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THE ROLE OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN AND THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY IN ADVANCING THE POLITICAL INTEGRATION OF THE TURKIC WORLD

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SUMMARY

The article examines the role of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey in the political integration of the Turkic world. The study analyzes the impact of the strategic partnership between the two states based on common history, language, culture and national-spiritual values on the development of cooperation between the Turkic states. The importance of the First Turkological Congress in terms of the integration of the Turkic world, the activities of the Organization of Turkic States, the role of summits of heads of state and the decisions adopted in strengthening political solidarity are assessed. At the same time, the contributions of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline to regional energy security, economic cooperation and geopolitical stability, the development directions of Azerbaijan-Turkey relations during the periods of Heydar Aliyev and Ilham Aliyev, as well as the impact of the Xaribulbul International Music Festival on the cultural integration of the Turkic world are examined. As a result, it is shown that Azerbaijan and Turkey act as the main initiators of political, economic and cultural integration in the Turkic world, and the joint projects and cooperation mechanisms they implement make a significant contribution to strengthening stability in the region and strengthening solidarity among the Turkic states.

Keywords: *Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Turkey, Turkic world, political integration, organization of Turkic States, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, Xaribulbul Festival.*

INTRODUCTION

Relevance and Significance of the Topic

The political integration of the Turkic world has emerged as an increasingly important subject within contemporary regional and international studies. In recent decades, the strengthening of political, economic, and cultural cooperation among Turkic states has contributed to the formation of a more coordinated regional framework based on shared historical, linguistic, and civilizational ties. In this context, the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey have assumed leading roles in promoting regional solidarity, institutional cooperation, and sustainable integration across the Turkic world. This topic aims to examine the role of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey in advancing the political integration of the Turkic world. Particular attention is devoted to the historical foundations of bilateral relations, the development of strategic political and economic partnerships, the institutional mechanisms facilitating regional cooperation, and the contribution of cultural diplomacy to strengthening a common Turkic identity. The topic also evaluates the significance of major regional initiatives, including the Organization of Turkic States, TURKPA, TURKSOY, and strategic infrastructure projects such as the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan Oil Pipeline and the Middle Corridor, in promoting political coordination, regional connectivity, and long-term cooperation among Turkic states. The relevance of this research lies in the growing strategic importance of the Turkic world within the evolving international system. The institutionalization of multilateral cooperation through regional organizations, regular summits of heads of state, parliamentary diplomacy, economic integration, and cultural initiatives has created favorable conditions for strengthening political solidarity and enhancing the international standing of Turkic states. Against this background, Azerbaijan and Turkey have emerged as the principal initiators and driving forces of the integration process, providing both political leadership and practical mechanisms for deepening cooperation. By examining these developments, this study contributes to a better understanding of the contemporary dynamics of political integration in the Turkic world and highlights the strategic importance of Azerbaijan– Turkey relations in shaping the future of regional cooperation.

Historical foundations of the political integration of the Turkic world:

In modern times, the development of political, economic and cultural cooperation between Turkic states is of great importance in the system of international relations. The Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey play a special role in this process. Azerbaijan-Turkey relations, based on historical roots, common language, culture and national-spiritual values, make a significant contribution to strengthening the unity of the Turkic world.

Both states, through their successful foreign policy, regional projects and cooperation within international organizations, create conditions for deepening political integration between Turkic states. Especially in recent years, the strengthening of mutual strategic partnership relations has allowed the Turkic world to cooperate more closely on a single political platform. Therefore, the study of the role played by the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey in the political integration of the Turkic world is one of the topical issues from both scientific and practical points of view.

The First Turkological Congress held in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan in 1926, is one of the most significant events that laid the foundation for a new stage in the cultural integration of Turkic peoples, including the Azerbaijani people. At this magnificent meeting, a number of global issues for the cultural life of the numerous Turkic peoples living in various regions of the former Soviet Union, in a vast and vast geographical space, were discussed, important decisions were made for the near future, and most importantly, scientific and methodological principles for the transition to the Latin script for all Turkic peoples living in the former Soviet Union were developed [4, p.6] The delegations of the First Turkological Congress by country consisted of well-known, prominent scientists and public figures of those nations, reflecting in all its reality how great potential Turkology has as an independent scientific field.

As is known, the Republic of Turkey participated in the Turkological Congress with a delegation of 4 people (including 1 German and 1 Hungarian scientist), the Russian Federation with 48, Germany 2, Kazakhstan 4, Uzbekistan 11, Iran 1, Turkmenistan 4, Kyrgyzstan 2, Georgia 5, Armenia 2 representatives.

In agreement with the central government, Tatarstan 10, Bashkiria 5, Dagestan 6, Crimean Tatars 5 were represented in the Turkological Congress with a separate delegation.[7, p.7] The Republic of Turkey is considered one of the leading states in the development of political integration of the Turkic world. Expanding cooperation with Turkic states that share common values in terms of history, culture and language is one of the important directions of Turkey's foreign policy [12, pp. 75–83]. Establishing diplomatic relations with the Turkic republics that have gained independence, developing political dialogue and strengthening multilateral cooperation are among the main goals of this policy. Turkey has taken important initiatives to strengthen mutual trust and solidarity among Turkic states. For this purpose, it has supported the creation of various political platforms and attached special importance to holding regular meetings at the level of heads of state, parliaments and governments.

It is carried out within the framework of one of the most important directions of Turkey's activity in the political integration of the Turkic world. Turkey actively participated in the establishment and institutional development of the organization, made significant contributions to the deepening of political dialogue between member states, the adoption of joint decisions and the formation of a single position on international platforms[12, p. 23] At the same time, Turkey is trying to increase the international influence of the Turkic world through its foreign policy at the regional and global levels. Joint projects implemented in the fields of transport, energy, defense, education and humanitarian affairs create conditions for strengthening relations between Turkic states and further developing political integration. In particular, the strategic alliance with Azerbaijan is considered an important example in strengthening the unity of the Turkic world. [2, p. 17-19]

The strategic Azerbaijan–Türkiye partnership and regional integration:

The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline is considered one of the most important results of strategic cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey. This project, in addition to ensuring the export of energy resources of the Caspian basin to world markets via a safe and alternative route, has increased the political and economic importance of the region [3 p. 156–160]. The foundation of the project was laid with the Contract of the Century signed in 1994, construction began in 2002 and was fully commissioned in 2006. Azerbaijan acted as the initiator and main oil supplier of this project. The oil pipeline has provided access to the world market for the country's energy resources, accelerated eco-

nomic development, brought significant revenues to the state budget, and increased Azerbaijan's international prestige. In addition, the project is considered one of the main pillars of Azerbaijan's independent energy strategy and has expanded the country's foreign policy capabilities [7, pp. 486–492]. Turkey, as the project's main transit state, has become an important energy bridge between Europe and Asia. The transportation of oil to world markets through the Ceyhan terminal has increased Turkey's geopolitical importance, brought transit revenues to the country, and strengthened its position in the field of energy security. This project has been one of the main factors strengthening Turkey's political leadership in the Turkic world [1, pp. 214–220]. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline has made a significant contribution to the further strengthening of the strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and Turkey, ensuring regional stability and developing economic and political integration between the Turkic states. The project also formed the basis for other energy and transport projects implemented in subsequent years and served to strengthen the international position of the Turkic world [2, pp. 74-77]. Relations with Turkey occupied a special place in Heydar Aliyev's foreign policy. Relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey have risen to the level of strategic partnership based on common history, language and cultural values [1, pp. 87-89] The meetings between Heydar Aliyev and Turkish President Suleyman Demirel played an important role in the development of these relations. In February 1994, during Heydar Aliyev's official visit to Turkey, the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict and regional security issues were discussed in a meeting held in Ankara. Turkey clearly stated its support for the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan [5, pp. 32-35].

In 1996, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline project was one of the main topics of discussion in the meetings held in Baku. This project created conditions for the deepening of economic cooperation between the two countries and the introduction of Azerbaijan's energy resources to the world market [4].

In November 1999, Heydar Aliyev and Suleyman Demirel met again within the framework of an international summit held in Istanbul, where regional projects and strategic cooperation were discussed. This meeting led to the further strengthening of Azerbaijani-Turkish relations [6] In general, the foreign policy implemented by Heydar Aliyev highly valued Azerbaijan-Turkey relations, and of course, the relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey had a positive impact on the relations of all Turkic states. During the time of Ilham Aliyev, relations with Turkey rose to the level of strategic alliance, and this cooperation was further strengthened, especially in the context of the Karabakh conflict. Azerbaijan and Turkey have closely cooperated in the political, economic and military spheres on the basis of the principle of "One nation, two states" [6, p. 87].

From February 28 to March 6, 1992, Hikmet Çetin paid a visit to the Turkic republics, including Azerbaijan. The purpose of the visit was to develop the relations established with the new Turkic states on a solid basis, to be able to assist them, and to discuss issues of accelerating concrete cooperation projects. During his meetings in Azerbaijan, Hikmet Çetin recommended achieving a ceasefire and a peaceful resolution of the conflict, and at the same time put forward a number of proposals for resolving the conflict within the framework of the CSCE. On February 28, protocols were signed between the two countries on visas, consultations between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, internships for Azerbaijani diplomats in Turkey, and cooperation between the Ministries of Education [11, p. 431].

Institutional mechanisms of political cooperation in the Turkic world:

Summits and meetings play an important role in the political integration of the Turkic world. During these meetings, the leaders of the member states make decisions on expanding cooperation in the political, economic, transport, energy, security, education and cultural spheres, and define joint directions of action (1, pp. 112–118). The summits serve to strengthen mutual trust among the Turkic states, protect common interests and inform about a common position in the international arena (2, pp. 54–60). Azerbaijan and Turkey have actively participated in all summits of the Organization of Turkic States, making important contributions to the integration process [13, p. 45]. In particular, the development of transport corridors, strengthening of the Middle Corridor, energy security, digital cooperation and regional security were the main topics of discussion at the summits held in Astana in 2023 and Bishkek in 2024. Both countries supported the initiatives taken in these directions and demonstrated a common position on their implementation.

The decisions taken at the summits make a significant contribution to strengthening the political solidarity of the Turkic world, further developing relations between states and increasing the international prestige of the Organization of Turkic States. In this

regard, Azerbaijan and Turkey act as the main initiators and leading forces of integration within the organization. In the fall of 1993, Turkey established camps for internally displaced persons expelled from the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan and provided them with humanitarian aid. The Xaribulbul International Music Festival is one of the international events that holds an important place in the cultural life of Azerbaijan. The festival was first held in Shusha in 1989 and was suspended after the occupation of Karabakh. After the liberation of Shusha from occupation, the festival was revived and began to be organized annually starting in 2021 [9, pp. 142–145].

The Xaribulbul Festival makes a significant contribution to the development of cultural integration of the Turkic world. Music collectives, artists and folklore groups from Azerbaijan, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and other countries participate in the festival. This event serves to preserve the common Turkic cultural heritage, strengthen friendly relations between peoples and expand cultural cooperation [10, pp. 198–201].

Concert programs, folklore samples and cultural events held within the framework of the festival demonstrate that Shusha is one of the important cultural centers of the Turkic world. The Xaribulbul Festival is considered one of the important indicators of the contributions of Azerbaijan and Turkey to the political and cultural integration of the Turkic world.

Festivals held in Azerbaijan also strengthen the ties between the Turkic states. One of these festivals is the Yaylaq Festival

The Yaylaq Festival held in the Goygol district is one of the important events in terms of preserving and promoting the common cultural heritage of the Turkic world. The festival brings together representatives, artists, folklore groups and guests from various Turkic states, including the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey. Within the framework of the event, samples of national musical scores, folk dances, traditional crafts, horse games, samples of national cuisine and presentations reflecting the ancient steppe life are demonstrated.

The Steppe Festival makes a significant contribution to the strengthening of cultural ties between the Turkic peoples, the transfer of common national and spiritual values to future generations and the development of mutual cooperation. The events held within the framework of the festival serve to promote the rich cultural heritage of the Turkic world at the international level, and at the same time promote the further expansion of cultural cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey. In this regard, the Yaylaq Festival organized in Göygöl is considered one of the important cultural platforms demonstrating the unity and solidarity of the Turkic world.

TURKPA (Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic States) was established on November 21, 2008 in Istanbul at the initiative of the parliaments of Azerbaijan, Turkey, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The main goal of the organization is to develop parliamentary diplomacy among the Turkic states, strengthen the exchange of experience in the field of legislation, support the development of democratic institutions and deepen political cooperation [14, pp. 15-20)].

TURKPA General Assembly meetings and commission meetings play an important role in expanding cooperation between the parliaments of the member states. These meetings discuss issues related to regional security, economic cooperation, transport corridors, energy security, humanitarian relations, development of cooperation in the fields of education and culture [14, p. 15].

Cultural integration and the preservation of the common Turkic heritage:

The Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey are among the states that demonstrate special activity in the activities of TURKPA. Both countries take important initiatives in the direction of developing interparliamentary dialogue, expanding the exchange of experience in the field of legislation and forming a common legal framework. This cooperation makes a significant contribution to strengthening the political integration of the Turkic world, increasing mutual trust between states and strengthening common positions on international platforms [8, p. 214–220]. The Turkic World Cultural Capital program implemented by TURKSOY aims to preserve and promote the common cultural heritage of the Turkic peoples and to develop cultural cooperation [10, pp. 183–186]. Within the framework of this program, one of the cities of the Turkic world is declared the Cultural Capital every year, and various international cultural events are organized in this city throughout the year. The program includes international music festivals, folklore festivals, theater performances, art exhibitions, scientific conferences, symposiums, book fairs, poetry evenings, national cuisine days and folk crafts exhibitions [15]. These events served to preserve the common history, language and national-spiritual values of the Turkic peoples, to form a common identity among

the younger generation and to expand cultural ties between the states. [5, pp. 94–99]

Azerbaijan is one of the countries actively participating in the program. In 2016, Sheki was declared the Cultural Capital of the Turkic World, and in 2023, Shusha was declared the Cultural Capital of the Turkic World. Within the framework of the events held in Shusha, international concerts, folklore festivals, scientific conferences, art exhibitions, book presentations and cultural forums were organized, and representatives of Azerbaijan and Turkey, as well as other Turkic states, actively participated in these events [10, pp. 198–201].

The Turkic World Capital of Culture program makes a significant contribution to the further development of cultural cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey, to the international recognition of the common cultural heritage of the Turkic world and to the strengthening of integration between states [10]

The Turkish Business Forums are one of the important international platforms held to expand economic cooperation between Turkic states, increase mutual investments and develop direct contacts between entrepreneurs. Within the framework of the forums, government agencies, businessmen, investors and representatives of economic organizations of the member states come together to discuss cooperation opportunities in the fields of trade, industry, logistics, agriculture, energy, digital economy and transport [10, p. 214–29].

The development of the Central Corridor, simplification of customs procedures, improvement of the investment climate, support for small and medium-sized enterprises, implementation of joint industrial projects and expansion of cooperation in the field of innovation are among the main topics of discussion at the Turkish Business Forums [14, p. 5]. The decisions taken at the forums serve to strengthen economic relations and form a single economic cooperation space among the Turkic states [8, p. 226–230].

The Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey play a leading role in the organization and activities of the Turkish Business Forums (Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2023; Ministry of Trade of Turkey, 2023). Both countries attach special importance to increasing mutual investments through forums, expanding energy and transport projects, strengthening cooperation between industrial zones and establishing new business ties. Baku-Tbilisi-Karsdemir road, Central Corridor and other regional projects are considered as important results of this cooperation [3, pp. 165–170].

Turkish Business Forums play an important role in strengthening the economic integration of the Turkic world. Cooperation documents, investment agreements and business ties signed as a result of the forums make a significant contribution to increasing trade turnover between member states, strengthening economic stability and strengthening the international economic position of the Turkic world [14, p. 15].

CONCLUSION

The political integration of the Turkic world has become an increasingly significant component of contemporary regional cooperation and international relations. In this process, the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey have emerged as the principal driving forces, promoting political dialogue, institutional cooperation, and regional solidarity among the Turkic states. Their strategic partnership, founded on shared historical, linguistic, cultural, and national-spiritual values, has substantially contributed to strengthening the unity of the Turkic world. The findings of this study demonstrate that both countries have played a decisive role in advancing political integration through active participation in the Organization of Turkic States, TURKPA, and other regional cooperation mechanisms. Regular summits, parliamentary diplomacy, and coordinated foreign policy initiatives have reinforced mutual trust, enhanced political solidarity, and facilitated the development of common positions on regional and international issues.The strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and Turkey has also been strengthened through large-scale energy and transport projects, particularly the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan Oil Pipeline and the development of the Middle Corridor. These initiatives have enhanced regional energy security, promoted economic cooperation, and increased the geopolitical significance of both countries while creating favorable conditions for broader integration among the Turkic states. Furthermore, cultural initiatives, including the Kharibulbul International Music Festival, the Yaylaq Festival, and the TURKSOY Cultural Capital of the Turkic World Programme, have made important contributions to preserving the common cultural heritage of the Turkic peoples, strengthening interpersonal ties, and fostering a shared Turkic identity. Such initiatives complement political and economic cooperation by reinforcing the social and cultural foundations of integration. Overall, the study concludes that Azerbaijan and Turkey occupy a central position in the

political, economic, and cultural integration of the Turkic world. Their joint initiatives, strategic vision, and institutional cooperation continue to promote regional stability, strengthen solidarity among Turkic states, and enhance the international standing of the Turkic world. Further expansion of multilateral cooperation in political, economic, cultural, and humanitarian fields will contribute to the sustainable development and deeper integration of the Turkic world in the evolving international system.

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AZƏRBAYCAN RESPUBLİKASI VƏ TÜRKİYƏ CÜMHURİYYƏTİNİN TÜRK DÜNYASININ SİYASİ İNTEQRASİYASINDA ROLU

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XÜLASƏ

Məqalədə Azərbaycan Respublikası və Türkiyə Cümhuriyyətinin Türk dünyasının siyasi inteqrasiyasında oynadığı rol araşdırılır. Tədqiqatda iki dövlət arasında ortaq tarix, dil, mədəniyyət və milli-mənəvi dəyərlərə əsaslanan strateji tərəfdaşlığın Türk dövlətləri arasında əməkdaşlığın inkişafına təsiri təhlil edilir. Birinci Türkoloji Qurultayın Türk dünyasının inteqrasiyası baxımından əhəmiyyəti, Türk Dövlətləri Təşkilatının fəaliyyəti, dövlət başçılarının zirvə görüşləri və qəbul olunan qərarların siyasi həmrəyliyin möhkəmləndirilməsində rolu qiymətləndirilir. Eyni zamanda Bakı–Tbilisi–Ceyhan neft kəmərinin regional enerji təhlükəsizliyinə, iqtisadi əməkdaşlığa və geosiyasi sabitliyə verdiyi töhfələr, Heydər Əliyev və İlham Əliyev dövrlərində Azərbaycan–Türkiyə münasibətlərinin inkişaf istiqamətləri, eləcə də Xarıbülbül Beynəlxalq Musiqi Festivalının Türk dünyasının mədəni inteqrasiyasına təsiri araşdırılır. Nəticə etibarilə göstərilir ki, Azərbaycan və Türkiyə Türk dünyasında siyasi, iqtisadi və mədəni inteqrasiyanın əsas təşəbbüskarları kimi çıxış edir, onların həyata keçirdiyi birgə layihələr və əməkdaşlıq mexanizmləri regionda sabitliyin möhkəmlənməsinə və Türk dövlətləri arasında həmrəyliyin güclənməsinə mühüm töhfə verir.

Açar sözlər: *Azərbaycan Respublikası, Türkiyə Cümhuriyyəti, Türk dünyası, siyasi inteqrasiya, Türk Dövlətləri Təşkilatı, Bakı–Tbilisi–Ceyhan, Xarıbülbül Festivalı.*

РОЛЬ АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ И ТУРЕЦКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ В ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОЙ ИНТЕГРАЦИИ ТЮРКСКОГО МИРА

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РЕЗЮМЕ

В статье исследуется роль Азербайджанской Республики и Турецкой Республики в политической интеграции тюркского мира. В исследовании анализируется влияние стратегического партнёрства между двумя государствами, основанного на общей истории, языке, культуре и национально-духовных ценностях, на развитие сотрудничества между тюркскими государствами. Оценивается значение Первого Тюркологического съезда с точки зрения интеграции тюркского мира, деятельность Организации тюркских государств, саммиты глав государств и роль принимаемых решений в укреплении политической солидарности. Одновременно исследуется вклад нефтепровода Баку–Тбилиси–Джейхан в региональную энергетическую безопасность, экономическое сотрудничество и геополитическую стабильность, основные направления развития азербайджано-турецких отношений в периоды правления Гейдара Алиева и Ильхама Алиева, а также влияние Международного музыкального фестиваля «Харыбюльбюль» на культурную интеграцию тюркского мира. В результате показывается, что Азербайджан и Турция выступают основными инициаторами политической, экономической и культурной интеграции в тюркском мире, а реализуемые ими совместные проекты и механизмы сотрудничества вносят значительный вклад в укрепление стабильности в регионе и усиление солидарности между тюркскими государствами.

Ключевые слова: *Азербайджанская Республика, Турецкая Республика, тюркский мир, политическая интеграция, Организация тюркских государств, Баку–Тбилиси–Джейхан, фестиваль «Харыбюльбюль».*

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