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**Statement
at the 572nd meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
October 13, 2005**

Mr. Chairman,

In accordance with the reservation I made at the last meeting of the Permanent Council today I would like to react to your statement on the recent escalation of situation on the Armenia-Azerbaijan border and the Line of Contact.

First I have to reiterate that my Delegation shares the concern over this escalation and we too are particularly concerned for safety of Ambassador Kasprzyk and his team. We also regret that Ambassador and his field assistants were unable to confirm, which side was responsible for the violation of cease-fire during the monitoring in the vicinity of Garahanbeyli village of the Fizuli region of the Republic of Azerbaijan on September 20.

Mr. Chairman,

Speaking in this hall last month, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan has informed the Permanent Council of approach of our country to the conflict resolution process, which is based upon the return of territories and the return of population, creation of the climate of peace, stability, development of confidence and peaceful coexistence between Armenians and Azerbaijanis in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. In this light the Azerbaijani side cannot be interested in violating the cease-fire, since we sincerely aim at de-blocking the situation and establishing normal relations.

Those who are really interested in violating the cease-fire aim at causing tension and instability, particularly now when one can see promising signs in the peace talks. This tension and instability plays into hands of those who promote hatred and distrust, those who declare that Armenians and Azerbaijanis are “*ethnically incompatible*”. These forces use this tension and instability to justify the existence of the so-called “*buffer zone*” around the Nagorno-Karabakh region in order to prevent the return of the Azerbaijani population. They also use it to demand increased security measures in order to conserve and freeze the conflict situation at the military-technical level. This tension and instability renders the

reintegration of Azerbaijani and Armenian communities of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan difficult and leads to alienation of one from the other.

Today I will not go into such details of the cease-fire violations as their frequency and number of victims, since the situation is rather clear in this regard. I will only make one observation that it is alarming that we witness the increase of cases of cease-fire violations when Azerbaijan is going to hold the next parliamentary elections soon.

As far as the hate-speech is concerned, Ambassador Tabibian is right when he condemns it. We also condemn this phenomenon and want to stress that it does not have a unilateral character and it would not be correct to engage into “*who started first*”-type of discussions. Azerbaijani people are tolerant, however this tolerance cannot be exploited in an infinite manner. Endless statements that we hear on the “military victory” achieved by the Armenian side over “defeated” Azerbaijan, on the secession and independence of Nagorno-Karabakh do not contribute to promoting and strengthening the tolerance. Despite these belligerent statements the major trend on Azerbaijani side is one of peaceful settlement, return of territories and return of population and peaceful coexistence with the Azerbaijani citizens of Armenian origin in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijani territories are occupied and Azerbaijanis were expelled from their homes, and the only way to achieve the reconciliation and confidence between two sides is by de-blocking the conflict situation.

On the issue of military budgets we would like to note that it is not correct to count money in somebody else’s pocket. Here we witness a normal process of the armed forces development in the overall context of development of the country. Different from other countries in the region Azerbaijan only counts on its own resources. Besides that, who is in a position to define what is too much and what is too little? Furthermore this issue should not be viewed out of the context of the situation in the region. Here too concerns cannot be limited to one party only. We have serious grounds for concerns, for the instance, caused by the regular large-scale military exercises held in Armenia, including the recent ones.

Mr. Chairman,

The escalation of situation at the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan and at the Line of Contact does not positively affect the peace process, but rather aggravates it. In this regard we call upon the Armenian side engage constructively into the peace talks.

Thank you.