MILLIONS SPENT TO BURNISH AZERBAIJAN'S IMAGE

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To cover-up his crimes against his own people, the maltreatment of minorities, the occupation of Armenian territory through naked aggression, the killing of Armenians, and the forced deportation of Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians, Azeri dictator Ilham Aliyev has spent, in the past decade, billions of dollars in PR projects.

To achieve the above goals, Aliyev--the five-time president of Azerbaijan—has over the years hired the following high-powered American PR and lobbying groups: Podesta Group; BGR Government Affairs; The Tool Shed Group; Taneo Strategy, and The Friedlander Group.

Per the advice of the above, Aliyev's petrodollar state has launched costly international campaigns to shape the global image of the violent and fascist regime by portraying it as a modern, dynamic, influential, and democratic state. All the while demonizing neighboring Armenia which has been battered by naked Azeri aggression. The image enhancement has involved various strategies—sports, cultural, economic, and diplomatic.

In the sports arena, Baku hosted European Games, Formula 1 Grand Prix, world championship wrestling and judo matches. In the diplomatic arena Aliyev has hosted the Non-Aligned Movement gathering, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development, 2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29). Azerbaijan's cultural PR has included a jazz festival, the exhibition of traditional carpet weaving.

To lubricate its various image-enhancing campaigns, Baku has organized non-stop junkets for journalists. One such project witnessed the hosting of 300 journalists from all over the world. The campaigns and other involving foreign diplomats have been mockingly dubbed Caviar Diplomacy.

Despite the billions of dollars the Azeri dictator has spent, honest and courageous journalists continue to expose Azerbaijan's multiple crimes against the Azeri people, ethnic minorities, and Armenians. On Dec.20 of last year, Britain's *The Gardener* published a scathing article about the many crimes of the Azeri dictatorship. Meanwhile, the U.S. State Department urged Baku to release political prisoners and stop the crackdown on civil society, and human rights groups.

Per the advice of the above-mentioned PR firms, Azerbaijan has recruited overseas Azeri and Turkish communities to promote the Aliyev regime and to demonize Armenians.

Comments



jirair – 2026-03-31 08:33:03
When the Aliyev dictatorship spends countless millions to sponsor vrrroom, vrrroom car races, wrestling matches, fashion shows, travel junkets, and perhaps an international hygiene conference on how to safely clean your ear, it is repeating a well-trodden path--perhaps tutored by Israel. Get together two Israelis and you will see four flags of Israel. No matter how insignificant an international gathering, Israelis participate flashing numerous copies of their flag which symbolizes Zionism's dream of creating Greater Israel stretching from the Nile to the Euphrates (the two blue bands). Bottom line, these Azeri-sponsored gatherings are platforms where the Azeri dictatorship declares that it exists, it belongs, and it's a progressive member of the international community. But Aliyev is missing the boat. a good PR company would have advised him to change the Azeri flag to depict hundreds of hearts or a kissing couple with an oil derrick in the background.



Nurnisa Erismis – 2026-03-30 16:07:21

This editorial does not merely address a foreign policy issue; it invites us to question how a regime narrates itself to the world. Sometimes, to understand what a regime does, it is not enough to look at what it says; one must examine how it presents itself to the world. It is precisely within that narrative that the traces of what is being concealed can be found. While reading this piece, I was reminded of a recent investigation by The Guardian. The fact that British peers accepted trips funded by Azerbaijan may appear, at first glance, as routine diplomatic engagement. However, upon closer examination, these visits reveal themselves not merely as benign encounters, but as part of a broader strategy through which a regime produces international legitimacy. This is not classical propaganda; it is subtler, more indirect, and therefore more effective as a political technology. From this perspective, the central claim of the article becomes clearer: the Azerbaijani regime has constructed a multilayered mechanism that deepens repression at home while polishing its image abroad. From sports events to cultural showcases, from diplomatic summits to journalist tours, this wide field is not simply about promotion; it is about normalization. The issue is not how the world sees Azerbaijan, but how it is guided to see it. At the same time, there is an internal dimension to this strategy that is often less visible. Based on personal observation, it can be argued that under Ilham Aliyev, the economic and political pressures experienced by Azerbaijani society are frequently managed through the construction of a strong enemy narrative. In this context, anti-Armenian sentiment functions not only as a historical tension, but also as a tool to redirect social discontent and consolidate political power. In other words, just as image management operates externally, the production of enmity operates internally as a political instrument. Thus, propaganda is not only outward-facing. It operates as a dual mechanism that simultaneously disciplines society at home and produces an acceptable image abroad. At the same time, an important distinction must be made. The account presented by The Guardian proceeds through concrete actors, relationships, and documented examples. The Keghart editorial, in turn, extends this picture into a broader political conclusion through generalization. These two approaches do not contradict one another; they complement each other. Yet the difference matters: one reveals the mechanism, the other constructs its meaning. Perhaps the more fundamental question is this: if a regime must spend billions on its image, is this truly a sign of strength, or rather an indication of a deeper legitimacy crisis? The Azerbaijani case reminds us that contemporary authoritarianism operates not only through repression, but also through staging, visibility, and the production of international acceptance. Yet no image campaign, no diplomatic showcase, and no costly event can permanently replace suppressed realities. In the end, the logic is simple: One can reshape the narrative without changing reality. But no matter how polished the narrative becomes, reality eventually asserts itself.



David Boyajian – 2025-02-20 10:01:57

Is there a comparable public relations effort by Armenia to boost itself and counter Azeri lies? I don't think so, and this has been a problem since independence in 1991.