Military Relations of Turkey and Azerbaijan

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After the collapse of the Soviet Union, new political environment caused necessity to have a different form of cooperation especially on the economy, energy, military and cultural areas. In that way, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was established to meet necessities of the newly independent countries as well as other regional actors. The creation of CIS was meaningful for the adaptation of these countries to the new world order. On the other side, geostrategic importance of the former Soviet countries was highly attractive for other actors to reach energy sources quickly.

Azerbaijan became one of the most important players in the region, especially with its energy-rich position. Here, the cultural connection with Turkey played an important role for the aforementioned adaptation to the global political system. Although the partnerships between Turkey and Azerbaijan that started in 1991 have suffered some troubles at various times, healthy flow has been ensured since the newly established authority. Ayaz Muttalibov's Russia-oriented policies affected the relationship with Turkey only at the level of establishing embassies.[1]

During Muttalibov's short-term administration, Turkey was making efforts to strengthen the policies of the Turkic countries, which emerged in the new era. In the era of Abulfaz Elchibey, who was governed after Ayaz Muttalibov, the foreign policy of Azerbaijan was following a pro-Turkey line opposite Muttalibov. That is why many agreements have been made with Turkey in the fields of economy, military, political, education and culture and the actions have started mutually.[2]

In 1992, an agreement was signed between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Turkey on mutual military training.[3] In this period Azerbaijan, which was in the effort to draw attention of the international public due to the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, also made the agreements on military cooperation with Turkey, which also created the effects that could raise the tension in the region. In the last days of Elchibey and in the early days of Haydar Aliyev, military cooperation between Turkey and Azerbaijan remained limited, with the aim of strengthening the authority of the present country and balancing foreign policy. As a result of the balance politics followed by Haydar Aliyev, pragmatist cooperation has been provided to other neighboring states. However, we could see the significance given to Turkey in military fields through agreements made in other years. Because it was inevitable for Azerbaijan to take an active role in the region, it also had to join the axis of NATO and the US.

In 1996, a cooperation protocol was signed between the Government of Azerbaijan and the Government of Turkey on the activities of the members of the Delegation of the Armed Forces and the training of the medical delegation.[3] A declaration was signed in 1997 about the expansion of the protocol and strategy cooperation to regulate the flight of civilians and military vehicles to be built within a ten-kilometer area on both sides of the Azerbaijan border line.

During this time, the agreements with Russia and Iran were only aimed at resolving the issues of mutual relations and boundary problems. Agreements with the United States have
not yet fully met with mutual military ties. It should be noted that Azerbaijan has been subject to embargo by Russia because of the Chechen issue until 1998, which has further increased the tendency of the country especially in this regard to Turkey.[4] As we understand from the developments, the military relations established by Azerbaijan have also carried a diplomatic message that goes to Cyprus and Armenia.

The initiatives of Azerbaijan in the international military arena started with the protocol about the financial assistance of the Turkish Armed Forces to the Azerbaijan Defense Ministry in 1999, and the activities of the Azerbaijani team going to Kosovo in the preparation of the Kosovo Turkish Battalion Command between the two countries. Azerbaijan, which will keep its troops here until Kosovo's independence, was also a country that gained importance in NATO's expansion strategy to the east.[5] Azerbaijan, which was also involved in different missions outside Turkey, further strengthened its position of importance.

In 2000, the delivery of TCG AB-34 (P-134) assault boat to Azerbaijan between the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan and the Turkish Naval Forces Command, and a protocol was signed on:

- Financial aid between the Azerbaijan Defense Ministry and the Turkish Armed Forces,
- The use of technical equipment between the same parties,
- Defense industry cooperations.[6]

Protocols for the development of the Nakhtcivan 5th Army Region, financial assistance of Turkey in 2001, and the cooperation protocol in the fields of military history, military archives, military museums and military publications between the parties in 2002, Azerbaijan State Border Service’s cooperation with Turkey in the fields of education, implementation and technical assistance, financial assistance, cooperation between the headquarters on exploration and cooperation in 2003 and an agreement between Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey on the security of the East West energy line were signed.

At the same time, an agreement was signed between Armenia and Greece in 2003 against the initiatives of Azerbaijan by declaring, "Armenian troops should take part in the Greek peacekeeping forces in Kosovo".[7] Approximately 30 Armenian troops, as approved by the Armenian Parliament on 13 December 2003, went to Kosovo in the guidance of Armenia's Deputy Minister of Defense Artur Agabekyan as of January 2004, and he was described this action as support of the South Caucasus region for the Euro-Atlantic integration.[8] Despite the fact that the Azerbaijani army was modernized by the Turkish Armed Forces, Greece moved to provide various contributions to the Armenian army, and military co-operation began to feel its influence on political problems. In this period, reciprocal aids of the countries would show differences with the future energy and commercial interactions.

Azerbaijan, which fully supported the USA's anti-terrorism policy after 9/11 attacks, has sent its teams to Afghanistan to fight terrorism and build peace. However, Azerbaijan, which has opened the airfield to the US, was making efforts to evaluate the advantage of being a strong and regional actor formed by the military cooperation with Turkey.

A joint protocol on financial aid and military equipment was signed in 2004 and 2005, and in 2006, another protocol was signed on military equipment, medical team cooperation and financial assistance, as well as on emergency situations.[9]

The following developments in the region since 2006 have provided new dimensions for the cooperation:

- The positive approaches of Azerbaijan towards the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, [10]
- Turkey's attempt to take missiles from the US,
- Newly emerged relations between Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey as the result of Russia's natural gas politics.

In the same year, the new relations in the Caucasus were completely in favor of Azerbaijan, with the steps Greece has taken on the pipeline project with Azerbaijan. Because of these developments, Athens would have been more cautious about Armenia and, Yerevan officials had to follow a new compromise road that will benefit them.

The military cooperation policy that Azerbaijan has followed since its independence is a totally balanced table when we look at the regional powers. The importance given to Turkey has also clearly defined the attitude of Azerbaijan in the international arena. For example, Azerbaijan, who could use the Cyprus card for Greek military aid to Armenia, did not miss the US and NATO support, and was able to produce alternatives to Russia, which was pro-Armenia on the Karabakh issue. We can say that the pro-Turkish policies of the Abulfaz Elchibey era on the military cooperations and the balance policies of Haydar Aliyev as a whole provided a very important contribution and experience for Azerbaijan in the Caucasus till today.

[9] Official web site of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Bilateral Agreements with Turkey
What can you say about relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey as generally?

Azerbaijan and Turkey relations are one of the very few relations that can be described as the strategic partnership in the world in the shortest and most general way. There are almost no other examples of two countries and two communities so closely linked to their past, present and future. But since the course of the associations has been constantly below their potential, they have often been criticized by highly anticipated people. It is quite natural that these criticisms and expectations can not be met. This is because the period of 70 years of separation and the present global dynamics, in particular, cause serious hurdles both to high expectations and to the fulfillment of these expectations. In general, if you look; political, military, cultural aspects of relations are positive but economic area is more problematic than these.

What do you think about the challenges in Turkey-Azerbaijani relations that have occasionally occurred since the period of Ayaz Muttalibov?

There are different dimensions which are global effects and changeable situations of Turkish and Azerbaijani governments to explain it. Let alone global effects with to call them external actions of big powers. It can be criticized badly if relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey may be effected ideologic outlooks and daily politics of two governments. There is a stability of balances but we can not see any increase point in general period, additionally there is an unstable period for Azerbaijan which is depended on leaders but it decreased from time to time. Relations gained as institutionally.

General reason is only that Turkey entered post Cold war time without institutional foreign policy and Azerbaijan was already a new independent state which had different leaders who had different ideologies.

What is the importance of military relations for foreign affairs of Azerbaijan?

Azerbaijan and Turkey military relations constitute one of the most important dimensions of bilateral relations and the most stable direction. In terms of Azerbaijan's foreign policy, it fulfills a firm foothold. The most important demonstration of this was seen in July 2001 during the crisis with Iran. While Iran was constantly violating Azerbaijani borders, these violations were not the objections of the US and other Western countries, but the demonstration of Turkish stars in Baku could end. Although Azerbaijan Armenia has not fully fulfilled its expectations during the occupation, Turkey-Azerbaijan military relations are of great importance in terms of the process of liberation of Azerbaijani lands from the Armenian occupation. The role that Turkey can play in the military in the Karabakh conflict, which is the most important problem of Azerbaijani foreign policy, naturally attaches particular importance to the military aspect of the bilateral relations. Much of the Azerbaijani people continue to be influenced by Mehmetçik's role for the liberation of Baku at the beginning of 1918. This effect is one of the most important psychological foundations of today's relations. Military relations are also the symbol of permanent and lasting confidence in this context.

How does military relations affect Azerbaijan in relation to NATO?

Turkey-Azerbaijani military relations are an important factor in the convergence of Azerbaijan to NATO, but not the most important ones. This is due both to the
balanced stance of Azerbaijan on NATO and to the task of Turkey in its plans for NATO’s Azerbaijan. Nevertheless, the joint work in the field of gendarmerie especially contributes to this issue.

What do you think about the modernization process of the Azerbaijani army in Turkey?

I am very positive. Azerbaijan has a military need for rapid development and modernization because it is a young country and because it is involved in energy projects with regional and global precaution, since its territories are under occupation (having the urgent need to rescue their lands from the invasion), they perceive serious threats from their surroundings. It is very difficult to meet this necessity by its own means. External support is inevitable. This support cannot be as natural as coming from neighboring Turkey, which is the same timeframe and the same root, the same language, the same root, the same culture, and geographically close. This means both military training, education, and technical convenience. At the same time, it is also important for the common struggle against possible threats. Because the choice of foreign country to deliver military training and modernization is very important (in terms of knowing your military secrets, capabilities and characteristics). As a matter of fact, at the beginning of the 20th century, the process of establishing the Azerbaijani army was realized both by the Azerbaijani generals who served in Tsarist Russia and by Turkey. The similar process is now happening.

How does the two countries influence regional issues?

Turkey and Azerbaijan military relations can be a balance element in the region. This is clear when the position of Turkey in the middle of the Middle East, the Balkans and the Caucasus, which possesses many problems and the potential for serious conflict, and the characteristics of Azerbaijan are taken into consideration. Bilateral military relations and the triple and multiple military partnerships developed in parallel can interfere with the instability potentials of ethnic conflicts, spreading attempts, and contribute to regional stability. But the available opportunities are not likely to achieve this goal in the near future. This may be the right expectation for the medium and long term.

After the September 11 attack, can we say that the Azerbaijani position has been shifted from the post-Soviet line to the Western bloc? If we could say something like that, does Turkey have a role in this issue?

Azerbaijan is trying to carry out balance policy and this policy is very dependent on global and regional balances. In this context, since there was no serious increase in the rule of the West during the post-9/11 period (there was an increase in short-term US sovereignty, the US even settled in Central Asia, but this issue declined in time) and the partial balance of Azerbaijani foreign policy it has. In fact, even in the recent period, Azerbaijani foreign policy has been talking about anti-Westernism (even in Azerbaijan, in the West and in Turkey). But, in general, it is better to talk about the reactions of Azerbaijan in the interests of Azerbaijan in terms of the balancing changes in contrast to the Western counterpart. The course of Turkish foreign policy in recent periods is also different from the classical course. Multidimensionality draws more attention than Westernism. In this context, Azerbaijani-Turkey relations have a common feature in the line of multidimensionality, even though the lines sometimes collide.
What can you say about relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey as generally?

The Azerbaijani and Turkish relations have been watching the rising line since 1991 (despite some minor disagreements in between) and continue to do so today. Azerbaijan and Turkey are as natural allies as one can not see in any other state, and this alliance must not be strictly forbidden by the second or third states. Due to the importance of Azerbaijan in the South Caucasus, Turkey is strong in the region. Likewise, Azerbaijan has strong and reliable ally in the region.

It is understood that these relations are inadequate if military relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey are evaluated in the context of regional and international security problems on the basis of two countries. It is not possible to give a positive opinion on the issue when an evaluation is made for the present day as military relations between the two countries must be at a higher level in the last 19 years. While the geopolitical situation of Turkey and Azerbaijan and the security problems they face must bring these countries closer to one another, unfortunately no progress has been made.

Turkey has the right of guarantor on the Nakhchivan in accordance with the terms of the Moscow and Kars Treaty. Despite the fact that Georgia has the right of guarantee on Acharistan, it is very thought-provoking if Turkey is silent when it abolishes the autonomy of Georgia. It is also an important issue for Turkey to take a stance on the Nakhichevan when the status quo changes in any way. Although the authorities of the Turkish army gave the necessary explanations while Armenia attacked Nakhichevan in 1992, governments' approach could be different. The fact that Turkey has the right to guarantee in Nakhchevan according to international treaty requirements is the only international legal basis for its existence in the South Caucasus.

The military relations between the two countries are also continuing in the context of NATO. It's just a circle of relationships. In my opinion, bilateral relations are more important. The lack of signing of a strategic alliance and defense agreement between the parties to date is a serious shortcoming.

There may be some regional and international obstacles to signing this treaty. But Turkey and Azerbaijan have the possibility and mechanism to overcome these obstacles and to sign such an agreement. For example, a similar defense agreement between Russia and Armenia can be signed between Turkey and Azerbaijan. When this happens, the power balance in the region can change significantly. Of course, Azerbaijan and Turkey will benefit most from this change. This may also cause Armenia to re-examine its policy towards Turkey and Azerbaijan in the military and security context.

What do you think about the challenges in Turkey-Azerbaijani relations that have occasionally occurred since the period of Ayaz Mutallibov?

Ayaz Mutallibov was a pro-Russian president. Although he visited Turkey after becoming president himself, it was not possible for him to leave Russia in terms of political psychology. He could not hold much in power anyway. After Mutallibov, the ruling AHC (Azerbaijani People's Front), despite its importance to Turkey's political, economic and military relations, did not have the opportunity to develop its cooperation in the year it was in power. After Haydar Aliyev came to power, relations with Turkey entered a certain level and significant developments took place. While military and political agreements between the two countries were signed, military relations remained in the shadow of these treaties.

The exposure of military relations between the parties from time to time is not only a process of relations between the two countries. It is also useful to take note of the developments in the region and the international scene. Particularly, Russia and the West/USA should generally evaluate the South Caucasus, especially Azerbaijani policies. Towards the end of the 90s Russia, trying to recover after the dissolution of the USSR, has tried to apply aggressive politics to the former Soviet republics.
What is the importance of military relations for foreign affairs of Azerbaijan?

In the context of the development of military cooperation between the two countries, the signing of a strategic partnership and defense agreement in the future is of great importance not only in Azerbaijan but also in Turkey's foreign policy. Both countries will have the opportunity to pursue more active politics in foreign politics, considering that they shoulder strong ground. Azerbaijan and Turkey may form a common platform for the fight against Armenian genocide and territorial claims against Turkey. The position of Azerbaijan strengthens especially in the talks on the occupation of Azerbaijani lands by Armenia. At the same time Azerbaijan can assume the role of a Turkish bridge in relation to NATO.

How does military relations affect Azerbaijan in relation to NATO?

The development of military cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey will naturally reflect positively on Azerbaijan's relations with NATO. Turkey is an indispensable member of NATO, and it will most likely protect it for a long time. Although Azerbaijan's mission to coordinate its relations with NATO within the framework of the IPAP (Individual Partnership Action Plan) program was initially given to Turkey, the environment, which was later troubled that relations between the two countries would develop further through NATO, took its coordination work from Turkey to Lithuania It has been transferred. Despite this opportunity, Turkey still has the opportunity to be in an active position in Azerbaijan-NATO relations.

How do you think about modernisation process of Azerbaijani army by Turkey?

The Azerbaijani army is still young and has not shown the expected performance in military operations until 1994. However, Azerbaijan has made important military reforms to this day and has begun to work to raise the army to the level of NATO standards. In the reform phase, the problems faced by Azerbaijan need to be supported by the Turkish army, which is more experienced and NATO-experienced. The Turkish army's discipline, successful history and long history of cooperation with NATO could be a suitable example for the Azerbaijani army. The Azerbaijani army tried to establish Azerbaijani officers who served in the Soviet army, and in the early years the Soviet model was adopted. In the following years, returning to Turkey by completing the training of military students in Turkey helped reconcile the army profile to NATO and the training of Azerbaijani officers in NATO framework increased the possibility of cooperation with this security organization.

Turkey's modernization of the Azerbaijani army will in all cases contribute to the army of Azerbaijan and will help to continue in harmony with NATO cooperation.

How military relations of two countries effect regional problems?

The military cooperation between the two countries and the strategic partnership and defense agreement, which is inevitable to sign in the future, could lead to the emergence of a new center of power in the region. First of all, this can result in the change of the profile of the security organization or mechanism that the West / US and Russia have tried to establish in the region and which has not yet succeeded, taking into account the national interests and security policies of Turkey and Azerbaijan. The effect of Armenia, which followed the expansionist policy towards Turkey and Azerbaijani lands after independence, can be significantly reduced. If there are developments in these relations, at the same time Georgia may be interested in taking part in this power center. Especially in August 2008, Russia's invasion of Georgia put the government into a new security search. If such an alliance is established between Azerbaijan, Turkey and Georgia, and if successful projects are passed on to ensure the security of the region, GUAM member states may consider to take part in this cooperation in some way.
After the September 11 attack, can we say that the Azerbaijani position has been shifted from the post-Soviet line to the Western bloc? If we could say something like that, does Turkey have a role in this issue?

There are those who define the September 11 incident as a milestone. Faced with Armenian terrorism, Azerbaijan supported the US fight against global terrorism, sent peacekeepers to Afghanistan and opened the airspace for US use. In fact, after Azerbaijan proclaimed its independence, not after this event, it turned towards the West. But he has not disrupted his relations with other regional states. In other words, Georgia has not been as openly questionable by neighboring states, declaring its presence in the West camp as openly as possible. We have seen the consequences of ignoring the interests of the regional states during the AHC period in the Nagorno-Karabakh War. Haydar Aliyev's ruling, on the other hand, gives priority to balance policy. Even so, his face always turned to the West. Of course, Turkey also plays a role in the direction of Azerbaijan towards the West. Even in the first years of the independence of Azerbaijan, Western / US Azerbaijani policies have been tried to be realized through Turkey. However, when establishing relations with Azerbaijan through Turkey later, they noticed that the position of Turkey was strengthened and they started to work directly with Azerbaijan. Despite all this, however, Azerbaijan still has a role to play in Turkey’s contacts with the West / US.
Reshad SULEYMANOV
Editor in Chief of Military Azerbaijan Journal and APA Press Agency

What can you say about relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey as generally?

If you will excuse me, I just want to touch on the relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey in the military, because I think that is the most important issue in relations. All relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan in political, economic and military fields are very important. From time to time, important developments in these relationships are also occurring. At the level of the General Staff, there are mutual visits every year and they have participated in a hundred events together.

The Ministry of National Defense of Azerbaijan confirmed these activities with their statements. But there are also contradictions, such as Russia-Armenia solidarity, between Turkey and Azerbaijan. This is the main contradiction of position. There are also some important agreements signed between these two countries, such as the development of the Nakhchivan Army 5, the relocation of military supplies, the procurement and gendarmerie military training.

Turkey has been found to assist Azerbaijan in the areas of regional anatomy, military unit building, development and military industry, and Kale Education Center has been established with the support of Turkey. Today, Turkish General Staff members serve as consultants in the Azerbaijani Naval Forces. Turkey has already given a ship to Azerbaijan in the first place and in some special cases the Azerbaijani Armed Forces have helped. This important process can be seen in Azerbaijan Air Force. There are other examples such as the training of Azerbaijani military pilots in Turkey and the renewal of Air Force Headquarters by Turkey.

The Military Industry should be examined in relation to Turkey-Azerbaijani military relations. Murat Bayar, secretary of the Ministry of Defense of Turkey, visited Azerbaijan with 17 Turkish companies in 2008. In this direction, we can get a positive opinion about the latest and important helpings between our countries. Now AELSAN is continuing to work in Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijani Defense Ministry signed a $ 3.2 million deal with the military radio station.

Koza, another important company, works with the Technical Defense Industry, the Ministry of Defense and other government agencies. Another company, TİSAS, cooperates with this official institution and produces weapons called İnam, Zafer, Zafer-K. It just does not stay with them; Technological connections with MKEK have been established and 7,62 mm caliber bullets are produced. The authorities of the two countries are also concerned with the production production of Altay and Milgem national tanks, and the process in this regard is ongoing.

We can say that the year we passed is influential for the solidarity of Turkey and Azerbaijan armed forces. Throughout the year, the two sides discussed their own coordination and how they have improved their current situation. Following the visit of Azerbaijan National Defense Minister Sefer Abiyev to Turkey in April, Turkish gendarme commander Atilla Isik visited Baku in March 2009.
What do you think about the challenges in Turkey-Azerbaijani relations that have occasionally occurred since the period of Ayaz Muttalibov?

Not only country administrations, but country leaders also influence inter-country relations. The relations between Süleyman Demirel and Ahmet Necdet Sezer of the Haydar Aliyev in 1994-2003 have affected the relations of Turkey with Azerbaijan, especially military relations in a positive way. I would like to point out that İlham Aliyev cares about the visits of Turkish military authorities.

What is the point of military relations in Azerbaijan's foreign policy?

Azerbaijan plays a key role in the Turkish influence over the Caucasus and Central Asia. It also helps Turkey to be Turkey's leader in Turkish geography. If Turkey loses its chances of Azerbaijan, there will be a dilemma on regional dominance. I think we should be careful when talking about military affairs, because we will reach an important point. Turkey wants to create a guarantee against the bad effects of a Russian-Armenian union on Azerbaijan. Nowadays, Azerbaijan needs the support of every inland Turkey. Obviously, other key actors have different ideas about these military relations. Especially Iran and Russia want to preserve their influence in every situation. I want to point out one more point; Iran has violated the Azerbaijani air and sea area and has displayed a demonstration of power on Baku with the Turkish Air Force warplanes. This has been a very strong morale for the Azerbaijani people. After this, Iran follows a more careful policy with Azerbaijan.

How does military relations affect Azerbaijan's "NATO" issue?

Turkey has a key role in relation to Azerbaijan and NATO. In general, we can say that the Turkish Armed Forces have supported the Azerbaijani army in terms of renewal, organizational structure and adaptation to NATO in the military education process. But Turkey is not the first reason for not coming to NATO soon; the political situation of the region and the Karabakh conflict affect Azerbaijan in the direction of injury from this reality.

What do you think about the modernization process of the Azerbaijani army by Turkey?

Absolutely perfect. First of all, this is a unifying process in the field of national identity and cultural values that is possible. Secondly, it is beneficial for Azerbaijan to choose the Turkish model instead of the European countries. The Azerbaijani gendarmerie units were organized by the Turkish army and they were informed about their training in Foça. Our work has many positive results. Every year 200 members (military officers) participate in military schools and training centers in Turkey. There are also exams for the Azerbaijani people to enter the KHO and GATA.
How does the two countries influence the regional issues?

Of course the region has a great influence on the political outlook. Today, if Azerbaijan declares war to solve the regional problem, it should take Turkey's support. First of all, the Karabakh and Georgian war in 2008 showed us a different point that Russia could violate the region at any moment. In particular, Armenia will find support from Russia. We should see this as a way to improve the international projects and global energy security of Turkey and Azerbaijani military relations. On the other hand, Russia and Iran do not want to meet Turkey.

After the September 11 attack, can we say that the Azerbaijani position has been shifted from the post-Soviet line to the Western bloc? If we could say something like that, does Turkey have a role in this issue?

In order to understand this point, I think that we should look at the old political processes (periods) and embrace reality.
A Staff Member of the Turkish Military Attache in Azerbaijan

What can you say about Azerbaijan and Turkey relations in general terms?

Generally is it a good example for regional states to make a common structure which basis on cultural, historical and geographical similarities. We should look at first times of 20 century, Turkish soldiers helped Azerbaijani people because of Russian and Armenian invade. Contemporary relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey borned in that time as a strong structure. After the independence time leaders of two states worked to be combine in every subjects. Especially Süleyman Demirel and Ahmet Necdet Sezer shared their sensivity about Turkish states. In Azerbaijan, Abulfaz Elchibey and Haydar Aliyev created strong relations with Turkey. Aliyev is very popular in Turkey with his successful works. So if we say honestly, relations among two states are strong than others.

What do you think about the changes in Turkey-Azerbaijani relations that have occasionally occurred since the period of Ayaz Muttalibov?

There can be some different outlooks with initiatives and ideologies of leaders. Of course Muttalibov had a tendency to Russia after the Soviet time. But political conditions can be difficult to share brave behaviors. In that time Turkey should have created new politics for Azerbaijan but our political leaders were not effective to establish new relations with our brother state. In People’s Front Party time Azerbaijan created a good base to make new politics for Turkey, after Aliyev came to power and he realised all of political thoughts. Also Turkey had different seasons like Azerbaijan. Different leader came and different political steps had been established.

What is the point of military relations in Azerbaijan's foreign policy?

Military relations are very sensitive and important than others. As a human we know importance of defense ourselves against to some threats, like that states have some arguments to defend theirselves. We can create cooperations to be stronger than other. So Turkey and Azerbaijan established good relations in military subject. NATO supported our relations with Western style. But we can some goals about regional politics with effecting to foreign policy of Azerbaijan. In late times of 1990s, Azerbaijan sent peacekeepers to Kosovo under the Turkish army. After Greece worked to get Armenian army to send them Kosovo as against to Turkish effect. So we created a line as Baku-Ankara. They worked to establish a line as Yerevan-Athens and Azerbaijan initiated to be brave about Cyprus issue. It is a very important to say an effect on foreign policy of Azerbaijan. Also Azerbaijan has a near position to NATO. We should say the role of Turkey.

How does military relations affect Azerbaijan in relations to NATO?

Turkish military relations have enough role about NATO subject. But it is not first effect because Azerbaijan has its own determination to join Western blok. So Turkey is a vice helper via standardization duty of Azerbaijani army.
What do you think about modernisation process of Azerbaijani army by Turkey?

It is a big mission of Turkey and also Azerbaijan needs it. Turkey has an obligation by NATO. Again we can look at history, Turkish commanders educated disordered army of Azerbaijan in 1918. After independence time two states signed some agreements and protocols. Turkey gave some technical tools and weapons. Staff members of Azerbaijan are educated in Turkey by Turkish army. It is a great chance for Azerbaijan and also for Turkey to be effective in South Caucasus.

How does the two countries influence regional issues?

Turkey has some rights on Caucasus such as Adjaria and Nakhcivan. They can be political subjects but we may see effects on regional problems. Turkish army sent some important messages to Armenia and Western states in first times of Karabakh problem. Armenian hegemony was stopped by Turkey. As we said Kosovo mission of NATO shared regional political structures.

After the September 11 attack, can we say that the Azerbaijani position has been shifted from the post-Soviet line to the Western bloc? If we could say something like that, does Turkey have a role in this issue?

There can be Western effect on Azerbaijan and state selected to support struggle to terrorism with the USA. But there is no total tendency to West because we have a reality that Azerbaijan is a post-Soviet country and it is near to Eastern projects and political organisations. It is important to say Aliyev’s balance politics or pragmatism. Turkey have some roles with energy routes, commercial activities and military relations. But Turkey supports free politics of all states.