



Please deliver to:
**Foreign Affairs
Leg. Assistant**

Armenian National Committee of America
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

To: Members of Congress
From: Kate Nahapetian, Government Affairs Director
Date: June 7, 2012

RE: Stopping Azerbaijani aggression

On the morning of Monday, June 4th, during the early hours of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's visit to the Caucasus, Azerbaijan launched a brazen attack into the Tavush region of Armenia, killing three Armenian soldiers, potentially sparking a regional war that could involve NATO, and setting back the cause of a peaceful, negotiated settlement. Over the next two days, additional attacks led to six more deaths along the Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh borders.

It's time for America and the rest of the international community to take Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev at his word when he openly threatens to restart his war against Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh. The cost of appeasement - and the dangers of a renewed war - are far too high for us to either dismiss Aliyev's threats or to ignore the hazard he represents to the region and beyond.

Attached please find a set of message points and also a series of specific policy recommendations in support of a peaceful and democratic resolution of Azerbaijan's conflicts with Armenia and the Nagorno Karabakh Republic (Artsakh).

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Azerbaijani Aggression - Key Points:

The following message points support a peaceful and democratic resolution of Azerbaijan's conflicts with Armenia and the Nagorno Karabakh Republic (Artsakh):

— The international community's failure to restrain, or even to criticize, Ilham Aliyev's oil-fueled march toward war has emboldened Baku, and left the land-locked and blockaded citizens and soldiers of Armenia and Artsakh with little choice other than to defend themselves against Azerbaijan's aggression.

— The first line of defense against Azerbaijan's aggression should be strong international condemnation, coupled with diplomatic and economic pressure to deter Baku from pursuing a military solution to its conflicts with Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh.

— Bought or bullied into silence, far too many leaders of the international community have stood by silently as Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev has openly acted on his violent threats to re-start his war on Armenia and Artsakh.

— In the face of Azerbaijan's open threats and repeated acts of anti-Armenian aggression (including official threats to shoot down civilian aircraft), the international community continues to give Azerbaijan the benefit of a doubt that it neither seeks nor deserves.

— Ilham Aliyev makes no secret of his military build-up and his march toward war, takes pride in his acts of violence, and offers no apologies for the growing number of citizens and soldiers being killed due to his aggression.

— It's time for America and the rest of the international community to take Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev at his word when he openly threatens to restart his war against Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh. The cost of appeasement - and the dangers of a renewed war - are far too high for us to either dismiss Aliyev's threats or to ignore the hazard he represents to the region and beyond.

Seven Policy Recommendations for a More Secure Caucasus:

The following seven steps by the Administration and Congress would help deter further Azerbaijani destabilization of the region, and support the peaceful and democratic resolution of regional conflicts:

— The Obama Administration should publicly, forcefully, and unequivocally condemn Azerbaijan's acts of aggression and threats of renewed war.

— The Obama Administration should suspend all military aid to Azerbaijan, and stop the sale or transfer to Baku of any military equipment or dual-use items (including the proposed sale of advanced helicopter-based surveillance equipment - DDTC 12-002).

— The Obama Administration should fully enforce Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act until Baku has stopped its threats of war, ceased all acts of aggression, demonstrated a commitment to a lasting peace with Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh through solely non-violent means, and has accepted the OSCE Minsk Group's call to pull back all snipers (a proposal already accepted by both Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh).

— The U.S. House-Senate conference committee charged with reconciling the FY13 foreign aid bill should accept the House version's allocation of at least \$5 million in aid to Nagorno Karabakh.

— The Obama Administration should support the reinstatement of the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh as a full participant in all peace talks, including the negotiations hosted by the OSCE Minsk Group.

— The Obama Administration should remove out-dated, counter-productive barriers to broad-based U.S.-Nagorno Karabakh governmental and civil society communication, exchanges, contacts, cooperation, and travel.

— The Obama Administration should insist that the Azerbaijani government end restrictions on U.S. Embassy officials and third-party experts visiting and investigating the medieval Armenian cemetery, in Djulfa, Azerbaijan, which was destroyed in December of 2005 in a videotaped act of systematic desecration by the Azerbaijani military.