

JOSEPH R. PITTS
16TH DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND
COOPERATION IN EUROPE

CONGRESSIONAL—EXECUTIVE
COMMISSION ON CHINA

ASSISTANT REPUBLICAN WHIP

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3816

April 18, 2005

GABE NEVILLE—WASHINGTON CHIEF OF STAFF
TOM TILLET—DISTRICT CHIEF OF STAFF

221 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-2411

LANCASTER Co. COURTHOUSE
50 NORTH DUKE STREET
LANCASTER, PA 17602
(717) 393-0667

POST OFFICE BOX 837
UNIONVILLE, PA 19375
(610) 429-1540

Web Page: www.house.gov/pitts

H. E. Ilham Aliyev
President, Republic of Azerbaijan
19, Istiglaliyat St.
Baku, AZ 1066, Azerbaijan

VIA FACSIMILE: 99 412 492 35 43
99 412 492 06 25

Dear President Aliyev,

We have been impressed by the recent announcement that the Azerbaijani Parliament has approved the establishment of seven new embassies to be opened in Moldova, Jordan, Argentina, Qatar, Spain, the Czech Republic and Sweden. We were surprised, however, that the list did not include an embassy in Israel.

As you may know, the fact that Azerbaijan has for many years had an Israeli embassy has made a favorable impression on all of us in the Congress. Moreover, that Azerbaijan has long been known as a nation with a small but flourishing Jewish community and a lack of anti-Semitism going back to its time as a republic of the former Soviet Union has been an element in our respect for what Azerbaijan stands for.

We are concerned with the lack of any progress on your government's commitment to open an embassy in Israel as was publicly promised by then-Foreign Minister Guliyev on behalf of your father, former President Heydar Aliyev, on October 21, 2001.

We were pleased that your deputy foreign minister visited Israel on 28 March for a two day visit. We hope that this will soon lead to a visit by Foreign Minister Mamedyarov.

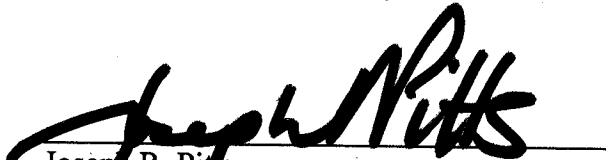
The course of ever strengthening the bonds of friendship between Azerbaijan and the United States, and with Israel, remains a high priority for all of us. We appreciate the support your government has freely given the United States on issues ranging from the war on terrorism to support for the Middle East's only democracy, Israel.


We are sensitive to the situation your country faces, particularly the hostility of Iran towards both the United States and Israel. Nevertheless, as a strong and independent state with a firm commitment to aligning itself with the West and with the United States, we believe that

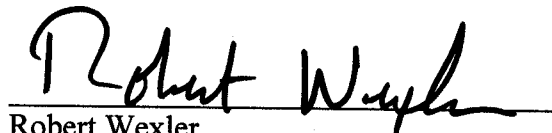
Azerbaijan will direct its foreign relations in a manner that demonstrates your independence and dedication to creating a vigorous and multicultural society.


As Israel embarks on a path to withdraw from Gaza and parts of the West Bank, and with dramatic events in Syria, Lebanon and other states in the region, the establishment of an embassy in the Jewish State would be a dramatic symbol of the path Azerbaijan has taken to play an important and progressive role in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.


Joseph R. Pitts
Member of Congress
Co-Chair, Congressional Silk Road Caucus


Gary L. Ackerman
Member of Congress
Co-Chair, Congressional Silk Road Caucus


Robert Wexler
Member of Congress


Tom Lantos
Member of Congress