

The Main Results of The Implementation of Information Provision in The Foreign Policy of The Azerbaijan Republic

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ABSTRACT

In the last 20 years the implementation the successes of the foreign and domestic policy in the Republic of Azerbaijan are gradually increasing the country's ranking in the international world, and these successes are clearly manifested in the political, economic, cultural and military fields. Most importantly, putting an end to a 30-year occupation policy of Armenia in the Patriotic War made Azerbaijan known as a victorious state in the world. Thanks to the information provision of the foreign policy, the rapid development of the country has already attracted the attention of the world's leading mass media and television channels. The interview of the president Ilham Aliiev which was broadcast on Euronews on December 9, 2023 confirmed this. The first question of the television employee started with the sentence "according to the estimates from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development - Azerbaijan and the countries of the Central Asian region experience significant economic growth in 2023" made each of us feel proud.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Azerbaycan Cumhuriyeti, dış politika, bilgi sağlama, ana öncelikler, temel yönler, 44 günlük - Vatan Savaşı

ÖZET

Azerbaycan Cumhuriyeti'nin son 20 yılda uyguladığı dış ve iç politikadaki başarılar, ülkenin uluslararası dünyadaki sıralamasını giderek yükseltmekte ve bu başarılar siyasi, ekonomik, kültürel ve askeri alanlarda açıkça ortaya çıkmaktadır. En önemlisi Ermenistan'ın Vatan Savaşı'ndaki 30 yıllık işgal politikasına son vermesi, Azerbaycan'ın dünyada muzafer bir devlet olarak anılmasını sağlamıştır. Dış politikanın bilgi sağlama sayesinde ülkenin hızla gelişmesi, şimdiden dünyanın önde gelen kitle iletişim araçları ve televizyon kanallarının dikkatini çekmiştir. Cumhurbaşkanı İlham Aliyev'in 9 Aralık 2023'te "Euronews" televizyonunda yayınlanan röportajı da bunu doğruladı. TV çalışanın ilk sorusu "Avrupa İmar ve Kalkınma Bankası'nun hesaplamalarına göre Azerbaycan ve Orta Asya bölgesi ülkeleri ciddi ekonomik kalkınma elde etmiştir" cümlesiyle başladı, hepimiz gurur duyduk.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Due to its geographical location and independent policy, Azerbaijan is known as a country with its own place and unique opportunities in the world information space. After gaining its independence for the second time on October 18, 1991, the Republic of Azerbaijan took its first steps in the direction of creating a legislative framework related to foreign policy and joining international conventions in a short period of time. It began to be recognized as a reliable partner in the system of international relations, to establish diplomatic relations with a number of countries and to form the institution of representations in international organizations. In order to implement its policy as an independent state and to confirm its authority in the international world, it first defined the information policy. Today, thanks to the successful state information policy of the state, authorities and governmental bodies regularly work and create new opportunities to disseminate detailed information about the political and socio-economic life of the country to the mass media, press centers, public relations departments and other means of communication.

If the main goal of the state policy is to ensure the happiness of its citizens, then it can be assumed that the main goal of its internal and external policy is to ensure the material and moral interests of the state's citizens (population, people) (internally and within other states). According to Elshan Nasibov, Ph.D. of Political Sciences, "Foreign policy is a broad concept and, as a continuation of domestic policy, it expresses the actions of the state beyond its borders. Foreign policy keeps the state as a structural unit in a kind of "suspended position" in its own space and in the international sphere in a balanced form and level". Foreign policy is a set of actions carried out by the state that introduce the population and people of the state to the international world. It turns out that a state without a foreign policy cannot exist in the present time. Foreign policy is a set of actions carried out by the state that introduce the population and people of the state to the international world. It turns out that a state without a foreign policy cannot live in the present time. The existence of the state lies in the unity of its domestic and foreign policy. As mentioned at the beginning, the state builds its policy, in terms of covering the space, mainly in two important directions: inside its borders and outside its borders (Nasibov, 2013, p 54).

I would like to mention that in the period of independence, large-scale work was done in the direction of creating the normative legal basis of the state information policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan. In the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan adopted by referendum in 1995, the provision of human and civil rights and freedoms is established as the supreme goal

of the state. In accordance with Article 50 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, everyone has the freedom to search, obtain, transmit, prepare and distribute the information they want in a legal way (Qanun.az., 1996).

According to Honored Journalist, Doctor of Political Sciences, Khalid Niyazov - a comprehensive information policy is being implemented by the state in our country, and its basis is the creation of a unified information and telecommunication space. It is possible to classify the main tasks of the State information policy as follows:

- modernization of information and telecommunication infrastructure and their development;
- efficient use of national information resources, provision of free access to them;
- providing citizens with information of public importance;
- development of independent mass media;
- creation of the essential normative legal framework for the establishment of the information society (Niyazov, 2016, p.95).

2. FOREIGN POLICY OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN AT THE LEGAL LEVEL

The main tasks and priorities of the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan are reflected in the Constitution of the state of Azerbaijan. Based on the requirements of the Constitution, the head of state defines the foreign policy priorities within each specific time, space and circumstances, and ensures its implementation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is considered the main institution coordinating foreign policy priorities. The task of foreign policy is carried out by the institutions dealing with the foreign policy of the state (in this direction executive bodies, ministries, departments and diplomatic missions), and these tasks are regulated by the "Regulation about the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan". According to the "Regulations About the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan", the ministry carries out its activities directly and through diplomatic missions and consulates of the Republic of Azerbaijan, including foreign missions of the Republic of Azerbaijan to international organizations, as well as subordinate organizations and other institutions. According to article 7 and paragraph 7.9-1 of the Regulation states: "Information of the public about its activities, creation of a website, posting of public information that it has and the list of which must be disclosed as determined by legislation, and constant updating of this information must be ensured".

In Article 8 and paragraph 8.15 of the same Regulation, the main functions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan are more concretely emphasized: "It informs the state bodies, media subjects and journalists of the Republic of Azerbaijan about the international situation and foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan". It is clear from this that , the people, the public have the right to observe and openly discuss the foreign policy carried out by the government structures.

As the main institution coordinating foreign policy priorities, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides information in accordance with the Regulation (Qanun.az., 2004).

In foreign policy, Azerbaijan has chosen the model of leadership in the region. The balanced foreign policy implemented by Azerbaijan, which is based on the interests of the nation and the state, is a universally accepted success all over the world. Thanks to this policy, Azerbaijan, which has won the sympathy of the world community, has strengthened its position in the region and the world, has gained the image of a peaceful state and a reliable partner. Currently, the Republic of Azerbaijan has established diplomatic relations with 183 foreign countries worldwide. Azerbaijan has Embassies in 59 countries, Consulate Generals in 9 cities, and Honorary consulates in 17 countries. Azerbaijan has representatives under 19 international organizations. At the same time, Embassies of 66 countries, 4 Consulates General of 3 countries, Honorary Consulates of 13 countries, and Representatives of 21 countries operate in Azerbaijan. Representations of 21 international organizations operate in Azerbaijan. Today, around 1,000 professional diplomatic corps are operating within the country and in foreign states, international and regional organizations, implementing the course of Azerbaijan's foreign policy. By the decrees of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, more than 150 diplomats have been granted the rank of extraordinary and authorized ambassadors and envoys (Bayramov, 2023).

Doctor of historical sciences, Musa Gasimov in his book called "Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy" (Conceptual Issues) explained the forms and methods of foreign policy activities of Azerbaijani diplomacy. Diplomatic activity - correspondence, letters, notes, memoranda, statements, participation in the work of international and local organizations, participation in international congresses, conferences and meetings, visits and meetings of state and government delegations, preparation and signing of bilateral and multilateral international contracts and agreements, work carried out by diplomatic missions of Azerbaijan in foreign countries, meetings of heads of state, telephone conversations, press coverage of the state's position on one or another issue of foreign policy, consultations, official information,

publication of international agreements and documents, etc. forms are used. Of course, these forms may change according to international conditions and time (Gasimov, 1997, p.21).

The former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Elmar Mammadyarov, in his interview to Azertac Information Agency on December 25, 2018, defined the main priorities of the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan in order to protect its national interests and strengthen its global and regional positions in its foreign policy as follows:

- To protect and strengthen state independence, ensure the security of the country, the rights of national statehood and connect it with the international security system....
- Realization of the new oil strategy, which constitutes an important part of Azerbaijan's national income and the main part of its economy...
- Maintaining the country's "favorable state image" for foreign capital and investment by ensuring the current stable situation, developing the non-oil sector using the opportunities of the external world...
- To integrate into the European Union system (in the economic, political, social, cultural spheres), where Western countries are represented, and into the global world politics space.
- Establishing norms of civil coexistence based on international legal norms in the world, taking effective measures to protect the international rights of states, increasing the closer participation of international organizations, especially organizations such as the UN, OSCE, NATO, in ensuring peace and security in the world, etc.
- protecting the national and civil rights of Azerbaijanis living in all countries of the world, their property and ownership, as well as national and civil rights of our countrymen.
- systematization and realization of regional interests.. - to take its rightful place in the international and regional integration carried out in the Eurasian space, to maximally protect and ensure the national interests of the country (Mfa.gov.az., 2018).

Regaining its independence for the second time in the Republic of Azerbaijan attempts were made to prepare the foreign policy concept and these steps were reflected in the mass media of that period. However, getting rid of the influence of the USSR and the former socialist way of coexistence, formulating an independent foreign policy course, defining its main priorities, goals and objectives, directions, entering to the world political level and joining to the system of international relations was not such an easy task for a young and inexperienced state. As a state that has just gained independence, it could not integrate into the world information space

with limited means of information communication, it could not convey the truths of the country to the world community at the appropriate level. In 1990, on the night of January 19-20 (Bloody January), former Soviet troops committed an unprecedented massacre of civilians in Baku who rose up to establish an independent state and gain their sovereignty, the occupation of 20 percent of our lands as a result of the military aggression of Armenia, "The Khojaly genocide" that committed against ethnic Azerbaijanis during the occupation of Khojaly on the night of February 25-26, 1992 by the Armenian Armed Forces and many other injustices were related to such information.

When national leader Heydar Aliyev returned to power at the insistence of the people on 15 June 1993, the situation in the country was extremely complicated. The great leader came to the conclusion that the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict required a comprehensive approach that would take into account crucial domestic and foreign policy factors. He paid special attention to the press, because he knew very well the role of the press in social and political life, its influence on the formation of public opinion in society. He was also sure that the information provision of the big works started inside and outside the republic is possible only through the mass media. Adopting the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan established established freedom of thought, speech and the information[1995], the decree "On measures to ensure freedom of speech, thought and press in the Republic of Azerbaijan" (1998) created favorable conditions for guarantee of freedom of thought and the adoption of Law "On Mass Media" (1999) became the legislative basis for ensuring the information policy. This law greatly increased the possibilities of providing information and broadcasting of Azerbaijani truths in the international world. Later Laws "On the Procedure for Consideration of Citizens' Appeals", "On Freedom of Information", "On Information, Informatization and Protection of Information", "On Obtaining information on the Environment" also turned the media into a powerful tool for the dynamic democratization of society (Aslanov, 2013, p.55).

Today, independent and pluralist media are being formed in Azerbaijan that meets modern international norms and standards, and all urgent measures necessary for the free development of the mass media have been provided by the state. In terms of the number of media outlets, the Republic of Azerbaijan occupies one of the leading places among the CIS countries and Eastern Europe. More than 5,000 media outlets in Azerbaijan are registered with the relevant state body. The official media are owned by various political and public organizations, private organizations, and individuals. The country publishes about 40-daily, more than 200-weekly and monthly newspapers. More than 80 scientific-practical, socio-political, socio-economic

issues, children's and women's problems, and entertainment magazines are published. About 100 newspapers and magazines are published in the regions. Nowadays, About 20 news agencies in Azerbaijan regularly and comprehensively disseminate information about the events taking place in the country and the world (Azerbaijan.az 2024). One of them is the first news agency of Azerbaijan is AZERTAC which created on March 1, 1920. To date, AZERTAC has established official partnerships with 49 information agencies, is a member of 11 international information platforms and is represented on the governing bodies of several of them. The agency operates 22 correspondent stations in 21 countries (Azertag, 2024).

Since 1998, new private TV and radio channels have been opened in Azerbaijan, and the scale of cable television has expanded in recent years. Currently, Azerbaijan operates 11 nationwide, 4 satellites and 17 cable television, 8 regional and 12 radio stations. More than 50 journalist organizations are registered in Azerbaijan, about 30 organizations are actively engaged in the development of freedom of speech and information, strengthening the economic independence of the press, protection of journalists' rights, expansion of access to information by mass media, regulation of relations between society and mass media and other issues. The number of independent commercial companies operating in the country has increased. At present, more than 20 media companies are operating in the capital and regions (Azerbaijan.az., 2024).

In the foreign policy of Azerbaijan, social media is a key part of its diplomacy. Considering the last few years, social media, which has had a significant impact on society for a long time, can now be considered a platform of importance for states in terms of international law. Currently, the type of Diplomacy called "Digital Diplomacy" is actively used in the international community. During the 44-day war, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev widely used not only traditional diplomatic methods, but also digital diplomacy. By sharing the main moments of the war and the victories of the Azerbaijani Army on his official Twitter (now X) and Instagram account, he informed the citizens and the international community. "President Ilham Aliyev's purposeful use of Twitter" at the same time led to public awareness of social networks, active use of social networks, and involvement of citizens in social networks. Citizens' active use of social media contributed greatly to the fact that they conveyed the realities of the 44-day war to the international community, and in favor of Azerbaijan in the information war. The involvement of citizens in social media and their education in this direction have positive effects on the representation of our country in the international arena.

Additionally, The role of social media in Azerbaijan's foreign policy is still active. The official social media accounts of state bodies, as well as the President and other leading persons share information on current issues on their official social media accounts and provide the public with information.

3. 44-DAY PATRIOTIC WAR AND INFORMATION PROVISION OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict which has been on the agenda as the main priority issue of Azerbaijan's foreign policy for nearly 30 years was ignited on 5th of August in 2019 after Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan made a statement in Khankendi that "Karabakh is a part of Armenia and full stop". That statement by Nikol Pashinyan explicitly showed that Armenia's actual goal was aggression.

Addressing the 16th annual meeting of the 2019 Valdai International Discussion Club on 3 October, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev responded to Pashinyan's statement in a strictly way: "Karabakh is Azerbaijan and an exclamation mark." Although Azerbaijan tried to settle the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict peacefully by negotiating with Armenia, which has occupied 20% of its territory for nearly 30 years, the negotiations did not yield any results, on the contrary, it was clearly observed that the Armenian side simply wants to prolong time. They tried to strengthen the status quo and make it eternal. In 1993, the Security Council of the UN (Security Council) adopted resolutions 822, 853, 874, and 884 on the Armenian- Azerbaijani conflict. Each resolution was adopted as a result of the occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh and other territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan by the Armenian Armed Forces. Unfortunately, UN resolutions remained on paper for 27 years. Although the 26-year-long ceasefire provided by the Bishkek Protocol (1994) was repeatedly violated by Armenia, the Azerbaijani side tried to prevent the violation of the ceasefire regime. This was due to Azerbaijan's balanced foreign policy (Jafarova, Huseynov. Bagirov, Hajiyev, Asgarova, 2021, p. 6).

Most importantly, Azerbaijan never put up with the occupation and showed unwavering determination in the restoration of their territorial integrity. And finally, on 27 September 2020, a counter-offensive was launched in response to Armenia's yet another large-scale military attack on Azerbaijani Army positions and civilian settlements. The counter-offensive later became known as Operation Iron Fist that led to the Patriotic War. 8 November 2020 is inscribed in the history of Azerbaijan as Victory Day in golden letters. On 10 November 2020, the act of Armenia's capitulation, the "Statement of the President of the Republic of

Azerbaijan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and President of the Russian Federation”, was signed. On the same day, in his eighth address to the nation, Ilham Aliyev announced that his phrase “Karabakh is Azerbaijan and an exclamation mark”, which had become a national slogan, already covered the whole of Karabakh and put an end to the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict.

After the victorious end of the 44-day national war, new horizons have opened up in the field of foreign policy as well as in all fields. The fact is that the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict prevented our country from revealing its great potential for many years. Now, there is no obstacle called the problem of Armenia and Karabakh in the matter of developing cooperation and partnership relations with the countries of the world and strengthening their contacts. In recent years, the foreign policy of Azerbaijan has already gone beyond the borders of the region and entered the category of countries considered to be a middle power in the world.

I would like to mention that, on June 16-18, 2022, under the patronage of President Ilham Aliyev, the 9th Global Baku Forum under the motto "Challenges to the Global World Order" has today kicked off. In the Global Baku Forum more than 50 countries representatives and 450 reputable international organizations are taking part, where the head of the country Ilham Aliyev spoke about the main issues of Azerbaijan's foreign policy in the new era after the Karabakh victory. Based on the specially prepared text of the speech, it is possible to list the main priorities of Azerbaijan's foreign policy in the new era.

- Opening of Zangazur corridor
- Normalization of relations with Armenia and resolution of border issues with Armenia,
- Establishing peace and security in the region,
- Ensuring stable and sustainable development in the South Caucasus,
- To become a reliable and enterprising country in the international world.
- To ensure energy security and transmission,
- Giving preference to large-scale foreign policy and international development, etc (Azerbaijan-news.az, 2022).

4. PROVIDING INFORMATION ON THE MAIN FOREIGN POLICY DIRECTIONS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

The direction of Azerbaijan's foreign policy in the coming period was clearly expressed in the programmatic speech of President Ilham Aliyev at the swearing-in ceremony held on

February 14. The direction of Azerbaijan's foreign policy in the coming period was clearly expressed in the programmatic speech of President Ilham Aliyev at the swearing-in ceremony held on February 14. The head of our state said that "in general, in this new era, we should open new horizons in the direction of foreign policy. If in the previous period the main direction of our foreign policy was the solution of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, today this issue is almost not on the agenda: Therefore, new directions of our foreign policy should prevail." In this context, Mr. Ilham Aliyev pointed out three main directions of foreign policy in the new era, one of which is - the Organization of Turkic States. We have brotherly relations with all countries that are members of the Organization of Turkic States, and our policy is to solidify the Organization of Turkic States. The second direction of foreign policy in the new era is - the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation always stood with Azerbaijan during and after the occupation, as well as during and after the Second Karabakh War and the anti-terror operation. Azerbaijan is a valuable member of this organization. The attitude towards the Islamic religion and all religions in Azerbaijan is highly appreciated by this organization. The third direction is - the Non-Aligned Movement. Our membership in the Non-Aligned Movement played an important role in strengthening its international position. Having chosen the direction of not joining any military alliance in its foreign policy, Azerbaijan received the unanimous support of the member states of the movement on May 26, 2011, and was accepted as a full member of the National Assembly. In the years 2019-2022, when Azerbaijan chaired the organization (later our chairmanship period was extended for another year), as the President noted, the Non-Aligned Movement entered a new level: "Although we have already handed over the chairmanship, we are still presented in the troika. The Non-Aligned Movement entered a new level during our presidency, and we certainly cannot allow it to decline to whatever extent. I am sure it won't. On our part, we will do our best to strengthen the Non-Aligned Movement as an institution. If it is necessary to help solve the problems facing member countries, of course, we will do that" (Sakhavat, 2024, N38).

"Our foreign policy in the global arena: Azerbaijan's weight and importance in the international world is increasing" entitled article was published by Hamid Sakhavet in "Xalq" newspaper. The author notes in the article that Azerbaijan is currently carrying out large-scale restoration and reconstruction works in the Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur economic regions at the expense of its own resources. Within the framework of the "Great Return" program, thousands of former internally displaced persons have already returned to their native lands.

By 2026, 140,000 former internally displaced persons are expected to return to their homeland. According to the saying of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, "We will turn this region - Karabakh into a paradise. We will live forever in these lands from now on. No one can move us from these lands. Karabakh is ours! Karabakh is Azerbaijan!" (Sakhavat, 2024, N37).

By the way, it should be mentioned that 2023 was marked by a number of successes in Azerbaijan's foreign policy. This was announced on 28 December at the Annual Press Release conference on the results of the previous year at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Firstly, Azerbaijan fully restored its sovereignty and territorial integrity and thus, established the foundation for the regional order based on international law and justice. In the event, bilateral and multilateral cooperation with foreign countries during 2023, economic, humanitarian diplomacy and international aid activities of our country, diplomatic efforts in the post-conflict period, work on protecting the rights and freedoms of Azerbaijani citizens, events organized in connection with foreign policy information provision, analytical work and personnel issues were given extensive information. As in previous years, the intensity of contacts with neighboring states, including Asian, European, American and African countries were discussed, 161 documents were signed with 44 countries in various fields, and political consultations were held with 25 countries. It was stated that our country successfully chaired the Non-Aligned Movement, the UN Special Program for Central Asian Economies (SPECA), the Economic Cooperation Organization, as well as continued cooperation with other regional and international organizations. The approval of the candidacy of the Republic of Azerbaijan to host the 29th Conference of Parties (COP-29) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the largest event of the UN system, should be especially noted (Mfa.gov.az., 2023).

In order to convey the truths of Azerbaijan to the world community, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued its activities on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube platforms. In the course of the year, 740 statements were posted on the MFA website (up to December 25, 2023), 26 briefings were organized for local and foreign media and diplomatic corps accredited in our country (Sakhavat, 2024, N37).

5. RESULTS

Currently, Azerbaijan is the only country in the region that is taking consistent and systematic steps towards ensuring regional security with a well-thought-out foreign policy based on national interests. The energy projects implemented by the Azerbaijani state and cooperation

formats serving regional integration play an important role in ensuring stability in the South Caucasus. In general, the Republic of Azerbaijan's ending of Armenia's occupation and aggression and its own implementation of UN Security Council resolutions is one of the most exemplary models of conflict resolution in the world. With the end of the conflict, that is, with the restoration of the territorial integrity of our country, Azerbaijan is implementing a foreign policy in a larger geographical space based on its distinct geopolitical identity. One of the next political and diplomatic successes of our country is the holding of the 29th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change - COP29 - in our country in 2024. This is also a clear example of the great trust and respect of world states for our country once again. The G20 meeting is coming up. From now on, Azerbaijan will pursue a more broad-based foreign policy in terms of contributing to issues on the global agenda and resolving problems.

In the end, I would like to note that providing the society with information on foreign and domestic policy issues of the country is the main factor for its development and the rise of modern civilization. The provision of information to the main structures of society and the state is carried out by constantly developing technological systems and information means. Although the regime created in the country is of great importance in the objective dissemination of information, the main task falls on the mass media.

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