

## The “Abrahamic Accords” in the context of Israel–Azerbaijan–Turkey relations ARVAK Center comment, 17.03.2025<sup>1</sup>

Since February 2025 Israel has actively begun the process of including Azerbaijan into the list of countries of the so-called “*Abrahamic Accords*”.

The “*Abrahamic Accords*” represent a series of agreements aimed to normalize relations between Israel and Arab states, initially signed in 2020-21. The term “*Abrahamic Accords*” refers to the forefather Abraham, a figure who is held in high regard in the religious traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The list of the countries that have signed this agreement with Tel Aviv is not yet extensive. It includes the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, Egypt and Sudan. However, the latter has formally “normalized” its relations with Israel, yet diplomatic contacts have not even been established between the two countries on a permanent basis<sup>2</sup>. It is possible that by the present year the number of countries included in the “*Abrahamic Accords*” would have been significantly higher had it not been for the recent escalation in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the events in Gaza. Countries such as Jordan and Saudi Arabia after the start of the Israeli operation “*Iron Swords*” in the fall of 2023, have refused to take part in Tel Aviv’s recent initiative, and neither the efforts of the Donald Trump administration (during the first term) nor Joe Biden, which provided full support for the new Israeli doctrine, were able to change their position.

It is noteworthy that the initial goal of the “*Abrahamic Accords*” was to promote rapprochement between Israel and the Arab world, with the reference to the name of Abraham being presented less in the context of the religious aspect of the closeness of Jews and Arabs and more in the context of genetic kinship. In this context, the involvement of Azerbaijan, which has established its Turkic identity as a fundamental aspect of its statehood, in the political project of the community of peoples and countries related to Jews, is a subject of particular interest. Perhaps it is precisely to eliminate such dissonance that pseudoscientific materials have recently begun to be disseminated intensively on Israeli propaganda platforms, claiming that the ethnic identity of Azerbaijanis is historically closely connected with the Khazar civilizational and ethnocultural code. These materials, which have gained significant traction, align with the strategic objectives of the Israeli authorities, who are seeking to expand the potential geopolitical scope of the “*Abrahamic Accords*” beyond the confines of the “*genetically and civilizationally related*” Arab world. In this light, the “Azerbaijani case” of the new Israeli project is of particular interest, as it is obvious that the already exceptional relationship between Tel Aviv and Baku, as perceived by Israel, has not exhausted its full potential.

For Israel, the value of a multi-level partnership with this South Caucasus country is motivated by a number of factors, primarily due to the Iranian issue, energy imports and exports of Israel’s military-industrial production. However, it should be assumed that

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<sup>1</sup> The original (in Rus.) was posted on our website on 15.03.2025.

<sup>2</sup> “Abraham Accords Summit in Israel: What They Will Talk About”. *Коммерсант*, 28.03.2025, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/5281216/> (download date: 10.03.2025).

recently the Azerbaijani direction of Israeli foreign policy has also acquired particular significance in connection with the growing aggravation in Turkish-Israeli relations, which was reflected in the desire to strengthen the ties with Baku and consolidate the essentially allied bilateral relations in the special framework of the “*Abrahamic Accords*”.

One way or another, a thorough examination of a number of significant events coinciding in and around Israel concurrently gives grounds to conclude that Tel Aviv is looking for opportunities to weaken, through its influence on Baku, Turkey’s regional positions, which have sharply strengthened following the shift in the Damascus regime.

Immediately after the publication of the Israeli government’s so-called “*Nagel Committee*” in early January, 2025 report the prime minister of the Jewish state Benjamin Netanyahu made a rather unexpected statement that Israel’s security policy had shifted its focus to containing Turkey<sup>3</sup>. From that moment on, Tel Aviv launched active anti-Turkish undertakings in a number of areas, the specifics of which have been detailed by the ARVAK Center in its previous publications<sup>4</sup>. Taking into account the scale of the campaign launched by Israel, fully supported by the newly elected U.S. president D. Trump, it was foreseeable that the “Azerbaijani case” of Israeli policy could be used to undermine the strategic interaction between Ankara and Baku.

Thus, on February 19, 2025, a meeting took place in Jerusalem between the Israeli prime minister B. Netanyahu and the representative of the president of Azerbaijan I. Aliyev, Hikmet Hajiyev. Following this meeting, the Israeli press spread the news indicating that Azerbaijan would soon become part of a “*regional alliance*” known as the “*Abraham Accords*”<sup>5</sup>. This news was published in the Azerbaijani media, but passed over in silence by the official Baku, which tried to show Ankara that the significance of the agreements with Tel Aviv should not be overestimated. Probably, these same motives were responsible for the fact that a fairly low-ranking official, I. Aliyev’s assistant on foreign policy issues H. Hajiyev went on a business trip to Israel for negotiations with Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Further, after discussion by Israeli experts and observers, the topic of Azerbaijan’s inclusion into the “*Accords*” was already touched upon by the representatives of the Israeli cabinet. In particular, on March 05, 2025, the Israeli minister of settlement affairs Orit Struk stated that it is imperative for the Jewish state to make Azerbaijan part of “*Abrahamic Accords*” and that for this, the support of the United States is important, which must repeal Section 907 of the “*U.S. Freedom Support Act*” in relations with Baku<sup>6</sup>.

In order to convince Washington of the necessity to establish close cooperation between the United States and Israel in spreading the “*Abrahamic Accords*” initiative to the Turkic

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<sup>3</sup> Igor Subbotin, “Israel is calculating a war with Turkey”. Независимая Газета, 08.01.2025, [https://www.ng.ru/world/2025-01-08/1\\_9166\\_israel.html/](https://www.ng.ru/world/2025-01-08/1_9166_israel.html/) (download date: 10.03.2025).

<sup>4</sup> Turkish-Israeli confrontation in the context of the NATO strategy. ARVAK Analytical Center, 13.01.2025, <https://arvak.am/en/turkish-israeli-confrontation-and-nato-strategy/> (download date: 10.03.2025).

<sup>5</sup> “Azerbaijan has approached the level of the Abraham Accords”. Israel News CHANNEL 7, 20.02.2025, <https://www.7kanal.co.il/news/272394/> (download date: 10.03.2025).

<sup>6</sup> “Forbes writes what needs to be done before Azerbaijan’s possible accession to the Abraham Accords”. Вести, 08.03.2025, <https://www.vesty.co.il/main/article/zooa0n5qr> (download date: 03/10/2025).

states Israel, in line with its official structures, as was expected, also attracted the Jewish lobby. On March 9, 2025 it became known that over 50 U.S. rabbis had appealed to D. Trump about “*expanding the Abraham Accords to include the Turkic states (primarily Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan)*”<sup>7</sup>. Thus, for the first time, the Central Asian Turkic republics were included in the list of potential partners of Israel in the “*Abrahamic Accords*” format which may also indicate an attempt by Tel Aviv, if not to intercept Turkey’s initiative for full-scale expansion into Central Asia in the future, then at least to create a counterbalance to Turkish integration programs within the framework of “*Organizations of Turkic States*” (OTG), a key element in the pan-Turkic and pan-Turanist policies of Ankara. However, in the growing struggle between Israel and Turkey, it is Azerbaijan that is the key geostrategic resource, the possession of which determines the dominance of forces in the region.

It is extremely important for Tel Aviv to increase its influence over Baku both in terms of its anti-Iranian doctrine and with an eye to containing Turkish expansionism towards the Caucasus and Central Asia with their rich natural and demographic resources. In this regard the “*Abrahamic Accords*” are instrumental in deepening the long-standing policy of “tying” Azerbaijan to Israel through the transfer of military-industrial technologies to Baku, its militarization and close financial and economic interaction. It is no coincidence that Tel Aviv, in its discourse on Azerbaijan’s involvement in the “*Abrahamic Accords*”, first of all, mentions the possibility of the U.S. Senate’s removal of Section 907, which would remove legal barriers for Baku to access a wide range of American weaponry.

In parallel with the ongoing negotiations between Tel Aviv and Baku concerning the “*Abrahamic Accords*”, Israel and Azerbaijan have reached an unprecedented deal in their economic cooperation. At the end of January 2025, the Azerbaijani state oil and gas company SOCAR acquired a 10% stake in the international consortium responsible for developing the Israeli “*Tamar*” gas field, which was discovered in 2009 on the Mediterranean shelf<sup>8</sup>. This is also the first deal for SOCAR to participate in the exploration and development of hydrocarbon deposits located outside the territory of Azerbaijan.

There is an opinion that Azerbaijan’s involvement in the consortium was primarily driven by political considerations rather than economic factors. American, British and European transnational companies are engaged in competitive bid for participation in the development of Israeli gas, as well as all other gas fields within the Eastern Mediterranean shelf. However, Tel Aviv also chose to involve SOCAR, which is not the most technologically developed and influential player in the global oil and gas market. Consequently, we can talk about an additional tool for “tying” Azerbaijan to Israel as a counterbalance to Turkish influence in Baku. In this regard, it is noteworthy that Turkey declared a boycott of all actions of the international consortia in offshore fields in the Levant Sea, which, together with the countries that own gas deposits (Egypt, Israel, the Republic of Cyprus, and

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<sup>7</sup> “American rabbis turn to Trump over Azerbaijan”. Haggin.az, 09.03.2025, <https://haqqin.az/news/342245/> (download date: 11.03.2025).

<sup>8</sup> «SOCAR acquired a stake in the Israeli Tamar field”. BLACKSEA CASPIA, 31.01.2025, <https://blacksea-caspia.eu/ru/socar-priobrela-dolyu-v-izrailskom-mestorozhdenii-tamar/> (download date: 11.03.2025).

Lebanon). Turkey allegedly did not take into account the interests and rights of the so-called “*Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus*” for its share of the deposits. It is significant that the Israeli “*Tamar*” field is located on the border of Israeli territorial waters with Cyprus, and it is this zone that is disputed by Ankara in the context of the “rights” of the separatist regime of Northern Cyprus to the deposits of the Eastern Mediterranean hydrocarbons. It should be assumed that Israel’s actions to attract Azerbaijan to the development of this particular field are dictated by the strategic intent to create a potential knot of contradictions between Ankara and Baku, which would be extremely beneficial for Tel Aviv in the broader strategic confrontation with Turkey.

A number of experts believe that Ankara is unable to interfere with the deepening of Azerbaijani-Israeli economic relations due to its own energy dependence on *SOCAR* and desire to “*maintain normal relations with Baku*”<sup>9</sup>. This is a fairly convincing argument, given the fact that Turkey, which is formally the leading element in relations with Azerbaijan, is in fact unable to afford a tougher position regarding the strengthening Azerbaijani-Israeli ties.

In the contemporary geopolitical situation in the region and the world, the Azerbaijani leader I. Aliyev is claiming more space for maneuver, hoping, in the event of weakening relations with Ankara, to find support in both Moscow and Tel Aviv. Faced with a number of internal (deepening economic stagnation, internal political crisis) and external (Syrian problem) challenges, Turkey can hardly afford radical steps towards Azerbaijan, without whose support Ankara’s successes in a number of strategic foreign policy areas will be devalued. Perhaps, therefore, the closed part of the negotiations between I. Aliyev, who arrived in Ankara on March 5, 2025, and Turkish president R. Erdogan should be considered an attempt by the parties to reach a mutual understanding in light of the deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations on the one hand and the strengthening of Azerbaijani-Israeli ties on the other.

It should be assumed that beyond the formal aspect of the visit related to the opening of the Iğdir—Nakhijevan gas pipeline<sup>10</sup>, the presidents of the two countries discussed mainly the issues of involving Baku in a consortium for the development of Israeli gas, providing the Jewish state with Azerbaijani oil through Turkey and the future of Azerbaijan in the “*Abrahamic Accords*” initiative format. It was imperative for Ilham Aliyev to convince his Turkish colleague that the new trends would not contradict the Turkish-Azerbaijani alliance and would not affect Turkey’s vital interests. Ankara realizes that Baku’s positive response and actions regarding Israeli initiatives are not due to I. Aliyev’s arbitrary decision, but to forced necessity caused by Israel’s significant influence on the political, military and economic spheres of Azerbaijan.

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<sup>9</sup> “Azerbaijan will take part in gas exploration on the Israeli shelf for the first time.” *Magnis.news*, 08.03.2025, <https://magnis.news/rus/news/399870/> (download date: 11.03.2025).

<sup>10</sup> “Erdogan spoke about his meeting with President Ilham Aliyev.” *Report. az*, 10.03.2025, <https://report.az/ru/vneshnyaya-politika/erdogan-rasskazal-o-vstreche-s-prezidentom-ilhamom-alievym/> (access date: 11.03.2025).

I. Aliyev cannot afford to ignore Israeli interests, taking into account the important fact that an impressive part of his family's financial assets is invested in Israeli banks and the economy<sup>11</sup>. As a pragmatic politician, Recep Tayyip Erdogan cannot ignore all these factors before demanding “*little brother's*” unquestioning loyalty in the context of Turkish-Israeli contradictions. Ankara is unable to stop a new milestone in the Azerbaijani-Israeli rapprochement within the framework of the “*Abrahamic Accords*”. The only question is determining the extent to which Ankara can condone the deepening of this process without compromising its national interests, a point that will inevitably reach a point of no return.

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<sup>11</sup> “The family of the President of Azerbaijan invested \$600 million in the Israeli economy.” EADaily, 31.07.2017, <https://easily.com/ru/news/2017/07/31/semya-prezidenta-azerbaydzhana-investirovala-v-ekonomiku-izrailya-600-mln/> (download date: 11.03.2025).