

Azerbaijan: Mafia State

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A 2009 [U.S. embassy political dispatch](#) compared Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev to a mafia crime boss. An apt comparison given that Aliyev and the Azeri political elite have been living under the protection of the [Capo Crimini](#) – Israel . The protection does not come cheap; and the manufacture of the recent lie — the arrest of [22 Azerbaijani citizens](#) allegedly “trained in Iran ” to carry out terrorist acts against the U.S. and Israel , is the latest protection payment.

Capo Crimini’s protection is noteworthy. Aliyev, a corrupt dictator who came to power through election fraud in 2003, managed to make his rounds in Washington in 2006, including a private meeting with President Bush, thanks to the full weight of the Israeli lobby in Washington . The promotion of the Azeri cause in Washington by the Israeli lobby (which included lobbying against Armenians), reinforced the notion that “the way to Washington leads through Jerusalem ”¹ while benefitting various players – to the detriment of some others.

Although much of Israel ’s oil comes from Azerbaijan , Israel was more interested in the control of the oil. With this in mind, despite the fact that oil companies in the Caspian region favored the much shorter and cheaper oil pipeline that would transit Iran, Israel relentlessly pushed for the alternate, more expensive and impractical Baku-Tblisi-Cehan pipeline which pipeline had over 1000 miles of it going through mountainous territory bypassing Russia and Armenia. This expensive venture also served to send the message to Turkey that alliance with Israel pays off.

Lord Browne, former chief executive of BP, was quoted as saying that the whole scheme was launched in the interest of Israel.² [Brenda Shaffer](#) who was instrumental in promoting the pipeline, put it this way: “There’s growing demand in Asia . If Israel is clever about it, it could market this not only commercially but also politically in a way that could improve regional security and stability.” (*JTA, NY , Oct 21, 2005*). Shaffer is also of the opinion that Caspian oil (specifically non-OPEC members Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan) makes Saudi Arabia and the OPEC cartel nervous because they do not coordinate their policies with the cartel.

These plans were made possible thanks to the aftermath of September 11. 9/11 changed everything – as a leading Azeri foreign policy specialist opined: “But the situation changed after Sept. 11, with American presence in Central Asia, Georgia and Azerbaijan ,” he explains. “Our being under the shadow of America means Russia and Iran will not meddle. We are able to be more courageous.” (*Greene, Richard Allen. Jewish Telegraphic Agency. New York :Apr 29, 2002. p. 4*)

More courageous, perhaps but the newfound courage lacks rationale and the needs of the people of Azerbaijan have been neglected. Asim Mollazadeh, first Chairperson of the Party for Democratic Reforms prominent Azeri opposition candidate, states that Azerbaijan receives only 10 percent of oil royalties. He argues that with 42 percent of the country living below poverty lines, the oil income does not trickle down.³ A heavy price to pay for Washington to feign welcome to the Azeri dictator.

In 2002, JTA reported that Israel 's ambassador to Azerbaijan had a favorite local joke: "Are you Jewish? No, I just look intelligent." (JTA Apr 29, 2002). Insulting as the joke may be, inarguably, actions which alienate the Russians, compete with Saudis, and magically pull "22 Iran-linked terrorists" out of a hat do not 'look intelligent'.

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Notes

1 Netty C. Gross; "The Azeri Triangle", *The Jerusalem Post*, July 10, 2006, p. 24

2 Cited by Andrew I. Killgore, "Ideology Trumps Economic Efficiency, as The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline Opens", *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, Aug 2005, Vol. 24, iss. 6, p.32

3 Netty C. Gross; "The Azeri Triangle"

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