

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations
HT-2 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations
10136 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

March 23, 2023

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Lee:

As you begin consideration of the FY 2024 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill, we urge you to recognize the strategic value of the U.S.-Azerbaijan partnership in the new global reality.

Azerbaijan has been a long-standing partner of the United States, cooperating on multiple fronts from fighting against terrorism and drug trafficking, to preventing nuclear proliferation, to stabilizing the wider Caspian region. It is also worth noting that Azerbaijani troops were among the last partner militaries to leave Kabul airport, facilitating the evacuation until the very end.

As recognized by European leaders, Azerbaijan will be a key partner in replenishing the potential energy shortage in Europe that may occur from Russian aggression against Ukraine. Moreover, Azerbaijan continues to be a major energy supplier for our mutual ally Israel, despite open threats and covert action by Iran. These threats have ratcheted up since Azerbaijan took back control of its border with Iran. As threats in the region increase, especially those towards energy infrastructure in the Caspian Sea, it is vital for the United States to explore opportunities for further assistance in border security, maritime security, and non-proliferation to Azerbaijan.

Furthermore, as the Russian invasion of Ukraine continues, it is worth noting that Azerbaijan has provided significant humanitarian aid to Ukraine during this trying time, an exception among former Soviet non-NATO countries that led Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to publicly thank the President of Azerbaijan for this courageous step.

As a historical milestone, Armenia and Azerbaijan both reaffirmed their commitment to the UN Charter and the 1991 Alma Ata Declaration, in which both sides recognize each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty in the margins of the first European Political Community in Prague on October 6, 2022. The US assistance should build on this momentum by continuing to support this agreement and these conversations.

In light of our partnership and shared interests with Azerbaijan, and the United States' good relations with the countries of the South Caucasus, the U.S. must remain ready to help the region achieve an enduring peace. Therefore, we believe that the U.S. should participate in demining

activities and refrain from any initiative that could undermine the trust we have built with the region.

In this context, we believe that any U.S. assistance or humanitarian aid programing for areas within the internationally recognized borders of Azerbaijan should be coordinated with or run through the Government of Azerbaijan. It is important that any program in these territories is in line with the United States' support for the principle of internationally recognized territorial integrity.

Sincerely,



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Joe Wilson
Member of Congress



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



KHAZAR IBRAHIM

Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United States of America

Mr. Khazar Ibrahim was appointed as an Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United States of America on July 26, 2021, and his credentials were formally accepted on September 15, 2021.

Previously, he served as an Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Republic of Turkey during 2017-2021.

Khazar Ibrahim also served as Head of the Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to NATO with the rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary between 2011-2017.

From 2009 to 2011 he was Deputy Chief of Mission of the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United States of America.

In 2007-2009, he was the spokesman of the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry and deputy spokesman before. In 2005-2006, he worked at the Political-Military Division of the Foreign Ministry, being directly involved in drafting National Security Concept of Azerbaijan and implementation of the Individual Partnership Action Plan with NATO.

From September 2002 to September 2005, he served at the Azerbaijani Embassy to the United States. His portfolio included political-military, political, and public diplomacy issues.

In 1998-2002, he held several positions at the International Organizations and Security Affairs Departments in the Foreign Ministry, responsible for the bilateral political-military relations, NATO affairs, arms control, disarmament and multilateral security issues.

He received master's degree in international relations (with distinction) from Baku State University and master's degree in security studies (with distinction) from Georgetown University. He attended senior course at the NATO Defense College in Rome in 2000-2001.

He taught "Foreign Policy of Azerbaijan" class and "Post-Soviet Azerbaijan politics" seminar at Khazar University in Baku.

He is married and has one son and three daughters.