

Technical editing

Sample: Geopolitical Article

Turkey and Azerbaijan: sister countries becoming Eurasian powerhouses through projects

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29 May 2009, Friday by Enes Cansever (Baku, Azerbaijan)

News Diplomacy

Turkey and Azerbaijan: sister countries becoming Eurasian powerhouses through projects

The independence of Azerbaijan, which like other Central Asian republics was declared after the Soviet Union collapsed, was recognized by Turkey first.



May 28, Azerbaijan's Republic Day, is the nation's day to celebrate its independence and freedom. As is the case every year, this year there will be important events to mark Republic Day. Azerbaijan, which declared its independence on Oct. 18, 1991, is only 18 years old. Turkey's support has been behind the young nation since it declared its independence, and relations between the two countries have developed well on many different levels. Owing to favorable opportunities, privileges and, most importantly, to the common needs of the public, Turkish-Azerbaijani relations have reached a very important level in the past 18 years. During this period, some countries -- Russia, Armenia and Iran, in particular -- developed strong interests in Azerbaijan for various reasons, such as its geopolitical location and its natural resources, but ties between Azerbaijan and Turkey have continued unhindered.

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proofreading & editing notes

'X did Y first' is how children talk. Instead :

Eighteen years ago Turkey was the first nation to recognise Azerbaijan's fledgling independence.....['fledgling' implies a care or support, the theme of the article.]

The article summary should be rounded out:

Among many important events celebrated yesterday, Azerbaijan's strong Turkish ties were remembered - and the country's ongoing problems, internal and external, discussed - as part of the May 28 Azerbaijan Republic Day.

Two separate subjects : (1) Republic day, (2) Turkish relations. Move Republic day to the previous paragraph, and start discussing Turkish relations here.

Since Azerbaijan's 1991 independence from the former Soviet Union, the Azerbaijani Republic's relationship with Turkey has grown strong, initial Turkish support and obvious public needs developing into mutual opportunities and granted privileges. During this time the country's rich natural resources and unique geopolitical position have lead to it being the unwilling recipient of discord from many of it's neighbours, Russia, Armenia and Iran in particular, while over this same period Azerbaijan's unhindered Turkish ties have continued to calmly develop.

"level" used twice, and in two different ways.

Establishing ties on a firm ground from the very beginning had a positive impact on the relations between Turkey and other Central Asian republics. These relations are not due to family ties alone but also to the relationship between the countries as a result of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum natural gas pipeline. These two pipelines are known as the "projects of the century."

The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway, which is still under construction, will revive the old Silk Road, connecting Turkey and Europe to Central Asia via Azerbaijan. A cargo train from China to Kazakhstan will be able to reach Europe via our country. These giant projects are making Azerbaijan and Turkey the powerhouses of Eurasia. On the one hand, Azerbaijan is a rapidly growing country; on the other hand, it faces a difficult problem due to Armenia's occupation of 20 percent of its territory. Azerbaijan has a population of 8 million, 1 million of whom fled the Nagorno-Karabakh region due to war and settled in different parts of the country, especially Baku. This means one out of every eight people in Azerbaijan is a refugee.

'Our brotherhood more than protocol rules'

Azerbaijani Deputy Prime Minister Elçin Efendiyev explained that both countries needed to learn a lesson from the events that were experienced in the last couple of months and noted that people who don't want Turkey and Azerbaijan to become too close had carefully monitored the process and tried to disrupt relations. He added that events were aggravated by some incorrect and sensationalist media reports. Noting that he always believed that the tension, which had increased from February onward, would eventually end and that Turkey would never take a step against Azerbaijan's



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(1) "Establishing ties on a firm ground from the very beginning"

clumsy noun phrase, made of three noun phrases.

(2) NEVER, EVER write "X of the century", including in quotes. "X of the century" is a phrase used to mock newspapers. Don't use it.

Try:

The positive relationships seen today between Turkey and each of the Central Asian republics - not just Azerbaijan - have developed from a small collection of important commonalities. As a basis Turkey shares cultural, historical and religious traits, plus a common heritage, with the Turkic states. From these foundations, over the centuries, many family and community ties have grown. More recently, support for and work on two globally significant pipelines, the "Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan" (BTC) pipeline (oil) and the "Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum" (natural gas), have focused and reinvigorated Azerbaijani - Turkish relations. The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway under construction will echo the old silk road, connecting again China with Europe, once more through Azerbaijan and Turkey.

This paragraph has two or three subjects. Move the train-silk road to the previous (pre-sidebar) paragraph, and move onto the occupation, 'population' elsewhere. Maybe the writer is trying to use linking paragraphs ? This isn't one; use a heading and move on.

"...will revive the old Silk Road. " to "...looks to revive the old Silk Road"

typo : "...from China or Kazakhstan..."

You probably wouldn't write "On the one hand.... on the other hand", maybe in an email, but not in any public writing.

"...fled the war..." (the war is over) or

"...whom have fled the Nagorno-Karabakh..." (the region exists)

The Baku administration
dropped the

national interests, Efendiyev said: "I was
right. The relationship between Turks and

A 'secret hand' brought relations to the brink of destruction

At the same time, efforts to resolve the problem -- the details of which haven't been disclosed to the public -- that have been continuing since 2007 have had an impact on the agenda. At first, talks with Armenia brought hope, but shortly afterward concerns replaced those hopeful expectations. A "secret hand" that appeared to be trying to make Turkey's

efforts useless began continuously spreading provocative and fabricated information. The tension between Turkey and Azerbaijan, stemming from Turkey's attempts to normalize relations with Armenia through "secret" and "open" talks over the last two years, ended when Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visited Baku on May 13. Through manipulation of the media, certain people against the Armenian effort had almost convinced the public of both countries that their leaders were making the wrong moves until this point.

with the war between Russia and Georgia. Turkey began taking solid steps regarding

issues in the region, similar to the efforts it made regarding issues in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq.

Efforts by Turkey to become an active player in the region were introduced with the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform. The diplomatic traffic between Russia, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan increased, and while the developments in Georgia appeared to be the main issue at that time, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict would soon become the biggest obstacle the platform would have to deal with.

Deputies draw attention to those sowing discord

Azerbaijani deputy Ganire Paşayeva noted that the recent unsubstantiated tension between the two countries eased with Erdoğan's visit to Baku. Noting that there were aims to disrupt sincere efforts to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh problem, Paşayeva said no power could disrupt relations between the two countries. "We saw once more that the Turkish and Azerbaijani parliament."



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An introduction to this new subject is more important than its age, so replace the adjectival sub-clause with "...issue, the occupation of this large area by Armenian forces,"

*"dragged" to "presented" or "usually presented".
"dragged...as a frozen problem". Mixed metaphor.
please delete "into a vortex of irresolvability"*

*"problem. This...in the country"
to "problem, a major obstacle to economic and political development"*

*"in order to encourage"
to "to look for"*

"a countless number" : it is OK, I suppose; I wouldn't write that, and they are somewhat oxymoronic. Better would be either "Countless summits", or better still "Maybe X summits..." where X might be 100, or 150, or whatever. The author should call someone for a ballpark estimate, then correctly present it as a ballpark estimate, a strong (correctly) vague statement.

*"Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform" :
what is this ? A classification or short description is needed.*

*"Efforts ... introduced...", mismatch.
to "Efforts ... began..."*

*"biggest", clumsy, better would be
"main" or "most X" e.g. "most important"*

It was discovered that provocative and fabricated reports were first printed by some Armenian media sources. At a time when concerns were at a peak and reports of full of disinformation were being discussed on the streets of Baku, Erdoğan's visit to Baku and his warm and clear messages to the Azerbaijanis and the world at the National Assembly of Azerbaijan immediately reduced tensions. It became clear that unlike what was reported in the media, Turkey hadn't abandoned Azerbaijan. Turkey's policy toward Azerbaijan has been the same for years. It was the same in 1918, 1990 and 2000, and it is the same today. Turkey's Azerbaijan policy has been a state policy from the very beginning. It was like this when Nuri Paşa, the

commander of the Caucasian army, rode his horse to help people in cities that were burned down by Armenians, such as Baku, Ganja, and Shemakha. It was like this when Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of Turkey, referred to the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic as a "Turkish door" and Kazım Karabekir referred to it as the "eastern door." Moreover, Turkey's strong stance played a role in the Armenians' loss of interest in Nakhchivan after it obtained autonomous status.

people's most important problem and distress is the Karabakh problem. During this period, the well-intentioned efforts of sincere people of both countries should not be distorted," he said, noting that the messages given by both Aliyev and Erdoğan in Baku disrupted the efforts of those trying to sow discord among the public.

Stating that there are some hostile forces trying to meddle in the affairs of the two countries, former Prime Minister Penah Hüseynov, who is currently a deputy and a member of the Turkey-Azerbaijan Friendship Commission, said, "Our relations must be so tight that no enemy could have the courage or opportunity to even try to infiltrate it." The chairman of the Great Establishment Party, Fazil Mustafa, ensured that there was no way the countries could be distanced from each other, but noted that there are forces that are trying to revive old tensions. Noting that the tension between Azerbaijan and Turkey stemmed from miscommunication, Mustafa said some people were trying to exploit this communication failure and spark concern and suspicion.

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Try:

"Meanwhile, the steps being taken to resolve another issue have had their own impacts. While details of the "secret hand" problem remain confidential, manifestations include the hope initially generated by talks with Armenia being quickly converted into concerns, without any other cause for this rapid change."

Many errors and corrections here:

"A "secret hand" that appeared..." to "A "secret hand" appeared..."

"trying" is weak, esp. after "appeared". Try "working" or "undermining"
"began continuously spreading" to "began spreading a continuous stream"

Do you want to say "in its media" ?, are you trying to reference media owners, or just manipulators ?

Don't use "information" if you are trying to indicate that is false, information implies truth. Try "stories".

move the cause of the tension to the first sentence.

"A secret hand" appeared to be undermining Turkey's reconciliation work by spreading a continuous stream of both fabricated, and provocative, reports in [its / the] media concerning Turkey's series of talks with Armenia over the previous 24 months. However, any tension this clandestine force had succeeded in generating quickly evaporated when Prime Minister Recep..."

"certain people". Writing like this is weak enough to be incorrect:

(1) it is a weak definite statement (correct, everyone is a certain person). Better is a strong vague description "not yet identified X", maybe "not yet identified media operators working against the Armenian ..."

(2) it says that you know (which you may not) and you are not going to identify. The feeling given is that you (the writer, or Today's Zaman) are too weak to make the identification. Again, strong vague is better.

(3) for the above (and maybe other) reasons, "certain people" is usually heard in negative gossip, another weak connotation

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"It was discovered that provocative..." passive voice, not the sin it is made out to be, but unnecessary in this case as we know the actor: the Armenian media. As it is weak, you don't want to use the passive voice unless you have to. Try "A few Armenian media sources were the first to print the provocative stories.", or "A few particular Armenian media..." if the media outlets together have specific attributes (shared owners, or attitudes, or whatever)

typo: "It became clear that _unlike what..."

make one sentence :

"been the same for years. It was ..." to "been the same for years, it was..."

"Turkey's Azerbaijan policy"

to : "Turkey's Azerbaijani policy" or "Turkey's policies towards Azerbaijan"

The "from the beginning..." onwards is probably OK. I would, myself, run it together for pace, and make it present continuous (again for pace). Once you have indicated that the first of a list is in the past, you can then talk of the remainder of the list in the present, which makes it more dynamic :

"...from the beginning, Nuri Paşa, the ... army, riding his horse and Shemakha, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk referring to..."

... Turkey's strong stance played..."

better: "...Turkey's strong stance has played..."

Prime Minister Erdoğan showed his strong reaction to attempts to distort information regarding the opening of the border with Armenia, saying: "The occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh is the cause, and the closure of the border for 16 years since 1993 is the effect. Without the occupation ending, the gates will not be opened." This statement was highlighted and underlined. In his speech at the National Assembly of Azerbaijan, Erdoğan said: "My dear brothers, first of all, it is a shame to even utter that Turkey has given up on the Karabakh issue. I am dismissing this lie outright once and again here." His assurances destroyed the plans of the "secret hands" that had been intent on causing a storm. Shortly afterwards, Azerbaijani President İlham Aliyev, pleased and comforted to hear Erdoğan make such statements, delivered a message to the Azerbaijani public that reinforced Erdoğan's statement, preventing artificial tensions from being created. "There is no room for any suspicion. There is no room for any other ideas or speculation. This is a date, and we are putting it in the past," Aliyev noted, hinting at the necessity for both countries to remain focused on bilateral and regional issues.

Gül and Erdoğan's relationship with Aliyev of special importance

President Abdullah Gül and Prime Minister Erdoğan's general sensitivity toward Azerbaijan and their close and sincere relationships with Aliyev upset the hopes of those seeking to create tension between the two countries. After becoming president, Gül made his second official visit the Azerbaijan, winning the appreciation of the Azerbaijani public. He also visited Baku three times in his first year as president. It is for that reason that the relationship between Gül and Aliyev has special importance. Erdoğan's friendship with Aliyev goes back to 2003, when Aliyev was entering the politic scene in Azerbaijan. At a time when

Aliyev's father, former Prime Minister Hayder Aliyev, was ill and the country was experiencing a difficult period, Erdoğan did what he felt was his responsibility and invited the new prime minister to Turkey for the first time. During that time, there were clashes in domestic politics as well as regional problems and instability in the country.

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better: "Prime Minister Erdoğan reacted strongly to the attempt to misrepresent the opening of the Armenian border, saying "[quote]", a statement he later reinforced. In his" *stronger verbs.*

"...that had been intent..."

maybe "...that had previously been intent..."

The rest of this paragraph is good, fine.

"with Aliyev upset" to "with Aliyev had upset".

I would drop "the hopes of"

typo "visit the Azerbaijan" should be "visit to Azerbaijan"

maybe "Azerbaijan, winning" to "Azerbaijan, successfully winning"

"the Azerbaijani public. He also..." run these together, to "the Azerbaijani public, before visiting..."

"politic" to "political"

"experiencing a difficult period,"

to either "experiencing difficulties" or "going through a difficult period"

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Again “countless number”. Better is “many” , “a large number”; and best is some sort of estimate.

This paragraph is muddled, unclear, but otherwise there are no straightforward errors.

the note about the affiliation with the company is irrelevant, or, why is that detailed ?

If “free” and “shining examples” are quotes they should be in quotes marks, and if they are not, they should be replaced with more measured words.

Move “once again” from the end of the sentence to the start, and rearrange into the sentence into the standard (leading adverbial)-subject-verb-object form.

“Once again Erdoğan reiterated to Aliyev Turkey's policy concerning the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Similarly Turkish Foreign Minister...”

'Our brotherhood more than protocol rules' [sidebar]

'Our brotherhood more than protocol rules'

Azerbaijani Deputy Prime Minister Elçin Efendiyev explained that both countries needed to learn a lesson from the events that were experienced in the last couple of months and noted that people who don't want Turkey and Azerbaijan to become too close had carefully monitored the process and tried to disrupt relations. He added that events were aggravated by some incorrect and sensationalist media reports. Noting that he always believed that the tension, which had increased from February onward, would eventually end and that Turkey would never take a step against Azerbaijan's national interests, Efendiyev said: "I was right. The relationship between Turks and Azerbaijanis does not merely comprise protocol rules. Nor does it comprise just the words written or spoken in the media." He added: "[These] emotions come from the blood. The unity and togetherness [between Turkey and Azerbaijan] will never be shaken. Those who are against our brotherhood can try as hard as they want to take advantage of opportunities [to damage our brotherhood], but they will fail."



Turkish Friendship Commission and Atatürk Center President Professor Nizami Ceferov said that although small concerns emerged between the two countries due to misunderstandings, Turkey and Azerbaijan are not just sister countries, but are also very strong allies for each other, noting that it is necessary to share the same views in order to act together on solving regional issues. Describing the ties between the two countries, Ceferov said: "The relations between Turks and Azerbaijanis are like salt water: The more you drink, the more it burns, but the more it burns, the more you want it. In other words, it is like a situation where you cannot fulfill your thirst. We should never say 'that is enough' with respect to any issue. We must continuously plan for new developments, talks and targets. This is especially the responsibility of the friendship commission in the parliament."

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This side-bar is obviously from a different pen; and is fundamentally OK, with a couple exceptions:

"from the events that were experienced in the last few months" should be "from the events that have been experienced over the last few months" i.e. present perfect, not simple past, and use "over" not "in"

I would also edit "become too close", as "too" indicates that the speaker thinks it is a problem. Better something like "... who are working against [their] relationship..."

*"...small concerns emerged..."
to "...small concerns had emerged..."*

*"...countries, but are also very strong allies for each other, noting..."
to "... countries but strong allies, noting..."*

Deputies draw attention to those sowing discord [sidebar]

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Deputies draw attention to those sowing discord

Azerbaijani deputy Ganire Paşayeva noted that the recent unsubstantiated tension between the two countries eased with Erdoğan's visit to Baku. Noting that there were aims to disrupt sincere efforts to resolve



the Nagorno-Karabakh problem, Paşayeva said no power could disrupt relations between the two countries. "We saw once more that the Turkish and Azerbaijani people's most important problem and distress is the Karabakh problem. During this period, the well-intentioned efforts of sincere people of both countries should not be distorted," he said, noting that the messages given by both Aliyev and Erdoğan in Baku disrupted the efforts of those trying to sow discord among the public.

Stating that there are some hostile forces trying to meddle in the affairs of the two countries, former Prime Minister Penah Hüseynov, who is currently a deputy and a member of the Turkey-Azerbaijan Friendship Commission, said, "Our relations must be so tight that no enemy could have the courage or opportunity to even try to infiltrate it." The chairman of the Great Establishment Party, Fazil Mustafa, ensured that there was no way the countries could be distanced from each other, but noted that there are forces that are trying to revive old tensions. Noting that the tension between Azerbaijan and Turkey stemmed from miscommunication, Mustafa said some people were trying to exploit this communication failure and spark concern and suspicion.

"that the recent unsubstantiated tension "
to *"that recent apparent tension eased" (less tension)*
or *"that unsubstantiated claims of recent tension reduced" (fewer claims)*
Only claims can be unsubstantiated.

"...aims to disrupt sincere..."
to *"...attempts to disrupt the sincere..."*

"people's most" to "peoples' most"
"and distress is" to "and cause of distress is"

"...Baku disrupted..."
to *"...Baku have disrupted..." (effect continues - present perfect)*
or *"...Baku had disrupted..." (effect completed - past perfect)*

Swap the adjectival phrases ,
(1) a member of the Turkey..., and current deputy
(2) former Prime Minister ...
clearer and more powerful.

"ensured" ? to "wanted to ensure" ?
what is actually meant here ?

"forces that are trying to"
to *"forces trying", or better "forces working to"*

Forces trying to heighten tension over border issue [sidebar]

Forces trying to heighten tension over border issue

The editor-in-chief of the 525 daily, Reşat Mecit, confirmed Erdoğan's statements with these words: "I continuously watch our [Azerbaijani] media and the Turkish media. Although there have been clear messages, there are people that are still trying to bring the border issue to the agenda. But as a member of the media, I believe our sister country Turkey will never take a step that will harm our national interests. From the very beginning, Turkey has sided with directing the Karabakh issue from a dead end toward a concrete conclusion." Mecit also noted that Davutoğlu's official visit to Baku on the eve of a meeting in St. Petersburg was a commendable development.



Azerbaijani Press Agency Editor-in-Chief Vüsale Mahirkızı opined that Turkey, feeling historically responsible, would never give up on Azerbaijan and would continue to protect its relations in the future as well. Mahirkızı said some recent developments had caused misunderstandings between the two countries, but noted that she did not believe the two countries were disappointed with each other, as has been claimed.

proofreading & editing notes

Drop "with these words". Any sentence before a colon (':') should be a complete sentence, and not an ' as follows ' type lead on. This is a very common mistake and, anyway, "with these words" is weak.

"...visit to Bakuwas ... a commendable development." is mixed up. either "... first visit to Baku" (the start of a pattern is a development) or "... ... a commendable action" (a visit is an action)

OK.