

AZERBAIJAN-TURKEY

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS IN THE MODERN GEOPOLITICAL CONDITIONS

LAS RELACIONES DIPLOMÁTICAS ENTRE AZERBAIYÁN Y TURQUÍA EN LAS CONDICIONES GEOPOLÍTICAS MODERNAS

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Suggested citation (APA, seventh ed.)

Ismayilov, S. (2025). Azerbaijan-Turkey diplomatic relations in the modern geopolitical conditions. *Universidad y Sociedad*, 17(1), e4907.

ABSTRACT

The relationship between Turkey and Azerbaijan is a powerful example of “natural allies” on the international stage, rooted in deep historical and cultural connections. Despite the complex and often turbulent course of history, the two nations have consistently stood by each other during difficult times. This partnership gained even greater importance as Azerbaijan emerged as a key player on the global stage, prompting a closer examination of the strategic dimensions of their alliance. The goal of this research is to analyze how Turkey’s political and moral support contributed to Azerbaijan’s success in ending Armenia’s 30-year occupation, restoring its territorial integrity, and fostering regional stability. We show that this collaboration extends beyond political and military support, to include economic, transportation, and cultural initiatives, all of them aiming at securing long-term peace and development in the Caucasus. The broader implications of this alliance are significant; to the point that President Ilham Aliyev’s stated that no regional project can proceed without the involvement of Azerbaijan and Turkey. This underscores their shared priorities and growing influence in regional and international affairs.

Keywords: Azerbaijan, Turkey, Turkishness, Political relations, Economic relations, Bilateral relationship.

RESUMEN

La relación entre Turquía y Azerbaiyán es un ejemplo poderoso de “aliados naturales” en el escenario internacional, arraigados en profundas conexiones históricas y culturales. A pesar del curso complejo y a menudo turbulento de la historia, las dos naciones siempre se han apoyado mutuamente en tiempos difíciles. Esta asociación adquirió aún mayor importancia cuando Azerbaiyán emergió como un actor clave en el escenario mundial, lo que impulsó un examen más detallado de las dimensiones estratégicas de su alianza. El objetivo de esta investigación es analizar cómo el apoyo político y moral de Turquía contribuyó al éxito de Azerbaiyán en poner fin a la ocupación de Armenia de 30 años, restaurar su integridad territorial y fomentar la estabilidad regional. Se demuestra que esta colaboración se extiende más allá del apoyo político y militar, para incluir iniciativas económicas, de transporte y culturales, todas ellas destinadas a garantizar la paz y el desarrollo a largo plazo en el Cáucaso. Las implicaciones más amplias de esta alianza son significativas; hasta el punto de que el presidente Ilham Aliyev declaró que ningún proyecto regional puede avanzar sin la participación de Azerbaiyán y Turquía. Esto subraya sus prioridades compartidas y su creciente influencia en los asuntos regionales e internacionales.

Palabras clave: Azerbaiyán, Turquía, Turquidad, Relaciones políticas, Relaciones económicas, Relaciones bilaterales.

INTRODUCTION

Azerbaijan-Turkey relations are an example of a close and multifaceted partnership that covers political, economic, cultural, and military spheres. These relations are based on common historical, cultural, and linguistic roots, as well as strategic mutual understanding and support in international politics. Azerbaijan and Turkey have traditionally maintained very close political ties since both countries share strategic interests in the region, and their interaction is often described as “brotherly relations,” which is also emphasized by their common Turkic and Muslim heritage (Vladimir, 2022). Important aspects of political interaction are:

1. **Support for territorial integrity:** Turkey actively supports Azerbaijan on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, recognizing Azerbaijan’s sovereignty over this region. In 2020, after the Second Karabakh War, Turkey actively supported Baku, which strengthened the strategic ties between the countries (Yemelianova, 2024).
2. **Diplomatic support:** Azerbaijan supports Turkey in international forums and organizations such as the UN, OSCE, and others. Both countries oppose external interference in the affairs of Turkic and Muslim peoples (Talyshinsky, 2021).

Azerbaijan-Turkey relations, based on historical roots, have always been formed according to the political realities of the time. Mutual relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey have developed at a more positive pace in the 20th and 21st centuries and have risen to the level of an alliance from economic, political, and military perspectives (Yilmaz & Yorulmaz, 2021). These relations show that both states together demonstrate political will to ensure peace and security within the framework of Turkish unity and in the South Caucasus. The deep historical roots of these relations prove that the mutual relations between the two countries are not only within the framework of strategic interests but also stem from an attachment to their roots and shared national and moral values. As a result, the geopolitical processes in the world since the beginning of the 20th century have had no significant impact on the future of the peoples living in the South Caucasus (Shafiyev, 2023).

Azerbaijan-Turkey relations, built on the basis of historical friendship, mutual trust, sincere relations, and high-level cooperation, are constantly being strengthened. The fact that their peoples share the same ancestry, language, religion, culture, and many other mutual ties has always made these two countries close to each other, and they have stood by each other’s side during both happy and sad times. The relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey, characterized by the great leader Heydar Aliyev as “one

nation, two states,” are reaching a higher level today as a logical result of the correct and purposeful policy implemented by the leadership of both countries, and are evolving to a new quality in several areas (Gurbanov, 2011).

Azerbaijan and Turkey have strong economic ties. In recent decades, trade and economic cooperation between the two countries have expanded significantly due to mutual investments and projects in the energy, infrastructure, and agricultural sectors. Key areas:

- **Energy:** Turkey and Azerbaijan are important partners in the energy sector. Azerbaijan is a supplier of natural gas and oil to Turkey and is involved in major energy projects such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline, which transports oil from the Caspian region to Turkey, and the Turkish Stream gas pipeline, which supplies natural gas from Russia and Azerbaijan to Turkey (Gahramanov, 2019; Progonati, 2021).
- **Investment:** Turkey is actively investing in various sectors of the Azerbaijani economy, including construction, banking, and information technology. Azerbaijan is also investing in the Turkish economy.
- **Trade:** The trade turnover between the countries is growing regularly (Tufaner, 2022). In 2022, the volume of trade amounted to more than \$5 billion, with forecasts for further increase.

Historical examples are, for example, when Turkish officers and soldiers captured during the failed Sarigamyş operation in 1915, as well as civilians captured from Kars, Erzurum, and other regions of Anatolia, were sent to different provinces of Russia. The Russian government ordered to bring a large part of the captured Turkish population to Nargin, the “Island of Hell”. Turkish prisoners, consisting of more than 7,000 soldiers and civilians, faced death in Nargin prison under extremely difficult and unbearable conditions. According to the documents of that time, at least 30 people were killed every day. During such a time, the Muslim societies operating in Azerbaijan tried to provide all kinds of assistance to their Turkish brothers. The main goals of “Brother Help”, “Committee to Help Turkish Prisoners”, “Help to the Needy”, and Baku Islamic Charitable Societies, Muslim Women’s Charitable Organization were to help the captives, facilitate their return to their homeland, and extend a helping hand to orphaned children, the elderly, and the sick. Additionally, Azerbaijani entrepreneurs organized the secret rescue of captives from Nargin Island, hiding them in their homes and shops. The national awakening against Tsarist Russia, which was a “prison of nations” at that time, ultimately resulted in the empire’s collapse.

The Azerbaijanis created the first Turkish-Muslim state with democratic foundations in the East - the People’s

Republic of Azerbaijan. They restored internal stability and strengthened army-building efforts by drawing closer to their brotherly Ottoman state to resist both internal and external influences. Ottoman Turkey was the first state to officially recognize the Azerbaijan People's Republic. The units and divisions of the Muslim corps, which had already been formed on the eve of independence, did not have enough military power to break the resistance of the Bolshevik-Dashnak troops and Andronikin's troops supported by Stepan Shaumyan. In such a situation, the Azerbaijani government appealed to the Ottoman state for help and created the Caucasian Islamic Army based on Turkish military units that came to aid the Azerbaijani people who were subjected to genocide, combining them with national troops. Nuru Pasha was appointed as the commander of that army. It was through the direct participation of that army that Baku and the surrounding areas were liberated from the Dashnak-Bolshevik forces (Yagublu, 2013, pp. 71–78).

Thus, the goal of this research is to explore the relationship between Turkey and Azerbaijan, focusing on their political, military, and moral support that contributed to Azerbaijan's success in reclaiming its territorial integrity, especially during the Second Karabakh War, and its wider implications for regional stability. The study looks into how this alliance goes beyond military cooperation, encompassing areas such as economic, transportation, and cultural collaboration, with the aim of promoting lasting peace and progress in the Caucasus. By highlighting these multifaceted efforts, the research emphasizes the increasing influence of Turkey and Azerbaijan as strategic partners shaping both regional and global dynamics.

DEVELOPMENT

Azerbaijan is the closest to Turkey in the Turkic world. Mutual relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey continued even after Azerbaijan became part of the Soviet Union. During the first years of Turkey's independence, money, gold, oil, and oil products were sent from Azerbaijan to Turkey as financial support. The Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, which gained state independence on May 28th, 1918, signed its first agreement with the Ottoman Empire a week later - on June 4th. Thus, the Ottoman state was the first to recognize Azerbaijan's independence. Based on the 4th paragraph of that agreement, the help of the Ottoman government was requested, and the Caucasian Islamic Army, which came to help, played a crucial role in liberating Azerbaijan from the Armenian-Bolshevik occupation.

During the first years of Soviet rule in Azerbaijan, diplomatic relations between the two states continued. The

Azerbaijan-Turkey relations also became evident in preventing the loss of Azerbaijani territories to Armenia. The Soviet leadership was attempting to unite Azerbaijan's Zangezur and Nakhchivan provinces, as well as Karabakh, with Armenia, thereby realizing the Armenians' dreams of "Greater Armenia" at the expense of Azerbaijan's territory. After Zangezur was handed over to Armenia in 1920, when work was being done to resolve the fate of Nakhchivan, brotherly Turkey played an exceptional role in resolving this issue within the framework of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity by negotiating with the Soviet leadership.

In October 1921, the embassy of the Azerbaijan SSR was opened in Turkey. Later, the consulate of the Azerbaijan SSR operated in Kars, and the diplomatic representation of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey operated in Baku. The issue of Nakhchivan occupied an important place in the foreign policy of Soviet Azerbaijan. It was through the Moscow and Kars negotiations with Turkey's help, and in the relevant agreements signed as a result of those negotiations, that Nakhchivan was handed over to Azerbaijan.

In the early 1990s, Nakhchivan held a special place in Turkey-Azerbaijan relations. Preference was given to maintaining mutual diplomatic relations with Heydar Aliyev, who was then the Chairman of the Supreme Assembly of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, to solve both economic and social issues. From 1991-1993, key indicators of brotherly relations between the countries included:

- Eliminating the financial hardships of the autonomous republic's population
- Involving young people in education in different cities of Turkey
- Opening the "Hope" bridge between Nakhchivan and Turkey (May 28th, 1992)

Between March 22-24, 1992, Great Leader Heydar Aliyev visited the Republic of Turkey and encouraged the development of economic, social, and cultural relations between the two countries. In 1992, when the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia organized attacks on the border regions of Nakhchivan, the Republic of Turkey issued a statement on May 18th condemning Armenia's military aggression, 57 countries joined this declaration.

During the existence of the Soviet Union, cultural relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan were somewhat preserved. Figures from science, culture, and art visited each other and tried to maintain connections. The Consulate General of Turkey was opened in Baku on May 25th, 1991, on the eve of the Soviet Union's dissolution

and Azerbaijan's restoration of state independence. On August 30th, 1991, after the adoption of the Declaration of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the restoration of state independence, the issue of recognition by foreign countries arose.

After Azerbaijan regained its state independence on October 18th, 1991, on November 1, it officially delivered its proposal to Turkey regarding the recognition of the country's independence. At the meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Turkey held on November 9th, 1991, the decision to recognize the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan was accepted. Thus, Turkey became the first country to recognize Azerbaijan's independence. After Azerbaijan gained its independence, the Republic of Turkey again stood beside Azerbaijan, as it had at the beginning of the 20th century. The sister country first recognized Azerbaijan as an independent state on November 9th, 1991. Diplomatic relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan were established on January 14th, 1992.

In February 1992, agreements were signed between the ministries of foreign affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey on cooperation and the exchange of letters on visa-free travel between the two countries. At that time, Azerbaijan's primary expectation from Turkey was the mutual opening of embassies and Turkey's assistance in helping Azerbaijan gain recognition of its independence from other countries. The visit of Turkish President Turgut Özal to Azerbaijan on May 1-3, 1992, and the "Joint Statement" signed during the visit became the cornerstone of strategic cooperation. The meetings between the leaders of the two countries and the "Joint Statement" defined the main principles of mutual relations and development prospects. Both countries began to take successive steps based on the principles of mutually beneficial cooperation (Ruintain, 2005, pp. 30–85).

Azerbaijan and Turkey demonstrate an example of cooperation, collaboration, and alliance. Turkey supported the efforts of the Republic of Azerbaijan in its path of independent state-building and began to provide extensive assistance to develop comprehensive relations. In August 1992, the Embassy of Azerbaijan in Turkey was opened, and in January 1993, the Consulate General was established in Istanbul. On April 12th, 2004, the Consulate General was established in the city of Kars. Simultaneously, the Turkish Embassy in Baku and Consulate Generals in Nakhchivan and Ganja continue to operate.

In November 1992, intergovernmental agreements were signed between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey covering technical cooperation in developing small and medium-sized industrial enterprises,

trade and economic cooperation, promotion and protection of investments, credit agreements, and other documents. These agreements marked important steps in creating the legal normative base for mutual relations.

From the first days of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, Turkey consistently defended Azerbaijan's legitimate demands in accordance with international legal norms and made great efforts to ensure the territorial integrity and sovereign rights of Azerbaijan. Turkey played a crucial role in removing the blockade and protecting the security of Nakhchivan, which was cut off from land connections with other territories of Azerbaijan. Turkey was actively involved in lifting Nakhchivan's economic blockade. On March 22th, 1992, the Chairman of the Nakhchivan Supreme Council, Heydar Aliyev, visited Turkey and signed a protocol allocating a loan of 100 million dollars to Nakhchivan and allowing 10 students to study in Turkey. After the occupation of the Kalbajar region in April 1993, Turkey was the only regional state that closed its borders with Armenia and imposed sanctions against it, while simultaneously actively supporting the strengthening of the Azerbaijani Army.

In the first years of independence, very few foreign country embassies operated in Azerbaijan. Some countries' embassies in Ankara were also accredited to Azerbaijan. Turkish embassies represented Azerbaijan in many countries. Even before establishing a dedicated embassy building, Azerbaijani ambassadors were located in Turkish embassy buildings in those countries. For this reason, Turkey's permanent representatives in NATO also represented Azerbaijan for an extended period. After returning to power in 1993, Heydar Aliyev, who placed special importance on expanding comprehensive cooperation with Turkey in Azerbaijan's international integration, regional security protection, and the realization of political-economic and scientific-cultural interests, ensured the development of this strategic direction.

The first official visit of Azerbaijan's President Heydar Aliyev to Turkey, which lasted from February 8 to 11, 1994, gave new momentum to the development of bilateral relations. Following negotiations in Ankara on February 9th, the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey signed multiple important documents, including:

- A protocol on cooperation and mutual assistance.
- An agreement on cooperation in scientific, technical, cultural, and economic fields.
- An agreement on developing friendship and comprehensive cooperation.

- An agreement on political consultations.
- A mutual investment promotion and protection agreement.

On September 20th, 1994, the representation of the "Turkish Petrol" company in the consortium of foreign oil companies that signed the "Contract of the Century" was a real manifestation of the developing strategic cooperation between Turkey and Azerbaijan. Regular mutual visits of heads of state were accompanied by the further development of relations between the two countries. The Joint Statement and memorandum on economic cooperation, signed during the official visit of Turkish President Suleyman Demirel to Azerbaijan on December 7-9, 1995, once again confirmed that the principles defining friendly relations and the development directions of bilateral relations remain unshakable. The strengthening of bilateral relations and the development of friendly ties expanded the scope of Azerbaijan-Turkey cooperation.

In 1996, several documents on cooperation in military, technical, and scientific fields were signed between the two countries. On May 5th, 1997, during Azerbaijan President Heydar Aliyev's official visit to Turkey, important documents were signed in Ankara, including:

- A declaration on deepening strategic cooperation between the governments of Azerbaijan and Turkey.
- An additional protocol on cooperation aimed at developing small and medium-sized industrial enterprises.
- An agreement on cooperation in the electric power sector.

The years 1996-2003 marked a qualitatively new stage in Azerbaijan-Turkey economic cooperation. In the initial years, the main part of Azerbaijan's export to Turkey consisted of chemical products, metal, and cotton. Oil products comprised 70 percent of exports from the Republic of Azerbaijan to Turkey. In 1996, the Republic of Turkey accounted for 6.2 percent of Azerbaijan's exports and 22.5 percent of its imports. On May 5th, 1997, at the invitation of Turkish President Suleyman Demirel, Great Leader Heydar Aliyev went on an official visit to Turkey and participated in the document signing ceremony at the "Çankaya Pavilion". The presidents signed a declaration on deepening strategic cooperation between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Azerbaijan. Mutual visits of heads of state and government, along with signed partnership documents, created conditions for closer relations between the two countries.

On November 18th, 1999, at the OSCE Istanbul Summit, the presidents of Azerbaijan (Heydar Aliyev), Georgia (Eduard Shevardnadze), and Turkey (Suleyman Demirel) signed an agreement on transporting crude oil through the territories of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey via the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Main Export Pipeline. They simultaneously decided to build a gas pipeline to transport natural gas from the Shahdeniz field to Turkey along the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum route (Hajiyeva, 2012, pp. 120-125).

Azerbaijan-Turkey military cooperation has been expanding year by year, playing a crucial role in:

- Training officers for the Azerbaijani army.
- Conducting military exercises.
- Strengthening the material and technical base.
- Building the army to NATO standards.

In March 2001, the official visit of Azerbaijan's President Heydar Aliyev to Turkey and the signing of agreements on taxes, finance, transportation of Azerbaijani natural gas, and other documents were important in creating additional conditions for continuing the mutually beneficial cooperation policy. The official visit of President Ilham Aliyev to Turkey on April 13-15, 2004, played a significant role in developing relations between the two countries. During the visit, several documents were signed, including:

- A joint statement between Azerbaijan and Turkey.
- Protocols on cooperation in civil aviation and culture.

The implementation of projects introducing Caspian Sea energy resources to world markets was an important step toward strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and Turkey. Global economic projects demonstrated the dynamic development of relations between the countries in all fields. On July 13th, 2006, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil export pipeline was launched at the Ceyhan terminal on the Turkish Mediterranean coast, implementing an international transcontinental project involving both countries.

In 2007, the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline was commissioned. The implementation of these projects opened a new chapter in the socio-economic development of Azerbaijan and Turkey, strengthening: 1) regional security, 2) mutual relations and 3) comprehensive integration into the world community. Key milestones in bilateral relations include:

- August 16th, 2010: Signing of the "Joint Declaration on the Establishment of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council"

- June 26th, 2013: Signing of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) project in Istanbul by President Ilham Aliyev and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan

The TANAP project is assessed as a significant contribution to energy security for Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Europe. It ensures:

- Transportation of Caspian gas to European countries.
- Access for Azerbaijan to international sales markets.
- Increased economic potential and strategic role for both countries.

The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway project, an important part of the "New Silk Road" transport corridor, was inaugurated in Baku on October 30th, 2017, with the participation of Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev and Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Beyond contributing to regional peace and security, the project is of great importance in improving the welfare of both peoples. The Trans-Anatolian Gas Pipeline (TANAP) - a key component of the Southern Gas Corridor and dubbed the project of the XXI Century - was commissioned in 2018 in Eski ehir, Turkey. The Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) began transporting Azerbaijani gas to Europe in 2021. The realization of these projects represents another product of sincere friendship and beneficial partnership between Turkey and Azerbaijan. Moreover, these projects serve to strengthen the global positions of both countries by increasing their regional influence (Ismayilov, 2011).

In addition, Azerbaijan and Turkey share similar views on many international issues, including policies toward the Caucasus, the Middle East, and Central Asia. Their cooperation helps to strengthen their influence in international organizations such as the UN, NATO, ECO, the Turkic Council, and others. Regarding regional security, both countries actively cooperate on regional security issues, especially in the Caucasus, where they jointly counter external influences from countries like Russia and Iran. Other example of the close relation is that Turkey supports Azerbaijan's efforts to integrate into the Turkic Council and other Turkic organizations, which helps to strengthen ties between Turkic states.

The Karabakh Victory also shed light on the historical pages of our brotherly countries. For 30 years, the tradition of mutual support between the two countries in the international arena has always continued. Turkey has consistently defended Azerbaijan's internationally recognized territorial integrity and Azerbaijan's rightful position in the conflict that arose as a result of Armenia's occupation of our

historical territories. In the Karabakh issue, which is the most painful problem of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the brotherly country Turkey has always stood by Azerbaijan and supported our country's rightful stance in international arenas. The Republic of Turkey has ensured the participation of members of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan in exercises held in the brotherly country, allowing them to acquire military expertise at the highest level. The Azerbaijani army demonstrated unparalleled bravery in the capture of the Lalatepe height in 2016 and in the victory at Gunnut in 2018, due to the combat capabilities it acquired through various trainings both in Turkey and Azerbaijan. Condemning the large-scale military provocation by the Armenian armed forces against Azerbaijan on September 27, 2020, the Republic of Turkey declared that it would always stand by Azerbaijan. Stating that he was ready to support the Republic of Azerbaijan by all means, the President of the Republic of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, sent a strong message to the Armenian diaspora worldwide and to states that have become captives of Armenian lobbies.

The presence of the Turkish government and opposition, as well as the media, in Azerbaijan's war for justice played an important role in Azerbaijan's victory in the Second Karabakh War and in exposing Armenia's occupying stance against Azerbaijan. The presence of the most modern military equipment purchased from the Republic of Turkey, especially Bayraktar drones, alongside Azerbaijani soldiers played a significant role in securing the victory. The exceptional contributions of Turkish TV channels, news portals, newspapers, and social networks, together with Azerbaijani media, in covering the Karabakh truths bore fruit in achieving the historic victory.

During the 44-day Patriotic War, Turkey's political and moral support to Azerbaijan was highly appreciated by our people. Turkish authorities and citizens demonstrated their solidarity with Azerbaijan to the entire world. Turkey lived every moment of the Second Karabakh War together with Azerbaijan as a brotherly country. The glorious victory achieved in the Karabakh War was recognized as a historical triumph not only for Azerbaijan but also for Turkey and the entire Turkic world. The Shusha Declaration, signed between Turkey and Azerbaijan after this historic victory, is a document of great importance in strengthening the unity between the two countries at even higher levels. This document, the first official agreement signed between the two brotherly countries during Azerbaijan's independence, addresses issues of military security and its various parameters. From this perspective, the Shusha Declaration holds historical significance and marks the

beginning of new geopolitical and geoeconomic relations in the region.

CONCLUSIONS

The enduring relationship between Turkey and Azerbaijan reflects a profound blend of historical, political, economic, military, and cultural collaboration, rooted in their shared heritage and aligned strategic interests. Often encapsulated in the phrase “one nation, two states,” this bond highlights the deep solidarity that has developed over time. A defining chapter in their modern alliance came during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, when Turkey provided unwavering support for Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity, both politically and militarily. In the Second Karabakh War, Turkey’s condemnation of Armenia’s aggression and its supply of Bayraktar drones played a pivotal role in Azerbaijan’s historic victory, solidifying Turkey’s role as Azerbaijan’s closest ally. This support—political, moral, and informational—resonated strongly within Azerbaijani society and strengthened international recognition of Azerbaijan’s legitimate cause. Following this triumph, the **Şuşa** Declaration formalized their military partnership and set new directions for security cooperation, regional integration, and geopolitical engagement. The agreement elevated their bilateral ties to a strategic alliance encompassing joint military operations, defense industry collaboration, and enhanced security capabilities. Turkey’s training of Azerbaijani forces and the joint military exercises further bolstered Azerbaijan’s combat readiness, as demonstrated in the successful operations of 2016 and 2018.

On the economic front, the Turkey-Azerbaijan partnership thrives through key energy projects like TANAP, which not only bolster regional energy security but also enable Azerbaijani gas to reach European markets via Turkey. Beyond energy, shared priorities in infrastructure, preferential trade agreements, agriculture, and manufacturing underscore their economic alignment. Meanwhile, cultural ties—anchored in shared language, education, and media initiatives—deepen mutual understanding and strengthen their intertwined identities. Ultimately, the Turkey-Azerbaijan relationship exemplifies a successful model of strategic cooperation built on deep historical and cultural foundations. Their collaboration addresses pressing regional challenges while positioning both nations as influential players in the Caucasus and the broader Turkic world. As they pursue greater integration across economic, military, and cultural spheres, vigilance remains critical—especially concerning lingering security issues in Nagorno-Karabakh—to ensure this partnership continues as a shared vision for a prosperous and unified future.

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