

*Gunel Yusibova*

## **THE FIRST STEPS TOWARDS STRATEGIC ALLIANCE IN AZERBAIJANI-TURKISH RELATIONS BEFORE THE SECOND KARABAKH WAR**

*Azerbaijan and Turkey are historically linked by many common cultural, linguistic and religious ties, which creates the basis for the development of strategic allied relations between these two countries. After President Ilham Aliyev came to power in 2003, relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey continued to strengthen, and both sides expressed interest in a deeper strategic partnership. In this article, we will consider the first steps towards strategic alliance in Azerbaijani-Turkish relations during the reign of Ilham Aliyev, especially in the context before the Second Karabakh War.*

*To analyze the first steps towards strategic alliance between Azerbaijan and Turkey during the reign of Ilham Aliyev, a comprehensive analysis of official statements, political documents and treaties, as well as acts of foreign policy of both countries was carried out. Data from studies and analytical reviews published in various scientific journals and reputable analytical publications were also used.*

*The purpose of this study is to identify the first steps taken by Azerbaijan and Turkey towards deepening strategic alliance during the reign of Ilham Aliyev before the Second Karabakh War. We strive to analyze the main stages and factors that contributed to the formation of closer ties between these two States.*

*During the reign of Ilham Aliyev, a number of events and political initiatives aimed at deepening strategic relations with Turkey were initiated in Azerbaijan. This included increased military cooperation, the signing of agreements on security and mutual support, as well as agreements on cooperation in the field of energy and transport. Azerbaijan's support of Turkey in various international issues also played a key role in strengthening diplomatic ties.*

*The first steps towards strategic alliance between Azerbaijan and Turkey during the reign of Ilham Aliyev turned out to be an important stage in the development of relations between these two states. The deepening of cooperation in various fields, including military, political, economic and cultural, contributed to the strengthening of mutual understanding and trust between Azerbaijan and Turkey. This process had a significant impact on the further development of relations and played a key role in the formation of a strategic alliance, which turned out to be especially important in the context of the Second Karabakh War and subsequent events.*

**Key words:** *cooperation, support, strategic alliance, second Karabakh war.*

**Statement of the problem in a general form.** The development of relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey in the post-Soviet period is an interesting historical process reflecting the deep cultural, historical and geopolitical ties between these two states. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Azerbaijan and Turkey quickly established diplomatic relations, and since then their interaction has continued to develop actively.

The first years of Azerbaijan's independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union (1991-1993) were difficult. During this period, Turkey provided significant support to Azerbaijan, including humanitarian assistance, economic assistance and security support [1].

In the 1990s and early 2000s, Azerbaijan and Turkey actively developed economic cooperation. This included joint investments in various industries such as energy, transport and tourism. Projects such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) and Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) oil pipelines have become symbols of the strategic partnership between the two countries.

Azerbaijan and Turkey have also developed cooperation in the field of defense and security. The two countries conducted joint military exercises and exchanged experiences in the field of military training. Turkey has also provided security support to Azerbaijan, in particular in the context of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Cultural ties also played an important role in the development of relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey. The exchange of cultural de-

legations, the organization of cultural festivals and joint projects in the field of art and education contributed to the deepening of mutual understanding between the peoples of the two countries.

Political relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey have also been developing. Both countries actively supported each other in the international arena and advocated common interests in the region.

The development of relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey in the post-Soviet period was marked by a number of key achievements in various fields. These relations continue to be important for both countries, especially in the context of the changing political situation in the region. Cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey remains a strategic priority for both sides, and their cooperation remains a key element of stability and development in the South Caucasus and Transcaucasia.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** The research methodology of the article «First steps towards strategic alliance in Azerbaijani-Turkish relations before the Second Karabakh War» will be based on a systematic analysis of available literature and sources covering the political, historical and socio-cultural aspects of Azerbaijani-Turkish relations, as well as the context of the Second Karabakh War. Within the framework of this methodology, the following approach is proposed:

**Literature review:** The first stage of the study will consist of a literature review, including articles, books and scientific research listed in the list of references. This stage will allow you to get acquainted with current theories, concepts and facts related to the research topic.

**Analysis of political sources:** The second stage will be devoted to the analysis of political sources, such as official statements, treaties and agreements between Azerbaijan and Turkey, as well as historical documents related to the development of their relations before the outbreak of the Second Karabakh War.

**Historical context research:** The third stage will be devoted to the study of the historical context of Azerbaijani-Turkish relations, including their evolution since the independence of Azerbaijan and the impact on them of various historical events such as the Karabakh conflict and the formation of the Turkish state.

**Analysis of the dynamics of relations before the Second Karabakh War:** The fourth stage of the study will be devoted to the analysis of

the dynamics of Azerbaijani-Turkish relations in the period before the Second Karabakh War, including their development, causing factors and changes in political, economic and military relations.

Exploring Turkey's role in the context of the war: The fifth stage will be devoted to the study of Turkey's role in the Second Karabakh War, including its political and military intervention, support for Azerbaijan and the consequences for the dynamics of relations between the countries.

**Presentation of the main research material.** As a result of a systematic analysis of literature and sources, as well as the above-mentioned research stages, the article will contribute to a deeper understanding of the processes and factors determining the first steps towards strategic alliance between Azerbaijan and Turkey before the Second Karabakh War. The results of the study: The collapse of the Soviet Union significantly changed the geopolitical situation in the Caucasus, creating new dynamics and challenges for regional stability. The emergence of new independent states, such as Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, was accompanied by an increase in interstate and intra-State conflicts, which then became key factors determining their relations, both with other countries in the region and with world powers.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, new players appeared in the Caucasus, such as Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, seeking to establish their place in world politics. However, their potential was significantly limited by inter-State and intra-State conflicts, such as the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia, as well as the conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia on the territory of Georgia.

These conflicts have become an important factor determining relations with other actors in the international arena. For example, neighboring countries and world powers were forced to take these conflicts into account when shaping their policies in the region. The spread of conflicts could have a negative impact on stability and security not only in the Caucasus, but also in the broader context of Eurasia [2].

In such circumstances, regional interstate cooperation proved to be a difficult task. Despite some attempts to resolve conflicts and promote stability in the region, for example, through mediation by international organizations and intermediary countries such as the Organization for

Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and Russia, achieving meaningful results remained a difficult task.

Thus, the collapse of the Soviet Union led to profound transformations in the geopolitical situation in the Caucasus, creating complex challenges and opportunities for regional stability and development. The establishment of friendly diplomatic relations between the Republic of Turkey and independent Azerbaijan was an indispensable step due to geographical, ethnic and historical factors. The relations between these two states were built on the basis of traditional friendship and mutual understanding, which had deep roots in their common cultural and historical ties [5].

The geographical location of Turkey and Azerbaijan provides them with strategic importance in the region. Both countries are located at the intersection of important transport routes, which makes them key players in the geopolitical sphere. The proximity of ethnic and cultural traditions also strengthens the bond between the two peoples.

Azerbaijan's independence in 1991 opened up new prospects for establishing and strengthening friendly relations with Turkey. Both countries sought to develop cooperation in various fields, including the economy, defense, culture and education.

This period was also marked by active cooperation in the international arena. Turkey has acted as a supportive and allied partner of Azerbaijan in its efforts to strengthen independence and security. Both countries supported each other on a number of important international and regional stability issues.

In 1992, Azerbaijani President Abulfaz Elchibey made an official trip to Turkey. This visit was of great importance for the establishment and strengthening of friendly relations between the two countries. During the visit, various aspects of cooperation were discussed, including economic, political and cultural issues.

The main purpose of the visit was to outline the prospects for cooperation between Turkey and Azerbaijan. President Elchibey discussed potential areas of joint work with the Turkish leaders and expressed readiness to deepen friendly ties between the two states.

In response to this visit, in 1992, Turkish President Turgut Ozal and Prime Minister Suleiman Demirel paid a friendly return visit to Azer-

baijan. This visit was also of great importance for the development of relations between the two countries and confirmed the desire for cooperation at various levels. The establishment of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan made it possible to quickly sign a number of real economic and political bilateral agreements. These agreements covered various aspects of cooperation, including trade, investment, defense, cultural exchange and more.

Thus, the visits of the President of Azerbaijan to Turkey and the Turkish leaders to Azerbaijan were important steps towards strengthening friendly relations between these two states. They helped to expand cooperation and establish the basis for further development of mutually beneficial relations.

One of the first important events confirming the close relations between the two countries was the visit of the Commander of the General Staff of the Turkish Army, D. Gyuresh, to Azerbaijan in early 1991. This visit has become a vivid symbol of Turkey's support and solidarity with Azerbaijan at a time when the country was facing challenges to independence and security. The result of this visit was the appearance of Turkish military advisers in the Azerbaijani army and a training program for cadets, soldiers and officers from Azerbaijan in Turkey.

Turkey has also actively supported Azerbaijan's integration into international political and economic institutions. During the 1990s, the Republic of Turkey, to the best of its ability, contributed to the involvement of Azerbaijan in transatlantic, European and Asian political and economic institutions. This included Azerbaijan's participation in various regional and international forums, as well as support in the development of economic projects and infrastructure initiatives.

One of the first steps in this direction was the registration of Azerbaijan's accession to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in 1991. This step confirmed Azerbaijan's desire to strengthen cooperation with other Muslim states in various fields, including politics, economics, culture and education [6].

In addition, in 1992, Azerbaijan began the process of joining the United Nations (UN). This step reflected Azerbaijan's desire to become a full participant in the international community and actively contribute to solving global problems and challenges.

Also in 1992, Azerbaijan began cooperation with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), formerly known as the Council for Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). This step was aimed at participating in international efforts to ensure peace, security and stability in Europe.

Thus, Turkey's efforts in promoting Azerbaijan's involvement in international organizations such as the OIC, the UN and the OSCE have played an important role in strengthening Azerbaijan's international position and status on the world stage. These steps confirmed Azerbaijan's desire to integrate into the global community and cooperate with other countries to achieve common goals and interests.

The second important stage in strengthening relations between the two states can be called the coming to power of Heydar Aliyev.

After Heydar Aliyev came to power in 1993, relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan continued to strengthen and develop in various spheres, including the political, economic and military spheres. Heydar Aliyev attached great importance to the strategic partnership with Turkey based on common interests and historical ties between the two peoples.

One of the important events in the relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan was the signing of the "Strategic Partnership Agreement" between the two countries in 1992. This agreement became the foundation for further deepening cooperation in various fields [3].

In 1995, the "Treaty on Fraternal Relations and Cooperation" was signed between Turkey and Azerbaijan. This agreement has strengthened mutual trust and cooperation between the two countries in the fields of defense, culture, economy and other areas.

Another important event was the signing of the "Strategic Partnership Agreement" between Turkey and Azerbaijan in 1999. This agreement continued to strengthen partnerships and established the basis for further cooperation in the fields of energy, transport, defense and other areas.

In 2001, a "Strategic Partnership Agreement" was signed between Turkey and Azerbaijan, which complemented previous agreements and strengthened cooperation in the fields of security, economy and culture. It should also be noted that during the reign of Heydar Aliyev, both states actively cooperated in a number of areas, including trade, energy, transport and culture. Military cooperation also continued to develop,

including joint military exercises and the exchange of experience in the field of defense [8].

Thus, during the years of Heydar Aliyev's rule, a number of important agreements were signed with Turkey, which strengthened the strategic partnership between the two countries and contributed to the development of their cooperation in various fields.

The third stage in the development of relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan can be highlighted during the reign of Ilham Aliyev, who became the 4th President of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2003. During his presidency, relations between the two countries continued to deepen and develop in various fields, reflecting the desire of both sides to strengthen strategic partnership.

**Economic cooperation:** Under the leadership of Ilham Aliyev, trade and economic relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan continued to develop actively. Numerous joint projects have been implemented in the fields of energy, transport, construction and other industries. An important event was the signing of an agreement on strategic partnership in the field of energy, including oil and gas pipeline construction projects [7].

Over the years, signed contracts and agreements:

**Free Trade Area Agreement:** In 2005, Azerbaijan and Turkey signed a Free Trade Area Agreement, which helped to increase trade turnover between the two countries and reduce trade barriers.

The signing of the Free Trade Agreement between Azerbaijan and Turkey in 2005 was a significant event that strengthened economic relations between the two countries and contributed to their mutual development. This agreement played a key role in reducing trade barriers and stimulating mutual trade and investment. Let's take a closer look at this important stage in economic cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey.

**Free Trade Area Agreement (2005):**

**Date of signing:** The Agreement was signed in 2005.

The purpose of this agreement was to create a free trade zone between Azerbaijan and Turkey, which would help increase trade turnover and stimulate economic growth in both countries.

The agreement provided for the reduction of customs duties and other restrictions on goods originating from both countries. It also provided for the regulation of trade and investment, as well as cooperation in the field of customs policy.



The signing of this agreement has become a powerful incentive for the growth of trade turnover between Azerbaijan and Turkey. It has contributed to increasing mutual investments, expanding economic ties and creating a favorable environment for business and entrepreneurship development in both countries.

This agreement has played an important role in deepening economic cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey, providing mutual benefits and contributing to the overall economic development of the region.[12]

**Energy Cooperation Agreement:** In 2007, an energy cooperation agreement was signed aimed at developing joint energy projects, including transportation and oil and gas production.

**Transport Infrastructure Agreement:** In 2010, an agreement on the development of transport infrastructure between Azerbaijan and Turkey was signed, which contributed to the improvement of transport links between the two countries and their regions.

**Agreement on cooperation in agriculture:** In 2015, an agreement on cooperation in agriculture was signed, aimed at the development of agricultural technologies, exchange of experience and joint projects in agriculture.

**Bilateral Investment Agreement:** In 2018, a bilateral investment agreement was signed between Azerbaijan and Turkey, aimed at stimulating investment and developing economic cooperation.

**Important meetings in the field of economics:**

2010, Baku: The Presidents of Azerbaijan and Turkey held a meeting at which the prospects for the development of economic cooperation between the two countries were discussed[11].

2013, Ankara: The meeting of the heads of government of Azerbaijan and Turkey was organized to discuss issues of cooperation in the field of trade, investment and energy.

2018, Izmir: The meeting at the level of the Ministers of Economy of Azerbaijan and Turkey was aimed at discussing cooperation in various sectors of the economy and developing joint strategies.

**Military cooperation:** Under the leadership of Ilham Aliyev, military cooperation between Turkey and Azerbaijan has also continued to develop. Both countries conducted joint military exercises and exchanged experience in the field of defense and security [4].

**Political interaction:** Ilham Aliyev continued to maintain close diplomatic relations with Turkey in the international arena. Both countries advocated common interests and adopted joint positions on many issues of world politics.

**Cultural ties:** During the presidency of Ilham Aliyev, cultural ties between Turkey and Azerbaijan also remained active. The exchange of cultural delegations, the organization of cultural events and educational projects continued to strengthen mutual understanding and friendship between the peoples of the two countries [9].

Cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey in the cultural sphere from 2003 to the present is of great importance for both countries, as they strive to preserve and strengthen their cultural ties and heritage. In this context, several treaties and agreements were signed, as well as many important cultural meetings and events were held.

**Agreement on Cultural Cooperation (2004):**

The agreement was signed in 2004 in Baku, Azerbaijan. This agreement established personnel for the development of cultural cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey. It included the exchange of cultural delegations, the organization of exhibitions, concerts, festivals, as well as joint research and educational projects.

The signing of this agreement helped strengthen cultural ties between the two countries and allowed them to cooperate more effectively in the fields of art, literature, music, cinema and other cultural fields.

**Important cultural meetings and events:**

Cultural meetings and festivals between Azerbaijan and Turkey are regularly held, for example, festivals of traditional music, dance, cinema and literature.

Important cultural events are exhibitions and cultural programs organized by the embassies and cultural centers of the two countries aimed at popularizing each other's art and culture.

Exchange of youth cultural delegations and student exchange programs: Azerbaijan and Turkey actively support the exchange of youth cultural delegations and student exchange programs, which contributes to the deepening of mutual understanding and friendship between the youth of both countries.

These and other cultural initiatives confirm the desire of Azerbaijan and Turkey to strengthen cultural ties and exchange experience in various

fields of culture, which contributes to the development of friendly relations and partnership between these two countries.

Treaties and agreements: Important dates in relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan during the years of Ilham Aliyev's rule were the signing of a number of treaties and agreements, including an agreement on cooperation in the field of energy, an agreement on military cooperation and others.

Cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey in the political sphere since 2003 has been of strategic importance for both countries and broad regional interests. Below is an overview of key moments and events, as well as signed agreements and important meetings in the field of political cooperation during this period.

#### Strategic Partnership Agreement (2004):

The agreement was signed in 2004 in Ankara, Turkey. This agreement established the framework for strategic cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey in various fields, including politics, security, defense, culture and economy.

The signing of this agreement confirmed the mutual desire to strengthen friendly and partnership relations between the two countries.

The meetings of the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Turkey were regularly held at the highest level and played an important role in strengthening diplomatic relations between the two countries. They discussed various issues of bilateral cooperation, as well as regional and international policy issues.

#### Agreement on Mutual Assistance in the Field of Defense (2005):

The Agreement was signed in 2005. This agreement established a framework for mutual defense assistance between Azerbaijan and Turkey, including military cooperation, exchange of experience and training.

The agreement strengthened military cooperation and security between the two countries, which is important for ensuring stability in the region.

Regular consultations and meetings on political and security issues: During the period from 2003 to the present, Azerbaijan and Turkey have regularly held consultations and meetings on political and security issues to discuss common interests, regional challenges and ways to solve them.

These events and agreements in the political sphere testify to the close and trusting partnership between Azerbaijan and Turkey, which

continues to develop and deepen in the interests of both countries and ensuring stability and security in the region.

Military cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey since 2003 has been a key aspect of their strategic partnership aimed at ensuring security and stability in the region. In this context, several treaties and agreements were signed, as well as a number of important meetings and joint exercises were held.

Joint military exercises and exchange of experience:

Azerbaijan and Turkey regularly conduct joint military exercises such as Dostluk and Turk Phase. These exercises are aimed at strengthening military cooperation and increasing combat readiness.

The exchange of experience between the armed forces of the two countries is also an important component of military cooperation.

Cooperation in the field of military industry:

Azerbaijan and Turkey are also developing cooperation in the field of military industry. Cooperation agreements and joint projects in this area promote the exchange of technologies and experience, as well as strengthening the defense capabilities of both countries.

Important meetings and consultations:

Senior representatives of the armed forces of Azerbaijan and Turkey regularly hold meetings and consultations to discuss security issues and joint strategies in the region.

These and other military cooperation activities testify to the close military ties and strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and Turkey aimed at ensuring security and stability in the region.

Conclusions: The Second Karabakh War, also known as the Liberation War, took place in September-November 2020 between Azerbaijan and Armenia in connection with the territorial dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh and related areas. The war was the last but bloodiest episode of the conflict, which began in the early 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The conflict was resolved by an agreement signed on November 10, 2020, between Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia, which stopped the fire and settled the conflict issues. This agreement opened the way for Azerbaijan to regain control over a significant part of the territory previously under the control of separatist forces, and also put the issue of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh on the negotiating table.

The main factors that provoked the war included the prolonged stagnation of the conflict, violations of truces, increased military rhetoric and provocations on both sides. As a result of the war, a significant part of the occupied territories, including the city of Shusha and other strategically important settlements, were liberated by the Azerbaijani armed forces.

The Second Karabakh war had serious geopolitical consequences for the region, including the strengthening of Turkey's influence in the region, a change in the dynamics of forces in Transcaucasia and a revision of Russia's strategic positions. There is also a need for international efforts to ensure long-term peace and stability in the region.

This war had a significant impact on both countries, causing deep feelings of loss and disappointment among the Armenian community, as well as joy and hope for the future among Azerbaijanis. She also raised the need for a long-term and sustainable settlement of the conflict, including prospects for a political settlement, the return of refugees and displaced persons, as well as the restoration of destroyed infrastructure.

Turkey's role in the second Karabakh War in Azerbaijan was significant and had a significant impact on the course of the conflict. Turkey has been one of the key supporting factors for Azerbaijan both politically and militarily. Her intervention in the conflict largely determined its outcome and the subsequent negotiations.

#### Political support:

Turkey has supported Azerbaijan, politically supporting its position in the conflict and defending its rights to territorial integrity. This has manifested itself in official statements, diplomatic efforts, and international forums.

#### Military support:

Turkey provided military support to Azerbaijan, including the provision of military equipment and weapons, as well as military assistance in the form of military advisers and specialists..

#### Political influence:

Turkey has played an important role in shaping international opinion on the Karabakh conflict, actively promoting Azerbaijan's position in the international arena.

#### Diplomatic efforts:

Turkey participated in diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict, including as a mediator in the negotiation process.

Moral support:

Turkey provided moral support to the Azerbaijani people and the military, which was important for maintaining morale and motivation in the struggle for the liberation of the occupied territories.

**Conclusions.** Turkey's role in the second Karabakh war in Azerbaijan was active and had a significant impact on the course of the conflict. Her support contributed to ensuring the success of the Azerbaijani armed forces and, ultimately, to victory in the war.

Summing up the study, it can be said that the conclusions to Azerbaijan's political and economic relations with Turkey during the reign of Ilham Aliyev and Azerbaijan's victory in the second Karabakh War may be as follows:

Strengthening the strategic partnership: The period of Ilham Aliyev's rule was characterized by the strengthening of the strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and Turkey in both political and economic spheres. The two countries continued to actively cooperate at various levels, supporting mutual interests and ensuring security in the region.

The growth of economic ties: During the reign of Ilham Aliyev, economic relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey have significantly deepened. The signed free trade area agreements and other agreements have contributed to an increase in trade and investment between the countries.

Turkey's support during the Second Karabakh War: The Second Karabakh War became an important moment in relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey. Turkey provided significant support to Azerbaijan during the war, which contributed to its victory and the return of control over the occupied territories.

Strengthening diplomatic cooperation: Diplomatic ties between Azerbaijan and Turkey have also strengthened during this period. The two countries continued to actively cooperate within the framework of various international organizations and forums, defending common interests and positions.

In general, relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey under the leadership of Ilham Aliyev remain close and strategically important for both countries. Azerbaijan's victory in the second Karabakh War further stren-

gthened these relations and gave a new impetus to further cooperation and development in the region.

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## **ПЕРШІ КРОКИ ДО СТРАТЕГІЧНОГО АЛЬЯНСУ В АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСЬКО-ТУРЕЦЬКИХ ВІДНОСИНАХ ПЕРЕД ДРУГОЮ КАРАБАХСЬКОЮ ВІЙНОЮ**

*Азербайджан і Туреччину історично пов'язують багато спільних культурних, мовних і релігійних зв'язків, що створює основу для розвитку стратегічних союзницьких відносин між цими двома країнами. Після приходу до влади в 2003 році президента Ільхама Алієва відносини між Азербайджаном і Туреччиною продовжували зміцнюватися, і обидві сторони висловили зацікавленість у поглибленні стратегічного партнерства. У цій статті ми розглянемо перші кроки до стратегічного альянсу в азербайджано-турецьких відносинах за правління Ільхама Алієва, особливо в контексті перед Другою Карабаською війною.*

*Для аналізу перших кроків до стратегічного альянсу між Азербайджаном і Туреччиною під час правління Ільхама Алієва було проведено комплексний аналіз офіційних заяв, політичних документів і договорів, а також актів зовнішньої політики обох країн. Також були використані дані досліджень та аналітичних оглядів, опублікованих у різних наукових журналах та авторитетних аналітичних виданнях.*

*Метою цього дослідження є виявлення перших кроків, зроблених Азербайджаном і Туреччиною щодо поглиблення стратегічного альянсу за часів правління Ільхама Алієва перед Другою Карабаською війною. Ми прагнемо проаналізувати основні етапи та чинники, які сприяли формуванню тісніших зв'язків між цими двома державами.*

*Під час правління Ільхама Алієва в Азербайджані було започатковано ряд заходів та політичних ініціатив, спрямованих на поглиблення стратегічних відносин з Туреччиною. Це включало посилення військового співробітництва, підписання угод про безпеку та взаємну підтримку, а також угод про співпрацю*

в галузі енергетики та транспорту. Ключову роль у зміцненні дипломатичних відносин зіграла також підтримка Азербайджаном Туреччини в різних міжнародних питаннях.

Перші кроки до стратегічного альянсу між Азербайджаном і Туреччиною під час правління Ільхама Алієва виявилися важливим етапом у розвитку відносин між цими двома державами. Поглиблення співробітництва в різних сферах, включаючи військову, політичну, економічну та культурну, сприяло зміцненню взаєморозуміння і довіри між Азербайджаном і Туреччиною. Цей процес мав значний вплив на подальший розвиток відносин і відіграв ключову роль у формуванні стратегічного альянсу, що виявилось особливо важливим в контексті Другої Карабахської війни та подальших подій.

**Ключові слова:** співпраця, підтримка, стратегічний союз, друга карабахська війна.

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### **Відомості про автора / Information about the Authors**

Гунель Юсібова, докторант кафедри соціологічних дисциплін Гянджінського державного університету, м. Гянджа, Азербайджан. E-mail: [gunnel.yusibova@gdu.edu.az](mailto:gunnel.yusibova@gdu.edu.az). orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-1316-0849>.

Gunnel Yusibova, Doctoral student of the Department of Sociological Disciplines of Ganja State University, Ganja, Azerbaijan. E-mail: [gunnel.yusibova@gdu.edu.az](mailto:gunnel.yusibova@gdu.edu.az). orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-1316-0849>.

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