

## DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS OF AZERBAIJAN – VIETNAM: SIMILARITIES IN DEVELOPMENT

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### Abstracts

Vietnam-Azerbaijan relations are a special relationship cultivated by President Ho Chi Minh and leader Heydar Aliyev. In 1992, Vietnam and Azerbaijan officially established diplomatic relations, but before that, when Azerbaijan was one of the 15 republics of the Soviet Union, the relationship between Vietnam and Azerbaijan was extremely close. The people of Azerbaijan have helped the Vietnamese people a lot in such areas as: training international students, building the oil and gas industry, sending experts to help Vietnam during the war. This is a relationship of friendship between the two nations. To learn more about this relationship, the similarity of diplomatic relations between the two countries of Vietnam and Azerbaijan in the development, the author has selected the topic: "*Diplomatic relations Azerbaijan - Vietnam: the similarities in development*". The article explores aspects of the issue such as: the historical and geographical similarities of the two peoples have influenced foreign policy from the very beginning of the nation's establishment. The article also summarizes the diplomatic achievements of Vietnam and Azerbaijan in the history as well as the development of the present. In particular, the article mentioned people-to-people diplomacy, one of the pillars of the foreign policy of Vietnam as well as Azerbaijan to show the faithful friendship of the two peoples.

**Keywords** Diplomatic relation, Azerbaijan, Viet Nam, friendship, development.....

### Introduction

Foreign policy is the most important issue in international political relations, which is the basis for the development of economic, political and cultural fields of each country. External activities can help a country develop and prosper, expanding economic and political relations with other countries in the world. As a country that loves peace and always wants to make friends with all countries in the world, Vietnam is ready to open its doors to welcome friends from all over the world. As one of the special friendship relations, the diplomatic relations between Vietnam and

Azerbaijan are developed from similarities in foreign affairs and history of the two countries. To clarify and further explore this topic, the author has chosen the topic: "*Azerbaijan - Vietnam diplomatic relations: similarities in development*".

### **Many similarities in the country's history**

Located at the crossroads of the great Silk Road, Azerbaijan appears as a strategic position in the world. Since ancient times, this place has often been interested and invaded by powerful imperial forces. To illustrate the importance of Azerbaijan, we can use a saying of Emperor Napoleon: "Geography is destiny"<sup>[1]</sup>

Because of its position in the middle of the confluence of interests of the world's superpowers, an area with a lot of political instability and ethnic conflicts, the people of Azerbaijan have always shown their steadfast will and determination to maintain their independence. To emphasize this, the leader of the Azerbaijan people Heydar Aliyev said in a message to young people in 2001: "Our greatest achievement is national independence"<sup>[2]</sup>. Therefore, the government and people of Azerbaijan attach great importance to peace and always develop friendly, sustainable, cooperative and development foreign relations.

In its history, before the formation of the State of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan, the people of Azerbaijan suffered from the oppression of the Khans under the Persian Empire (a large part of which is now Iran) and the Russian Empire. After the collapse of the Russian Empire in World War I (1917), Azerbaijan declared its independence and established the State of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan on May 28, 1918 - State with the Islamic Republic The world's first parliament. Although it did not last long (1918 - 1920), but since 1918, the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was the first state to have a People's Commissar's Council established in Baku, which was the head body of Baku, which was very progressive early in the organization of the state apparatus of the country where Islam is the main religion of Azerbaijan.

With the formation of the State of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was established and diplomatic activities began with the international community, laying the foundation for foreign policy of Azerbaijan. On the basis of the Provisional Directive passed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan on 9 July 1919, this day became the Day of the Foreign Service of Azerbaijan.

From the very beginning of the State of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan, the foreign policy goal was enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, that is, the State of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan is ready to establish friendly relations with all countries especially neighboring countries. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Republic of Azerbaijan re-established and restored its independence in 1991, also determined the development of friendly relations with neighboring countries and the world community at large on a bilateral basis and multilateralism, enhancing peace, stability and security in the region and the world, etc. are the basic objectives of foreign policy.

An uncanny similarity between Azerbaijan and Vietnam comes from the geography and history of the nation's formation. If Azerbaijan is located in the center of the Asia-Europe freight route on land, Vietnam is the center of the sea transport route. Being in an important position in the world, right after its establishment, Vietnam was attacked by many empires in the world, especially the Chinese feudal dynasties.

Entering the nineteenth century, Vietnam was a colony of the French colonists and was under colonial rule for 100 years. In 1945, under the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam led by President Ho Chi Minh, the Vietnamese people carried out a successful revolution, national liberation, and established the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. However, the great powers once again waged wars to invade Vietnam, typically two wars: the Indochina War (1945 - 1954), the Vietnam War (1954 - 1975) with two superpowers, France. and America.

As a nation that suffered many losses due to war, the Vietnamese people deeply love peace. That is clearly reflected in the foreign policy of the Vietnamese government. From the very first day of establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, in the "Declaration of Independence" on September 2, 1945, President Ho Chi Minh stated that Vietnam's foreign policy is to be ready to cooperate with all countries. Today, the goals and tasks of foreign affairs are clearly stated in the document of the 12th Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam, which is to ensure the interests of the nation - nation, on the basis of the basic principles of the international law, equality and mutual benefit.

Vietnam consistently implements the foreign policy of independence, self-reliance, peace, cooperation and development; diversification and multilateralization in foreign relations; proactively and actively integrate into the world; "serving the goal of maintaining a peaceful and stable environment, taking full advantage of external resources to develop the country and improve people's living standards; enhance the position and prestige of the country and contribute to the cause of peace, national independence, democracy and social progress in the world."<sup>[3]</sup>

Thus, the Democratic Republic regime formed for the birth of the two states of Azerbaijan (1918) and Vietnam (1945) have similarities in the results of the people's struggle against oppression and aggression strategy, aspiration to build a government of the people, by the people, for the people.

### **Outstanding achievements in bilateral cooperation**

102 years of diplomacy of the Republic of Azerbaijan and 76 years of diplomacy of Vietnam experienced many events. Up to now, the diplomacy of Vietnam and Azerbaijan has been achieving positive results, contributing to promoting the country's cooperation and development, bringing a prosperous and happy life to the people.

The relationship between Vietnam and Azerbaijan was formed more than 70 years ago, when Azerbaijan was still one of the 15 republics of the Soviet Union. In 1959, President Ho Chi Minh visited Azerbaijan and in 1983 leader Heydar Aliyev - the founder of present-day Azerbaijan, then as Vice Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR visited Vietnam. Diplomatic events laid the foundation for Vietnam-Azerbaijan cooperation relations.

The diplomatic image of President Ho Chi Minh with Azerbaijan on the oil and gas rigs in Baku has shown the potential for cooperation in developing the oil and gas industry of Azerbaijan and Vietnam. At Baku oil and gas industrial zone, President Ho Chi Minh told Azerbaijan oil and gas leaders and engineers that: "I think we have a sea in Vietnam, we will definitely have oil, but we are at war, we can't do it. I hope and believe that after the victory of the Vietnamese resistance, you will help us find oil, then help exploit and process oil, build an oil and gas industrial park like Baku"<sup>[4]</sup> (23/07/1959)

Pic 1: President Ho Chi Minh visits Baku oil and gas area, 1959. [URL: <https://vov.vn/the-gioi/ho-so/cac-buc-anh-quy-hiem-ve-chu-tich-ho-chi-minh-tham-mo-dau-azerbaijan-826126.vov>]

Less than 2 years later, Vietnam's oil and gas industry was born (November 27, 1961). In the past, thousands of Vietnamese students have been trained and grown up in universities of Azerbaijan, making an important contribution to the success of Vietnam today. In addition, under the Soviet Union, there were hundreds of Azerbaijani military and civilian experts who volunteered to help the Vietnamese people defend and build the country. Today, there are still many works and symbols in Vietnam bearing the mark of the traditional friendship and effective cooperation between the people of Vietnam and Azerbaijan, in which it is impossible not to mention the Vietsovpetro Joint Venture. With the cooperation and support of the people of Azerbaijan, after reunifying the country, Vietnam conducted oil and gas exploration in the East Sea. In April 1981, Vietnam exploited the first cubic meters of gas and tons of crude oil, and was named in the list of oil and gas producing countries in the world.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Azerbaijan became an independent country, since then, Vietnam-Azerbaijan relations have been upgraded and tightened. On September 23, 1992, Vietnam and Azerbaijan officially established diplomatic relations. In 2013, the Embassy of Azerbaijan in Hanoi was opened as a milestone in the diplomacy of both countries. In particular, President Ilham Aliyev's official visit to Vietnam in May 2014 and President Truong Tan Sang's visit to Azerbaijan in May 2015 have raised the level of friendship between the two peoples.

According to statistics, in the period 2013-2014, Azerbaijan is the country with the third largest trade turnover with Vietnam after Russia and Ukraine in the countries of the former Soviet Union. In 2014, two-way trade turnover was 422.4 million USD; in which, export reached 73.6 million USD, import reached 348.8 million USD. However, in 2015, the import-export turnover between the two countries suddenly decreased to only 34.2 million USD; in which, export turnover of Vietnam to Azerbaijan reached 34.2 million USD. In 2016, two-way trade between Vietnam and Azerbaijan showed positive signs of recovery, reaching US\$104.44 million, of which Vietnam's exports to Azerbaijan reached US\$5.14 million and imports reached US\$99.30 million USD. [5]

In particular, 2019 is the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic service of Azerbaijan, the two countries have had bilateral and multilateral diplomatic activities to strengthen this friendly relationship. Not to mention, can be mentioned the visit of Member of Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, Vice President Dang Thi Ngoc Think to Azerbaijan, on the occasion of leading the Vietnamese delegation to attend the 18th Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement in Baku, Azerbaijan (October 25-26, 2019); or the visit of the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Vietnam on March 10-13, 2019 to co-chair the political consultation between the two foreign ministries of Vietnam and Azerbaijan. These can be considered as important events marking the development of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Also in this series of events, in Hanoi, the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam held a seminar: "Vietnam and Azerbaijan diplomacy: Similarities, development and roles in constructions country". On November 29, 2019, Binh Son Refining and Petrochemical Joint Stock Company (BSR) - a member of Vietnam Oil and Gas Group (Petrovietnam) and SOCAR Trading Company (a member of Azerbaijan National Petroleum Corporation - SOCAR) ) signed a contract to supply

crude oil to Dung Quat Refinery in 2020. According to the signed content, SOCAR Trading Company will supply Azeri crude oil to Dung Quat Oil Refinery in the first 6 months of 2020 with the block supply is 5 million barrels.[6] These are all typical manifestations of the relationship between the two countries.

Internationally, Azerbaijan and Vietnam have always been loyal friends. Azerbaijan has expressed concern over disputes over territorial sovereignty and territorial waters in the East Sea and agreed with the trend of settling disputes by peaceful means, conflict disputes, respecting international law, especially United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in 1982 and the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC). In particular, at the United Nations, Azerbaijan always supports Vietnam in its role as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the 2020-2021 term. With regard to the war situation in a tense area like Nagorno-Karabakh, the Vietnamese people have always supported the peaceful solution of disputes, avoiding war, and respecting international law. The Vietnamese people mourned the soldiers and civilians killed in the war.

### **Rich and effective people's diplomacy**

People's diplomacy is an important external channel of Vietnamese diplomacy. Simply put, these are dialogues between the Vietnamese people and the people of other countries. People's diplomacy has the participation of many branches, levels and social organizations as President Ho Chi Minh said at the Diplomatic Conference on January 14, 1964: "These are not embassies, consulates general, are specialized agencies in charge, but also other organizations such as foreign trade, culture, youth, women, trade unions all also do diplomacy"[7]

The concept of people's diplomacy was first raised in 1951 at the Second National Congress of the Party, but people's diplomacy was advocated by President Ho Chi Minh very early on. For Azerbaijan, it was President Ho Chi Minh and leader Heydar Aliyev who were the first to build the friendship and close bond between the two peoples.

The foreign policies of the two countries Azerbaijan and Vietnam have many similarities and play a role in promoting the country's development, especially in the current period of international integration. Azerbaijan and Vietnam are both responsible members of many international organizations, sharing the same view of protecting a stable and peaceful environment on the basis of international law. In the context of international integration, cultural diplomacy and external propaganda have been playing a very important role in promoting the image of the country and people of Azerbaijan and Vietnam as hospitable and rich in identity, there are many world cultural heritages.

After the establishment of the Azerbaijan Embassy in Vietnam in 2013, the Azerbaijan History and Culture Research Center was established in 2014, so far there have been many practical activities, especially connecting generations of former Vietnamese students in Baku participate in activities to strengthen cooperation and friendship between Vietnam and Azerbaijan.

For more than 4 years of operation, the Azerbaijan History and Culture Research Center has cooperated with the Embassy of Azerbaijan in Vietnam to organize many forums with the theme of "Vietnam - Azerbaijan cultural similarities" with the participation of experts participation of former Vietnamese students in Azerbaijan, staff of the Embassy of Azerbaijan in

Vietnam, some scientists, officials of cultural, educational and press agencies of Vietnam who are knowledgeable about culture and history Azerbaijan country.

During the complicated development of the COVID-19 epidemic across Europe, on May 11, 2020, the Vietnamese people donated 20,000 medical masks to the people of Azerbaijan on the occasion of the anniversary of the victory over the Nazis[8]. It is a timely and sincere support that the Vietnamese people have given the people of Azerbaijan in the difficult epidemic situation. Another manifestation in the diplomacy of the two peoples is that in Vung Tau city in Ba Ria - Vung Tau province there is a street named Baku and vice versa in Baku city - the capital of Azerbaijan has a street named Vung Tau.

That is the rich and effective people's diplomacy, in addition to the official diplomacy of the Government of Azerbaijan and Vietnam, which is increasingly being strengthened.

### Conclusion

Currently, the common trend that countries around the world are aiming for is peace, cooperation and development. Vietnam has always been a friend and is ready to be a friend of all countries in the world. Among the hundreds of thousands of complicated diplomatic relationships that stand out is the faithful friendship between the two peoples of Vietnam and Azerbaijan. A relationship is built from similarities in the two countries' histories, mutual support in difficult times and the emotional attachment between the two peoples. Over the past 29 years since the establishment of official diplomatic relations, the government and people of Vietnam, as well as the government and people of Azerbaijan, have always tried to tighten the friendship and solidarity between the two countries, working together and development, contributing to peace and prosperity all over the world.

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