

**From:** Tavlarides, Mark <mtavlarides@bgrdc.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 16, 2021 11:13 AM  
**To:** Tavlarides, Mark <mtavlarides@bgrdc.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Support the U.S.-Azerbaijan Relationship in FY22 SFOPs Appropriations

Good morning,

I wanted to follow up on the below Dear Colleague, inviting your boss to join Azerbaijan Caucus Co-Chairs Cohen and Chabot in urging support for the U.S.-Azerbaijan relationship in the FY2022 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. **As a signatory of the letter for FY2021 (attached for reference), we hope your boss will again sign the letter this year.**

The deadline is currently next **Friday, April 23**. To sign on to the letter or for more information, please contact Mark Erste ([mark.erste@mail.house.gov](mailto:mark.erste@mail.house.gov)) with Congressman Chabot or Marilyn Dillihay ([Marilyn.dillihay@mail.house.gov](mailto:Marilyn.dillihay@mail.house.gov)) with Congressman Cohen.

Current signers: Cohen, *Chabot*, Cuellar, *Aderholt*, Payne, *Perry*, *Wilson*

Best,  
Mark Tavlarides  
*BGR Group*

*Note: BGR Government Affairs, LLC has filed registration statements under the Foreign Agents Registration Act with regard to its representation and dissemination of information on behalf of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Additional information is on file with the Foreign Agents Registration Unit of the Department of Justice in Washington, DC.*

## Support the U.S. Azerbaijan Relationship in FY22 SFOPs Appropriations

Sending Office: Honorable Steve Chabot  
Sent By: [mark.erste@mail.house.gov](mailto:mark.erste@mail.house.gov)

Dear Colleague,

As Co-Chairs of the Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus, we invite you to join us in urging support for U.S.-Azerbaijan relationship in the FY 2022 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill.

Azerbaijan is a critical partner of the United States. Azerbaijan is strategically positioned as the only friendly gateway to Asia, situated bordering Russia to the north and Iran to the south. This has allowed Azerbaijan to provide a crucial link for U.S. forces in Afghanistan. Azerbaijan is also a strong counterterrorism partner and a friend of our ally Israel. In December 2020, Azerbaijan began operation of the Southern Gas Corridor, a pipeline that will bring Caspian Sea gas to Europe, thereby lessening the continent's reliance on Russian energy supplies.

As you are likely aware, 2020 brought substantial change to the South Caucasus. With Azerbaijan now in control of internationally recognized territory and with Russian soldiers deployed as peacekeepers in Azerbaijan, the region presents several new opportunities and challenges.

Specifically, the United States should support humanitarian efforts to address the aftermath of the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia, by providing assistance for internally displaced persons and for demining. We should also take the opportunity to support peacebuilding efforts between the two countries.

The Russian presence is among the gravest challenges. We therefore ask that any funding be routed through either the Government of Azerbaijan or the United Nations, so that U.S. taxpayer resources do not come under Russian control. With these priorities in mind, we would appreciate your support of our efforts to strengthen the U.S.-Azerbaijan relationship. To sign on to the letter or for more information, please have your staff reach out to Mark Erste ([mark.erste@mail.house.gov](mailto:mark.erste@mail.house.gov)), Congressman Chabot or Marilyn Dillihay ([Marilyn.dillihay@mail.house.gov](mailto:Marilyn.dillihay@mail.house.gov)) with Congressman Cohen.

Sincerely,  
Steve Chabot  
Co-Chair, Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus

Steve Cohen  
Co-Chair, Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus

Robert Aderholt  
Co-Chair, Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus  
###

Henry Cuellar  
Co-Chair, Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus

Dear Chair Lee and Ranking Member Rogers,

We write to you asking to recognize the strategic importance of the U.S.-Azerbaijan relationship and the new realities in the South Caucasus in the forthcoming FY 2022 State and Foreign Operations appropriations bill. Azerbaijan is a key player in bringing the hydrocarbon resources of the Caspian Sea to global markets. Specifically, the opening of the Southern Gas Corridor on December 31, 2020, is the crowning achievement in this regard. Through U.S. support for this project, Azerbaijan's efforts have strengthened the energy security of Europe and decreased its reliance on Russian gas.

The situation on the ground in and around Azerbaijan's internationally recognized territory of Nagorno-Karabakh has changed dramatically over the past several months. Azerbaijan's restoration of effective control over the lands lost in 1994 has given Azerbaijan full control of its borders. With this change in circumstance, the United States should consider expanding bilateral cooperation on non-proliferation and border security.

More importantly, the United States should support the historic chance for normalization between Armenia and Azerbaijan. We hope that Congress encourages a new era of peaceful cooperation between Armenia and Azerbaijan. A permanent resolution of the divisions in the South Caucasus requires exploring how both countries could find areas of common ground to end hostilities. We request that the Committee make funding available for programs promoting cultural and educational exchanges between the Armenian and Azerbaijani people, as well as for cross-border and integration initiatives between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

In the immediate term, support for the victims of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict is critical. We request that the committee support this priority, especially the clearing of Azerbaijan's territories devastated by war due to landmines and other weapons. This is the most urgent challenge, as demining will allow internally displaced persons to return to their homes.

Finally, we are concerned that funds could fall into the hands of the Russian military, as they are currently the only peacekeeping entity in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. We respectfully request that as the committee determines appropriate the level of humanitarian assistance to the victims of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, including the urgent need for aid in previously occupied territories, that all funds be provided through the Government of Azerbaijan or U.N. organizations. We believe that doing so will ensure Russia does not gain control over U.S. funding, and that U.S. assistance reaches the intended recipients.

Thank you for your consideration.  
Sincerely,



**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 13, 2020

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on State, Foreign  
Operations, and Related Programs  
HT-2, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harold Rogers  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on State, Foreign  
Operations, and Related Programs  
2406 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Lowey and Ranking Member Rogers,

As you begin consideration of the FY 2021 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you consider the strategic importance of U.S.-Azerbaijan relations when drafting the legislation. We write to offer our views and insights on the issue of U.S. assistance in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan.

Implementation of assistance has always been a highly sensitive issue for Azerbaijan because its Nagorno-Karabakh region is still under military occupation by Armenian forces. As a result of the conflict, around one million Azerbaijanis were expelled from the Nagorno-Karabakh region and surrounding territories of Azerbaijan. The Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has worked with Azerbaijan and Armenia to find a peaceful resolution since 1992.

Though previous negotiations on assistance in the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict have been difficult, in previous Fiscal Years these bills omitted specific language regarding U.S. assistance programs for the victims of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. This allowed the United States to maintain its long-standing policy of neutrality in this conflict, continue to protect the U.S. role as an honest and impartial broker in the peace process.

As you know, Azerbaijan has long been an ally to the United States and their support is commendable. Azerbaijan supports U.S. military missions in Afghanistan with troops and transport assistance. Furthermore, Azerbaijan is a stable and reliable Muslim country with a growing Jewish population that lives in peace, demonstrating the strong ties binding Azerbaijan and Israel.

Taking into account the recent Appropriation bills, we request that the Committee to uphold the previous years' practice of Congress to omit any reference to Nagorno-Karabakh and not to support any programs in the occupied territories, which is also consistent with long-standing U.S. approach.

Thank you in advance for considering our requests. We applaud you for providing consistent leadership on this and other pertinent issues over the years, and hope that this continues into the upcoming budget negotiation cycles.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Cohen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Chabot". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Steve Chabot  
Member of Congress

---

Member of Congress

Henry Cuellar  
*Member of Congress*

Scott Perry  
*Member of Congress*

Scott DesJarlais  
*Member of Congress*

Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
*Member of Congress*

Donald Payne, Jr.  
*Member of Congress*

Marc Veasey  
*Member of Congress*

Rob Bishop  
*Member of Congress*

Alcee Hastings  
*Member of Congress*

Pete Olson  
*Member of Congress*

Randy K. Weber  
*Member of Congress*

Al Green  
*Member of Congress*

Filemon Vela  
*Member of Congress*

Ruben Gallego  
*Member of Congress*

Robert Aderholt  
*Member of Congress*

Sheila Jackson Lee  
*Member of Congress*

Markwayne Mullin  
*Member of Congress*

Joe Wilson  
*Member of Congress*

Lance Gooden  
*Member of Congress*

Paul Cook  
*Member of Congress*

Blaine Luetkemeyer  
*Member of Congress*

Michael R. Turner  
*Member of Congress*

Vincente Gonzalez  
*Member of Congress*

Mark Meadows  
*Member of Congress*

Alex X. Mooney  
*Member of Congress*

Doug Lamborn  
*Member of Congress*

Don Young  
*Member of Congress*