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PRESS RELEASE

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Azerbaijan Assumes Responsibility for Weapons of Mass Destruction- Proliferation Prevention Program

The United States Department of Defense and Azerbaijan's State Border Service joined together in Turkan settlement of Baku city on June 29, 2011 to celebrate the completion of Weapons of Mass Destruction-Proliferation Prevention Program under the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, a joint effort between Azerbaijan and the United States to monitor, detect, deter, and interdict smuggled nuclear and radiological materials in the Azerbaijan sector of the Caspian Sea.

U.S. Ambassador Matthew Bryza, who participated at the event, praised the partnership, stating, "What we have achieved together through this program is truly remarkable. Azerbaijan and the United States have demonstrated their mutual commitment to nuclear nonproliferation and promoting security in an insecure world."

Under this unique program, the United States provides technical expertise and training, while the Azerbaijanis conduct the actual missions at sea. This program has been implemented in Azerbaijan since 2004. Department of Defense officials traveled to Azerbaijan to transition this program completely to the State Border Service.

Joined by officials from the State Border Service, the US delegation was led by the Associate Director of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency of the Defense Department, Ronnie Faircloth. Addressing attendees, Faircloth noted that, "The United States does not face the challenges of the world alone. I am proud to be here with our Azerbaijani partners to demonstrate our joint commitment to the prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction proliferation in this region and around the world. Azerbaijan has been our steadfast partner, and I look forward to future cooperation between the United States and Azerbaijan."

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