

REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

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ABSTRACT

of the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**AZERBAIJAN-GEORGIA RELATIONS: EMERGENCE,
DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPECTS**

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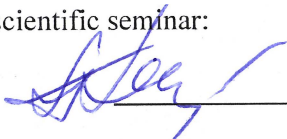
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GENERAL ESSENCE OF THE DISSERTATION

Relevance and development of the topic. As is known, after Azerbaijan regained its independence, one of the main tasks ahead was to regulate foreign policy issues, especially relations with neighboring countries. The main directions, goals, principles and main features of the foreign policy of the independent Azerbaijani state are reflected in the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan adopted on November 12, 1995 and in the speeches of the national leader Heydar Aliyev. The main principles of the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan are to live in friendship, peace and safety with all the nations of the world and co-operate with them for this purpose, uses its relations with other states on the basis of the principles enshrined in universally accepted international legal rules, effectively uses these relations both to strengthen the international positions of the Republic of Azerbaijan and to develop the economy, science, and culture of the republic.

In the first years of independence, as a result of incompetent leadership, situation of the Republic of Azerbaijan became more aggravated and in all spheres the crisis deepened. The military aggression of Armenia, the struggle for power and economic decline, arbitrariness in all spheres of public life, chaos were the main threats facing state independence. The crisis situation proved itself in foreign policy and prevented the establishment of beneficial relations with other countries. In 1993, the great leader Heydar Aliyev, who returned to power at the insistent demand of the people, saved the state independence. A ceasefire was achieved, stability and peace were established, and successful steps were taken to regulate foreign policy.

Ensuring the establishment of mutually beneficial relations with neighboring countries was also a matter of strategic importance. From this point of view, the relations established with Georgia were of particular importance, and were identified as one of the priorities of the foreign policy of national leader Heydar Aliyev. Therefore, an in-depth study of the relations

between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Georgia is very important.

The relevance of the research work can be expressed more specifically by the following provisions:

- First of all, the historical connection between the two countries is one of the foundations of relations. The Azerbaijani and Georgian peoples have had neighborly and friendly relations for thousands of years. These relations have been maintained and deepened both in the early twentieth century, when both countries first gained independence, and since the late twentieth century, when independence was restored. It is no coincidence that during his official visit to Georgia on March 8, 1996, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev emphasized the great historical ties between Azerbaijan and Georgia and expressed special importance to relations with this country: “*Georgia is a close neighbor and friend to us. We have great historical ties.*”¹
- Geopolitical and geoeconomic aspects of Azerbaijani-Georgian relations are very important. Azerbaijan is Georgia’s gateway to Asia, and Georgia is Azerbaijan’s gateway to Europe.
 - For many years, both states were first colonized by Tsarist Russia, then by the Soviet regime, and then fought for independence. Purposeful administrative-territorial division during the USSR led to the emergence of separatist hotbeds in both countries.
- A number of global energy and transport-communication projects initiated by Azerbaijan and with the participation of Georgia are being implemented. President Ilham Aliyev has from time to time expressed the impact of these projects on interstate relations.² The projects have an exceptional role in strengthening the independence of the countries, the prosperity

¹ Aliyev, H.A. Our independence is eternal: [46 volumes] / H.A.Aliyev. - Baku: Azerneshr, - vol. 5, - 1998. - 500 p., p. 203.

² Aliyev, I.H. Development is our goal: [104 volumes] / I.H.Aliyev. - Baku: Azerneshr, - vol. 61. - 2018. - 400 p., p. 216.

of their economies and the growing weight of the South Caucasus in the world. In one of his speeches, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev stressed the role of projects in the development of the region: *“It is clear that energy and transport projects have transformed the South Caucasus, enabled two countries in the region - Georgia and Azerbaijan - to obtain additional financial resources, and increased the importance of our countries to international partners.”*³

- Azerbaijani-Georgian cultural and humanitarian relations have very deep roots. Cooperation in this area has historically developed on the basis of mutual enrichment and has been expanded and preserved in modern times. Both countries are interested in developing cultural and humanitarian ties.
- Among the main factors determining the relations between the two countries are the Azerbaijanis living in Georgia and the population of Georgian origin living in Azerbaijan. Since the restoration of independence, the Azerbaijani state has not been indifferent to the fate of Azerbaijanis living in Georgia, moreover, has created the necessary conditions for the full provision of the Georgian population and the protection of their rights and freedoms. President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has repeatedly stressed the importance of this factor: *“Georgians in Azerbaijan and Azerbaijanis in Georgia are our great wealth.”*⁴
- Since the restoration of independence, Azerbaijan and Georgia have joined a number of international and regional organizations and successfully cooperate within these institutions. President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev stressed that Azerbaijan and Georgia work together as two independent states,

³ President Ilham Aliyev: Joint energy and transport projects of Georgia and Azerbaijan have transformed the South Caucasus: [Electronic resource] / 21 May 2021. URL: <https://azertag.az/xeber/> Prezident_Ilham_Aliyev_Gurcistan_ve_Azerbaycanin_birge_enerji_ve_neqliyyat_layiheleri_Cenubi_Qafqazi_transformasiyaya_ugradib-1785781

⁴ Əliyev, İ.H. İnkişaf məqsədimizdir. P. 219.

supporting each other within the UN, the Council of Europe and other international organizations.⁵

- Both Azerbaijan and Georgia have suffered from occupation for many years. In his speeches, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, repeatedly drew attention to the violation of territorial integrity, which is the biggest problem of the countries, and listed them among the factors that bring the countries together: *“Unfortunately, Georgia and Azerbaijan have been subjected to aggressive separatism, which has led to the violation of the territorial integrity of our countries.... Therefore, all these problems, and most importantly, the positive factors, bring us closer to each other.”*⁶

In bilateral meetings and on international platforms, Azerbaijan has always defended the territorial integrity of Georgia and proved that it is a reliable and loyal neighbor both theoretically and practically.

During the 30 years of the conflict, in the 44-day Patriotic war and in the post-war period, Georgia tried to maintain its official neutral position and voiced balanced opinions towards both neighboring states. After the war, Georgia tried to mediate and did certain things from this point of view.

In-depth and comprehensive study of all these issues, making scientifically based forecasts for the development of mutual relations is one of the main tasks facing the political science of Azerbaijan. Therefore, the study of the problem is relevant.

Azerbaijani-Georgian political-historical, economical cultural and humanitarian relations have been elaborated in various works. The most important source for studying the main directions of the establishment and development of the relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Georgia is the multi-volume work “Our Independence is Eternal”, which contains speeches and interviews of national leader Heydar Aliyev. The work, which is of great importance from the scientific-theoretical and political-historical point of view,

⁵ Əliyev, İ.H. İnkişaf məqsədimizdir. P. 218.

⁶ Aliyev, İ.H. Development is our goal: [104 volumes] / İ.H.Aliyev. - Baku: Azerneshr, - vol. 3. - 2009. - 416 p., p. 124.

comprehensively and objectively analyzes the processes of that period, reflects the way to preserve and develop state independence, and identifies priority areas of nation-building. The work details the work done for the development of political-diplomatic, economic, energy, trade, humanitarian and other spheres in the relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Georgia, the goals and objectives of the Republic of Azerbaijan in relation to the neighboring state and its role in development. The visits of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev to Georgia, the meetings held within these visits, the agreements and treaties reached, as well as similar steps of the neighboring head of state can be considered the most detailed and reliable source for studying the development of relations between the two countries.

The multi-volume work of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev “Development is our goal” played an important role in writing the dissertation. The book analyzes in detail the visits of President Ilham Aliyev, who duly continued the stable and balanced domestic and foreign policy, bilateral and multilateral cooperation, founded by Heydar Aliyev, meetings with foreign officials and delegations visiting the Republic of Azerbaijan, participation in events held within international and regional organizations. It is an irreplaceable source for understanding the main directions of the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijani researchers have shown a certain interest in the investigation of separate aspects of the studied subject. Relations with Georgia are analyzed in the works of researchers M.Qasimli, A.Hasanov, I.Huseynova, E.Ahmadov, H.Babaoghlu, N.Nasibzadeh, Z.Mammadov, Sh.Rahmanzadeh, J.Arikhov, F.Chiragov, Z.Shiriyev, R.Guliyev and others, devoted to the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, its history and various aspects.⁷ In these works,

⁷ Qasımlı, M. Azərbaycan Respublikasının xarici siyasəti (1991-2003): [2 hissədə. I hissə] / M.Qasımlı. – Bakı: Mütərcim, – 2015, – 648 səh.; Qasımlı, M. Azərbaycan Parlamentarizmi tarixi / M.Qasımlı, B. Muradova, [2 cildə, II cild], – Bakı: Mütərcim, –2018, – 680 səh.; Həsənov, Ə. Azərbaycanın geosiyasəti/ Ə.Həsənov. – Bakı: Zərdabi LTD MMC, –2015, – 1056 səh.; Hüseynova, İ. Heydər Əliyev və Qafqazda sülh prosesi/ İ.Hüseynova. – Bakı:Çaşıoğlu, –2008,

geostrategic importance of Azerbaijan, various aspects of the role of global projects initiated by Azerbaijan, ensuring and diversifying Europe's energy security, increasing the geopolitical importance of the South Caucasus, the weight of relations between Azerbaijan and Georgia in foreign economic relations, Azerbaijan-Georgia humanitarian relations were investigated.

In the works of M.Qasimli, the goals and main directions of the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, as well as the conceptual issues of the relations with Georgia were analyzed, was brought to attention the role of the Great Leader Heydar Aliyev in the implementation of energy projects, establishment and strengthening of cooperation between the two countries.

Research conducted at the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences was used in the research. The publications of the Institute of Caucasus Studies of ANAS "Georgia: administrative-territorial structure, management and demography" authored by V.Omarov, E.Kalbizadeh, S.Habibbeyli, N.Mammadova and K.Salayev, "Activities of Armenian organizations in Georgia" authored by M.Qasimli, V.Omarov, N.Mammadova, S.Habibbayli and K.Salayev, publication of the Institute of History named after Bakikhanov of ANAS "History of Azerbaijan-Georgia relations (XVIII-early XXI centuries)" were used during the study of the problem.⁸

Works of researchers from other countries were also used in writing the dissertation. As is known, since the end of the XX century, the South Caucasus region has been of interest to a number of

616 səh.; Əhmədov, E. Azərbaycanın xarici siyasəti: beynəlxalq təhlükəsizlik və əməkdaşlıq institutları ilə münasibətlər/ E.Əhmədov. – Bakı: Letterpress nəşriyyat evi, – 2013.–452 səh.; Azərbaycan Respublikasının xarici siyasətinin əsas istiqamətləri(1991-2016) (məqalələr toplusu) / –Bakı: Poliart MMC, – 2017. –904 s.; Shiriyev, Z. Azerbaijani – Georgian relations/ Z.Shiriyev, K.Kakachia – Bakı: Center for the Strategic Studies, –2013. –117 p. and etc.

⁸ Gürcüstan: inzibati-ərazi quruluşu, idarəçiliyi və demoqrafiyası/ V.Ömərov, E.Kəlbizadə, S.Həbibbəyli [və b.] – Bakı: MTM İnnovation MMC, –2019. – 320 s.; Gürcüstanda erməni təşkilatlarının fəaliyyəti / M.Qasımlı, V.Ömərov, N.Məmmədova [və b.] – Bakı: RS Poliqraf MMC, –2019. – 320 s.; Azərbaycan-Gürcüstan münasibətləri tarixi (XVIII əsr-XXI əsrin əvvəlləri) / İ. Bağirova, Ş.Həmidova, S.Əliyeva [və b.] . – Bakı:Şərq-Qərb, – 2013. – 392 s.

researchers, and over time it has begun to be developed in a broader context. The problem has also attracted the attention of Turkish political science. Turkish scholars A. Aydingul, A. Asker, A. Y. Shir, M. M. Hekimoglu, Y. Sarikaya, M. Chelikpala and others studied the impact of Azerbaijan-Turkiye-Georgia cooperation on regional security, energy and transport projects, their geopolitical and geoeconomic significance and other problems.⁹ The book “Muslim communities in Georgia” analyzes the socio-economic situation of Azerbaijanis living in Georgia, the problems they face in various fields. Mithat Çelikpala’s book “Turkiye and the Caucasus: from reactionary foreign policy to active diplomacy” analyzes the political line of Turkiye in the background of the processes in the South Caucasus, the impact of global energy projects on geopolitical processes in the world.

Russian researchers A. Krylov, E. Arkhipova, E. Eshba, O. Kuznetsov used their research on border issues in bilateral relations, energy diplomacy, global oil and gas projects, Azerbaijan-Turkiye-Georgia cooperation, 44-day war and its consequences.¹⁰

Georgian scientists such as V. Papava, B. Arveladze, T. Mibchvani, M. Tsereteli, K. Kakachiya, G. Markhuliya have conducted interesting studies on various aspects of the problem.¹¹

⁹ Gürcistandaki Müslüman topluluklar: Azınlık hakları, kimlik, siyaset / ed. A. Aydingül, A. Asker, A. Y. Şir – Ankara: Terazi Yayıncılık, – 2016. – 428 s.; Hekimoğlu, M. M. Bakü – Tiflis – Ceyhan Boru hattı projesinin hukuki boyutları // – Bilig, – 2012. №63, – s.77-92 etc.

¹⁰ Крылов А. Южнокавказский энергетический транзит: проблемы и перспективы // Кавказ и глобализация Том 6 (1). – 2012. – с.93-101; Кузнецов О. Война за Карабах 2020 года: год спустя / О. Кузнецов. Центр анализа международных отношений Баку: Центр Анализа Международных Отношений. – 2021. – 36 с. etc.

¹¹ Папава В. Сравнительные преимущества стран центрального Кавказа: потенциальные, реализованные и упущенные возможности // Кавказ и глобализация Том 1 (1.) – 2006. – с.99-109; Мархулия Г. Армяно – грузинские взаимоотношения в 1918-1920 годах / Г. Мархулия. – Тбилиси: – 2007. – 257с.; Arveladze, B. Armenian Battalion Named After Bagramyan and Ethnic Cleansing of Georgians in Abkhazia / B. Arzeladze, T. Mibchvani – Tbilisi: Universal, – 2009. – 96 p. etc .

Researchs of S.F.Starr, S.E.Cornell from U.S., J.Wheatley, S.Lussac from Great Britain, K.J. Storm from Finland and others touch upon ethnic processes in the South Caucasus, socio-economic problems of national minorities, as well as discriminatory policies against Azerbaijanis living in Georgia.¹²

In general, the analysis of the scientific literature on the studied problem shows that its various aspects have been developed by scientists from Azerbaijan and abroad. However, as a result of the analysis of the scientific literature, it can be concluded that there are gaps in the dissertation level of the relevant problem, in terms of comprehensive research from the point of view of political science. This allows the presented dissertation work to be evaluated as a certain step in eliminating the existing gap in this field in the scientific literature.

Object and subject of research. The object of research are the establishment, development and prospects of Azerbaijani-Georgian relations at the present stage. The subject of the study are diplomatic-political relations between the two countries, trade-economic, cultural-humanitarian relations, energy projects, cooperation in the field of tourism, the attitude of the parties to the conflicts in the South Caucasus.

Aim and objectives of the study. The main purpose of the research work is the establishment and development of diplomatic – political relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Georgia, the main directions, current situation and prospects of cooperation between the two countries in other areas, the attitude of the parties to the conflicts in the South Caucasus and their cooperation in a multilateral format on a scientific basis.

¹² The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline: Oil Window to the West / ed. S. F. Starr, S.E.Cornell – Sweden. – 2005. – 152 p.; Samuel Lussac, The Baku – Tbilisi – Kars railroad and its geopolitical implications for the South Caucasus // *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, 2008, 2(4) – p. 212-224; Jonathan, W. The Integration of National Minorities in the Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli provinces of Georgia, Five Years into the Presidency of Mikheil Saakashvili / W. Jonathan. – European Centre for Minority Issues, – 2009. – 57 p. etc

In order to achieve the set goal, the following specific issues are to be investigated:

- Investigate the factors that determine the relationship;
- Determining the nature of bilateral relations and analyzing the current situation;
- Evaluation of the current situation and prospects in various directions of trade-economic, energy-communication, humanitarian cooperation;
- Defining the role of Azerbaijan and Georgia in the implementation of international projects;
- Determining the position of Georgia in relation to the Karabakh conflict created as a result of Armenia's military aggression against the Republic of Azerbaijan, as well as Azerbaijan in relation to the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Tskhinvali);
- Analysis of the current state and prospects of bilateral and multilateral cooperation between the two countries after the Second Karabakh War.
- Revealing the main forms of cooperation in a multilateral format.

Research methods. The dissertation was written using appropriate methods adopted in political research. Taking into account the wide range of scientific researches in the field of interstate relations, logical and historical-descriptive methods were used in the study of problems, facts and materials were collected and studied, systematized, and regular relations between them were determined. In addition, generalized scientific results were obtained using practical methods of event analysis, critical, comparative analysis and document analysis, and practical recommendations were made.

The main provisions of the defense. The study of the problem is specifically reflected in the following provisions:

- In modern conditions, the establishment of mutually beneficial relations with neighboring countries is one of the priorities in determining the foreign policy;

- The historical, political, economic, legal, cultural, humanitarian, etc. bases of the Azerbaijan-Georgia relations, the Azerbaijanis living in Georgia, the people of Georgian origin living in Azerbaijan are the main factors determining the mutual relations;

- Conflicts in the region have negatively affected the development of not only Azerbaijan and Georgia, but also the entire region.

- Implemented international and regional projects, along with being a key factor in the rapid development of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Georgia out of the economic crisis, created conditions for raising international relations to the level of strategic partnership;

- As strategic partners, the relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Georgia have further increased the geopolitical, geostrategic and geoeconomic importance of both countries;

- The growth of political and economic power of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Georgia, the high level of development of bilateral relations, the implementation of international projects have created conditions for the South Caucasus to become one of the most important regions in world politics.

- Geopolitical realities in the region after Azerbaijan's victory in the 44-day war and the tripartite declaration signed between Azerbaijan, Russia and Armenia indicate that the South Caucasus will become a wider transport and communication link.

Scientific novelty of the research. The scientific novelty of research is determined, first of all, by the problem statement. Establishment, development and prospects of Azerbaijan-Georgia relations was comprehensively studied for the first time in the political science of Azerbaijan.

The scientific novelty of the dissertation is specifically reflected in the following provisions:

- The factors determining the relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Georgia were systematically analyzed, it was noted that bilateral relations are conditioned by geographical location, historical ties, common interests, political-diplomatic, trade-economic, cultural-humanitarian, tourism relations, cooperation in multilateral format, Azerbaijanis in Georgia and the population of Georgian origin in Azerbaijan;

- The dynamics and development of the establishment and development of diplomatic-political relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Georgia were analyzed on the basis of the historical method. It was determined that since the restoration of state independence, mutual relations, have developed successfully and risen to the level of strategic partnership;

- The role of the Republic of Azerbaijan as an initiator and executor of global and regional projects has been investigated through factual and comparative analysis and comparative analysis. It was substantiated that the implemented projects, along with contributing to peace, security and development in the South Caucasus region, were one of the main factors in strengthening Georgia's state independence, overcoming the economic crisis and ensuring the social welfare of its population;

- The dynamics of development of bilateral trade-economic, scientific-technical, educational, cultural, humanitarian cooperation established since the restoration of state independence of the countries has been studied based on the method of comparative, critical analysis, existing problems have been identified, prospects for expanding cooperation have been identified, strategies have been studied and clarified that the practical activities of working groups in relevant fields, the exchange of experience in successful areas, the removal of bureaucratic barriers can play an effective role in deepening strategic partnerships and solving problems faster;

- Systematically analyzed the cooperation in the multilateral format, it was concluded that there is successful cooperation both within international and regional organizations and in the Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkiye trilateral format. In particular, the expansion of the tripartite format will increase the political and economic power of all

three states, gaining significant advantages in defense and security, ensuring the security and prospects of energy and transport-communication projects is very important in terms of ensuring the sustainable development of the region as a whole;

- After the brilliant victory of Azerbaijan in the Second Karabakh War, bilateral relations, the goals of the 3+3 cooperation format proposed by Azerbaijan and Turkiye were analyzed, and it was concluded that this format, along with ensuring peace and security in the region, can turn the South Caucasus into a wider global transport and communication hub;

- Azerbaijan's position on the Abkhazian and South Ossetia (Tskhinvali) conflicts has been studied and it was determined that the Republic of Azerbaijan has resolutely and unequivocally supported the territorial integrity and inviolability of the borders of Georgia, and has clearly stated this position in both bilateral and multilateral meetings. The activities of Azerbaijanis and Armenians living in Georgia during the acute stages of these conflicts were compared, and their position was assessed on the basis of facts and reliable sources. It was noted that, unlike Armenians, Azerbaijanis have always strived for the territorial integrity and state independence of Georgia.

- Georgia's position on the Karabakh conflict created as a result of Armenia's military aggression against Azerbaijan has been studied on the basis of official documents and it has been suggested that although Georgia expressed support for Azerbaijan's territorial integrity in bilateral meetings and the activities of international organizations, it did not specifically assess Armenia as an aggressor, by pursuing a balanced policy, it has taken a neutral position against both neighbors, and in some cases has taken pro-Armenian steps, albeit indirectly.

Theoretical and practical significance of the research. The results of the research and scientific-theoretical provisions can be used in the following areas:

- In conducting future research on one or another aspect of the problem,

- In the preparation of generalized works, textbooks and teaching aids;

- Lectures, seminars, scientific symposiums and conferences in universities;
- In the promotion of foreign policy activities of the Republic of Azerbaijan;
- In the development of relevant foreign policy concepts;
- In the preparation of analytical data for foreign policy;
- Organization of regional cooperation programs;
- Effective organization of Diaspora activities.

Approbation and application. The author has presented papers on the problem at international and national symposiums, conferences and forums in Azerbaijan and abroad.

The main provisions and results of the dissertation are reflected in 24 scientific works of the applicant (7 in foreign countries), written in Azerbaijani, English, Turkish and Russian languages, published in Azerbaijan, Turkey, Russia, Ukraine and other foreign countries.

Name of the organization where the dissertation work is carried out. The dissertation was completed at the Institute of Law and Human Rights of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences.

The structure and scope of the work. The dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters divided into nine paragraphs, a conclusion and a list of references.

The first chapter of the dissertation, consisting of 283,486 characters (excluding the list of references), consists of 102,760 characters, the second chapter consists of 83,689 characters, and the third chapter consists of 55,294 characters.

MAIN CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

The **Introduction** substantiates the relevance of the topic, analyzes the degree of study, identifies the main provisions, methods used, scientific novelty, theoretical and practical significance of the research, approbation and structure of the work.

The first chapter of the dissertation is entitled “**The establishment and dynamics of development of diplomatic and political relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Georgia.**” This chapter consists of three paragraphs. The first

paragraph, entitled “**Factors determining mutual relations**”, examines the factors influencing the establishment and development of Azerbaijani-Georgian relations, distinguishes several periods of Azerbaijani-Georgian relations in terms of the nature of diplomatic and political relations since 1918, when the two countries first gained independence, the main features of these periods, the main events that affect the relationship in each period are studied based on the historical method. As a result of the analysis, the main factors determining bilateral relations are historical connection, geographical position, neighboring countries, similar processes in the history of statehood, energy projects, trade-economic, transport, cultural-humanitarian relations, cooperation within international organizations, strategic partnership, Azerbaijanis living in Georgia and people of Georgian origin living in Azerbaijan. The dissertation emphasizes that Azerbaijan-Georgia relations have deep historical roots. There are 6 periods of relations between the two countries.

The periods enumerated in this paragraph have been considered, and it has been emphasized that bilateral relations have risen to the level of strategic partnership through a sharp and contradictory development.

The second paragraph of the chapter “**Establishment and development of diplomatic-political relations**” examines the path of diplomatic-political relations between the two countries since the establishment of diplomatic-political relations, the legal framework of these relations, mutual visits and meetings, the results achieved. The paragraph studies similar events that took place in the two countries at the end of the twentieth century, the political processes that took place on the eve of the establishment of diplomatic and political relations. As a result of the analysis, three stages of diplomatic-political relations were distinguished - the establishment, strengthening and development of relations, and the stages of strategic partnership. It is written that in the first years of independence, Azerbaijani-Georgian relations were not at the desired level, discriminatory policy of hard-line nationalist forces led by Z.Gamsakhurdia in power in Georgia, severe political and economic situation in Azerbaijan due to the Armenian occupation,

internal strife and power struggles not only hampered the establishment of bilateral relations, but also prevented effective steps from being taken to prevent a movement against Azerbaijanis.

The position of Eduard Shevardnadze, who came to power in Georgia in 1992, differed sharply from that of his predecessor, and he was interested in establishing normal relations with Azerbaijan. A number of documents signed during Shevardnadze's visit to Azerbaijan on February 2, 1993, laid the foundation of the legal framework of relations between the two countries.

The turn in relations between began with the coming to power of Heydar Aliyev in Azerbaijan. Heydar Aliyev attached special importance to relations with Georgia. From this point of view, mutual visits and meetings became more frequent and enriched in content from the very beginning. The visit of President Heydar Aliyev to Georgia on March 8, 1996 played an important role in the development of relations. The second stage of the development of diplomatic and political relations, which began with this visit, can be considered very important in terms of building and expanding bilateral relations. This stage was directly connected with the activity of the national leader Heydar Aliyev in one of the priority directions of the foreign policy strategy. The agreement on strengthening friendship, cooperation and mutual security between the two countries, agreements on oil and gas transit, documents covering various areas of bilateral relations have led to a very high level of development of Azerbaijan-Georgia relations.

After Ilham Aliyev was elected President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan-Georgia relations entered the highest stage. The relations have not only been preserved, but have been further developed and reached the level of strategic partnership. It is noted in this paragraph of the dissertation that after the change of government in Georgia, efforts were made to develop bilateral relations in the first years of independence, but in subsequent years, cooperation within the Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey trilateral format became more relevant. From time to time, under the influence of foreign forces, especially after the change of government in Georgia in 2013, despite the coldness and stagnation in relations, both

countries were able to adequately assess the importance of maintaining relations, has taken constructive steps to eliminate the problems, has done important work for the sustainability of the positive dynamics of cooperation.

The third paragraph of the chapter, entitled “Cooperation in the field of security and defense” examines the forms of cooperation in the field of security and defense, the legal framework, mutual visits and events. According to the dissertation, the main forms of cooperation in this field are the activities of heads of state, meetings of officials in relevant fields, cooperation in the field of cyber security, energy and information security, strengthening special forces, training, airspace security, etc. The development of these areas is very important in terms of strengthening the national security and inviolability of borders of both countries, achieving regional security, ensuring the security of global projects, contributing to international security.

In this paragraph it is written that along with bilateral cooperation in the field of Defense, Azerbaijan – Turkey – Georgia trilateral cooperation is also successfully implemented, and similar security problems of Azerbaijan, Turkey and Georgia are considered as factors contributing to cooperation in the field of Defense.

It was also emphasized that bilateral and Azerbaijan – Turkey – Georgia trilateral cooperation established in the field of defense was one of the factors influencing the formation of Georgia’s position both on the eve of the 44-day war, during the war and during the post-war period.

It was also stressed that both countries are aware of the need to maintain and strengthen security and defense relations to ensure national security, inviolability of borders, energy and transport projects, and a number of projects are being implemented for this purpose.

The second chapter, entitled **“Directions, current state and prospects of business cooperation between the two countries”**, consists of three paragraphs. The first paragraph, entitled **“Main forms and implementation of trade and economic cooperation”**

examines the legal framework that serves the establishment and development of trade and economic cooperation between the two countries since the restoration of state independence, the meetings between the heads of state and other officials, the agreements reached, the activities of the joint economic commission, joint measures, etc. It became clear that Azerbaijan and Georgia are strong trade partners. Georgia is one of the 12 main trading partners of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan, which accounts for 10 percent of Georgia's total foreign trade turnover, is the country's second largest trading partner and major investor. This section analyzes the statistical indicators of trade turnover between Azerbaijan and Georgia and clarifies the dynamics of cooperation. It was noted that Georgia, which is considered poor in terms of natural resources, has revived economically through joint projects with Azerbaijan, managed to become an interest of investors, by gaining the status of a transit country in the implementation of global projects, it has managed to improve the level of employment and create new jobs. The companies that pay the most taxes to the Georgian budget are Azerbaijani companies. At the same time, from the first days of independence, the Azerbaijani state has provided Georgia with concessions, assistance and loans. Taking all this into account, it is possible to say that trade and economic relations with Azerbaijan are of great importance for Georgia.

The dissertation states that trade and economic cooperation with Georgia is also important for Azerbaijan. It was noted that the country is one of the markets in which Azerbaijan can operate freely. As a transit country, Georgia is one of the important countries in Azerbaijan's foreign trade concept.

The second paragraph of the chapter, entitled **“Cooperation in the field of energy and transport communications”** examines the legal framework of cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Georgia in the field of energy and transport communications, agreements reached and projects implemented in this area, the impact of the energy factor on both bilateral and multilateral relations between the two countries. It was noted that the energy factor has been a key factor in the development of

interstate relations, both in the early twentieth century, when the country gained independence, and in modern times, since the establishment of diplomatic and political relations. For the first time, Azerbaijan's rich hydrocarbon resources have been directed to the West by transiting through Georgia, regardless of regional giants such as Russia and Iran. These projects have ensured the independence and economic development of Azerbaijan, as well as Georgia. It is written in the dissertation that cooperation with Azerbaijan in the field of energy has brought a number of advantages to Georgia. Thus, it was one of the most important factors in strengthening Georgia's independence, ensured the energy security of this country, created conditions for the development of the economy, helped to solve social problems, played a role in creating new jobs, increased the interest of foreign countries in Georgia, etc.

This paragraph says that since the restoration of independence, significant steps have been taken to establish cooperation between the two countries in the field of transport and communications, and great work has been done both as a participant in global programs and as an initiator and key player in regional projects. It was noted that the work done and future projects make the two countries, in general, the South Caucasus region one of the most important transport and communication hubs in the world.

The dissertation concludes that maintaining and expanding cooperation in the fields of energy and transport communications is very important for the economic development of countries. It was noted that the prospects of relations in all areas are likely to depend on the future development dynamics of energy cooperation.

The third paragraph of the second chapter, entitled **“Cooperation in Education, Culture and Tourism”**, is dedicated to the study of the legal framework of international cooperation in education, culture, humanitarian and tourism, the role of visits and meetings of heads of state and other officials in the development of this field, bilateral and multilateral measures. The paragraph also analyzes the statistical reports of different years and examines the dynamics of relations in the field of tourism since the restoration of

state independence, the successes and shortcomings, the benefits of developing relations for the countries.

The dissertation concludes that there has been successful cooperation in the field of education since the restoration of independence. Despite the successes achieved, the problems of Azerbaijani-language schools were revealed and a number of problems were touched upon. It is written that the reduction in the number of these schools, the high age of the teaching staff, the lack of young staff and the decline in the number of students are problematic aspects of this issue. By attracting young people educated in Georgia, who have a high level of knowledge of the state language as well as the Azerbaijani language, it is possible to achieve some solutions to the problems. Also, the effective use of investments, the mutual exchange of theoretical and practical knowledge, the expansion of student exchanges will allow to further deepen relations.

The study stressed that the Azerbaijani-Georgian cultural and humanitarian cooperation has very deep roots and has been expanded and developed in modern times. The visits and meetings of heads of state and other officials, meetings, events, anniversaries, holidays held within international organizations, cultural centers, Tbilisi State Professional Azerbaijani Drama Theater, Gakh State Georgian Drama Theater, Home museums of prominent representatives of Azerbaijani literature living in Georgia, cultural days, festivals, competitions, conferences, concerts, exhibitions, etc. are listed as key factors in the development of cultural ties.

It is written in this paragraph that both countries are interested in developing cultural ties. Intensive meetings and cultural events prove it. However, there are problems in this area as well. The main factor undermining the development of cultural relations is Georgia's indifference to the historical and cultural objects that exist in this country. Since the restoration of independence, the Georgian government has not allocated funds for the repair and restoration of these enterprises. It is worth mentioning that the replacement of toponyms and hydronyms of Azerbaijani origin with names of Georgian origin is one of the main problems. The

renaming of these names, which are part of the history and culture of Azerbaijan, has been purposefully carried out since the beginning of the twentieth century, and has accelerated since the restoration of independence. Given that these problems can damage the existing relations in the spirit of good neighborliness and strategic partnership, it is desirable for both countries to take appropriate measures to prevent future confrontations and to fulfill the obligations arising from the strategic partnership.

The third chapter of the dissertation, entitled **“Azerbaijan-Georgia relations in a multilateral format and the parties” views on the conflicts in the South Caucasus**”, consists of three paragraphs. In the first paragraph of the chapter entitled **“Multilateral Cooperation”**, international and regional organizations of which both countries are members, bilateral meetings held within these organizations, Azerbaijan-Turkey-Georgia trilateral cooperation, new cooperation platform - 3+3 format put forward by Azerbaijan and Turkey against the background of new geopolitical realities after Azerbaijan’s glorious victory in the Second Karabakh War were analyzed. It was stressed that strengthening cooperation within international organizations is very important for the development of bilateral relations. The support of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Georgia in making decisions within international organizations means strengthening the position of both countries. It is in the interests of both countries to use this power in international forums. It was also noted that the formation of the Azerbaijan-Turkiye-Georgia triangle is based on geographical proximity, historical and cultural ties, favorable conditions for joint economic cooperation, being part of a single transit corridor and political will. The forms of influence of these factors on the development of relations have been studied. It was stressed that cooperation between Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey serves to maintain peace and stability in the region, strengthen the political and economic independence of states, increase prosperity, as well as the safe operation of foreign companies and investors.

It was noted in the paragraph that along with the opening of the Zangazur corridor, the cooperation of the South Caucasus

countries - Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia with neighbors - Turkey, Iran and Russia is envisaged in the 3+3 format. It was concluded that this cooperation platform can promote peace and stability in the region, political stability and rapid development in the economic, energy, transport and other fields. Although Georgia has stated that it will not join the platform due to its problems with Russia, it is written that it is possible that the format will be implemented in the future, Georgia's green light to the format will provide it with a new discussion platform for resolving territorial issues. Moreover, if the process starts outside Georgia, the neighboring country is likely to lose significant economic benefits.

The second paragraph of the chapter, entitled **“The position of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Tskhinvali)”** examines the position of Azerbaijan on the issues of territorial integrity of Georgia, inviolability of its borders, the fight against separatism. The dissertation says that Azerbaijan has always defended the territorial integrity of Georgia, both in bilateral meetings and on international platforms, and has established itself as a reliable and loyal neighbor, both theoretically and practically. Moreover, the state independence and territorial integrity of Georgia have always been protected in the speeches of the heads of state and officials. Support for the fight against separatism, Azerbaijan's resolute defense of the importance of restoring Georgia's territorial integrity in international forums and voting in favor of the documents adopted on this issue, during the energy crisis in Georgia in 2008, the supply of this country with electricity and oil products by Azerbaijan were the key factors in maintaining its state independence. It was stressed that since the restoration of independence, the projects implemented at the expense of Azerbaijan's hydrocarbon resources, as well as the assistance provided and loans have been of great importance in the formation of the country's economy and the fight against separatism, the implemented projects have created conditions for strengthening Georgia's security by drawing the attention of the world community to this country.

The third paragraph of the third chapter is entitled **“Georgia’s attitude to the Karabakh conflict created as a result of the Armenian military aggression”**. This paragraph states that during the 30 years of the conflict, during the 44-day war and post-war, Georgia tried to maintain its official neutral position and made balanced statements in relation to both neighboring countries.

Thus, in the “Tbilisi Declaration” signed by the heads of State in 1996, in the joint statement signed by the president of the Republic of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev and the president of Georgia Eduard Shevardnadze in Tbilisi on March 2000, in the joint declaration signed between the president of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and the president of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili in Baku on March 2004, In the joint declaration signed in Tbilisi on November 2015, 5, between President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of Georgia Georgi Margvelashvili and a number of other documents, it was stated that the parties respect the inviolability and sovereignty of each other’s borders, and the territorial integrity of the two states is the guarantor of peace in the region.

During the “Tovuz events” that began on July 2020, 12 and until the Patriotic War, Georgia behaved as a reliable partner and did not allow the transportation of weapons from its territory. From the first days of the 44-day war, the neighboring state adhered to its neutral position during the conflict and banned the transportation of military cargo by any state from its territory. With this step, the territory of Georgia was used as a transit and the air and land connection with Russia, the main supplier of ammunition to Armenia, was cut off. During the war, the “Peace” Bridge and TV tower in the capital Tbilisi were illuminated in the colors of the Azerbaijani flag. During the post-war period, Georgia remained loyal to its official position and did not allow the transportation of military cargo from its territory. Georgia has also worked for the settlement of relations in the region, has resorted to mediation efforts and has done some work from this point of view. Thus, 15 Armenian captives were returned to Armenia with the participation of Georgian representatives on the Azerbaijani – Georgian border in

exchange for the transfer of a mine map of the Aghdam region to Azerbaijan. However, in some cases, he took pro-Armenian steps, albeit indirectly. The paragraph also stressed that Georgia's resolute position on the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan is very important for ensuring the security of the Georgian state. It was noted that Armenia has territorial claims not only against Azerbaijan, but also against Georgia.

In the **Conclusion**, the main scientific-theoretical provisions arising from the research, generalizations were made and substantiated practical recommendations for the further development of bilateral relations were put forward. The research confirms that the Azerbaijani-Georgian relations have ancient historical roots and have risen to the level of strategic partnership through a long and contradictory development. The implemented global and regional projects, the positive dynamics of cooperation in various fields prove that there is no alternative to these relations in the region. There is no doubt that Azerbaijan will play an exceptional role in the development of Georgia in the future, as it has done so far, given the projects and investments involved as a transit country. This role not only contributes to the development of the neighboring country, but also serves to strengthen its national security and its place in the international arena, to ensure the regional stability. Against the background of the geopolitical reality in the region after the 44-day war, Georgia's assessment of Azerbaijan's strength and prestige is very important both in terms of prospects for bilateral relations and in ensuring regional security and development.

The main content and provisions of the dissertation are reflected in the following published articles and theses of the author:

1. Factors determining the Azerbaijani-Georgian relations. Institute of Caucasus Studies of ANAS, “Interstate relations in the Caucasus: 100 years ago and modern period”, materials of the international scientific conference, Baku: - 2018, pp. 75-83.
2. Azerbaijanis in Georgia. Institute of Caucasus Studies of ANAS, Republican scientific conference “Deportations in the Caucasus”, Baku: - 2018, pp. 60-62.
3. Energy projects connecting Azerbaijan and Georgia. RESEARCHER of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, - 2018, pp. 30-35.
4. Formation of Azerbaijan-Georgia relations. Azerbaijan University of Languages, Materials of the Republican scientific conference on “Actual problems of international relations”, - 2019, pp. 411-413.
5. Trade and economic cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Georgia. VI International Forum of Caucasian Historians “Peoples of the Caucasus in the civilizational space of Russia”, - November 13-15, - 2019, - pp. 291-295.
6. Georgia’s attitude to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict created as a result of Armenia’s military aggression. Institute of Caucasus Studies of ANAS, Materials of the 2nd International Forum of Caucasus Studies, Baku: - 2019, pp. 52-56.
7. Energy relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Georgia. Institute of Philosophy of ANAS, Scientific works, №2 (33), p. 87-97.
8. The role of Heydar Aliyev in Azerbaijan-Georgia relations. ANAS Social sciences, №1, pp. 149-153.
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10. Georgia: administrative-territorial structure, governance and demography. Baku: MTM Innovation MMC, 2019, 320 p.
11. Azerbaijan-Georgia educational relations and Azerbaijani-language schools in Georgia. Report of the Presidium of ANAS, Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences. Baku, - №3-4, 2020, pp. 101-108.
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20. Territorial claims of Armenians against Georgia. Territorial-border problems in the South Caucasus: materials of the republican scientific conference from the Kars agreement to the Shusha declaration, Baku - 2021, pp. 123-125.
21. Energy projects as a factor in determining Azerbaijani-Georgian relations. Materials of the republican scientific conference “The Republic of Azerbaijan in 30 years: the power center of the South Caucasus”, - 2021, pp.111-112.

22. Turks (Azerbaijanis) living in Georgia: sociopolitical life and problems. VIII International Symposium on Turkic World Studies, 2021, Turkey, pp. 195-204.
23. Azerbaijan-Turkey-Georgia cooperation is like a stabilizing factor in the South Caucasus. International peace symposium on peace in the Caucasus, 2021, pp. 125-141.
24. The impact of the model of multiculturalism founded by Heydar Aliyev on the Azerbaijani-Georgian relations. Materials of the scientific conference “Heydar Aliyev: ideology of multiculturalism and tolerance”, p. 56.

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