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## Sassounian's column of June 8, 2023: Advice to Aliyev



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Even though Azerbaijan, with the help of Turkish and Israeli weapons and hired Islamic terrorists, won the 2020 Artsakh War, Pres. Aliyev has been destroying his country's international reputation.

With his barbaric actions during and since the war, Aliyev has undermined the interests of Azerbaijan. As a result, he has made himself a hated pariah and the laughing stock of the entire world. While Russia is cuddling him for its own political interests, the West is tolerating him to benefit from Azerbaijan's oil and gas.

I am very pleased that Aliyev is doing so many negative things in the eyes of not

only Armenians, but also the entire world.

There are many examples of Aliyev's misdeeds. Here are some of them:

During the 2020 war, Azeri soldiers committed barbaric acts that violate the international law, such as: beheading captured Armenian soldiers and civilians, mutilating their bodies, torturing them, trying the captives in court and sentencing them to lengthy jail terms.

In violation of international conventions, Azerbaijan used banned cluster and phosphorous bombs to kill Armenian soldiers during the 2020 war.

Azerbaijan systematically destroyed and defaced hundreds of Armenian cultural monuments and desecrated dozens of Armenian churches in Artsakh in violation of the Hague Convention on "the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict."

Azerbaijan continues to violate the ceasefire agreement signed by Pashinyan, Aliyev and Putin at the end of the 2020 war. Here are some examples: Not releasing many of the Armenian Prisoners of War, shooting at civilians in Artsakh, occupying parts of the territory of the Republic of Armenia, taking new Armenian hostages, and threatening Armenia and Artsakh with further attacks if they do not comply with Azerbaijan's wishes.

Aliyev has dehumanized and demonized Armenians by describing them with vile adjectives, such as "leeches" and "wild animals." In 2005, during the visit of a German delegation, the Mayor of Baku, Hajibala Abutalybov, shamelessly told them: "Our goal is the complete elimination of Armenians. You, Nazis, already eliminated the Jews in the 1930s and 1940s, right? You should be able to understand us."

Aliyev dispatched dozens of fake eco-activists to block the Lachin Corridor during the last six months, depriving 120,000 Artsakhtsis of food and medicines. These so-called eco-activists were more like eco-terrorists. Azerbaijan then placed a checkpoint at the Lachin Corridor further violating the 2020 agreement.

In addition, Azerbaijan periodically cuts off the Internet and electricity of the Artsakh population, keeping them isolated, in the dark and without heat in freezing temperatures.

Instead of a simple transit road, Azerbaijan repeatedly demands a corridor to cross from eastern Azerbaijan to Nakhichevan, which implies Azeri sovereignty over Armenia's territory, in violation of 2020 agreement. By insisting on the Corridor, Aliyev is actually delaying Azerbaijan's access to Nakhichevan through Armenia.

Aliyev declares that all of the territory of the Republic of Armenia is 'Western Azerbaijan.' This is sheer nonsense. Whereas Artsakh and Armenia are thousands of years old, Azerbaijan did not exist until a century ago.

Aliyev made the ridiculous pledge that Artsakhtsis will live under Azerbaijani rule just like all of its other citizens who are also repressed. Artsakhtsis remember well their barbaric mistreatment by Azerbaijan. Blockading them now shows how much worse they will be treated in the future.

Aliyev repeatedly urges Armenia to sign a peace treaty with Azerbaijan. Any treaty signed by Azerbaijan is a meaningless piece of paper as we see from Aliyev's violations of the 2020 agreement.

To make matters worse, State Dept. spokesman Matthew Miller welcomed Aliyev's outrageous statement that he will give amnesty to all Artsakh officials who resign. Instead, Miller should have condemned Aliyev's unacceptable threats to invade Armenia and Artsakh.

Aliyev dismissed the demands of scores of world leaders and international organizations as well as the UN Security Council, the World Court and European Court of Human Rights to release the Armenian POWs and unblock the Lachin Corridor.

After the 2020 war, Azerbaijan established a racist Military Trophies Park in Baku, displaying wax models of Armenian soldiers with hooked noses and distorted faces. After complaints and condemnations by the international community, the exhibit was closed down.

In February 2004, an Azeri soldier, Ramil Safarov, used an axe to chop the head of a sleeping Armenian soldier in Hungary during a NATO program. In return for Azerbaijan loaning Hungary several billion dollars, Safarov was released prematurely with the understanding that he will serve the rest of his life sentence in a Baku jail. However, Aliyev welcomed Safarov as a national hero, pardoned

him, promoted him to the rank of major, and gave him a free apartment and eight years of back pay. This is Azerbaijan's compensation to Safarov for committing a cold blooded murder.

As a result of all these war crimes, Aliyev has destroyed his and Azerbaijan's reputation around the world. He should be arrested and tried by the International Criminal Court as a war criminal.

Despite Aliyev's reprehensible actions, world powers keep closing their eyes ignoring his many crimes, blinded by Azerbaijan's oil and gas.