



*Azərbaycan Respublikasının Amerika Birləşmiş Ştatlarındakı Səfirliyi  
Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United States of America*

April 4, 2014

The Honorable Jeanette K. White  
35A Old Depot Rd., Putney, VT 05346

Dear Senator White,

I am writing to you to express my deepest concern regarding the troubling news that a Senate Resolution 9 entitled “Senate Resolution Requesting That The President And Congress Of The United States Recognize The Independent Nagorno Karabakh Republic” was introduced on April 3, 2014 in the Vermont State Senate and was later referred to the Committee on Government Operations.

This is a dangerous provocation which may seriously damage the very successful strategic partnership between the United States of America and Azerbaijan based on shared values and common interests. Furthermore, it clearly undermines America's interests in Eurasia.

It is, in fact, rather counter-intuitive that at this crucial juncture when whole international community stands for the principle of territorial integrity in the case of Crimea in Ukraine, this resolution calls for recognition of puppet separatist regime non-recognized even by Armenia itself and created on the occupied Azerbaijani territories. Supporting Armenian separatism in Azerbaijan would be the same as supporting separatist entities in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Not surprisingly, while Azerbaijan was among many progressive nations voting in the United Nations with the United States in support of Ukraine, Armenia was among only 11 nation voting with Russia against Ukraine. The other nations in the group included Iran, Cuba, Venezuela and others. In essence, the draft resolution would indicate Vermont's agreement with above narrow group of nations with strong anti-Western views.

Just several days ago Secretary of State John Kerry in his remarks at the U.S.-European Union Energy Council meeting in Brussels underlined the importance of Azerbaijan for energy security of Europe.

While we are working hard with our American allies to expand and deepen our strong partnership in areas like counterterrorism, non-proliferation, supporting operations in Afghanistan, regional and energy security, introduction of this resolution in the Senate is alarming. In fact, such a move, being highly disrespectful of territorial integrity of my country, casts a shadow on friendship between American and Azerbaijani people.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the Nagorno Karabakh region is an internationally recognized part of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Republic of Azerbaijan was admitted to the United Nations as a sovereign and independent state with the Nagorno Karabakh region within its borders; territorial integrity and borders of the Republic of Azerbaijan have been recognized by all members of the international community. In fact, the United States has unequivocally stated on many occasions that it does support territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and does not recognize Nagorno Karabakh as an independent state. It is entirely unrecognized as such even by Armenia.

The illegal entity referred to as “Nagorno Karabakh” was created as a result of occupation and ethnic cleansing. Occupation is not limited to the Nagorno Karabakh region. Seven surrounding districts were occupied by the Armenian Armed Forces as well. As a result, hundreds of thousands of civilian Azerbaijanis were expelled from the Nagorno Karabakh region and surrounding territories of Azerbaijan and for the past 20 years have been internally displaced within their own country. Four U.N. Security Council resolutions adopted in 1993 reaffirm territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan, demand immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces from all occupied regions. Unfortunately these UN Security Council resolutions remain unfulfilled.

The so-called representatives of “Nagorno Karabakh”, who engage in misleading public campaigns and pretend to represent a foreign entity, are actually nothing more than a private lobbying group. By unconstitutionally and unduly involving a state legislature in the realm of federal foreign policy making, they aim to distract the attention of the broad American public from the continued occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan by the Armenian Armed Forces, accompanied by gross violation of human rights of hundreds of thousands of the Azerbaijani IDPs. Their ultimate goal is to consolidate the occupation of these territories and to prevent return of the displaced Azerbaijani population to their homes and properties from which they were forcibly expelled.

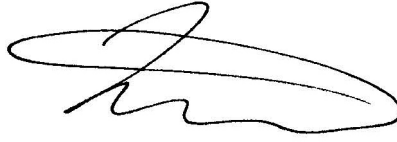
Azerbaijan has been committed to finding a peaceful solution to the long-standing conflict with Armenia for almost 20 years. While the USA has been playing a constructive role in negotiations between Azerbaijan and Armenia, the draft resolution in question may damage the image of the USA as an honest broker. At this stage, we should focus on advancing the peace process, rather than indulging in steps which would negatively affect this process.

We always appreciate that our strategic partner – the United States supports our territorial integrity. In fact, this support has always served as glue to further cement our partnership. Our partnership tremendously benefits the people of America and Azerbaijan. Allowing adoption of such resolutions in local legislature of the State of Vermont would contradict the spirit of the strong U.S.- Azerbaijan partnership and damage this partnership.

Taking into account all these, I would like to urge you to reject this draft resolution. It would be the best step in the interest of both the robust US-Azerbaijani partnership and the peace process.

The Embassy stands ready to discuss this matter with you in person. Please feel free to contact the Embassy should you have any question on this.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'S' followed by a series of loops and a horizontal line at the bottom.

Elin Suleymanov,

Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan