

DESTABILIZING THE CAUCASUS: AZERBAIJAN'S ESCALATING THREATS AND ATTACKS

Jun 22, 2007	<i>AFP</i> reports that Azerbaijan has increased its military budget by a factor of 8 in the past four years.
Nov 27, 2007	<i>AP</i> reports that the Azeri Defense Minister vows, "As long as Azerbaijani territory is occupied by Armenia, the chance of war is close to 100 percent. " The Armenian Defense Minister Mikhail Arutyunian reiterated, however, that he sees no alternative to a peaceful settlement.
Jan 4, 2008	<i>RFE/RL</i> reports that Aliyev has told Armenians in Karabakh to accept Azeri rule or get out. Aliyev warns, "We are reinforcing our army because we must be ready to free our lands . . . at any moment and by any means."
Jan 17, 2008	President Aliyev proclaims that capital of Armenia is actually Azerbaijani territory and that Armenians living there are "guests." Aliyev also declares that the war with Armenia was not over, but that "it was just the first stage of the war," which was completed. www.regnum.ru/english/943595.html
Mar 3, 2008	<i>Reuters</i> reports that Azerbaijan's President Aliyev has said that it is ready to take Nagorno Karabakh by force and is buying the military equipment to do so.
*Mar 4, 2008	Azerbaijan attacks Karabakh in worst ceasefire violation in over a decade. Nagorno Karabakh forces immediately call OSCE peacekeepers to report the violation. At least 8 soldiers are killed.
Mar 5, 2008	Nagorno Karabakh urges OSCE mediators to immediately investigate the attacks of the night before. Azerbaijan will not guarantee the mediators' safety. As a result, the OSCE is prevented from beginning an investigation.
Mar 6, 2008	Azerbaijan violates the ceasefire for a second time in a week.
Apr 15, 2008	<i>Reuters</i> reports that Azerbaijan has increased its military budget from \$150 million five years ago to \$1,300,000,000. http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSL1597375
Jun 26, 2008	<i>Reuters</i> reports that Azerbaijan staged its first military parade in 16 years in a show of strength aimed at Armenia and that Azerbaijan's defense budget of \$2 billion now surpasses Armenia's entire budget.
Aug 9, 2008	Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister declares that like the Georgians' recent move against South Ossetia, Azerbaijan has the right to militarily impose its rule over Nagorno Karabakh and reserves the right to resolve the conflict militarily , setting the stage to further destabilize the volatile region. http://www.azernews.az/site/shownews.php?news_id=5942
Oct 14, 2008	<i>RFE/RL</i> reports that Azerbaijan's President Aliyev vowed a policy of "total offensive" against neighboring Armenia.

Nov 6, 2008	<p>During a visit from Turkey’s Commander of the Armed Forces General Staff, Azerbaijan’s Defense Minister threatened, “If the peace talks will not give results, Azerbaijan will use of all the possible ways to restore its territorial integrity” contradicting a declaration signed between Armenia and Azerbaijan only days before vowing to seek a political solution to the conflict.</p> <p>http://news.trendaz.com/index.shtml?show=news&newsid=1339074&lang=EN</p>
Nov 16, 2008	<p>Azerbaijan violates ceasefire and attacks Karabakh forces near Fizuli. Karabakh forces transfer Azeri soldier, who was killed after crossing the line of contact, to the International Committee of the Red Cross.</p> <p>http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/azerbaijan-news-191108</p>
Nov 27, 2008	<p><i>RFE/RL</i> reports that Azeri President Aliyev refuses to exclude attacking Karabakh militarily, despite signing a declaration less than a month earlier to seek a political solution. Aliyev declares, “There is not a single commitment [in the declaration] that would keep Azerbaijan from resorting to a military option.”</p>
Jun 25, 2009	<p>Aliyev threatens, “We live in a state of war, thus our primary goal is and should be the strengthening of our army. . . . With the war still going on and only its first stage over, we are continuing our efforts to be ready to free our motherland from the enemy by military means at any time.”</p> <p>http://www.asbarez.com/2009/06/25/azeri-president-says-nation-must-prepare-for-war/ and http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/82404/ilham-aliyev-declared-azerbaijan-is-ready-to-go-to-war-with-armenia-.html</p>
Jul 14, 2009	<p>Just four days after Presidents Obama, Sarkozy, and Medvedev announced support for certain Basic Principles to resolve the conflict, including the non-use of force, President Aliyev threatened, “Unfortunately, I cannot totally rule out a military solution, as we have the total and based on international laws right to restore our territorial integrity”</p> <p>http://en.apa.az/news.php?id=105053</p>
Nov 23, 2009	<p>RFE reports yet another Aliyev threat: “Azerbaijan is spending billions on buying new weapons, hardware, strengthening its position on the line of contact We have the full right to liberate our land by military means.”</p>
Dec 8, 2009	<p>Azeri Defense Minister Safar Abiyev tells U.S. Air Force Commander in Europe and Eurasia Gen. Roger Brady that Azerbaijan will use alternative methods at solving the Karabakh conflict, since Azerbaijan is unhappy with the Minsk Group peace process.</p> <p>http://en.trend.az/news/karabakh/1595850.html and http://www.today.az/news/politics/58025.html</p>
Feb 25, 2010	<p>Azeri Defense Minister Safar Abiyev states that Azeri military action is becoming “more imminent” and “inevitable.”</p> <p>http://www.upi.com/Top_News/International/2010/02/25/Azerbaijan-threatens-end-to-cease-fire/UPI-25821267105427/</p>
Apr 23, 2010	<p>On the eve of the 95th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, Aliyev warned Armenia against normalizing relations with Turkey, insisting that the Karabakh conflict must be resolved first, and alluded to a possible attack on Armenia itself. Azeri Defense Minister Safar Abiyev informed Aliyev that “The Azerbaijan army has all the capabilities to hit any target on the territory of Armenia if necessary.”</p>

	http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2010/04/23/world/international-uk-armenia-turkey-azerbaijan.html
Apr 25, 2010	"The war is not over. Only the first stage of the war is over. We have to act in a way so we can free our lands any time by force," Aliyev said in a meeting attended by the country's top military officials on April 23, state-owned news agency Azartac reported. BBC Monitoring Trans Caucasus Unit
Jun 7, 2010	U.S. Defense Secretary Gates meets with President Aliyev in Azerbaijan to ease tensions with Azerbaijani leaders, who threatened to reconsider their relations with the United States, because of its support for normalizing relations between Armenia and Turkey. Gates delivers letter from President Obama, which warns against use of force to resolve the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Gates reports discussing ways to expand U.S.-Azeri military-to-military relations, including exercises and intelligence sharing. http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE6550XE20100607
*Jun 18, 2010	Within hours of a meeting between the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan to negotiate a peace settlement, Azerbaijan attacks the Nagorno Karabakh Republic in one of the worst ceasefires, since March 2008 , when Azerbaijan also attacked Karabakh a day after Reuters reported that it was preparing to attack. AFP reports that the Azeri parliament approved a 30% increase in defense spending, which has nearly doubled in the past two years. http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gd6DFMDPwHhKbIhkDXiAf0rz1GMg
Jun 23, 2010	Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov states that the June 18 attack is a "message to the entire world that such incidents will repeat unless Armenia liberates Azerbaijani lands." http://www.news.az/articles/17954
Jul 14, 2010	President Aliyev tells his cabinet that Azerbaijan would never accept anything short of Azeri control over the Nagorno Karabakh Republic and insisted that, "We must be prepared for the liberation of our lands from the occupiers at any moment." http://www.armenialiberty.org/content/article/2100006.html
Aug 10, 2010	President Aliyev boasts, "Military expenditure holds the first place in our state budget." President Aliyev warns again, " The war is not over yet, only its first stage is. There is a ceasefire, but the war is ongoing. We must be and we are ready to free our lands from occupiers. . . . [I]f talks are disrupted, the situation will change and a military solution of the issue emerge on the agenda." http://www.president.az/articles/561?locale=en

Aug 26, 2010	<p>Eldar Sabiroglu, head of the Azerbaijani Defense Ministry press service declared that "The Armenian separatists must be driven out of [Nagorno Karabakh] at all cost."</p> <p>Furthermore, Eldar Sabiroglu declared that "Azerbaijan had no choice but to upgrade its armed forces by acquiring new weaponry."</p> <p>http://www.rferl.org/content/Azerbaijani_Defense_Ministry_Rejects_Laughable_Armenian_Statement/2139321.html</p>
Aug 31, 2010	<p>Less than three months after their June 18 attack, Azerbaijan attacks the Nagorno Karabakh Republic again, claiming the lives of at least two soldiers.</p> <p>http://www.rferl.org/content/Azerbaijan_Claims_Five_Killed_In_Clash_On_NagornoKarabakh_Border_/2145292.html</p>
Sept 4, 2010	<p>"Karabakh soldiers repelled an assault by an Azerbaijani 'sabotage' unit at the northeastern section of the front line, which forced Azerbaijanis to drive back and leave two bodies."</p> <p>http://www.rferl.org/content/NagornoKarabakh_Says_One_Azeri_Soldier_Killed_In_Clash/2148142.html</p>
Oct 5, 2010	<p>RFE reports Manvel Saribekian, a 20-year-old shepherd who had wandered across the line of contact and detained by Azerbaijan, was found hung in his prison cell less than a month after his arrest. Before his death, he had been forced to give an interview on Azerbaijani government controlled TV with a bruise under his eye. Dismissing Azerbaijani claims of suicide, Armenian Government officials stated that "Saribekian was tortured to death or 'driven to suicide'."</p> <p>http://www.azatutyun.am/content/article/2182797.html</p>
Oct 11, 2010	<p>OSCE Minsk Group Russian Co-Chair Igor Popov expressed "shock" at the death of Armenian shepherd Manvel Saribekian in Azerbaijan captivity and urged that the incident be thoroughly examined with the participation of international organizations, in particular the Red Cross.</p> <p>http://news.am/eng/news/34146.html</p>
Oct 13, 2010	<p>RFE reports the Azerbaijani government's defense budget for 2011 calls for \$3.1 billion in expenditures, an almost 90% increase from the current year's spending level.</p> <p>In contrast, Armenia's state budget for 2011 is projected to be \$2.6 billion, of which only \$400 million will be allocated to the Armenian military.</p> <p>http://www.azatutyun.am/content/article/2189711.html</p>

Oct 14, 2010	<p>Vitaly Igitian, a 22-year-old Armenian soldier, was shot dead by sniper fire from Azerbaijani army positions.</p> <p>http://www.azatutyun.am/content/article/2191899.html</p>
Nov 8, 2010	<p>President Aliyev threatens to “use the military option’ to resolve the protracted conflict around Nagorno-Karabakh.”</p> <p>http://www.armenianow.com/karabakh/25684/azerbaijan_aliyev_karabakh_war_threat</p>
Jan 14, 2011	<p>Two Karabakh Armenian soldiers were wounded along two different front-line sections. Both men required hospitalization.</p> <p>http://www.rferl.org/content/nagorno-karabakh_azerbaijan_armenia_skirmish/2279329.html</p>
Jan 20, 2011	<p>Armenian soldier was shot dead, yet another violation of the “line of contact” between Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan.</p> <p>The Armenian Defense Minister spokesman Davit Karapetian stressed that “This incident once again shows that Azerbaijan’s authorities either do not control the frontline behavior of their armed forces or themselves organize such provocations.”</p> <p>http://www.rferl.org/content/armenian_soldier_killed_karabakh/2283750.html</p>
Feb 11, 2011	<p>Azerbaijan’s Defense Minister Safar Abiyev boasts “Azerbaijan is seriously preparing to liberate its territories.”</p> <p>“Azerbaijan has repeatedly threatened to use force to win back Karabakh.”</p> <p>http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=5685278&c=EUR&s=LAN</p>