



**Statement  
at the 660<sup>th</sup> (Special) meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council  
17 April 2007**

Mr. Chairman,

The results of the last rounds of negotiations give us a reason not to share sense of optimism expressed by the distinguished Minister Oskanian with regard to the current state of affairs. Despite the fact that it is very difficult to hope for a substantial breakthrough judging from a position, on which Armenia persists, Azerbaijan remains committed to continuation of the negotiations on the settlement of the conflict in the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group.

Since the beginning of the so-called “Prague Process”, the position of my country on the peaceful settlement of the conflict in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan has been amplified in this forum on numerous occasions. We are consistent in pursuing our position concerning every stage of the settlement process, which can be found in our distributed statements. Nevertheless, we would like to briefly dwell on the basic aspects of our approach.

In the process of peaceful settlement of the conflict, the Republic of Azerbaijan proceeds from the values of good neighborliness, restoration of inter-communal links and reintegration of the conflict-affected territories back into the political and economic system of Azerbaijan, with due account of the European experience. Our position is based on the norms and principles of international law and corresponds to the values of democracy, rule of law and human rights.

The ultimate objective of the settlement process is to elaborate and define the model and legal frameworks of the status of the Nagorno-Karabakh region within Azerbaijan. We will be ready to discuss this issue with the entire population of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan at the appropriate stage of the settlement process.

Proceeding from the standards of democracy, rule of law and human rights, we believe that process of definition of any status shall take place with direct, full and equal participation of entire population of the region, comprising Armenian and Azerbaijani communities.

Claims that population of the Nagorno-Karabakh region has defined its status in a situation of continued occupation of the region and surrounding territories, and forced displacement of indigenous Azerbaijani population run contrary to the values of democracy, human rights and rule of law, which have a special importance in multiethnic societies. Such attempts seek to legitimize the results of ethnic cleansing and impose a *fait accompli* situation on Azerbaijan.

Armenia has to withdraw completely from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and Azerbaijani IDPs should be provided an opportunity to return in safety and dignity to their places of origin in the Nagorno-Karabakh region and adjacent territories. This will be followed by restoration of inter-communal relations and normal life in the region, cooperation between the two communities in the humanitarian sphere, implementation of the special programs on education and tolerance, opening of the communications for the mutual use by both sides in two directions.

Implementation of these measures will pave the way for civilized democratic process of definition of legal status. This process will be facilitated through reintegration of the Nagorno-Karabakh region back into the economic system of Azerbaijan and later on, consequently, into the state's political system.

Mr. Chairman,

Azerbaijan reaffirms its preparedness to consider and solve the issues in a constructive manner. The practice of artificial introduction of political obstacles, unjustified by the real substantial reasons and designed to camouflage the unwillingness to find a solution, hinders the peace process.

It is more than obvious that the preservation of status quo does not inure to the benefit of the peoples of Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as the whole region. It will simply lead us to nowhere. A lot of work, time and energy have been invested for the last three years within the "Prague Process". Therefore, it is important at this stage to de-block the current situation. We believe that with more political will and constructiveness it is possible to reach mutually acceptable solutions to the most complicated problems in the negotiation process.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me now comment on some remarks made by Minister Oskanian.

On the so-called "isolation" of Armenia

We often hear statements from the Armenian side that this country is a victim of attempts of certain of its neighbouring states to isolate it from international markets through restricting Armenia's access to the main transport corridors.

For Armenia it would be better and useful, as we have numerously stated before, to establish normal relations with its neighbors and to pursue the appropriate foreign policy. As long as Armenia continues to follow its aggressive policy, any talks about peace and stability in the region are irrelevant.

Armenia first of all should realize that only through establishment of good neighborhood relations with Azerbaijan, it could be given a chance to join the ongoing large-scale regional and transnational economic projects and could get rid of self-imposed isolation.

Another argument, which is widely used by the Armenian side, says that Azerbaijan opposes any cooperation with Armenia. In this regard, I would like to stress that my country has established and successfully develop good and mutually beneficial neighbourhood relations with all states in the region. Such approach is based on a system of values of European democracies, first of all, on the climate of mutual trust, respect and legality. Our confidence in Armenia could emerge only after the political solution of the conflict with the latter is achieved, namely all occupying forces are withdrawn and occupied territories are liberated.

#### On the so-called “rights of people to self-determination”

Speculation on the right of people to self-determination contradicts the norms and principles of international law, because the practical realization of the right of people to self-determination does not imply a unilateral secession, as it is envisaged in relevant international documents, particularly the Helsinki Final Act.

#### On the GUAM Resolution initiative at the UN GA

By including the item entitled “*Protracted Conflicts in the GUAM area and their Implications for International Peace, Security and Development*” into the agenda of the UN General Assembly and initiating the relevant draft resolution the GUAM Member States pursue a number of constructive goals.

The first one is to call the attention of the world community to the problem of unresolved conflicts in the territories of the GUAM Member States and their negative consequences, a threat to international security, stability and peace.

Another important aspect is to once again present to the Assembly and obtain relevant support for a comprehensive conceptual approach of the GUAM States to the conflict settlement processes.

Therefore, if adopted, the resolution initiated by the GUAM, will fix the peaceful, constructive and goal-oriented approach to the conflict settlement firmly based on norms and principles of international law, including those enshrined in the UN Charter.

The draft resolution will support the international mediation efforts aimed at peaceful settlement of these conflicts in accordance with the norms and principles of international law.

Consideration of the GUAM initiative by the General Assembly will strengthen the Assembly's central role as a chief deliberative and decision-making body. In the meantime, through addressing the concerns of GUAM and adopting the resolution the Assembly will prove its relevance for the Member States.

These points make it clear that the GUAM position is not directed against any third state. It is only aimed at finding soonest and durable solution to the protracted conflicts, thus contributing to strengthening of international security, stability and peace.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.