

HEYDAR ALIYEV AND MUHAMMAD ALI JINNAH - TWO GREAT LEADERS

Tahir Farooq

Editor-in-chief of newspaper “Dayly Ittehad” - **Pakistan**

It gives me immense pleasure to talk about two remarkable leaders who have left a significant mark on the history of their nations and continue to inspire generations with their visionary leadership and unwavering commitment to their people. These two leaders are Heydar Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Muhammad Ali Jinnah known as Quaid e Azam of Pakistan. Both Heydar Aliyev and Muhammad Ali Jinnah played instrumental roles in the political landscapes of their respective countries, leading them through challenging times and carving out a path towards progress and prosperity.

Let us begin with Heydar Aliyev, a man whose leadership transformed Azerbaijan and shaped its future. Born on May 10, 1923, in Nakhchivan, Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev started his political career in the Soviet Union. He held various high-ranking positions, including being a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the First Secretary of the Azerbaijan Communist Party. However, it was during his presidency, from 1993 to 2003, that the late leader Hyder Aliyev truly made his mark.

When Aliyev assumed the presidency, Azerbaijan was facing significant challenges. The nation was grappling with political instability, economic hardships, and the ongoing Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with Armenia. Aliyev understood the urgency of the situation and embarked on a mission to restore stability, strengthen the economy, and protect Azerbaijan's territorial integrity.

Under the leadership of the great late leader, Azerbaijan witnessed remarkable progress. He implemented crucial reforms, attracting foreign investments, and focused on developing the country's energy sector. His efforts bore fruit, as Azerbaijan emerged as an emerging regional power and a major player in the global energy market. Aliyev's strategic diplomacy played a vital role in resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Through negotiations and international engagement, he secured a ceasefire agreement in 1994, although the issue remained unresolved.

Aliyev's vision extended beyond his presidency. Under Ilham Aliyev's leadership, Azerbaijan experienced remarkable growth, with infrastructure development, social reforms, and advancements in various sectors. In 2020, Azerbaijan achieved a significant victory in the Nagorno-Karabakh war, reclaiming territories that had been under Armenian occupation for decades. This success can be attributed to the strategic groundwork laid by Heydar Aliyev and the perseverance of the Azerbaijani people.

Now Moving on to Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founding father of Pakistan and a towering figure in the history of the Indian subcontinent. Born on December 25, 1876, in Karachi, British India, Jinnah's leadership was instrumental in the creation of Pakistan as an independent nation.

Jinnah was a prominent political figure who dedicated his life to the cause of Indian Muslims and fought tirelessly for their rights and representation. He believed in the idea of a separate homeland for Muslims, where they could exercise their rights and practice their faith freely. Jinnah's vision and steadfastness led to the formation of Pakistan on August 14, 1947.

As the first Governor-General of Pakistan, Jinnah faced immense challenges in laying the foundations of a new nation. Pakistan was born amidst communal violence, mass migrations, and the difficult task of nation-building. However, Jinnah's strong leadership and unwavering determination guided the nation through these turbulent times.

Jinnah's vision for Pakistan was that of a democratic, inclusive, and progressive nation. He envisioned a country where people of all religions and backgrounds could live in harmony and where justice and equality would prevail. He firmly believed in the principles of constitutionalism and the rule of law.

Jinnah's leadership legacy lies in his unwavering commitment to the ideals.

Heydar Aliyev had a close relationship and proximity with Pakistan. He visited Pakistan when Benazir Bhutto was the prime minister. I would like to mention here that I have a personal connection with this visit because my father, the late Mr. Sharif Farooq, was at the same banquet hosted in honor of Heydar Alivey. He always acknowledged Pakistan for accepting Azerbaijan as an independent country

when no other country was ready to do so. Mian Nawaz Sharif was the prime minister at that time and played a significant role in this.

Upon the issue of Nagorno Karabakh, Pakistan always supported Azerbaijan's stance, and Pakistani diplomats were directed not to keep any interaction with Armenian diplomats on international forums as well. Appreciating Pakistan's stance, the current President Ilham Aliyev on every forum supported Pakistan's stance on Kashmir.

A Pakistani senate delegation visited Azerbaijan and I was also part of it. President Ilham Aliyev categorically said when asked about Kashmir that Azerbaijan's policy is the same as that of Pakistan. There is a strong people-to-people connection between both countries and I am glad that there are 3 flags that are waived in Azerbaijan (Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Pakistan). This is because of the right execution of Heydar Aliyev's vision.

I would like to appreciate the diplomats of Azerbaijan in Pakistan, the outstanding diplomats are keeping close contact with friends of Azerbaijan. All the previous ambassadors have played a positive role in strengthening the ties. I would especially like to appreciate the efforts made by Dr. Eynallah Madatli, the longest-serving ambassador of Azerbaijan in Pakistan. He introduced Azerbaijan and its culture to the civil society of Pakistan. Credit goes to current Ambassador Khazar Farhadov showcased his ability of Public diplomacy to the best. He visited every corner of the country to introduce Azerbaijan and spread the message of President Ilham Aliyev. H.E. kept close tabs on all the families who had closed coordination with Azerbaijan. He visited my house along with his family for my son's wedding even though the weather was not friendly. This shows how he is taking forward the policy of Heydar Aliyev and Ilham Aliyev to keep close coordination with Pakistan and the Pakistani people.

At the end, I would like to thank the organizers of the conference for providing me the opportunity to speak at this August forum and to see my dear Azeri friends at least by Zoom.

LONG LIVE PAKISTAN AZERBAIJAN FRIENDSHIP!