

## Consul General of Azerbaijan Spoke at Utah Valley University



### *Consul General of Azerbaijan to Los Angeles, Mr. Nasimi Aghayev during presentation*

Consul General of Azerbaijan to Los Angeles, Mr. Nasimi Aghayev made an excellent presentation about Azerbaijan and religious situation in his country at Utah Valley University (UVU) on Monday, October 8, 2018. Mr. Aghayev currently is a Dean of Consular Corps in Los Angeles. He has an impressive professional background. Azerbaijan's President appointed him as Consul General of Azerbaijan to Los Angeles. Joining Azerbaijan's diplomatic service in 1999, the Consul General served at his country's Embassies in Vienna (2000-03), Berlin (2005-08), and Washington, D.C. (2010-12) as well as in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Baku. At Azerbaijan's Embassy in Washington, D.C., the Consul General served as Counselor for Political and Public Affairs. In 2009, the Consul General was a Visiting Scholar at the Canadian Munk School of Global Affairs (University of Toronto). In 2001-03, he taught the Azerbaijani language at the University of Vienna in Austria. The Consul General holds Master of European Law (LL.M) degree from the Europa-Institute of the Saarland University, Germany, and Bachelor of Arts and

Master of Arts degrees in International Relations from the Baku State University, Azerbaijan. He was also trained at the Vienna Diplomatic Academy in Austria. His book “Humanitäre Intervention und Völkerrecht: der NATO-Einsatz in Kosovo” (Humanitarian Intervention and International Law: NATO operation in Kosovo) was published in German in Berlin in 2007.

At the beginning of his presentation, he mentioned that geography is critical for his country. Neighboring with other countries plays a crucial role for Azerbaijan. He talked about the border with Turkey and Iran. He stated that “It's the only country in the world bordering Russia and Iran. He proudly said: “We have the Caspian Sea, the largest lake in the world.” It looks like the Republic of Azerbaijan has access to the sea, but at the same time Consul General stated that Azerbaijan is a “landlocked” nation. For example, to get to the oceans the officials and people would have to go through Russia or Georgia via the Black Sea. It creates interesting political situations, but as I understood from the presentation of the VIP-guest, Azerbaijan has succeeded in facing these challenges.

Mr. Aghayev mentioned that this was the second independent republic, when it was established in 1991. The first republic was established in 1918 after the October Revolution took place in Russia. At that time, as Consul General emphasized, the Azerbaijani people had a chance to create a republic, the first secular democracy in the world in 1918. They enacted very progressive reforms. The one reform that the country is especially proud of when it took place in 1919 that gave women the right to vote, a year before it happened in the United States. But in 1920, unfortunately, the first republic was invaded by Bolsheviks, and the Red Army from the north marched in. At that time, their country was forcefully incorporated into the Soviet Union. That situation remained for 71 years until Azerbaijani people were able to restore their freedom. During that time, all religions were oppressed, including Islam, Christianity, Judaism - mosques were closed. One beautiful cathedral in Baku downtown was destroyed. It's amazing to think how the capital of Azerbaijan would be much more beautiful with that. But Stalin ordered it to be destroyed. The clergy was arrested or killed. That's why the lack of freedom of religion was a very dominant factor in the Soviet Union.

This was very interesting and inspirational lecture of the distinguished guest from Republic of Azerbaijan. I both enjoyed it very much and learned so much new interesting information about this country located near the Caspian Sea.

*Cory Levin, UVU Student*

