



## Promoting a Lasting Partnership Between Azerbaijan and America

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel Hosted Azerbaijan's Defense Minister Safar Abiyev at Pentagon**

*Azerbaijan is the key transit and partner country for the NATO-led operations in Afghanistan*

**Washington, D.C. – August 9th, 2013** -- This week Safar Abiyev, Azerbaijan's Defense Minister, visited United States of America and met with Chuck Hagel, U.S. Secretary of Defense at Pentagon.

American Forces Press Service informed that U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel thanked his counterpart for Azerbaijan's support and efforts in Afghanistan, including the sustained deployment of Azerbaijani forces with the International Security Assistance Force.

In a statement summarizing the meeting, Pentagon Press Secretary George Little said that Hagel also thanked Abiyev for valuable role Azerbaijan plays in providing ground, air and sea transit access for logistical support to Afghanistan.

"Secretary Hagel recognizes Azerbaijan's role in fostering regional security and stability," Little said, "and he looks forward to continuing the strategic partnership."

Pentagon officials said the Defense Department partners with Azerbaijan, as well as with other South Caucasus nations, to strengthen Azerbaijan's security development and better enable it to contribute to security and stability in the broader region. U.S. support to development of Azerbaijani defense and security institutions includes training and advising in civil-military relations, professional military education, and emergency management, they added.

Last month, Evelyn Farkas, deputy assistant secretary of defense for Russia, Ukraine and Eurasia, led bilateral defense consultations with Defense Ministry officials in the Azerbaijani capital of Baku.

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