
SPEECHES

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Heydar Aliyev's speech at the meeting in the permanent representation of the Azerbaijan Republic in Moscow, on January 21, 1990 dedicated to the tragic events of January 20, 1990 (21 January, 1990)

Dear Comrades, Ladies and Gentlemen, as you know I was the leader of the Party organization of Azerbaijan for many years. I was elected a member of the CPSU Central Committee and acted as the first Deputy Chairman of the USSR of Ministers. It is over two years since I retired, I had a serious heart attack that caused my retirement. It is the first time since December, 1982 when I left Azerbaijan that I have come to the Permanent Representation of the Azerbaijan Republic in Moscow and the tragedy in Azerbaijan made me come here. I learned about it in the morning and could not remain indifferent to what had happened in Azerbaijan. First of all I come here, to the Representation that is just a small island of Azerbaijan in Moscow, to express my condolences to the Azerbaijan people in connection with the tragic event entailing horrible consequences, deaths of my compatriots. Secondly, I would like to express my attitude as regards to this matter. I am requesting the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan in Moscow-Zokhrab İbrahimov to pass my words of deep sorrow and my sincere condolences to the people of Azerbaijan. Unfortunately it is the least I can do currently.

Referring to the events happened in Azerbaijan I consider them to be illegal, hostile to democracy, totally contradicting the principles of humanism and the establishment of the legitimate state. There are certain reasons why this situation developed in Azerbaijan. I would not like to go into details; it would take too much time. The notorious ethnic conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia has been going on for two years already. This conflict has arisen in connection with the conflict in Upper Karabakh and around it. Two years is quite a long time for the leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia, the top party and political leaders of the country to settle this matter, to stop to the intestine conflicts, ethnic conflicts and to allow all people to live a free life irrespective of their nationality in our common Federative Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

However, to my opinion, necessary measures in this respect have not been taken.

If necessary actions had been initiated at the beginning of the troubles in Upper Karabakh we would not now observe the escalation of the tension and losses on both sides during the past two years and that military assault undertaken over the night from 19 to 20 January 1990 that brought heavy losses.

It is, first of all, the fault of the former first secretary of Central Committee of Azerbaijan Communist Party Abdurakhman Vezirov.

Being the leader of the Republic he made practically nothing to stabilize the situation in Azerbaijan. On the contrary, by his attitude and manner of work, political maneuvers, he opposed himself to people, could not inspire trust, created a gap between himself and people. People were indignant.

Demands were made at the meetings held for the past few months in Baku and other towns and regions of the Republic for the party leaders of Azerbaijan to resign, especially and primarily concerning Vezirov. It seems strange that this problem had not been solved. Only yesterday, after military troops were brought into the city and massacre carried out Vezirov ran away from Azerbaijan. It has been a serious mistake. The fatal mistake was to

appoint this gentleman inappropriate for the position of the First Secretary of Central Committee of Azerbaijan Communist Party.

I would like to speak in detail about that tragic eventuate happened over the night of 20th of January and is still going on. I think that there were possibilities, reserves for the political arrangement of the situation in Azerbaijan. The leaders of Azerbaijan and top political leaders of the country have not used all reserves. The incident on the border could have been prevented.

People expressed their demands in connection with frontier line three months ago. But nobody wished to meet them, to find the way out.

I would like to say again: there still were possibilities to calm people then. If 2-3 months ago the problem of the party leader in Azerbaijan would be settled, then may be would not have been a necessity to bring military troops into the city. I still think that political regulation was possible but the possibilities were not used and as a result regular troops of the Soviet Army and Ministry of Defense were brought to Baku over the night of the 20th of January. Tragic consequences of this action are well known. I regard this decision as political mistake. They were not aware of the actual situation in the Republic, of the peculiarities of the Azerbaijan people psychology, were not in contact with different circles of the society and thus could not foresee the consequences.

Such consequences should have been foreseen and preventive measures should have been taken. By the way, there has been information that among the victims there were many soldiers. Why should Russian fellows sent by the wrong decision of the top party leaders have suppressed the so-called revolt in Azerbaijan? Should so many troops have been brought to Azerbaijan? I am well informed how many troops had been stationed in Azerbaijan. There have been dislocated quite many troops; the Fourth Army, the Caspian Military Navy, landing forces, air-defense troops, troops of the Ministry of Defense. Was there any real need to bring additional troops here? If necessary, the troops already existed here could have been used. The leaders of Azerbaijan, who took such a decision, in the first place A.Vezirov, ran away from Azerbaijan. They should bear responsibility. Those who misinformed the country's top political leaders should also bear responsibility. I think that top political leaders of the country did not have access to the objective information in good time. The country leaders were misled and as a result such decision was taken.

Everybody involved in the crime should be punished.

21 January, 1990

Aliyev Heydar. Steadfast position. – B.,1994. – P. 6-10.

The speech of Heydar Aliyev at the session of the Supreme Council of Azerbaijan Republic (7 March, 1991)

Dear People's Deputies!

The question to participate or not to the referendum, appointed relating to the new Union agreement is of great importance. The future of Azerbaijan is being decided. In this relation I'd like to share my own ideas and suggestions.

Since 1922 Azerbaijan has been a member of the Soviet Union. Within these years our people had passed through a difficult historical way, achieved considerable success. There were hardships and difficulties on this way. One can't deny it.

We all were born, brought up, got education, during the existence of this Union. We all, at any rate the majority of us, strongly trusted this Union, devotedly served, and saw the happiness, bright future of our people only in this Union. I and my colleagues, who were in power for a long time, did our best to strengthening the Union and gained the feeling of devotion and love of Azerbaijani people to this Union.

However, the recent public and political processes in the world and in particular, in our country have changed our attitude towards our past, our world outlook. Economic, political ties between the Center and the Republics of the Soviet Union have been exposed. It has become quite clear which of them enjoys an advantage or losses. All the measures taken by the Union government to press down national-democratic movement in some republics, using military forces, revealed the empire policy of the Union. The disintegration of the Soviet Union started.

The leadership of the country having declared the uselessness of the Union which existed within 70 years calls for the creation of a new Union. In all his speeches Gorbachev declared that up to now there wasn't a real union in the country, that only now we can create a real union. In fact, I think that a new union project is more useless, than it was before.

As ex-leader of the republic I confess, that served such a useless and incomprehensible, using Gorbachev's words, union. I don't deny the mistakes made and regret it. We should take into consideration, that each period of the history put forward its demands. And we, all sitting here in this hall, were at the mercy of this regime. But now I think, that 70 year ordeal for our people is quite enough. I think that joining a new union for Azerbaijan people is unacceptable.

It should be said, that there are some factors, which justify our faithful service to the Union. A strong social-economic and intellectual potential which had been created at this period in the republic, is our national property and is a good background for an independent Azerbaijan.

In short, I am against joining a new union and, in this connection a referendum without any terms. This is a unanimous opinion of all my electors and deputies of Nakhichevan Majlis. I stand for a full economic and political independence of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijani people have already taken this path. Azerbaijani people comprehend its history anew, restore its national traditions, go back to national sources. The movement for national revival is being widely in process. Relating to this process the Session of the Supreme Soviet adopted some decisions on

February 5. I mean the renaming of the republic, State flag, and the decision on the date of May 28. Unfortunately, these items were not discussed, and the reasons of all these changes were not explained.

No doubt, all these decisions were adopted not for the sake of form. But why in this case the political, historical importance of these documents and decisions found no reflection?

During 70 years our republic was a Soviet Socialist republic. Now we set our republic free of all these words. And what new political system are we going to accept now? It is incomprehensible.

For 70 years our Republic lived up under the October Revolution banner. We refused this banner. We accepted a new flag, though it is not new at all. This was the national state flag of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in 1918. Why wasn't this important political act marked?

It is rather amazing to see this flag, which personifies the idea of Mamed-Emin Rasolzade's Party alongside with the bust of the founder of quite opposite idea.

To put it mildly, such discrepancy is difficult to understand.

May 28 is the date of the revival of Azerbaijani State and is celebrated as a national holiday. It is known, that on May 28, 1918 the first Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was established in our country.

In this case we should assess this event and assess the events of April 28, 1920. All these questions should be discussed at the session of the Supreme Soviet.

Duality, to be more exact, double-faced Gorbachev policy can't provoke confidence of the people. Recently addressing the meeting in Minsk, Gorbachev tried to prove that he is a communist and will remain faithful to the Communist Party till the very end.

However he tried to ground his swear by words of Solzhenitsin, who is known as an ardent enemy of the Communist Party, Lenin, and October revolution ideas. A question arises: what idea should we follow?

Some people try to prove that our republic can't exist apart from the Union, independently.

The idea that the former USSR republics can't exist apart from the Union, is widely being spread all over the Union, as they are tightly linked with each other by economics, technical ties.

All these statements are groundless. First of all Azerbaijan has potentialities to be an independent country. Relating to this I'd like to say against many items of the speech, made by deputy Samed-zade. I can prove their groundless, if I am given above time-limit.

Secondly, every state in the world has mutual economic, trade, technical relations with the other states, participates in the world economic integration, and this relation doesn't mean they are deprived of independence. That is why the economic links of the republics can't prevent gaining the independence by them. In my opinion, if Azerbaijan becomes an independent country it can implement bilateral, equal, mutually beneficial economic links with every republic of the Union and with the Union itself, if the latter remains. It will be of benefit for further development of independent Azerbaijan. Friendly relations of Azerbaijan people with other peoples will be independent and become more sincere, more solid.

It should be noticed that Azerbaijani people rather than other peoples have more ground to refuse a new Union agreement. For three years the sovereignty, territorial integrity of Azerbaijan have been violated. However, the Union government took no measures to prevent it.

On 20th of January 1990 there was an aggression on the Union side against Azerbaijani people. Having no basis, violating state laws, without letting know beforehand, the Union military forces brought troops into Baku, being equipped with modern arms. They massacred the innocent civilians. A lot of people were killed, injured and missed.

Unfortunately this aggression is being continued. More than a year the capital of the republic lives in the state of emergency. More than a year Azerbaijani people mourn for the dead. In the cities, village's monuments to the innocent dead people are being erected. But the killers haven't been shown up. It can't be justified. These questions should be discussed. The Session of the Supreme Soviet must assess the Tragedy of January 20, show up those guilty. Data, given by deputy Karayev have base.

As a people's deputy I can't understand why there is still the state of emergency in Baku. I wonder whom the Soviet Army Troops defend from.

Some people say that on January 20 the troops were brought to Baku without anybody's invitation. If it is so, the republic government using its sovereign rights had to return them back. But it didn't happen. On the contrary the presence of the troops is being considered as necessary.

Elmira Kafarova threatens people by civil war, which may begin. And these words are groundless too. It is difficult to understand: who is going to fight against whom?

The work of the Session shows once again that the Supreme Soviet faces more complicated problems.

However, the most important task is to restore the territorial integrity of the republic and defend our people from Armenian aggression. Last years nationalist bandit groups have formed powerful military potential. No doubt, they prosecute an aggressive aim towards Azerbaijan. Urgent measures must be taken to defend the republic.

All national unity should be gained in the republic. Unfortunately, some circles try to separate it, to oppose some regions, districts, villages, even persons. It should be stopped.

The Supreme Council must clearly take its right stand and work out its platform.

It is clear, that the platform of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, which is the part of the CPSU, can't unite people. The Communist Party must decline the power. Party Committee secretaries mustn't hold a post in soviet bodies. We must create the situation for the development of democracy, political pluralism, and glasnost. All political parties must act on equal rights.

People must know the truth. Social justice should be restored. The unity of Azerbaijani people can be ensured by a new, democratic, independent state. Certainly, there will be much difficulty. But we have to gain it at any cost. If we don't take this path, the future generations will do it. And neither they, nor history will forgive us. Now

every honest Azerbaijan person should think about the fate of his people, about its present and future, give up his personal interests. The fate of the people must be above everything.

Azerbaijani people must unite; defend the native land as the apple of one's eye. Azerbaijan Republic must take the path of economic and political independence and struggle for its full independence.

I call for it all people's deputies, the Azerbaijani people and I assure you I will not turn aside.

Thank you for your attention.

Aliyev Heydar. Steadfast position. – B.,1994. – P. 24-30.

The speech of Heydar Aliyev at the session of Supreme Council of Azerbaijan Republic (29 August, 1991)

Honorable deputies! Political, economical crises, the crises of state power have aggravated. The attacks of reactionary forces against democracy, attempt of state coup committed by criminal groups have failed. We witness the totter of the Soviet empire, of the Communist Party. The condition of our republic, of the Azerbaijan people at the moment is especially complicated and hard. The Communist Party of Azerbaijan that is at power in the republic and its rude, irreparable mistakes form the main reason of this reactionary policy (Voices of indignation). As a result of this policy the communist leadership of the republic in fast approved the state coup of August 19-22, and thus the Azerbaijan people was set into unfavorable situation that was immediately used by Armenian nationalists, enforced military operations and political propaganda against the republic. We are to find the ways out of this hard situation. Everyone is to strive to find ways out. We have to make clear the means of this way out.

Appeals to the people calling to unity and national consolidation are heard everywhere and from this rostrum as well. Unfortunately these appeals are late. But we are to do our best to come to national consolidation. It is necessary to make out the platform of this national unity. The consolidation can be achieved if the following terms are fulfilled. I expressed these suggestions in my pre-election speeches at the Sessions of the Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijan Republic in February and March, in July 19, in my statement on the occasion of my leaving the Communist Party and finally on August 24 in my letter to the Presidium of Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan. I don't want to be repeated; however I cannot but express some notes on these suggestions.

FIRSTLY. Baku has been in the state of emergency for a year and a half. Ayaz Moutalibov told today - why do we need it? It is necessary to remove it. Fine, but who will keep it for a year and a half? Whose resolution abolished another resolution of the Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan adopted in January 22 and has not been implemented. We have to estimate the cost of the state of emergency within this period of time and its losses for the Republic.

SECONDLY. The attitude of the leadership of Azerbaijan to the state coup was rumoured by foreign and all union mess media, and this item is to be clarified. We don't know what was said abroad but we know for certain that on August 2 in Ayaz Moutalibov's message over TV announced in Azerbaijan and Russian the activity of Committee of state Emergency was approved and some problems of Azerbaijan were hoped to be solved with its aid.

The solution of Upper Karabakh problem and rearming of armed Armenian brutal groups is connected with the activity of Emergency State Committee. If such an error was made the truth must be told to the people.

THIRDLY. The Communist Party of Azerbaijan must resign for the take of consolidation. It is the integral part of the Communist Party of the USSR. The CPSU has collapsed. The idea to preserve the Communist Party of Azerbaijan and solve it on the Congress shows the trends to use the potentiality of the Communist Party. It is un-possible to endorse it. All the structures of the Communist Party are to be abolished. The activity of all press organs of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan must be stopped and the cooperation between Central Committee of Azerbaijan and military coup should be cleared out by a parliamentary commission. It is a fact that within 3

days of ruling of State Emergency Committee press organs of Azerbaijan, Party press organs published documents of that Committee. Azerbaijan TV translated them into Azerbaijan indicating the existing cooperation. Leaders of the Communist Party should resign.

FOURTHLY. More than a year and a half has passed since the tragedy of January 20. Different talks are talked here. One group is of one opinion, Ragimov who spoke before me is of another opinion. I ask a question to Elmira Kafarova, Chairman of Supreme Council, to President Ayaz Moutalibov: Why this issue is not appraised politically?

I cannot accept the note given by Tamerlan Karayev as it has political and juridical sides. It was possible to give political appraisal to this issue. As to juridical aspect, to make some people answer could have been made clear by investigation. As the political appraisal has not given other measures could not be implemented.

Elmira Kafarova: It was given at the session on 20th.

Heydar Aliev: If so, who is a culprit of this military aggression? Today they say Yazov, Kryuchkov, Bakatin, Girenko, and Gorbachev. That's true. Who of Azerbaijan leadership is guilty? It is known. They are Vezirov, Kafarova, Moutalibov and other members of Central Committee of Azerbaijan Communist Party. If other people are guilty it must be cleared out. If other forces are guilty too - democratic forces, People's Front, their activity should be appraised politically too. Unless it is done the situation in the republic won't normalize.

If the political appraisal is not given to the issue, I ask Ayaz Moutalibov to answer why he didn't oppose Bakatin being assigned Chairman KGB when Gorbachev coordinated 3 ministers' appointments with the leadership of 9 republics. If did then why didn't mention about it in his speech? Why one of the culprits of 20 January tragedy Vezirov is elected the member of preparatory Committee from Azerbaijan to arrange the Congress of Peoples Deputies. Who proposed his nomination? If it is done by the leadership of Azerbaijan I want to tell honestly that they are guilty before the Azerbaijan people.

I agree with the deputies who are against the Presidential elections in the Republic. As the majority of the deputy stuff is made of communists, people having served in organs of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan are to be blamed and I am confident that Azerbaijan Parliament should be dissolved and new elections are to be held.

I'm sure after my sharp speech there will be speeches against me. I'm used to such actions. I made my speech being honest before my conscience.

29 August, 1991

Aliyev Heydar. Steadfast position. – B.,1994. – P. 35-39.