

Sharing the below release from the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, featuring this week's Trans-Caspian Forum. Please let me know if you have any questions for the Ambassador or if you have any questions on infrastructure projects and developments in the Trans-Caspian region. Thank you!

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Trans-Caspian Forum Highlights Economic Opportunity Along the East-West Trade and Transit Corridor

Helps provide energy security for Europe, is key link in East-West trade

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 26, 2017) – The Azerbaijani Ambassador to the U.S. Elin Suleymanov, speaking at the Trans-Caspian Forum in Washington today, championed the economic, business and infrastructure opportunities along the Trans-Caspian Corridor, a critical route connecting China to Europe through the Caspian and Black Sea regions. The Corridor's oil and gas pipelines help provide energy security to Europe and its transit routes speed East-West trade.

Suleymanov, joined by ambassadors and diplomats from Georgia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan, extended his remarks at the two-day conference, which is being held to bring greater focus to the opportunities for infrastructure development, special economic zones, enhanced customs and border crossing facilitation and trade and supply routes along the Trans-Caspian Corridor.

"We are honored to join our neighbors both near and abroad to cement this historic infrastructure and cooperation project – it will undoubtedly have a positive impact on millions of consumers and workers in the Trans-Caspian Corridor," said Ambassador Suleymanov. "Azerbaijan is well-positioned to help connect the East and the West and to facilitate regional integration. Linking the economies of the Far East and South-East Asia, the Caspian and the Black Sea regions, and Europe will allow for the flow of critical goods and deliver greater prosperity to many important regions of the world."

Held at The George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs, the World Bank and on Capitol Hill, the two-day forum was organized by the embassies of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan. In addition to Ambassador Suleymanov, the event featured Georgian Ambassador David Bakradze, Kazakh Ambassador Erzhan Kazykhanov, Afghan Ambassador Hamdullah Mohib, Turkmen Ambassador Meret

Orazov and Turkish Chargé D'affaires Tugay Tuncer, as well as other representatives from the six Trans-Caspian nations, the US Department of Commerce, the World Bank Group, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Boeing, General Electric (GE) and additional global trade and logistics companies.

The Trans-Caspian Corridor runs through Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan and Georgia before extending into Turkey. Together, these regions form a viable trade and transit corridor between Europe and China and South-East Asia.

Infrastructure projects along the Trans-Caspian Corridor include:

- The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, which moves 1 million barrels of oil per day from Azerbaijan through Georgia to Ceyhan, Turkey;
- The Southern Gas Corridor, which will strengthen Europe's energy security by connecting Azerbaijan to Europe;
- The C5+1 Transport Corridor Development, which will reduce the cost and time of moving goods across borders in Central Asia;
- The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway and the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route, which connect Asia to Europe; and
- The development of multiple ports.

Connecting trade, people and economies, the modern Trans-Caspian Corridor presents many new opportunities for U.S. and European businesses.

"The Caspian region has a great economic potential and it is not limited to only energy resources. Recent investments to develop trade and transit infrastructure presents valuable opportunities for U.S. business," said Ethan Niftiyev, Director of the Caspian Policy Center, during his opening remarks at the forum. Mr. Niftiyev also highlighted that the six Trans-Caspian countries have a collective GDP of over 1 trillion dollars.

Panels at the forum include "Regional policy outlook: Joint efforts to increase trade and investment in the region," "New commercial and investment opportunities in the region: What projects are leading the way in transportation and logistics?," "Advantages of the Trans-Caspian transit/transport corridor in trans-continental shipments" and "Combined transit options and new business opportunities in air transport."

The second and final day of the forum will include remarks by U.S. Congressmen Pete Sessions (R-TX) and Steve Chabot (R-OH) as well as Rear Admiral Lawrence Jackson, Director of Strategy, Capabilities, Policy and Logistics, U.S. Transportation Command on the opportunities presented by the Trans-Caspian Corridor, followed by a discussion featuring the Trans-Caspian delegations and U.S. business representatives on transport infrastructure and trade and customs software along the Trans-Caspian Corridor.

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