of the

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<sup>440</sup> Interview by the author with a scholar, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>441</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>442</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 21.06.2017.

<sup>443</sup> Interview by the with an academic, Baku, 22.06.2018.

Turkish ambassador.<sup>444</sup> Turkish national football team's successes were also celebrated enthusiastically in Azerbaijan. In 1<sup>st</sup> European Games in Baku, Turkish wrestler Rıza Kayaalp waved a salute with Azerbaijan and Turkey flags after winning a gold medal in 2015. Then, Ramil Guliyev won the gold medal and he wore the flags of two countries on his lap of honor in men's 200 meter in London Olympics in 2017. Ilham Aliyev sent a letter to Ramil Guliyev and remarked the following sentence "It is gratifying that you raised the flags of Azerbaijan and Turkey following your victory."<sup>445</sup> In Eurovision song contests which Turkey participated; "Azerbaijan's 12 point" to Turkey became a routine. The winner of 2011 Eurovision Song Contests were Azerbaijan. Eldar Gasimov and Nigar Jamal took the floor with Turkish and Azerbaijani flags and stated that Turkey and Azerbaijan are two states one nation. Moreover, in social and scientific context, Aziz Sancar's opinions about Turkic world has gained a great sympathy in Azerbaijan.

As well as the happy moments, the reaction of Turkish public after the unpleasant events and problematic times should be counted as a determining factor. After Black January events, mass protests were organized can be seen as a solidarity message of people of these two countries. For example; Azerbaijan Culture Association's efforts gathered 10 thousand people in the center of Istanbul. Again in 2012, tens of thousands came to Taksim Square in Istanbul for the commemoration of Khojaly massacre. After Van Earthquake in 2011, Azerbaijan was the first country that sent aids and search & rescue teams. Ministry of the Emergency Situations of the Republic of Azerbaijan organized the support after Ilham Aliyev's order. Azerbaijan was one of the three countries that Turkey accepted her supports.

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<sup>444</sup> Turkish papers hail 'historic' win, BBC News, 18.05.2000, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/753730.stm> (Accessed Date: 06.11.2017)

<sup>445</sup> Azerbaijani president congratulates Ramil Guliyev, World Athletics Champion, APA, <http://en.apa.az/azerbaijan-politics/domestic-news/azerbaijani-president-congratulates-ramil-guliyev-world-athletics-champion.html> (Accessed Date: 06.11.2017)

Especially, Khojaly Genocide has a great effect for mobilizing the public pressure of awareness for Azerbaijan in Turkey especially during the anniversary times. Many exhibitions, conferences, meetings and protests for commemorating Khojaly Genocide can be analyzed as a “mutual answer” of Turkey and Azerbaijan against Armenian allegations concerning 1915 events. However, it does not mean that everybody in Turkey knows about the historical occasions like Black January and Khojaly Genocide. The promotion of these events in Turkey are not enough and in some regions in Turkey, they are not known well.<sup>446</sup> A parliamentarian/politician says that, “Turkish and Azerbaijani NGOs can do better jobs about presenting the genocide in Khojaly and Armenian military aggression against Azerbaijan, to the world community. I see deficiency here...<sup>447</sup>” A president of a NGO mentions that it is important to organize events about these topics in the “third countries” and Turkish and Azerbaijani NGO’s should bring these cases to UN institutions.<sup>448</sup> However an academic mentions that, till the Zurich Protocols, Azerbaijan has thought that there was no need to be made an effort among Turkish public opinion but after this process working on the Turkish public opinion has emerged a necessity.<sup>449</sup>

In this point it should be remembered that; some intellectuals had endeavors for the normalization of the relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey so, it is was not only experienced on a political level. Some people also visited Armenia before this high-level meeting but no goals achieved. According to Esenyurt Mayor from CHP; Gürbüz Çapan’s statements in Ergenekon trial, “public diplomacy” between Turkey and Armenia led by him in 1995. He asserted that the trip was organized

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<sup>446</sup> Interview by the author with a MP in Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 24.06.2017.

<sup>447</sup> Interview by the author with a politician/academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>448</sup> Interview by the author with a chairman of a NGO in Azerbaijan, Baku, 22.06.2017.

<sup>449</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

by the directives of MIT. Demirel and Çiller were informed about the visit paid on June 1, 1995. He advocates that the current “public diplomacy” talks were rooted in 1995 meetings.<sup>450</sup> About the same issue columnist Oral Çalışlar wrote that; “in 1995, we went to Armenia with Esenyurt Mayor Gürbüz Çapan, Cengiz Çandar, Zeynep Atikkan and Taner Akçam. At that time president was Levon Ter Petrosyan. We met with all leading politicians including Ter Petrosyan.<sup>451</sup>” The visit can be analyzed as a step in terms of civil society but the contacts did not affect the bilateral relations between Turkey and Armenia remarkably and Turkey – Azerbaijan relations negatively. On the other hand, no goal was accomplished after this visit. This delegation was comprised of politically left oriented figures. From these efforts, we can conclude that, state bodies in Turkey has tried to activate many people who has various political backgrounds even so all of them were met with the aversion of Armenia.

The public precision among Azerbaijan is the prior to all other countries but the knowledge about Azerbaijan is so low in Turkey. Almost all of the participants think that, the community in Azerbaijan knows more about Turkey than the community in Turkey knows about Azerbaijan. The answers show that Azerbaijani people are more aware of the events and the recent agenda in Turkey. While an academic has noted that Azerbaijan is being followed in the metropolises in Turkey, another academic stated that he witnessed many people in the villages in Azerbaijan watching Turkish news and also soap operas. In Azerbaijan, the ratings of Turkish channels are so high and it serves Azerbaijani people to understand the developments in Turkey. In Turkey, “Azerbaijan” sounds so warm to everyone but the main information about the country is not very well-known. A statesman stresses that, when an Azerbaijani in Turkey gave an answer to the question

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<sup>450</sup> Türkiye-Petrosyan Danışıklarının Detalları: “Laçın Koridoru” Barədə Şok Anlaşma – Fotolar, Publika, 23.02.2016, <http://publika.az/news/nida/126725.html> (Accessed Date: 04.12.2017)

<sup>451</sup> Oral Çalışlar, Türkiye’nin Onuru ve Ermenistan Gezisi, 02.09.2008, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/yazarlar/oral-calislar/turkiyenin-onuru-ve-ermenistan-gezisi-896666/> (Accessed Date: 05.12.2017)

“Where are you from?”, they are welcomed by Turkish people with respect.<sup>452</sup> In this regard, it should be noted that; "one nation two states" has a social meaning to bring two countries together. But Turkey and Azerbaijan are two distinct countries, Azerbaijan doesn't know much about Turkey and Turkey doesn't know much about Azerbaijan.<sup>453</sup> An academic states that, people always wonder about a more developed country. Turkey is more developed than Azerbaijan and it is normal that Azerbaijanis know more.<sup>454</sup> Notwithstanding, another academic claims that a country who knows most about Turkey in the world is Azerbaijan but he also admits that Turkey knows about Azerbaijan less than Azerbaijan know about Turkey.<sup>455</sup>

According to respondents of the interviews in the context of my field work; media is an “important”, “remarkable” and “serious” factor in compromising the public opinion about Turkey in Azerbaijan. Turkish television programs, debates and especially soap operas are attention-grabbing in Azerbaijan.<sup>456</sup> Before, Azerbaijani people used to follow Russia but now it was not the same.<sup>457</sup> Now, it seems that Russian dominance in Azerbaijani culture has diminished. According to chairman of a think tank in Azerbaijan, Turkish media generally spare their time for the processes in Europe and do not concentrate on Azerbaijan or the leftist, liberal motives of Turkish media made them directing into West. A chairman of a NGO asserts that:

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<sup>452</sup> Interview by the author with a statesman, Baku, 21.06.2017.

<sup>453</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 21.06.2017.

<sup>454</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 21.06.2017.

<sup>454</sup> Interview by the with an academic, Baku, 22.06.2018.

<sup>455</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>456</sup> Interview by the author with a member of Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 23.06.2017.

<sup>457</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

If Turkish media showed the bloody incidents in Azerbaijan properly, Turkish people would stand up for that. Turkey has no media institutions like CNN, BBC or Al Jazeera. Because of that Turkey shares the information inside herself. Absence of world-wide known media agencies also restricts the potential of telling themselves to the world.<sup>458</sup>

A director a think-tank notes that “some of his friends in Turkey told him that they opened Azerbaijani state television Az Tv to listen traditional Azerbaijani music mugham.”<sup>459</sup> In a similar way, An academic and a statesman argue that “Turkish people listen Zeyneb Khanlarova and Reshid Behbudov.”<sup>460</sup> Another statesman thinks that, there should be more emphasis on Azerbaijan in Turkish mass media.<sup>461</sup> On the other hand, an academic imparted that there was a big difference between knowledge and emotion during 90’s because of the fact that communicational instruments were weak but in the last 15 years people in Azerbaijan have identified themselves with Turkey.<sup>462</sup> In this point, the intertwined identity of the bilateral relations implies the necessity of being careful. For instance, a comedy movie Recep İvedik 5 caused an annoyance because a character who wears a sport gear with Azerbaijan flag was punched. The scene was not perceived not only as a comedy and both countries understood it as a humiliation of Azerbaijan. Then these scenes were taken out from the movie.

An academic notes that, internet, rising number of trips to Azerbaijan have played an important in finding out the facts about Azerbaijan. An statesman argues that, “after realizing our facilities in Eastern Anatolia, Azerbaijan can be discovered more because there are extensions of natural assets in Turkey which can create a

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<sup>458</sup> Interview by the author with a chairman of a NGO in Azerbaijan, Baku, 22.06.2017.

<sup>459</sup> Interview by the author with a director of a think-tank in Azerbaijan, Baku, 22.06.2017.

<sup>460</sup> Interview by the with an academic, Baku, 22.06.2018.

<sup>461</sup> Interview by the author with an ambassador, Ankara, 11.01.2018.

<sup>462</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 19.06. 2017.

tourism potential in Azerbaijan”.<sup>463</sup> From this point of view, tourism can be the other alternative to increase the interaction between two sides.

Recently, internet resources have become other important field for social contacts. It also contains a high risk of manipulation by Armenian lobby. Some cliques who do not want a healthy Turkey – Azerbaijan relations sign up Facebook with the fake accounts and add friends from Turkey and Azerbaijan. Then, they start sharing ideas which can discredit the bilateral relations.<sup>464</sup> By making public diplomacy policies, Azerbaijan should avoid such movements.<sup>465</sup>

The students who came to Turkey for education in Turkey gave an impetus to bilateral relations. Turkey’s “Great Student Project” which started in 1992 was the first serious step of the interaction in education field. In the beginning of 90's when majority of the people in Azerbaijan were very poor. In this regard, these scholarships were very helpful. Nevertheless, the capacity and providing inadequate opportunities to students in this context was broadly criticized. Even today many Azerbaijanis go to study in Turkish universities because Turkish universities are good but the concept of students has also changed in line with the development of Azerbaijan. Now, mid-level Azerbaijanis go to Turkey but upper level ones who have enough money and can speak fluent English prefer Europe.<sup>466</sup> However, an academic underlines that studying in a university in Turkey like METU and Boğaziçi University is still very prestigious.<sup>467</sup> The accreditation of Azerbaijani universities by Council of Higher Education in Turkey has opened a door to several problems. But education plays a vital role in increasing the

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<sup>463</sup> Interview by the author with an ambassador, Baku, 23.06.2017.

<sup>464</sup> Interview by the author with a journalist, Baku, 24.06.2018.

<sup>465</sup> Interview by the author with a statesman, Baku, 21.06.2017.

<sup>466</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 21.06.2017.

<sup>467</sup> Interview by the with an academic, Baku, 22.06.2018.

awareness about each other in both countries. According to previous Turkish Ambassador to Baku, Alper Coşkun writes these:

The roots of our brotherhood ties are manifested in the social relations between the people of Turkey and Azerbaijan. We are children of the same nation. There are currently about 1900 students from Turkey studying and over 15000 Turkish citizens living in Azerbaijan. In turn, about 11000 Azerbaijani students and scores of Azerbaijani citizens currently live in Turkey. Meanwhile, the ever-increasing number of mixed-marriages further reinforces our bonds.<sup>468</sup>

Furthermore, an Azerbaijani official underscores that; “the number of experts and professors who knows Azerbaijan in the successful universities and Turkish intellectual elite should be increased.”<sup>469</sup> Regarding the Turkish intellectuals we can approach about a dilemma. While the public interest to Azerbaijan can be observed in general, the efforts of intellectuals are mainly concentrated on the nationalist circles.

A parliamentarian noted that, “the relations are not only between governments, states, politicians, media, scientists; there are also many marriages between two countries. Many people have become relatives.”<sup>470</sup> The relations between civil societies are defined as “not at the desired stage”, “weak”, “at show-business level”, “inadequate”, “on paper”, “less coordinated”, and “good”.

For a chairman of a NGO in Baku, “the coordination between two sides is low and they felt disturbed about it. Both in these two countries, NGO’s are not

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<sup>468</sup> Ismail Alper Coşkun, Turkey, 25 Years of Independent Azerbaijan Through the Eyes of Ambassadors Dedicated to the 25th Anniversary of The Restoration of State Independence, SAM Publications, Baku, 2016, p. 583.

<sup>469</sup> Interview by the author with an ambassador, Ankara, 11.01.2018.

<sup>470</sup> Interview by the author with a MP in Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 24.06.2017.

appreciated.”<sup>471</sup> According to a MP, “many contracts were signed in several fields as a matter of form, but in daily life problems can be observed.”<sup>472</sup> For a journalist, “it is unnecessary to invite everybody but professional people should work on this issue.”<sup>473</sup> The civil society organizations in Azerbaijan are more-state oriented. An academic points out that, relations in political, economic, military and even in cultural fields, were maintained on “state level”. At the moment, initiatives of states about this issue is also very scarce.<sup>474</sup> Especially after the FETÖ incidents in Turkey an academic points out the labyrinthic characteristic with these words; “Turkish civil society is very confusing for us, you never know which organizations is linked to which circles.”<sup>475</sup> An academic makes references to the short political history of the relations. Especially in the last 10 years, the relations between NGO’s has made a good progress but 25 years of time is not enough for improving the relations.<sup>476</sup> The efforts of the associations are concentrated in conferences and cultural events. Civil societies have remained under the shadow of political and economic relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan. An academic notes that, the works are in the high level economic and political level between Turkey and Azerbaijan and it should be moved into the lower levels. The reference of the cooperation between the NGOs are limited with the “Turkism” but it should be also enlarged.<sup>477</sup> The works and efforts about Azerbaijan are generally towards local communities. The “public favour” in Turkey has shaped automatically. Oskanian argues that;

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<sup>471</sup> Interview by the author with a chairman of a NGO in Azerbaijan, Baku, 22.06.2017.

<sup>472</sup> Interview by the author with a member of Azerbaijani Parliament, Baku, 23.06.2017.

<sup>473</sup> Interview by the author with a journalist, Baku, 24.06.2018.

<sup>474</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 19.06.2017.

<sup>475</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 21.06.2017.

<sup>476</sup> Interview by the author with an academic, Baku, 24.06.2017.

<sup>477</sup> Interview by the with an academic, Baku, 22.06.2018.

Ethno-linguistically, among former Soviet Turkic ethnic groups, Azeris relate most closely to the Anatolian Turks – the languages are largely mutually intelligible, and, with both societies largely secularized, the religious difference between the largely Shiite Azeris and Sunni Turks has become irrelevant. The large Azeri diaspora in Turkey adds to the inter-human links between the two societies, apart from acting as a foreign policy lobby in its own right on occasion.<sup>478</sup>

For a journalist, Azerbaijani diaspora has recently grown stronger. Turkish citizens contributed the development of Azerbaijani diaspora especially in Europe.

Azerbaijani origin Turkish people from Iğdır, which is a province which shares the same border with Nakhchivan in the eastern Turkey, has played a crucial role for creating the infrastructure of Azerbaijani diaspora in Europe. They started to go to Europe since the beginning of 60's. Starting from 90's, they started to form associations about Karabakh using the name of “culture” in European countries like the Netherlands and Belgium.<sup>479</sup>

One of the positive steps in civil society in Azerbaijan is the establishment of The Council on State Support to NGOs under the Auspices of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan (CSSN) in 2007. CSSN which is led by a Turkey-graduate Azay Quliyev who has tight relations with Turkey.<sup>480</sup> In 2000s Azerbaijan noticed the importance of diaspora activities and transformed into a more developed country. Therefore, she paid attention to this field. The foundation of Diaspora Committee in 2008 accelerated the activities and increased the coordination of the NGOs in foreign countries. Especially, in 2000s a sharp rise in the associations whose name includes “Azerbaijan” in Turkey, was noticed.<sup>481</sup> In Ilham Aliyev's

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<sup>478</sup> Kevork Oskanian “Turkey's Global Strategy: Turkey and The Caucasus” IDEAS Reports - Special Reports, Nicholas Kitchen (ed.) SR007, LSE IDEAS, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, 2011, p. 25.

<sup>479</sup> Interview by the author with a journalist, Baku, 24.06.2018.

<sup>480</sup> Interview by the author with an ambassador, Ankara, 11.01.2018.

<sup>481</sup> Araz Aslanlı, Vefa Kurban, “Türkiye Azerbaycan İlişkiler ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları”, *Marmara Turkic Studies Journal*, Vol. III, No. 1, Spring 2016, p. 39.

last speech in Turkish parliament; “one nation two states” concept was re-evaluated including the coordination diaspora activities between Azerbaijan and Turkey. Considering the rooted structure of Armenian diaspora working against Turkey and Azerbaijan in international area, the mutual assistance of Turkish and Azerbaijani diaspora has gained importance. According to an Azerbaijani journalist, the relations between Turkish and Azerbaijani diasporas are on a high level.<sup>482</sup>

Generally, the relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan has focused on improving the economic and political relations. The cultural relations that were established in history continued in several fields of daily life like sports, music and media. Additionally, social media has played an important role for rising the interaction of people in Turkey and Azerbaijan. Especially, popular culture has an important positive effect in terms of social relations. In this point, linguistic proximity has served a benefit for both sides. However, the high-level institutional ties could not be created between Turkish and Azerbaijani NGOs which caused a lack of information about Azerbaijan especially in Turkey. Azerbaijan – Turkey relations have a potential to encourage higher level civil society contacts.

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<sup>482</sup> Interview by the author with a journalist, Baku, 24.06.2018.

## CHAPTER 9

### CONCLUSION

Since the independence of modern Azerbaijan, the content of Azerbaijan - Turkey relations have changed in time. In the first phase, the bilateral relations have references to the common heritage and historical values derived from the period of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic era. The mutual assistance between Baku - Ankara and the pro-Turkish intellectual atmosphere left remarkable marks on the relations. The political interactions like opening embassy of Azerbaijan in Ankara and sending representative from Anatolia to Baku have served a ground for the brotherhood between both sides and laid the basis of “one nation two states” discourse. During the Soviet era, the relations can be defined as a longing period between people of Turkey and Azerbaijan. However, linguistic and ethnic proximity defended the core of the relations against the dominant Soviet values. In this period, the contacts between governments and communities remained weaker. With the *glasnost* and *perestroika* period in USSR, the independence movement in Azerbaijan led by PFA accelerated. During the pre-independence period in Azerbaijan, governments in Turkey adopted a restrained attitude among Azerbaijan because of the existence of USSR. However, after “Black January”, Turkish community especially people from the nationalist circles and Azerbaijani affiliated NGOs tried to prove the closeness between Turkish and Azerbaijani people and had efforts to raise the topic of Azerbaijan’s Karabakh issue with huge demonstrations all around the country. From this point, it can be asserted that the public sympathy among Azerbaijan did not end despite the long-lasting Soviet regime.

One of the most important milestones in Turkey – Azerbaijan relations and compromising of “one nation two states” discourse is Turkey’s recognition of

Azerbaijan's re-independence as a first state in international arena. In Ayaz Mutallibov's presidency, the relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan formally started but did not reach a further step because of Mutallibov's distanced stance among Turkey. Turkey is only perceived as an important neighbor country rather than a significant brother or partner. Although, Turkey recognized Azerbaijan's independence, she did not fully involve in Karabakh conflict regarding military terms.

The foreign policy motivations of Azerbaijan changed with Ebulfez Elchibey groundbreakingly. Turkey's capitalist economic model, democratic structure, Turkish identity and implementation of secularist system were seen as important elements. Elchibey's cadres preferred establishing very close ties and Turkey becomes the primary topic in Azerbaijan's foreign policy. In spite of Turkey's foreign policy agenda which prioritize post-Soviet Turkic countries, Azerbaijan's high expectations were not met. The Russian hegemony in the region caused a hesitation for Turkey in this period. On the other hand, Turkey's support to Azerbaijan about Karabakh conflict in diplomatic field maintained. Turkey sent military advisors to Azerbaijan but Turkey was not included in the military conflict. Turkey reacted with statements from the senior officials rather than a military operation to the war-zone. Not being a co-chair in OSCE Minsk Group restricts the role of Turkey in Karabakh conflict.

A prominent nationalist democrat, Elchibey, designated Turkey as a model state for Azerbaijan. The cultural interaction gathered speed in Elchibey but the war in Karabakh and the internal upheavals brought the end of his era. Turkey's main feature was being a gate between Azerbaijan and West. The main problem was the shortage of capacity of Turkey and Azerbaijan in this term. It can be understood that the relations had not come to a mature phase by the end of Elchibey era. The relations are mainly inspired by the kinship derived from the historical occasions. Turkism became an important reference source

Elchibey's successor Heydar Aliyev's ruling era was the transformation process of Turkey – Azerbaijan relations. In the early years of Heydar Aliyev, there was a suspicion in Turkish media and foreign policy makers about the future of the relations because of Aliyev's efforts of balancing the foreign policy focused on the détente with Russia and Iran in the region. "One nation two states" discourse was clearly expressed by Heydar Aliyev while characterizing the bilateral relations. Later, it is understood that Turkey – Azerbaijan relations would go further with references to a new economic dimension. Giving Turkey stakes in the Contract of Century could be counted as another turning point in the relations. Then, realizing Baku – Tbilisi – Ceyhan Oil Pipeline and Baku – Tbilisi – Erzurum Natural Gas Pipeline made two countries closer. Two countries have become a strategic partner and the concept of "one nation two states" has gained a pragmatic ground. The increasing level of the partnership included military grants to Azerbaijan and technical assistance to Azerbaijani army. The most serious tension was the unsuccessful coup attempt in 1995 which was prevented by President Demirel's informing to Heydar Aliyev. At first, it disrupted the relations but after particularly 1997, the relations pursued in higher level than the previous times. In this regard, the relations between Süleyman Demirel and Heydar Aliyev contributed the upgrading feature of Turkey Azerbaijan relations. In Heydar Aliyev's period the content of "one nation two states" was enriched by the rising facilities in business, energy and military issues. Referring to Heydar Aliyev's speech in Turkish parliament, Turkey maintained her position as an "example country" for Azerbaijan. Besides, Turkey turned out to be a strategic partner of Azerbaijan. Meanwhile, Turkey and Azerbaijan continued to determine a same stance against Armenia.

Main characteristic of İlham Aliyev's policies was preserving the main principles and priorities of Heydar Aliyev era. In this term, level of partnership between countries have upgraded. Strategic partnership has evolved into a high-level partnership in this epoch. The military cooperation has expanded with the joint exercises and the purchase of Turkish weapons by Azerbaijan. Hence, the bilateral

relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan have improved to multilateral mechanisms in the region with Georgia, Iran, Pakistan and Turkmenistan. TANAP and Baku – Tbilisi – Kars Railway are the most remarkable developments in Turkey – Azerbaijan relations. These high cost energy and transportation projects have increased the strategic importance of both countries. They have become a “modern Silk Way” and produced global outputs. SOCAR’s investments in Turkish energy sector made Azerbaijan the biggest foreign investor in Turkey. In this point it can be asserted that, Azerbaijan’s energy sources and Turkey’s geographical position has given a great probability to enhance “one nation two states” discourse. The increasing capacities of Azerbaijan and Turkey diversified the field of cooperation. It is also reaffirmed that, Azerbaijan and Turkey share each security concerns in the bilateral relations. Combatting against FETÖ and supportive statements of Azerbaijani officials during Olive Branch Operation can be given as an example.

Turkey’s policy of normalization with Armenia triggered the biggest crisis between Turkey and Azerbaijan. 2008 – 2010 period can be delineated as a period of confidence crisis. During the “football diplomacy” period, the brake up of “one nation two states” was started to be discussed both in Turkey and Azerbaijan. Turkey was started to be criticized because of her foreign policy maneuvers in Azerbaijan. In Turkey, especially some columnists began to question the essence of the brotherhood between Turkey and Azerbaijan. Despite all, the criticism did not go beyond measures and the discourse in both countries did not turn into a hostile rhetoric. In this point, it can be claimed that the framework of the relations is determined by “one nation two states” discourse and it prevented both states from unfavorable statements. In a short time period, the relations restarted in a higher level. While analyzing Turkey Azerbaijan relations, it can be seen that “one nation two states” established the core of the relations and no sharp differences were noticed when the presidents or governments changed in the countries.

In Heydar Aliyev era, the efforts of Armenian diaspora were observed carefully and Ilham Aliyev underscored the necessity of a coordinated activities between Turkish and Azerbaijani diasporas. From this point it can be said that, the “one nation two states” discourse paved a way for a recently denounced “one diaspora two states” concept which is indispensable with “one nation two states” discourse. On the contrary, the lack of coordination between civil societies can be counted as the weakest link in the relations. When the interviews in the context of thesis study are analyzed, it is examined that there is no problem in the sympathy of the communities to each other but especially in Turkey there is a lack of knowledge about Azerbaijan.

Finally, the relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan has pursued a path from historical friendship to strategic partnership. It is noticeable that two countries have endeavors to harmonize “one nation two states” discourse with realpolitik and the changing features in international factors.

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## APPENDICES

### TÜRKÇE ÖZET / TURKISH SUMMARY

Bu tez Azerbaycan ve Türkiye arasındaki ilişkileri, “bir millet iki devlet” söyleminden yola çıkarak incelemektedir. Azerbaycan’ın başkenti Bakü ve Türkiye’nin başkenti Ankara’da yapılan 19 adet derinlemesine mülakatın analizi, 1990 yılının şubat ayının medya arşivlerinin taranması, Türkiye ile Ermenistan arasında gerçekleştirilmeye çalışılan normalleşme ve ilişkilerin geliştirilmesi çabalarına ilişkin haberlerin analiz edilmesi, Türkiye ve Azerbaycan cumhurbaşkanlarının konuk ülke cumhurbaşkanı olarak bu ülkelerin parlamentoların yaptıkları konuşmaların incelenmesi sonucu bu çalışma ikili ilişkileri anlamaya ve “bir millet iki devlet” söyleminin içeriğinin nasıl bir değişimden geçtiğini ortaya koymaya çalışmaktadır. Azerbaycan cumhurbaşkanlarının görev yaptığı dönemlerde Türkiye’nin Azerbaycan dış politikası açısından yeri ve Azerbaycan’ın dış siyasetinde Türkiye’nin ne gibi roller üstlendiği konusunu araştıran bu tez ilişkilerin “stratejik ortaklık” olarak tanımlanabileceğini savunmaktadır. Coğrafya, kültür, etnik köken ve dil gibi konularda birbirine son derece yakın olan Türkiye ve Azerbaycan arasındaki ilişkilerin gelişimine bakıldığında, tarihi referanslar üzerinden şekillenen etkileşimin özellikle 90’lı yılların ikinci yarısından itibaren “stratejik ortaklık” temelinde birtakım yüksek maliyetli enerji ve ulaştırma projelerinin gerçekleştirilmesinde önemli rol oynadığı anlatılmaktadır.

Azerbaycan – Türkiye ilişkilerinin kökeni, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu döneminde Azerbaycanlı entelektüellerin ve Türk aydınlarının karşılıklı faaliyetleri sebebiyle yakınlık kurma sürecinde bulunmaktadır. Özellikle dil konusunda iki toplumun birbirini rahatça anlamaları ve bu yıllarda son derece etkili olan Türkçülük akımı iki taraf arasındaki alakaları artırmış, Azerbaycanlı entelektüeller bundan önemli

derecede etkilenmiştir. Doğu'nun ilk laik, demokratik cumhuriyeti olma vasfına sahip Azerbaycan Demokratik Cumhuriyeti'nin 28 Mayıs 1918 tarihinde kurulmasında Türkçülük ideolojisinin fikir babalarından olan Ziya Gökalp'in "Türkleşmek, İslamlaşmak, Muasırlaşmak" düsturu önemli rol oynamıştır. Bunun yanında, Azerbaycan topraklarının Daşnak ve Bolşevik işgalinden Kafkas İslam Ordusu tarafından kurtarılması ve Osmanlı Devleti'nin içerisinde bulunduğu 1. Dünya Savaşı ortamında iki toplumun birbirine verdiği sosyo-ekonomik, askeri ve siyasi destek bu irtibatın yanı sıra "bir millet iki devlet" söyleminin oluşmasının temelini oluşturmuştur. Çanakkale'de Azerbaycan'dan gelen askerlerin Anadolu coğrafyasının savunulması için savaşması ve Azerbaycan topraklarının Anadolu'dan giden Kafkas İslam Ordusu'nun hareketiyle düşman işgalinden kurtarılacak bağımsızlığına kavuşması iki toplumun kader birliğini göstermekle birlikte tarihi hafızayı ortak şekilde oluşturan başlıca unsurlardan olmuştur. Öte yandan, Azerbaycan halkının savaş koşullarında kısıtlı imkanlarla mücadele veren Anadolu'daki Türklere kurmuş oldukları hayır kurumları tarafından para toplayarak yardım etme gayreti iki toplumu yakınlaştıran etmenlerden olmuştur. 1920'de Azerbaycan Demokratik Cumhuriyeti'nin yıkılması ve Azerbaycan'ın Sovyet Sosyalist Cumhuriyetler Birliği'nin (SSCB) yönetimi altına girmesiyle iki taraf arasındaki ilişkilerde zamanla gerileme başlamıştır; fakat savaş yıllarında iletişim devam ettirilmiştir. Anadolu'da Kurtuluş Savaşı devam ederken Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'ün borç istemesine karşılık Neriman Nerimanov'un "Kardeş kardeşe borç vermez, ancak yardım eder" sözü ilişkilerin geçmişi anlatılırken önemli bir referans haline gelmiştir.

Tez çerçevesinde derinlemesine mülakatta bulunan kişiler, SSCB döneminde Azerbaycan ve Türkiye arasında büyük bir hasret dönemi yaşandığını ifade etmiştir. Sovyetler Birliği Komünist Partisi Genel Sekreteri Josep Stalin döneminde baskının boyutu artarak SSCB içerisinde yaşayan Türklerin kimliklerinden Türk ibareleri silinmiştir. Siyasi ve sosyal anlamda Azerbaycan ve Türkiye arasında önemli bir etkileşim sağlanamasa da Azerbaycan'da Türkiye'ye yönelik ilgi ve sempati devam etmiştir. 1975'te imzalanan Helsinki Nihai

Senedi'nin yarattığı ortam ve Mihail Gobaçov'un SSCB'nin başına geçtikten sonra uyguladığı “galastnost” ve “perestroyka” politikaları sonucu SSCB içerisindeki toplulukların bağımsızlığına giden yol açılmıştır. Sovyetler'in Rus değerlerini Azerbaycan'a empoze etme gayretleri, özellikle tarihi Azerbaycan toprakları olan Karabağ bölgesinde Ermenilerin saldırıları ve yaşanan çatışmalar Azerbaycan'daki milli bağımsızlık hareketinin başlamasında önemli rol oynamıştır. Azerbaycan Halk Cephesi, Sovyet yönetimine itirazların dillendirmek için Bakü'de büyük protestolar organize etmiş, bunun yanında Ermenistan'a giden demiryolunun kapatılması ile kısa bir süre abluka uygulanmış. Ayrıca İran ve Azerbaycan arasında bulunan sınır telleri halk tarafından gösterilerle yıkılarak İran'ın kuzeyinde genellikle Azerbaycan Türklerinin yaşadığı Güney Azerbaycan bölgesindeki yakınlarına kavuşmuşlardır.

Bütün bu yaşananlara SSCB, olağanüstü hal yönetimi ilan ettikten sonra 20 Ocak 1990 tarihinde Sovyet tanklarını Bakü'ye sokarak karşılık vermiş, bundan dolayı 143 insan şehit olmuş, birçok kişi yaralanmıştır. Sovyetler'in Azerbaycan'a müdahalesi henüz Azerbaycan bağımsızlığını ilan etmiş olmaması rağmen Türkiye'de önemli ses getirmiştir. Türk medyasında etraflıca işlenen konu, Türk kamuoyunun duyarlılığıyla birleşmiş ve Türkiye'nin birçok şehrinde telin mitingleri yapılmıştır. “Bir millet iki devlet” söylemi bu süreçte tam olarak oluşmasa da “bir millet” kavramı Türkiye'de kamuoyunun davranışlarının şekillenmesinde önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Yaşananlar dönemin Cumhurbaşkanı Turgut Özal'a yaşananlar sorulduğunda kendisinin Türkiye ve Azerbaycan arasındaki mezhep farklılığı temelinde verdiği cevap ilk krizi ateşlese de bu sorun kısa süre içerisinde aşılmıştır. 20 Ocak Olayları, Bakü'de Sovyetler'den kopuşu artık iyiden iyiye başlatırken bu dönemde Türkiye'de düzenlenen protestolar, iki ülke halkları arasındaki dayanışma duygusunun ve Türkiye'deki Azerbaycan duyarlılığının gösterilmesi bakımında önemli bir faktör sayılmaktadır.

Azerbaycan, 18 Ekim 1991 tarihinde bağımsızlığını ilan etmiş, Ayaz Mutallibov, ülkenin ilk cumhurbaşkanı olmuştur. Dönemin dış politika öncelikleri;

Azerbaycan'ın uluslararası örgütlere üyeliği, tanınma ve diğer ülkelerle bağımsızlığını yeni kazanmış bir devlet olarak eşit ilişkiler kurma gibi hedeflerdir. Mutallibov'un cumhurbaşkanlığı döneminde dış politika anlayışı ve Türkiye'nin Azerbaycan dış politikasındaki yeri incelendiğinde, Muttalibov'un Rusya'ya yakın bir çizgi benimsediği Türkiye ile ilişkilerin ise komşuluk ekseninde yürütüldüğü görülmektedir. Bu dönemde Türkiye'nin Azerbaycan'ın bağımsızlığını 9 Kasım 1991'de tanıyan ilk devlet olması iki ülke arasındaki ilişkilerde önemli bir mihenk taşıma oluşturmaktadır. Kısa süre sonra 14 Ocak 1992'de Türkiye Bakü'deki konsoloslughunu büyükelçilik seviyesine yükseltmiş ve diplomatik ilişkiler resmi olarak yeni bir evreye girmiştir. Türkiye'nin Azerbaycan'ın bağımsızlığını tanınmasında izlediği yöntem, post-Sovyet Türk cumhuriyetlerinin tanınmasında da bir yol haritası oluşturmuştur. Bu dönemde Rusya'nın bölgede kaybetmek istemediği tarihi etkisini koruması istemesi sebebiyle Türkiye'nin Azerbaycan ile ilişkilerini geliştirmesi Rusya tarafından tercih edilmeyen bir durum olarak görülmüştür. Mutallibov dönemi iki ülke arasındaki ilk irtibatların sağlanması, ilk antlaşmaların imzalanması bakımından sembolik olarak önemli olmakla birlikte ilişkilerdeki stratejik boyut bu yıllar henüz ön plana çıkmamıştır. Azerbaycan ile Türkiye arasında bu dönemde imzalanan Dostluk, İşbirliği ve İyi Komşuluk Antlaşması'nın içeriğine bakıldığında iki ülke arasında ekonomi, ticaret, kültür, bilim, ulaştırma, turizm, spor gibi birçok alanda yakın ilişkilerin kurulması için çalışmalar yürütüleceği vurgulanırken devam eden Karabağ Savaşı göz önüne alındığında asıl stratejik konu olan askeri konular anlaşma içerisinde yer almamıştır. Burada, Türkiye'nin bölgedeki Rus varlığından ötürü ihtiyatlı yaklaşmasının yanı sıra Mutallibov yönetiminin de Türkiye'ye karşı Karabağ sorununu "iç sorunu" olarak tanımlaması etkilidir. Türkiye'nin Karabağ konusundaki arabuluculuk teklifi bu sebepten ötürü Mutallibov tarafından reddedilmiştir. "Bir millet iki devlet" söylemine atıfla incelendiğinde dönemin önemi, Azerbaycan'ın bağımsızlığını kazanması ve böylece Türkiye'nin Azerbaycan ile birlikte "iki devlet" olarak tarih sahnesine çıkmasıdır.

Azerbaycan ve dünyanın da çeşitli ülkeleri tarafından soykırım olarak tanınan Hocalı kasabasında Ermeni kuvvetlerin sivillere yönelik büyük çaplı katliam sonrası Mutallibov'a yönelik protestolar sonucunda Ebulfez Elçibey ve Azerbaycan Halk Cephesi ülkedeki yönetimi ele almıştır. Elçibey dönemi, Turancılık ideolojisinin kendini hissettirdiği ve Rusya'ya yakın bir profil çizen Mutallibov döneminin akside Azerbaycan dış politikasında Türkiye'nin bir numaraya yerleştirildiği ayrıca model olarak kabul edildiği döneme işaret etmektedir. Azerbaycan – Türkiye ilişkilerinde Türklük kimliği doğal bir bağ olmuştur. Elçibey dönemi dış politikasında Türkiye'ye atfedilen önemin yanı sıra İran'daki yaşayan Azerbaycan Türklerine ilişkin de önemli vurgular yapılmış, bu durum İran yönetimi tarafından tepkiyle karşılanmıştır. Bunun yanında Elçibey Bağımsız Devletler Topluluğu'na (BDT) karşı bir ton benimsemiş, Rusya ile arasına mesafe koymuştur. Elçibey, genel anlamda Rusya ve İran'ı değil Batı ve Türk dünyasını önceleyen bir dış politika anlayışına sahiptir. Bu dönemde ABD ile ilişkilerde, burada bulunan Ermeni diasporasının da etkisiyle yürürlüğe sokulan Özgürlükleri Destekleme Yasası'na 907 Sayılı Ek sebebiyle Azerbaycan'a Amerikan yardımlarının yapılmayacağını açıklanması ilişkilerde olumsuz bir havanın oluşmasına sebep olmuştur. Elçibey döneminde Türkiye, demokratik, laik yapısı, serbest piyasa ekonomisi işletmesi ve Türk kimliği sebebiyle Azerbaycan'ın kendisine en yakın gördüğü devlettir. Türk dış politikasında da Türkiye'nin Soğuk Savaş sonrası yeni bağımsızlığını kazanan devletlerle ilişkilerini geliştireceğine yönelik stratejiler ortaya koyulmasına ve bu bölgeye yardımlar aktarılmasına rağmen uzun vadede beklenen sonuçlar alınamamıştır. Elçibey'in Türkiye'den büyük beklentileri ise tam anlamıyla karşılık bulamamıştır. Bu dönemde Türkiye'nin Ermenistan ile ilişkilerinin Azerbaycan ile ilişkilere olumsuz yansımaları da görülmüştür. Özellikle, 1992 yılında Ermenistan'a 100 bin ton buğday gönderilmesine ilişkin girişimler ve Ermenistan'a elektrik tedarik edilmesiyle ilgili imzalanan protokol Azerbaycan'ı rahatsız etmiş, ikili ilişkilerdeki ilk protokol krizi yaşanmıştır.

2 Kasım 1992 tarihinde Azerbaycan'ın Ankara Büyükelçiliği'nin açılması, iki ülke arası diplomatik ilişkilerin bürokratik altyapısının tesis edilmesinde önemli bir gelişme olarak karşımıza çıkarken Latin alfabesinin kabulü de Azerbaycan ve Türkiye arasında anlaşılmayı kolaylaştırdığından önemli bir etmen olmuştur. Türkiye'nin diplomatik alanda Karabağ konusunda Azerbaycan'ın yanında duran tek devlet olması ve uluslararası kuruluşlarda Azerbaycan'ın tezlerini savunması ilişkilerin geliştirilmesinde siyasi olarak olumlu bir atmosfere sebep olurken, Türkiye'ye karşı duyulan güvenin artmasında da kayda değer bir nokta olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Türkiye'nin diplomatları, dünyanın birçok yerinde Azerbaycanlı diplomatlara yardımcı olmuş, Türkiye bu süreçte yabancı misyon temsilciliklerini henüz genç bir cumhuriyet olan Azerbaycan'ın kullanması için açmıştır. Bu dönem uygulamaya giren Büyük Öğrenci Projesi ile Türkiye'ye eğitim almaya gelen Azerbaycanlı gençler ise ilişkilerin geleceğindeki olumlu gelişmelerin hayata geçirilmesi açısından önemli bir şans sağlamıştır. İlişkilerdeki diplomatik dayanışma, Karabağ konusunun uluslararası teşkilatlar nezdinde seslendirilmesi bakımından da Azerbaycan açısından son derece faydalı rol oynamıştır. Türkiye, Azerbaycan'ın Batı'ya çıkışında bu dönemde önemli bir diplomatik köprü olmuştur.

Azerbaycan'ın bağımsızlığını kazanmış yeni bir ülke olması ve Karabağ'daki savaşın bitmemesi Azerbaycan'ın gücünün önemli bir bölümünün buraya sarf edilmesine neden olmuştur. Bu noktada, diplomatik olarak Azerbaycan'a resmi olarak büyük destek veren Türkiye'nin askeri olarak savaşa dahil olmadığı görülmektedir. Rusya'yı tamamıyla karşısına almak istemeyen Türkiye, resmi olarak bu çatışmanın dışında kalmasının yanı sıra bölgeye gönderdiği askeri danışmanlar ile Azerbaycan'a yardımcı olmaya çalışsa da tez kapsamında yapılan derinlemesine mülakatlardan anlaşıldığı kadarıyla bu tutum, Azerbaycan'da bazı çevreler tarafından yeterli görülmemiştir. Türkiye'den bu süreçte bazı gönüllü birlikler Karabağ'da Azerbaycan Türklerine destek olmak için gitse de bu durum savaşın gidişatını kökten değiştirecek derecede olmamıştır. Nitekim Elçibey de insani yardım isteğinin Türkiye tarafından karşılanmadığını Türk medyasında

açıkça dile getirmiştir. Bu dönem, kapasite problemi nedeniyle Türkiye, Karabağ'daki çatışmalara müdahil olma konusunda kısıtlı bir davranış sergilemiştir. Ülke içerisinde kötüleşen ekonomi, yönetici elitlerin tecrübesizliği ve bazı etnik temelli kalkışmalar sebebiyle Azerbaycan içerisinde istikrarın sağlanamadığından ötürü ülke enerji kaynaklarını da etkili olarak kullanamamıştır. Kelbecer'in işgali, Karabağ Savaşı'nın yanı sıra Azerbaycan iç siyaseti açısından da kritik sonuçlar doğurmuş, Elçibey iktidarı o sırada Nahçıvan Özerk Cumhuriyeti'nin cumhurbaşkanlığını yürütmekte olan Haydar Aliyev'e bırakmıştır.

Haydar Aliyev, SSCB döneminde birçok önemli görevlerde bulunmuş ve önemli tecrübeler edinmiş bir devlet adamı olarak başa geldikten sonra Azerbaycan dış politikasında hakim olan söylem denge politikası olmuş, iç siyasette ise istikrar sağlanmaya çalışılmıştır. Elçibey döneminde ön planda olan Pan-Türkizmin yerini Azerbaycan'ın Türk kökenlerinin reddedilmediği Azerbaycancılık düşüncesi almıştır. Rusya ile gerginleşen ilişkiler onarılmaya başlanmış öte yandan Batı ile ilişkilerde işbirliği unsurları ön plana çıkarılmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu dönemde Azerbaycan'ın özellikle NATO ve Avrupa ülkeleriyle ilişkilerinde Türkiye son derece belirleyici olmuştur. Karabağ Savaşı'nda ateşkesin sağlanması, ekonominin düzeltilmesine yönelik hamleler ve ülke içerisinde siyasi istikrarın sağlanması Haydar Aliyev döneminin belirleyici unsurları olmasının yanı sıra Azerbaycan'ın enerji kaynaklarının uluslararası sermayeye açılması dış politikada enerjinin önemli bir araç olarak kullanıldığını göstermiştir. Yüzyılın Anlaşması ile enerji kaynaklarının dünyaya açılması ülkenin kalkınması açısından pozitif sonuçlar doğurmuştur.

Bu dönemde Türkiye ile ilişkilere bakıldığında Haydar Aliyev'in 1994, 1997 ve 2001 yıllarındaki Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi'nde yaptığı konuşmalarında Türkiye'nin örnek ülke olarak görüldüğüne ilişkin vurguları son derece önemlidir. Elçibey döneminde “model ülke” olarak algılanan Türkiye artık “örnek ülke” olarak görülmüştür. Bu dönemde Türkiye Cumhurbaşkanı Süleyman Demirel ve

Azerbaycanlı mevkidaşı Haydar Aliyev'in arasındaki kişisel irtibatlar üzerinden yürüyen ilişkiler, özellikle Haydar Aliyev'in 1997'de Türkiye'ye düzenlediği ziyaretinden sonra kurumsal seviyeye taşınmıştır. Burada, Türkiye'nin Eximbank üzerinden Azerbaycan'a sağladığı krediler, TİKA'nın Azerbaycan'daki altyapının geliştirilmesine ilişkin yatırımları da önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Dilucu ve Sederek arasındaki Hasret Köprüsü'nün Demirel ve Aliyev tarafından açılmasıyla iki ülke arasındaki beşeri irtibatlar ve ticari ilişkiler de artmıştır. Bu dönemde Azerbaycan'ın gerekli ilişkilerin gelişmesi açısından çeşitli alanlarda altyapı kurması ve dış politikada gerekli tecrübeyi edinmesi ilişkilerin stratejik ortaklık seviyesine çıkarılması bakımından gerekli temeli de hazırlamıştır. Özellikle, Bakü – Tiflis Ceyhan Petrol Boru Hattı'nın hayata geçirilmesine ilişkin atılan adımlarla hem iki tarafın birbirine güveni artmış, hem Azerbaycan enerji kaynaklarını uluslararası piyasalara taşıma fırsatı bulmuş hem de Türkiye'nin transit ülke olma kimliğiyle jeopolitik önemini artırmıştır. Enerji alanında kurulan ilişkiler Şah Deniz gazının taşınmasını öngören Bakü – Tiflis – Erzurum Doğalgaz Boru Hattı ile daha da geniş bir perspektif kazanmıştır. Azerbaycan – Türkiye ilişkilerinde Haydar Aliyev dönemi, önceki dönemlerde ilişkilerin geliştirildiği alanların yanı sıra askeri alanda da teknik ilişkilerin geliştirildiği, mail yardımların görüldüğü bir dönemdir. Haydar Aliyev'in cumhurbaşkanlığı döneminde, Türkiye Azerbaycan'a verdiği 3 milyon dolarlık bir hibe vermiş, Azerbaycan ordusunun askeri modernizasyonuna destek sağlamıştır. Bu yardım, Neriman Nerimanov'un Kurtuluş Savaşı zamanında Türkiye'ye gönderdiği yardımın 21. yüzyıldaki karşılığı olarak değerlendirilebilir.

Türkiye, Karabağ konusunda Azerbaycan'a desteğine devam etmiş fakat Avrupa Güvenlik ve İşbirliği Teşkilatı (AGİT) bünyesinde kurulmuş olan Minsk Grubu çerçevesinde eş başkan olmaması sebebiyle sorunun çözümündeki katkıları uluslararası aktörler tarafından sınırlandırılmıştır. Türkiye ve Azerbaycan, sözde soykırım iddiaları ile Türkiye'yi köşeye sıkıştırmaya çalışan ve Karabağ'da Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'nin aldığı kararlara rağmen işgalini sürdüren Ermenistan'ı hayata geçirecekleri büyük bölgesel projelerde dışarıda bırakacak

şekilde hareket etmişlerdir. Bu dönemde de Ermenistan ile normalleşmeye ilişkin söylemlerin Azerbaycan ile ilişkilere yansımaları olmuştur; bazı arabuluculuk mekanizmaları Türkiye tarafından işletilmeye çalışılmış ne var ki, bunların hiçbirinden somut sonuç çıkmamıştır. Bu dönemde Azerbaycan ile Türkiye arasındaki en büyük problemlerden birisi, Cumhurbaşkanı Haydar Aliyev’e yönelik darbe girişiminde Türk vatandaşlarının isminin geçmesi olmuştur; fakat Azerbaycan’daki darbe girişimi Süleyman Demirel’in Aliyev’i bilgilendirmesiyle önlenmiştir.

Haydar Aliyev dönemi, “bir millet iki devlet” söyleminin tam olarak ortaya çıktığı dönem olmuş, ilişkilerdeki gelişim kişisel irtibatlardan öte kurumsal seviyeye yükselerek devam etmiştir. Yüksek maliyetli bir proje olan Bakü – Tiflis - Ceyhan Petrol Boru Hattı projesinin hayata geçirilmesine ilişkin iradenin iki devlet tarafından da ortaya koyulması, ilişkileri sadece tarihi kardeşlik ve benzerliklere dayanan ilişkiler olmaktan çıkararak ilgi ve çıkarların ortak paydada değerlendirildiği bir anlayışın doğmasına ortam hazırlamıştır. Haydar Aliyev’in vefatından sonra ülkenin başına İlham Aliyev geçmiştir.

Azerbaycan Cumhurbaşkanı İlham Aliyev’in dış politikası selefi ve babası Haydar Aliyev’in belirlediği prensipler çerçevesinde oluşturulmuştur. Türkiye, yine bu dönemde de Azerbaycan dış politikasındaki önemini artırmaya devam ettirmiştir. Türkiye, Azerbaycan’ın denge politikası çerçevesinde sürdürülen dış siyasetinin merkez ülkesi konumunda bulunmuştur. İlham Aliyev’in ilk yurt dışı ziyaretlerini Türkiye’ye düzenlemesi ve benzer şekilde 2001 yılında Türkiye’de iktidara gelen AK Parti döneminde Recep Tayyip Erdoğan gerek başbakanlık gerek cumhurbaşkanlığı döneminde ilk ziyaretini Azerbaycan’a düzenlemesi bunun en önemli göstergelerinden sayılmıştır. İki ülke arasında yoğun temaların devam ettiği İlham Aliyev döneminde Yüksek Düzeyli Stratejik İşbirliği Konseyi’nin kurulmasıyla stratejik temasların seviyesinin yükseldiği anlaşılmaktadır. Bütün bunların yanına TANAP ve Bakü – Tiflis – Kars Demiryolu’nun inşa edilmesi de eklendiğinde iki ülkenin küresel anlamda ses getiren projelere imza atmaya

bařladıęı anlařılmaktadır. Bütün bu giriřimler aynı zamanda Azerbaycan – Trkiye arasındaki baęları da sıklařtırması bakımından önem tařımaktadır.

Sadece enerji alanında deęil, askeri alanda da iki lke arasındaki kardeřlięin yanında tehdit algılamaları karřısında ortak bir tutum benimsenmesi iliřkileri daha da stratejik kılmıřtır. Ermenistan’a ynelik ortak politikaların tesinde Trkiye’deki yerli savunma sanayinin geliřmesiyle Azerbaycan Trkiye’den silah ve askeri ara alamaya bařlamıřtır. Uluslararası alanda Karabaę konusundaki ortak tutum devam ettirilmiş ve bunların yanında iki devlet askeri tatbikatlar gerekleřtirmeye bařlamıřtır. TURAZ řahini ve TURAZ Kartalı bunun nemli rneklerindendir. Azerbaycan ve Trkiye, sıcak atıřmalarda bu dnemde birbirine destek vermiřtir. Afrin Operasyonu’nda Azerbaycanlı milletvekilleri uluslararası kuruluřlarda Trkiye’nin haklılıęını savunurken, 2016 yılındaki Nisan Savařları’nda da Trkiye Azerbaycan’a aık desteęini ifade etmekten geri durmamıřtır. zellikle 15 Temmuz 2016’da yařanan hain darbe giriřiminden sonra FET ile mcadele konusunda Azerbaycan’ın Trkiye’nin yanında durması gvenlik tehditlerine ynelik lkelerin aktif řekilde inisiyatif aldıklarını kanıtlamıřtır.

Bunun yanında, iki taraf arasındaki ekonomik geliřmeler de birbirini tamamlayıcı bir yapı sunmuřtur. Trkiye, inřaat, bankacılık gibi enerji dıřındaki sektrlerde Azerbaycan’da faaliyet gsterirken, Azerbaycan’ın Trkiye’deki yatırımları SOCAR’ın PETKİM’e ortak olması ve İzmir’in Aliaęa ilçesinde STAR Rafinerisi’ni kurmasıyla enerji sektrne odaklanmıřtır. SOCAR’ın Trkiye’de yaptığı yatırımlarla Azerbaycan’ın cumhuriyet tarihinin en byk yabancı yatırımcısı sıfatını kazanması iki lkenin yakınlıęını gstermektedir. Trkiye’nin Azerbaycan’ın modernleřmesi iin verdięi krediler ve yaptığı yardımlara benzer řekilde Azerbaycan’ın Trkiye’deki stratejik yatırımları “bir millet iki devlet” syleminin temellerinin saęlamlařması bakımından nemli alanlar olmuřtur. Stratejik zellik barındıran ekonomik boyutunun zenginleřmesi ile birlikte kader

ortaklığı, etnik yakınlık, tarihi kardeşlik gibi soyut bazı kavramlar üzerinden tanımlanan ilişkiler somut alana yansımıştır.

Azerbaycan ve Türkiye arasında vizelerin uygulanması, Kuzey Kıbrıs Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin Azerbaycan tarafından tanınmaması ve Türkiye parlamentosunda Hocalı'da yaşananların soykırım olarak tanınmaması ilişkilerdeki kronik sorunlar olsa da bunlar genel itibariyle ilişkilerin ilerleyişini engelleyecek bir önkoşul olmamıştır. İkili ilişkilerin tarihindeki en büyük kriz ise “futbol diplomasi” sürecinde Cumhurbaşkanı Abdullah Gül'ün Ermenistan'ın başkenti Erivan'ı iki ülke milli takımları arasındaki maçı izlemek için ziyaret etmesiyle başlamıştır. Gül'ün bu ziyaretinden sonra dönemin Ermenistan Cumhurbaşkanı Serj Sarkiyan'ın Bursa'daki Türkiye – Ermenistan maçını izlemek için geldiğinde stada Azerbaycan bayraklarının alınmaması ile kriz tam anlamıyla patlak vermiş, Bakü'deki Türk Şehitliği'nin önündeki bayrağın indirilmesiyle kriz daha da üst noktalara ulaşmıştır. Bu dönemde Türkiye'de bazı kesimler tarafından Azerbaycan ile ilişkilerin kardeşlik temelinde olup olmadığı sorgulanmaya başlamış, öte yandan iki taraf arasındaki temaslar kesintiye uğramadan devam etmiştir. Türk – Ermeni normalleşme sürecinin Azerbaycan'ın bilgisi dahilinde olmaması, yaşanan iletişim ve irtibat problemi neticesinde ilişkiler bir darboğazdan geçse de iki ülke resmi yetkililerinin birbirine yönelik retoriği “bir millet iki devlet” söylemi dışına çıkmamıştır. Bu süreçte Türk dış politikasında egemen olan “komşularla sıfır sorun politikası”nın en kolay uygulanabileceği yerde bile sorunlar yaşattığına şahit olunmuştur. Azerbaycan - Türkiye ilişkilerinde bu kriz Ermenistan ile protokollerin sonuca ulaşamamasıyla normale dönmüş, ilişkiler daha sıkı şekilde devam etmiştir.

Azerbaycan – Türkiye ilişkileri sonraki süreçte bölgesel stratejik projelerin hayata geçirilmesiyle ivme kazanmış ve aynı zamanda bu iki devlet arasındaki ilişkiler bölgedeki mekanizmaların hayata geçirilmesi bakımından lokomotif görevi görmüştür. Gürcistan'ı içerisine alarak Trabzon Deklarasyonu ile kurulan Türkiye – Azerbaycan – Gürcistan üçlü mekanizmasını İran, Pakistan, Türkmenistan gibi

lkelerin dahil olduęu l mekanizmalar ve Grcistan ile İran'ın dahil olduęu drtl mekanizma izlemiřtir. Sz konusu mekanizmalar Azerbaycan ile Trkiye arasındaki iliřkilerin blgesel olarak sorunların zm, iřbirlięi ortamının geliřtirilmesi gibi konularda iřlevsel hale gelmesinin gstergesi olması aısından nemlidir.

Trkiye ve Azerbaycan arasında tarihten gelen bir sosyal hassasiyet bulunurken, dıř politikada Azerbaycan'ın nemi gerek anketler sonucu Trk kamuoyu tarafından teyit edilmekte gerekse tez kapsamında Trk devlet yetkilileriyle yapılan mlakatlarda resmi olarak aıka ortaya konmuřtur. Toplumlar arasında bulunan sevginin yanı sıra Trkiye ve Azerbaycan'daki insanlar bu iki lke hakkındaki bilgi seviyesine bakıldıęında Azerbaycan'da Trkiye hakkında bilginin, Trkiye'deki insanların Azerbaycan hakkında bildięinden daha ok olduęu grlmektedir. Burada, Trk kltrnn Azerbaycan'da zellikle televizyon ve sosyal medya zerinden takip edilmesi bunun nemli sebeplerinden biridir. te yandan iliřkilerde kltr, sanat, spor gibi aktel alanlarda n plana ıkan figrler iki lke vatandaşlarının birbirine yakınlařmasını saęlamaktadır. Sivil toplum kuruluřları arasındaki irtibatlara bakıldıęında ise Azerbaycan ve Trkiye arasındaki iliřkilerin devletler arasındaki etkileřimden az olduęu grlmektedir. Bu noktada, Azerbaycan'da son yıllarda kurulan devlet kurumlarının bu alanın geliřmesi iin faydalı adımlar atmakla birlikte iki tarafın daha alacaęı ok yol alması ihtiyaı hissedilmektedir.

Son yıllarda iki lke arasında fazlaca gndeme gelen konulardan biri diaspora alıřmalarıdır. zellikle, İlham Aliyev'in 2008 senesinde TBMM'de yaptıęı konuřmada Trkiye ve Azerbaycan diasporalarının ortak alıřması gerektięini dikkat ekmesi "bir diaspora iki devlet" gibi yeni bir anlayıřın doęmasına yol amıřtır. Ermeni diasporasının iki lkeye ynelik zararlı kampanyalar yrtmesi karřısında Azerbaycan ve Trkiye diasporaları arasındaki ortaklıęın geliřtirilmesi iki taraf aısından da avantajlar doęurabilecek bir alan olarak grlmeye bařlanmıřtır.

“Bir millet iki devlet” temelinde, stratejik ortaklık ekseninde gelişen ve şekillenen Azerbaycan – Türkiye ilişkileri, her ilişkiler gibi zaman içerisinde belli değişim ve dönüşümler geçirmiştir. İki ülkede iktidar değişikliklerine rağmen ilişkin esas çerçevesi korunmuş, devamlılığın sağlanmasında “bir millet iki devlet” söylemi önemli bir yer edinmiştir. Bu söylem, ilişkilerde en sorunlu olarak görülen dönemde bile tarafların birbirine yönelik tutumunu belirleyen ve sınırlayan bir çerçeve olmuştur. Tarihi kardeşlik bağlarının stratejik ortaklığa dönüştüğü süreçte bu söylem değerini kaybetmemiş ve ilişkilerin ana esası olarak günümüze gelmiştir. Bu söylem ilişkilerin geleceği açısından da ana belirleyici olarak görülmektedir.

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