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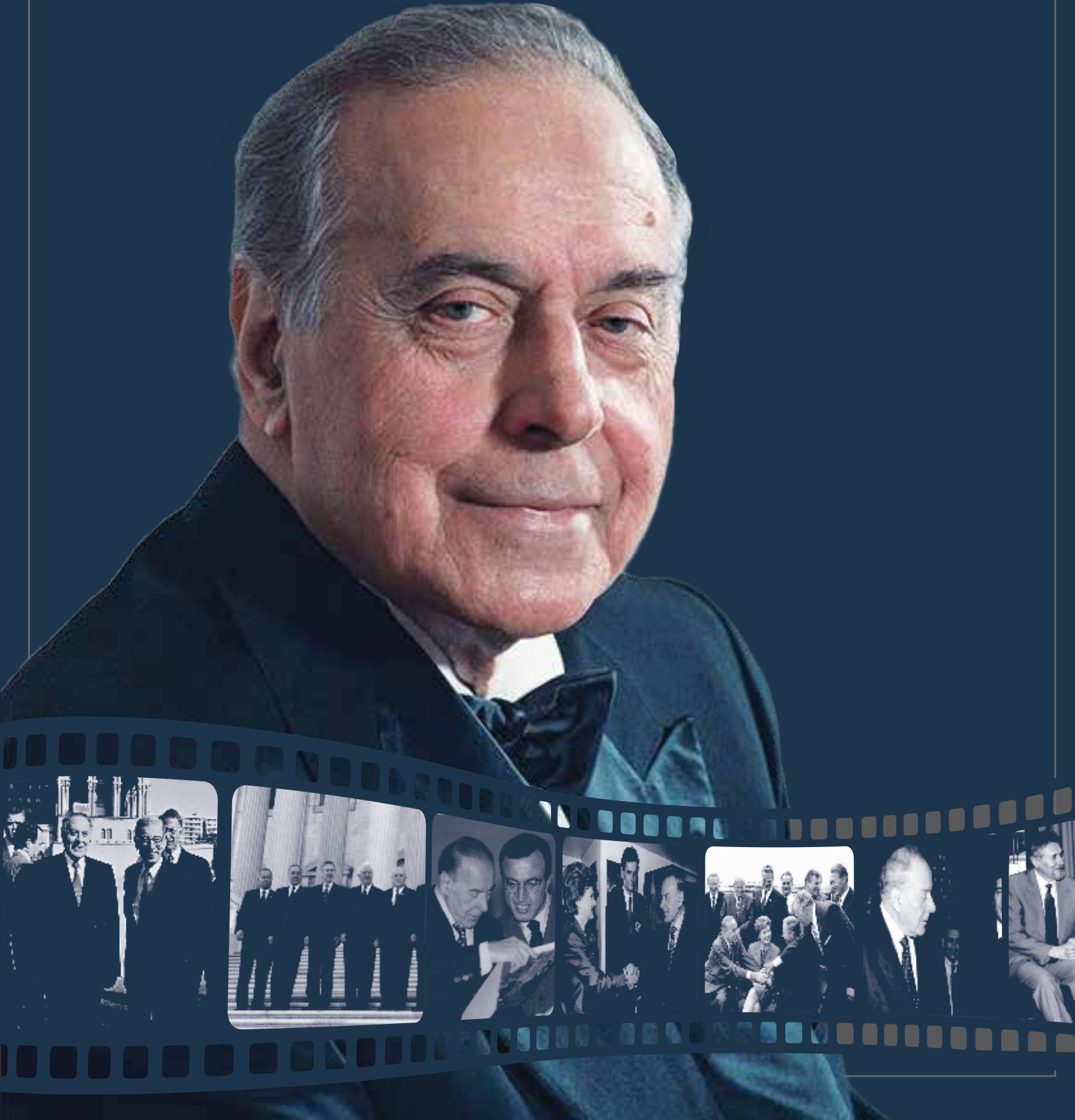
# GLOBAL POLICY ANALYSIS

NIZAMI GANJAVI INTERNATIONAL CENTER

100  
1923  
2023



HEYDAR ALIYEV 100  
LIFE & LEGACY



*Seventh edition*

# GLOBAL POLICY ANALYSIS

HEYDAR ALIYEV 100: LIFE & LEGACY

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## **VAIRA VIKE-FREIBERGA**

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Co-Chair of NGIC;  
President of the Republic of Latvia  
1999-2007

On the centenary of the birth of Heydar Aliyev, I join the ranks of those who have had the privilege of direct personal contacts with this towering figure of Azerbaijani history during my term in office as President of Latvia. He was truly an impressive personality, free and generous in sharing his insightful analysis of the challenges faced by all the countries that either gained or recovered their national independence after the dissolution of the USSR in December 1991.

His own personal experience spanned the cataclysmic changes that Azerbaijan had experienced during his lifetime, and he was fully committed to a vision of the future of his country that would rapidly advance on the path of independence, stability, social justice, economic development, religious tolerance, and modernity. President Heydar Aliyev possessed an unswerving love of his country and total commitment to defending the interests of his people, which remain as a heritage worth emulating by future generations of Azerbaijanis.



**Yalta summit** (September 9, 1999)

“Heydar Aliyev was born 2 years after the loss of independence the first independence of Azerbaijan he grew up when he spent his career as a very talented statesman and organizer and administrator under a system which was the only one available to him and that was a Soviet system.

Had not Azerbaijan had a Heydar Aliyev up to hell at the moment of transition from the failed Soviet Union to a successful modern nation. Heaven knows what might have happened here because Heydar Aliyev he was recognized in this region as a senior statement.

He was recognized and respected by those who knew him. He impressed those who met him with his understanding of the situations and the role of history in the development of the Baltic countries of the Caucasus of Central Asia and of the whole region.

I would like to recall a special historical event in which I had the privilege of participating shortly after my election as the President of Latvia in the summer of 1999. Then the President of Ukraine, President Kuchma had organized a conference in the city of Yalta on the Crimean Peninsula and on that occasion, I also had a bilateral meeting with President Heydar Aliyev. I very much learned from him the particular circumstances of the countries in the Caucasus, of the kinds of difficulties that they had overcome, in firmly establishing their independence in having to fight for their territory and in fact having to give up parts of their territory sadly because of the intervention of the Russian Federation and its army on the side of the Armenian forces. But he also explained the transition process from point of view of a Statesman who had been in high office during Soviet times already and who was then able to in many ways understand the snares and pitfalls that such a transition from autocracy to democracy entailed and how difficult democracy was to achieve in certain parts of the world. Because it did not have any historical roots or precedence.”



Heydar Aliyev is a great personality. He is my friend, brother. He will always have his place in my heart. He always fought to build his country as a prosperous nation, leaving in peace and stability.

**Butros Butros-Ghali**

Former Secretary-General of the United Nations



## **BAJRAM BEGAJ**

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President of Albania

Heydar Aliyev was an outstanding personality at the global level. Heydar Aliyev occupied a special place among world political leaders.

He carried out reforms, established partnerships and managed to win the trust of the people. This is not easy, especially for countries in transition, but Heydar Aliyev wisely coped with this task. Azerbaijan has made significant progress in a short period of time. Heydar Aliyev became a visionary of the future of Azerbaijan. I admire the genius of Heydar Aliyev.



## **PETRU LUCINSCHI**

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President of Moldova 1997-2001  
President of the Moldovan Parliament  
1993-1997; Member, NGIC

I met Heydar Aliyev, in the fall of 1970. In Baku, during an event dedicated to youth, in which young men and women from all the union republics participated.

A few years later, in August 1974, it was 30 years since the liberation of Romania from the fascist yoke. By the decision of the Political Bureau, a delegation was set up to participate in the events devoted to the liberation of Romania. The head of the delegation was Alexei Nikolaevich Kosîghin, but Heydar Aliyev and I were also part of the delegation. We flew to Bucharest from Sukhumi, where Kosîghin was resting. We were accommodated in a villa and of course we had three days to communicate with each other.

Later, over a month and a half, Heydar Aliyev arrived in Moldova. We were celebrating 50 years since the establishment of the Republic of Moldova. I had been specially appointed by His Excellency as a welcoming host throughout his stay in Moldova. Three more days to count. And that's how, in that year, friendships were formed between the two of us, which continued throughout our lives.



Later, being members of the Political Bureau, but also Presidents, already as colleagues, we constantly communicated with each other. So I am up to date and I know well what was the attitude towards Heydar Aliyev: both during the Soviet period and during the period when we were independent states.



During Yeltsin's time, but also later under Putin, when we, the leaders of the CIS states, met, the first word was always given to Heydar Aliyev, and we could see that his opinion weighed heavily. He was indeed an aqsaqal, an imposing man, because he possessed a wealth of life experience. He was a very reasonable and calm person, he analyzed deeply and gave accurate assessments of the situations in which we were.

Let's remember how GUAM was created. In the spring of 1997, I was at a meeting of the Heads of State in the Kremlin. During the break, Shevardnadze approached, as a former foreign minister, he informs us that we need to validate the Agreement between NATO and the Soviet Union regarding medium-range weapons. We, as independent republics, have to confirm the fact, that is, to ratify the Agreement. He tells us: "We should understand each other so that we have some kind of common position!" In the fall of the same year at a Summit of the Council of Europe in Strasburg, Heydar Aliyev invited us to a working lunch where we agreed to create this organization. GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development – Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova.



I'm from Moldova and Moldova is the country of the vines. However, sometimes Azerbaijan got ahead of us. So there was competition between our republics. A healthy competition.

Of course, Heydar Aliyev had his own special, unmistakable character. He possessed an iron will. If the knot would not be untied,

he had the courage to cut the Gordian Knot. Fate put him to difficult tests. Let's remember the time when the street made politics in the country. Not only in Azerbaijan, but everywhere in the former Soviet republics. He had been forced to retire to his homeland in Nakhichevan to his sister in an old house without any comforts. Within 4 hours he told me in detail about this period of great trials.

In the history of any nation there are periods of darkness, but the Azerbaijani people quickly had a light: they understood how necessary it is to return Heydar Aliyev better than him, who could solve problems better than him, because he gave the other man a richer experience than his: he had occupied high leadership positions in the state for almost half a century.

Currently, Azerbaijan is developing under the sign of the strategic ideas and visions of Heydar Aliyev. The baton, from the father, was taken over by his son, Ilham Aliyev. As one of our poets wrote, the son successfully continues the father's work. I must say that this continuity was and is beneficial for the whole country; now Azerbaijan is a country with weight not only in the region, but also in the whole world. Symposiums, international meetings are held in Baku. Many problems facing the countries of the region are solved in Baku.

I am a member of the Nizami Foundation. Every year this Foundation gathers in Baku people from different countries of the world, to exchange ideas, to exchange experience.

I pay a sincere tribute, I am impressed by what happened in these 30 and more years in the history of Azerbaijan. I would like to emphasize in particular the advantage of this continuity in politics, because it pursues a single goal: increasing the well-being of the people, the development of all spheres of activity in the country.

I always associate my memories of Heydar Aliyev with an exemplary model of thinking and political wisdom. His Excellency always make well-thought-out decisions: I repeat, at the global level. The word of Heydar Aliyev was appreciated and accepted in many countries of the world.

Remembering Heydar Aliyev, we spoke and will always speak words of respect and piety.

I am sure that the 100th anniversary of the birth of Heydar Aliyev, which is approaching soon, will be celebrated not only in Azerbaijan but in several countries around the world. Because he is a standard of what a statesman should be, what a leader of a country should be.

Heydar Aliyev spoke with love about his people, about Azerbaijan. And what he did for the prosperity of this country, I think, will remain for centuries in the memory of his people.



## DAVID CHIKVAÏDZE

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Chef de Cabinet of the Director-General  
of the United Nations Office at Geneva  
Vice President, Swiss Foreign Policy Association

### RENDEZ-VOUS WITH HISTORY

The term Founding Father is usually associated with George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, men who created a Nation that lives, thrives, and reinvents itself with every passing decade. In more recent times, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, Mahatma Gandhi, and Konrad Adenauer stepped up to the historic moment and laid the foundation for their respective great Nations and peoples.

With the dissolution of the USSR, and the appearance on the world stage of fifteen new countries, they were all in a position to beget their own Founding Fathers. Azerbaijan was among only a handful of those who proved that a post-Soviet country could have a real Founding Father.

Despite being a native of Georgia, which is a good and close neighbor, I first visited Azerbaijan only in December 1994, as part of a United Nations delegation to review the country's humanitarian needs at a difficult time. The delegation was received by President Heydar Aliyev, who had recently returned to save and lead

his country out of the deep crisis that it had found itself in following the break-up of the USSR. President Aliyev personally greeted each member of the United Nations delegation by name. He gave a deeply knowledgeable overview of the state of affairs in the country and a most profound analysis of the regional and wider implications of the situation as it was evolving in the South Caucasus and in all of Eurasia. We were spellbound and knew that this was no ordinary politician we were witnessing, but a major figure of contemporary history. He was one of the most impressive political leaders I have ever encountered in my career.



For my family, as for most Georgians, Heydar Aliyev was a household name since the 1970s. He considered peace in the Caucasus as his overarching commitment and was never tired of emphasizing this. “Achieving peace will not be easy, but common sense will prevail”, he stressed during his state visit to Georgia in 1996. “The Caucasus must be peaceful, the Caucasus must be secure, the Caucasus must be a region of peaceful, good-neighborly, mutually advantageous cooperation.”

The Father of modern Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev successfully pulled the country out of its ‘nosedive’ and led his native land from its post-Soviet dilapidated and destitute state into the position of one of the most successfully developing former Soviet republics. In true Founding Father fashion, Heydar Aliyev ensured that his work and his vision for his country would be firmly grounded in sound management and remain sustainable and successful in the long term.

The foundations of the young State laid down by the Father of modern Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev continue to be steadily and creatively strengthened, widened and solidified by President Ilham Aliyev. Under his astute leadership, Azerbaijan ‘came of age’, becoming a leading power in the energy, political, and strategic spheres, regained its territorial integrity and is a serious player on the world stage, a flourishing major regional actor that commands worldwide respect and an active and constructive member of the United Nations.



## Рашид АЛИМОВ

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Доктор политических наук, профессор,  
Генеральный секретарь ШОС (2016-2018 гг.)  
член Международного центра Низами Гянджеви

### **Один эпизод из моей жизни, связанный с Гейдар Алиевичем Алиевым**

Это было в самом начале 1985 года, объявленного Организацией Объединённых Наций Международным годом молодежи. В Советском Союзе Комиссию по его проведению возглавил Гейдар Алиев, в то время первый заместитель председателя Совета Министров СССР, член Политбюро ЦК КПСС,- один из высших руководителей мировой державы. Это подчеркивало особое отношение политического руководства страны к проблемам советской молодежи и, в особенности, проведению в Москве центрального мероприятия Года - 12 Всемирного фестиваля молодёжи и студентов (27 июля - 3 августа 1985 года).

Подготовка к главному форуму молодежи мира шла полным ходом и Комиссия регулярно заслушивала отчеты руководителей служб Советского подготовительного комитета (СПК), который начиная с 1984 года работал в круглосуточном режиме. Спрос с каждого руководителя был чрезвычайно строгим. Случалось, что после отчёта приходилось менять место работы.

Это было понятно, так как речь шла о мероприятии мирового масштаба: в последний раз в СССР Всемирный фестиваль молодежи и студентов проходил в 1957 году.

В один из холодных февральских дней наступил черёд держать экзамен перед Комиссией и мне - директору Международного пресс-центра Всемирного фестиваля. Поездка до Кремля, где должно было состояться заседание, занимала не больше 30 минут. Я выехал с запасом в 20 минут и, несмотря на свободные дороги, ... на начало заседания опоздал. Причина была банальной. Не доезжая до Большого Каменного моста движение автотранспорта было остановлено: как оказалось, ожидали выезда из Кремля лидера одного из дружественных государств. Такой поворот событий предсказать никто не мог. Когда я вошёл в зал заседаний, отчёт одного из руководителей города Москвы уже завершался. Ко мне подошёл один из помощников заместителя Председателя, присел на корточки и полусшепотом гневно предупредил о «серьезном разговоре» после заседания. В этот момент Гейдар Алиевич предоставил мне слово.

После отчёта и ответов на многочисленные вопросы, Гейдар Алиевич дал высокую оценку проведённой работе и подчеркнул, что «именно такой, ответственной, эффективной и результативной должна быть деятельность каждого при подготовке к такому грандиозному международному мероприятию как Всемирный фестиваль. А что касается опоздания, - задумчиво произнес Гейдар Алиевич, - то с кем не бывает»,- и мягко посмотрел на своего заместителя по Комиссии. «Вы свободны, товарищ Алимов. Продолжайте в таком же энергичном духе. Успехов Вам в ваших делах»,- заключил Гейдар Алиевич и я спешно покинул зал.



По дороге в офис ко мне приходили разные мысли. Понимал, что объяснить своё опоздание будет не легко. В Кремле никто и слушать не станет о перекрытии моста. Когда в кабинете зазвенел «белый» телефон, занервничал. Голос в трубке был грозным: «Скажите спасибо Гейдар Алиевичу, который не допустил Вашего строгого наказания», - услышал я в трубке до коротких гудков.... Всемирный фестиваль успешно прошёл с участием 26 тысяч юношей и девушек из 157 стран мира. Всемирное событие освещали почти две тысячи журналистов из 117 стран мира. Возглавляемый мной международный пресс-центр достойно справился со всеми поставленными задачами. По итогам фестиваля я был награждён Орденом Дружбы народов... Мне было 32 года...

Позднее моя заветная мечта сбылась - я стал дипломатом, возглавлял дипломатические миссии своей страны, Республики Таджикистан, за рубежом, на крупных международных форумах. Но какой бы пост в жизни я не занимал, всегда помнил о февральском эпизоде 1985 года, который показал величие Гейдара Алиева, - одного из известных государственных и политических деятелей своего времени. Это величие проявилось не только в доброте, проявленной ко мне. Защитив меня, Гейдар Алиевич продемонстрировал широту и масштаб своей личности, не поддался эмоциональным и несправедливым попыткам маленьких чиновников-формалистов раздуть «из мухи слона», а дал взвешенную и объективную оценку практическим результатам работы. В этом маленьком эпизоде, как в зеркале, отразились многие благородные дела во имя человека и человечности, которыми прославился Гейдар Алиевич Алиев - великий сын азербайджанского народа. Как справедливо заметил великий французский писатель Виктор Гюго: «Великие люди сами сооружают себе пьедестал: статую воздвигает будущее».



## **EMIL CONSTANTINESCU**

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President of Romania 1996-2000  
Member, NGIC

My presidential mandate coincided with the time when President Heydar Aliyev, after managing to stabilize the country's domestic affairs and included Azerbaijan in NATO's Partnership for Peace, launched two great projects of economic cooperation which overcame the regional framework and grew rapidly to a global importance. I am referring here to TRACECA and the Rebirth of the Silk Road. Our first meeting took place in Istanbul, in April 1997, at the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Business Forum, where, upon the invitation of our host, President Suleyman Demirel, I participated together with President Aliyev and Shevardnadze, and decided to join our efforts in order to revive transport on the Ancient Silk Road.

It was at this meeting that President Aliyev advanced also the idea of an Oil Road that would connect Azerbaijan with Romania, the two countries in which, along with the United States of America, originate the first industrial oil exploitations.



In support of this idea, I stated that, if during World War II, our countries' oil was vital to the military success of the belligerent parties, it was high time it became an agent of peace in the region.

The collaboration with President Aliyev was strengthened through our common actions in several Summits:

This spirit of sincere collaboration for a better and more peaceful world was taken over by the Nizami Ganjavi International Center which managed to gather together prestigious democratic leaders of the contemporary world as well as distinguished representatives of academia in the Forums organized in Baku as well as in other prestigious locations in the world, to which I participated every year, bearing in mind the belief that only a culture of peace can provide humanity with a prosperous future.





## ZLATKO LAGUMDZIJA

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Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina  
2001-2002, Deputy Prime Minister 1992-1994,  
2012-2015; Board of Trustees Member, NGIC

Being great leader is not only being successful when leading the nation in peaceful, glorious and flourishing time.

Confronted with seismic changes after Berlin Wall was falling down Heydar Aliyev knew the way, he showed that way, and ultimately he walked the way to independence and nation building with people of Azerbaijan.

Great leaders are the ones that have capacity to translate vision in reality when being challenged in turbulent historical times. The capacity to sail their nation out of threats and dangers in waters of freedom and stability while opening pathways to sustainable and inclusive prosperity of the people.

Greatest ones are not defined by number of people they lead, or by the size and resources of the country, or by the military power and wealth of the nation, but by the legacy measured with success of the leaders and nation that comes after he is gone.

Three decades after Heydar Aliyev became President of Azerbaijan and two decades after passed away, Republic of Azerbaijan, the country that 105 years ago became the first secular democratic Muslim majority state, today is modern fast growing developing country, founded on great history, culture, tradition, wisdom and legacy of great people like Nizami Ganjavi - country with high rate of economic development, enormous energy, transport and geostrategic importance that is unavoidable factor of overall geopolitical stability in Europe and in the broader region. Legacy of Heydar Aliyev is not only important part of nation building history but the key pillar of Azerbaijan today and tomorrow as well.



President Aliyev, Ilham Aliyev just continued the path on his father's legacy. And the creation of Nizami Ganjavi International Center as a platform for Global Baku Forum which is becoming some kind of geopolitical Dallas is actually made on one great gift that Azerbaijan has which is 12th century thinker, poet, sage great Nizami Ganjavi. So, I think that what we are witnessing today from Global Baku Forum, Nizami Ganjavi International Center, leadership of President Ilham Aliyev this is just something which was possible just like today's Azerbaijan that has a future to be not only regional leader but also some kind of lighthouse for dialogue, respect, learning, and understanding in broader sense. And that was all possible because 100 years ago in Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev was born and grabbed historical moment as a true leader.



## Виктор Ющенко

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Президент Украины 2005-2010  
Член Международного центра Низами Гянджеви

### **100 лет назад родился Гейдар Алиевич Алиев**

Мы познакомились с ним в начале 90-ых годов. Это время, когда Азербайджан был отключён от системы расчёта и внутри Советского Союза, и за рубежом. Наступила финансовая и платёжная изоляция. Я, как один из руководителей Национального Банка Украины, был приглашён в Нахичевань для обсуждения той финансовой и платёжной ситуации, которая сложилась в Азербайджане. Я тогда имел возможность провести несколько дней с Гейдаром Алиевым, и эти впечатления у меня остались на всю жизнь.

Когда я вошёл в его рабочий кабинет, а его рабочий кабинет находился в детском садике, на втором этаже, меня поразило несколько вещей. Первое, самое важное – я видел лидера, который приехал из Москвы, и в порядке дня стоял вопрос становления независимого Азербайджана. Было всё очень сложно. Я помню, как перед витринами в Нахичевани были очереди,

тысячи, десятки тысяч людей находились на тротуарах в ожидании. В этой атмосфере у нас начался очень продолжительный разговор, который длился не один день. И мы достигли того взаимопонимания, которое привело к тому, что Азербайджан впоследствии стал надёжным другом Украины. Азербайджан получил платёжную систему, вышел на внешний контакт, финансовый и экономический.

Я припоминаю, как через год Гейдар Алиевич приехал в Киев, и мы целый день с ним провели на банкнотной фабрике, монетном дворе Национального банка Украины, где мы рассматривали первые заказы, которые нужно было выполнить для Азербайджана, начиная от строгих документов, разного рода свидетельств и заканчивая облигациями, даже проговаривали вопрос печатания первых азербайджанских банкнот на нашей фабрике.

Эти и другие страницы наших отношений я храню в своём сердце до сегодняшнего дня. Я видел азербайджанский народ, великого лидера, может быть, в самые сложные часы. Азербайджанскому народу очень повезло, что он имел такого человека, который мог возглавить эти трансформации и в конце концов вывести страну на уровень, в котором она находится сейчас.





## PETAR STOYANOV

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President of Bulgaria 1997-2002  
Board of Trustees Member, NGIC

In December 1999 as a relatively young President of my country, I visited Baku at the invitation of President Heydar Aliyev. We had extremely fruitful and enjoyable discussions, including a one-on-one conversation. We discussed in detail our bilateral relations, major aspects of the further development of our cooperation and the strengthening of friendship between Bulgaria and Azerbaijan. It was a relaxed and friendly conversation between two presidents whose countries had a similar recent past and who were facing similar problems and difficulties at the time - economic and social, as well as political as our societies were undergoing a transition unknown in human history - from totalitarian rule and planned economy to democracy and free market economy. This challenge made us close in a special way.

In this challenging period, President Aliyev demonstrated that he was a visionary. His goal was not only to resolve the current problems of the country within his mandate, but also to lay the best foundations for its development in the next 40-50-100 years. Due to his recognition of the excellent strategic geopolitical



position of his country, Azerbaijan established its role as an important factor in the “TRACECA” program for the Restoration of the Historic Silk Route. I think that this quality of a visionary was the most important element of his leadership of Azerbaijan.

We met with President Heydar Aliyev many times in other formats, such as Partnership for Peace, OSCE and others. I remember very well our meeting at the NATO summit in Washington on April 22-23, 1999, when all of us, the presidents of the former Eastern European countries and former Soviet republics, discussed all issues related to creating a new world after the collapse of the former Soviet Union. President Heydar Aliyev had the right to take particular pride in this process due to his decisive role in asserting Azerbaijan's independence, but also in having avoided any of the dramatic and destructive turbulences that usually accompany such profound changes.

Despite the difference in age and experience, it was always a pleasure to communicate with President Aliyev as he was an intelligent, balanced and informed communicator. But I also enjoyed talking with him because he had invaluable experience and a



vision for the future of the post-Soviet space. He felt true love for my country which is similar in size and close in its traditions to Azerbaijan, but more importantly, because of the future common tasks we were facing. Aliyev's experience informed him that the gigantic challenges facing our new countries required patience and time. I must admit that, being much younger, I thought that we would overcome the post-communist problems within a much shorter time. However, President Aliyev was right.

I have always been greatly impressed by the political wisdom of Heydar Aliyev, as well as the will with which he laid the foundations of the new independent state of Azerbaijan. It is not by chance that the Azerbaijani people gave him the title “National Leader”. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Heydar Aliyev played a decisive role in the development and well-being of his country: from the historic achievements in gaining independence, through his leading role in the Nagorno-Karabakh peace negotiations, through the unique project that is the East-West Energy Corridor, attracting major foreign investments and the revival of the Great Silk Road. All these historical achievements of Azerbaijan are connected with the name and personality of Heydar Aliyev. In the history of every nation there are periods of historical challenges. A nation which at such times succeeds in appointing a leader who can lead his people to overcome those challenges, should be proud and grateful. And in the years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan had such a leader.



## **NINO BURJANADZE**

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Acting President of Georgia  
2003-2004 and 2007-2008;  
Speaker of Parliament of Georgia  
2001-2008

It is my great pleasure and honour to speak to you today about the legacy of Heydar Aliyev, a truly extraordinary personality and a remarkable leader whose political impact reverberated far beyond the Caucasus, and whose legacy continues to inspire us all as we celebrate his centenary. I had the privilege of knowing Heydar Aliyev personally, and I can attest that his work was an example of great statesmanship, executed with tremendous wisdom and great patience during his leadership of Azerbaijan through the gravest political, social and economic turbulences.

Heydar Aliyev led his country with great dignity during the Soviet times, and then helped it emerge from the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Through those exceptionally challenging times, he not only managed to lay a strong foundation for his country, but also managed to transform it into a stable and sovereign state on its journey to prosperity. He also did so much to build a good-neighbourly relations with my country, Georgia. During my long term political career, I witnessed first-hand his success in building reciprocal and harmonious relationship between our two nations. He did this both before, and after our independence.



I am confident that everyone who knew him personally will agree that he always left an everlasting impression. I remember vividly the first time I met him – this was back in 1996, during his official state visit to Georgia. Those were difficult times, but also times of great changes and hope. At that time, one of Georgia's top priorities was to become a part of transnational transit corridor, and the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline. The terms of

Georgia's participation, however, were not very satisfactory. We found ourselves in a difficult position. I will not delve deeper into technicalities, but my country needed a helping hand...

What Heydar Aliyev did was truly remarkable and set a new precedent in contemporary political history. Acting out of pure benevolence, he took steps to empower his neighbouring country and bolstered Georgia's position within the project. Furthermore, during his visit to Tbilisi, he surprised everyone by making a unilateral decision to increase Georgia's share in the project. And he announced this during his speech to the Georgian parliament. As my colleagues and I listened to his words, we were left in a state of shock. We were all stunned into silence for a split second before erupting into thunderous applause! This meant a lot for Georgia, and such magnanimous gesture could only be made by a far-sighted and brave statesman like Heydar Aliyev.

I want to take a moment to recall a personal meeting I had with Heydar Aliyev more than two decades ago. At the time, I was a young and less experienced politician, representing my nation as the Chairwoman of the Parliament. Despite my relative lack of experience, Heydar Aliyev treated me with the utmost respect, as if we were at the same level of global politics. During that meeting, he expressed his deep admiration for my nation and made a momentous decision that would only come to fruition because of his immense political weight. Looking back on that encounter, I am filled with a sense of awe and gratitude for the way he treated me and my country. It is a testament to his character that he elevated a young politician like me, and it speaks to the kind of leader he truly was.

Today, as we celebrate his centenary, I reflect on his legacy with immense admiration. It brings me great joy to see the people of Azerbaijan flourishing under the wise and prudent leadership characteristic to Heydar Aliyev, but now carried forward by honourable Ilham Aliyev. Our relationship is a source of immense pride for me, and I am delighted to see that Heydar Aliyev's political heritage lives on in contemporary Azerbaijan. I would like to wish President Ilham Aliyev continued success in building a resilient, forward-looking, and prosperous Azerbaijan.

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“Heydar Aliyev contributed to Georgia's participation in regional projects and to the improvement of people's well-being through these projects.”



## EKMELEDDIN IHSANOGLU

Member, NGIC  
Secretary-General, OIC 2004-2014

"Heydar Aliyev was a brilliant and wise leader. After becoming the President of independent Azerbaijan, he worked tirelessly and selflessly to further increase the power of the country. Heydar Aliyev succeeded in strengthening the economic well-being of Azerbaijan through bilateral and multilateral cooperation."





**Valdis Zatlers**

*President of Latvia 2007-2011  
Member, NGIC*

"100 years ago, a child was born to be a leader. There are not so many people in the history of the world who could be called the founding fathers of their own countries. It's a privilege, but this privilege needs wisdom and experience. How to do that? You need to create a vision of your country, and then you have to convince your people that they are ready to have their own state and that they will be proud of their state in the future. So that's what Heydar Aliyev did. I think not only Azerbaijani people but myself are very grateful to him because he put Azerbaijan on the global map."



**Ismail Serageldin**

*Co-Chair, NGIC  
Vice President of the World Bank  
1992-2000*

"We are privileged that many of us have known him personally. Today we reflect on 100 years since the birth of the real father of Azerbaijan. Heydar Aliyev established peace and prosperity in Azerbaijan and pushed for its development and its position in the world."



**Mladen Ivanic**

*President of Bosnia and Herzegovina  
2014-2018; Member, NGIC*

"Heydar Aliyev was seen as a person who was really significant and who established modern Azerbaijan. He will always be remembered in the history of the Azerbaijani people as a very significant personality."





### **Amre Moussa**

*Board of Trustees Member, NGIC  
Secretary-General, Arab League  
2001-2011; Minister of Foreign  
Affairs of Egypt 1991-2001*

"I met Heydar Aliyev more than once in my capacity as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt. I was impressed by his analysis and by his vast knowledge of the problems and issues of concern in Africa, the Arab world, West Asia, and the Mediterranean."



### **Wu Hongbo**

*Special Representative of the Chinese  
Government for European Affairs;  
former Under Secretary-General of  
United Nations; former Chinese  
Ambassador to Germany*

"Heydar Aliyev's national development strategy for the revival of the Silk Road is an important clap for the common prosperity and the development of both China and Azerbaijan.

Heydar Aliyev was a good friend of the Chinese people. During his visit to our country in 1994, he held important meetings with Chinese leaders. During his leadership, Azerbaijan-China relations developed rapidly, and important steps were taken to expand cooperation in a number of fields. Currently, China is interested in the further development of relations with Azerbaijan."

"If it was not for him, I cannot imagine what would have happened to this country. Because the relations of energy-rich countries with other states and neighbors are very important. The modern state of Azerbaijan was created under the leadership of Heydar Aliyev."



**Boris Tadic**

*Board of Trustees Member, NGIC  
President of Serbia 2004-2012*

"What is a nation from my point of view?

This is awareness about a common future. To be a state-ment means you have a duty, you have a goal, and you have an obligation to be able to work on common awareness about a common future.

This is extremely delicate, and only a few among the state-ments and the politicians are able to deliver it. Heydar Aliyev was showing a really specific philosophy; he was extremely successful in that process, and this is why he deserved to be the founding father of Azerbaijan.

It was extremely difficult during the turmoil of the dethron-ing of the USSR to establish a new country and to put the foundation of the new nation in a specific historical con-text. He was very brave; he was very determined and focused on his historical work. I appreciate very much everything he has done."



**Emil Constantinescu**

*President of Romania 1996-2000  
Member, NGIC*

"He used this wisdom from the first day. An example of this was the signing of the Contract of the Century, which allowed many foreign companies to start working in Azerbaijan, and this contributed to the development of the country. It was easy for us to work together. We saw Azerbaijan as a gateway to the Caspian region for Romania, while Azerbaijan saw Romania as a window to Europe. Our joint work to promote bilateral relations was very effective. Heydar Aliyev was able to make the right decision at the right time, which helped him solve the problems faced during his presidency."



**Eka Tkeshelashvili**

*Board of Trustees Member, NGIC  
Deputy Prime Minister of Georgia  
2010-2012*

“Speaking about President Heydar Aliyev is very emotional for me as a Georgian, as I vividly remember the role he played, not only in the nation-building of Azerbaijan, but for the whole region, and Georgia in particular. The close, brotherly relations between our two nations have been revitalized specifically during the period of Heydar Aliyev’s presidency.

Foundation for those issues on the agenda, such as energy independence, the connection between East and West, as well as the role of the Caucasus in all this, has been laid during those times.

President Heydar Aliyev, together with Eduard Shevardnadze, President of Georgia at the time, have built that vision that is serving our nations in terms of our role internationally and became the foundation for nation building, economic prosperity for the region, and the well-being of so many people. Heydar Aliyev’s image and legacy that he left are vividly known and appreciated. We, as Georgians, think of him as our own because his role in our country’s prosperity was very big as well. All that foundation for the strategic partnership of or two very close nations has been consolidated with his personal efforts.”



**Volkan Bozkir**

*75th President of the UNGA  
Member, NGIC*

“With the son Aliyev, who really showed the same talents as his father, Azerbaijan is now a country in the world with a lot of credit, a peaceful nation, a secular nation, and also an important element in many international gatherings. I’m sure that the national leader, Heydar Aliyev, is resting in peace but also with happiness, seeing that this dream has been achieved by his son and with his friends.”



**Rosen Plevneliev**

*Board of Trustees Member, NGIC  
President of Bulgaria 2012-2017*

“I'm going to tell you a story. One day, I spent the whole day with President Ilham Aliyev. We were at the opening of a very modern stadium just a kilometer out of here, and we also opened the ceremony for the European Olympic Games. And President Ilham Aliyev was telling me the story. Mr. President, do you know what was here before we built that very modern stadium, one of the most modern stadiums in the world, like this museum? You know what was here? I said no; that was a lot of gas. That was garbage. And I just wonder what President Heydar Aliyev inherited from the falling empire. I tried to see pictures; I tried to look at the museums; I saw some books.”



**Yves Leterme**

*Board of Trustees Member, NGIC  
Prime Minister of Belgium  
2008, 2009-2011*

“Nation-building refers to fulfilling the concept of a shared society based on a geographical location. We all know from the recent history of Azerbaijan that territorial integrity is crucial, as is geographical location, because you are a nation yourself; you feel yourself belonging to a group that makes you even more of a nation; and you're recognized as such by others. Azerbaijan is really becoming increasingly recognized as a beacon of stability and a trustworthy partner, and that's what the founding father laid as a solid foundation for Azerbaijan. I think he would be proud of what is now the result of his personal leadership and what he contributed to the building of this country and, moreover, of this nation.”



**Giorgi Margvelashvili**

*President of Georgia 2013-2018  
Member, NGIC*

"Together with Azerbaijani people we celebrate the 100th anniversary of Heydar Aliyev, who has given perspective to the nations of the Caucasus, Türkiye, as well as our partners in South Europe, who are now linked to the visionary concept of Caspian energy, and whose political future in many aspects linked to the concepts developed by Heydar Aliyev, Eduard Shevarnadze and Süleyman Demirel."



**Viktor Yushchenko**

*President of Ukraine 2005-2010  
Member, NGIC*

"Governing countries in the first years of independence required great responsibility. When Heydar Aliyev was asked what was the most difficult thing about governing the country, he said that it was laying the foundation of a sovereign state, and he succeeded in doing that. It is a great joy for the people of Azerbaijan to have had such a leader. Heydar Aliyev was a very cultured and fair person. When I visited Nakhchivan, I saw that Heydar Aliyev was working tirelessly for his country."



**Petar Stoyanov**

*Board of Trustees Member, NGIC  
President of Bulgaria 1997-2002*

"Heydar Aliyev had visions of the future and rich experience. He saved Azerbaijan from the difficulties and dangers that the country faced during the conflict. Currently, relations between Bulgaria and Azerbaijan are at a high level, and Heydar Aliyev played his part in strengthening these relations."



**Abdulaziz Altwaijri**

*Former Director-General of ISESCO  
Member, NGIC*

"His achievements were unique, he was among the most important people in the USSR, increased the budget of Azerbaijan by 89 times in a short time, and also solved the country's problems that arose after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Heydar Aliyev played a crucial role in Azerbaijan's accession to ISESCO and in the subsequent development of relations.

President Ilham Aliyev continued the work of a national leader and contributed to the development of relations between Azerbaijan and ISESCO.."



**Hikmet Chetin**

*Minister of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye  
1991-1994; Member, NGIC*

"Heydar Aliyev was a far-sighted and wise head of state who had dreams for his country. He wanted Azerbaijan to occupy an important place in the world community and establish peace in the region."



**David Chikvaidze**

*Chef de Cabinet to the  
Director-General of the UNOAG*

"I have been coming to Azerbaijan since the 1990s. During these years, I have witnessed the dynamic development of the country. Heydar Aliyev's wise policy is being successfully continued today. It is very important to have neighbors with a strong, constructive, and balanced policy."



100<sup>1923</sup><sub>2023</sub>

HEYDAR ALIYEV 100  
LIFE & LEGACY

