

Azerbaijan: A Guarantor of Peace and Security in the South Caucasus

In an era of global turbulence, when international law faces systemic challenges and many regions of the world remain arenas of prolonged conflict, the importance of stable regional centers is steadily increasing. The South Caucasus, long associated with chronic instability, is gradually transforming into a space of strategic reconfiguration. At the center of this transformation stands Azerbaijan.

Having restored its territorial integrity following the 2020 Patriotic War and concluded the military phase of the conflict in 2023, Baku entered a qualitatively new historical stage. This stage goes beyond post-conflict stabilization; it represents the construction of a new regional architecture grounded in sovereignty, geoeconomics strategy, and proactive diplomacy.

From the Restoration of Justice to the Institutionalization of Peace

The 44-day war reshaped not only the balance of power but also the logic of regional development. However, Azerbaijan's strategic significance is defined not by military success alone, but by its ability to convert that outcome into a sustainable political and economic order.

After 2023, state policy focused on reconstructing liberated territories, building modern infrastructure, modernizing the armed forces, and strengthening cyber resilience. Yet the central priority became the institutionalization of peace — transforming post-conflict reality into a durable model of development. It is precisely here that geoeconomics emerges as a decisive factor.

Geoeconomics as the New Foundation of Security: The Middle Corridor and Eurasian Connectivity

The Middle Corridor (Trans-Caspian International Transport Route) has evolved into more than a transport route; it has become a strategic axis of Eurasia. After 2022, when traditional northern logistical channels faced serious geopolitical constraints, the China–Central Asia–Caspian–Azerbaijan–Georgia–Turkey–Europe route gained new strategic relevance.

The Baku International Sea Trade Port in Alat, the Baku–Tbilisi–Kars railway, modernized Caspian shipping capacities, and expanding logistics hubs together form an infrastructure capable of servicing growing East–West transit flows.

The significance of the Middle Corridor extends far beyond logistics. It mitigates geopolitical risks in global supply chains, creates economic interdependence, and contributes to a new architecture of connectivity in which the stability of the South Caucasus becomes an integral component of broader Eurasian trade resilience. Within

this framework, Azerbaijan functions not as a peripheral transit state but as a structural node in a reconfigured Eurasian landscape.

Energy Diplomacy and Europe's Strategic Resilience

The Southern Gas Corridor has consolidated Azerbaijan's long-term role in Europe's energy architecture. Deliveries of Caspian gas via TANAP and TAP have become an important element of Europe's energy diversification strategy. Yet the significance of this cooperation extends beyond export volumes. The energy partnership between Baku and Brussels fosters structural interdependence in which economic interests reinforce political stability.

Simultaneously, a new dimension is emerging — the export of renewable energy. The Black Sea submarine electricity cable project connecting the Caspian region to European markets reflects Azerbaijan's transition toward a new energy paradigm. This is not merely diversification, but a strategic repositioning in the context of the global energy transition.

In an era of decarbonization, integration into green energy networks enhances a state's international agency and broadens the scope of its diplomatic leverage. Energy, therefore, is increasingly becoming not just an economic sector for Azerbaijan, but an instrument of multi-layered foreign policy — a channel of strategic dialogue and a mechanism for building long-term trust.

The Trans-Caspian Economic Arc

Parallel to these developments, a Trans-Caspian economic arc is taking shape — a system of transport, energy, and logistical linkages connecting Central Asian states to Europe through Azerbaijani infrastructure. Tariff coordination, expansion of Caspian maritime routes, synchronization of railway systems, and energy cooperation are creating a horizontal architecture of integration.

Within this configuration, Baku is evolving beyond a mere transit territory into a platform where the economic interests of two macro-regions intersect. Azerbaijan is gradually emerging as a cross-regional integrator — a state through which a new logic of Eurasian interconnectivity is being constructed.

Peace Through Infrastructure: The TRIPP Initiative

A significant component of the emerging regional architecture is the TRIPP project (Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity), proposed in 2025 with active U.S. engagement. The initiative envisions a comprehensive infrastructure network linking Azerbaijan, Nakhchivan, Armenia, and Turkey through railways, energy lines, and digital communication systems.

TRIPP is more than a transport scheme. It represents an effort to reframe post-conflict realities through economic pragmatism, where mutual benefit gradually replaces

confrontation. By enabling connectivity without compromising sovereignty, the project lays the groundwork for long-term regional stabilization through structured economic interdependence.

Diplomacy as Strategic Survival

In a context of global uncertainty, diplomacy is increasingly becoming not merely a foreign policy instrument but a mechanism of strategic survival.

It is within this framework that assess the meetings between President Ilham Aliyev of the Republic of Azerbaijan and President Donald Trump of the United States — both during his first administration and following his return to office in a second term.

While the first phase of engagement focused primarily on energy cooperation and regional stability, the second term broadened the dialogue into a more comprehensive geopolitical and peace-building dimension.

Contacts in 2025–2026 signaled the transition of bilateral relations toward institutionalized strategic trust. A defining moment was the meeting on January 22, 2026, on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, where the leaders reaffirmed the positive trajectory of bilateral ties and underscored the U.S. role in advancing the peace agenda between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

President Aliyev's participation in Davos carried strategic rather than ceremonial significance. Discussions centered on energy security, sustainable development, regional investment prospects, post-conflict reconstruction, and emerging Eurasian transport corridors. Davos 2026 effectively reaffirmed Azerbaijan's international status as a state capable of combining energy leadership, geoeconomics initiative, and political stability.

It was during this meeting that a new format of international cooperation — the Board of Peace, initiated under President Trump — was discussed, and Azerbaijan was invited to become one of its founding participants.

Azerbaijan's involvement in this format marked recognition of its role as a responsible stakeholder in the evolving global peace agenda. This engagement continued during President Aliyev's working visit to Washington on February 18–19, 2026, where he participated in the inaugural meeting of the Board of Peace. The discussions addressed global security challenges, humanitarian coordination, and post-conflict reconstruction efforts, including international initiatives concerning the rebuilding of Gaza. Support for the peace process strengthened the international legitimacy of the new post-conflict reality in the South Caucasus. The peace agenda thus moved beyond a purely regional framework and entered the broader sphere of global diplomatic discourse.

Political dialogue was further complemented by an economic dimension: the stability of relations with Washington enhanced Azerbaijan's investment appeal and reinforced international confidence. During the visit, President Aliyev held a series of meetings with representatives of American political, business, and civil society circles, including leadership of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), where

issues of interfaith harmony, strategic partnership, and the further strengthening of Azerbaijani–American relations were discussed.

Personal diplomacy and direct leader-to-leader communication played an important role in shaping a pragmatic atmosphere of strategic engagement.

Azerbaijan’s contemporary role in the South Caucasus emerges at the intersection of three interrelated processes: post-conflict transformation, geo-economics integration, and strategic diplomacy.

The restoration of territorial integrity marked the starting point. However, it is the development of the Middle Corridor, participation in Europe’s energy resilience, the formation of the Trans-Caspian economic arc, infrastructure initiatives such as TRIPP, and the institutionalization of strategic dialogue with major global actors that define the region’s long-term trajectory.

The South Caucasus is gradually shifting from a paradigm of confrontation to one of interdependence.

Within this configuration, Azerbaijan acts not as a dominant power but as a structural node in a reconfigured Eurasian system — connecting trade, energy, and diplomacy.

It is precisely the ability to combine sovereignty, geo-economics statecraft, and pragmatic foreign policy that positions Baku as one of the key factors shaping a more predictable and sustainable security architecture in the South Caucasus.

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