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**RELEASE**  
**NEWS**

THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION / EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**Secretary Abraham Joins Presidents of Azerbaijan,  
Georgia and Turkey to Open the BTC Pipeline**

Baku-Tibilisi-Ceyan Pipeline Meets National Energy Policy Goal

September 18, 2002

Washington, DC -Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham joined the Presidents of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey to commemorate the groundbreaking for the Baku-Tiblisi. Ceyhan (BTC) Pipeline, a project in planning since 1997 that will provide for the export of crude oil from Azerbaijan, in the Caspian region, to Ceyhan, on the Turkish Mediterranean coast.

"This is an historic achievement for the people of Azerbaijan and for the worlds energy infrastructure," Secretary Abraham said. "President Bush's National Energy Policy calls for the United States to support the increase in energy production throughout the world, and the BTC pipeline is an excellent example of what international cooperation can accomplish to meet that goal."

"The Caspian Sea region contains 10 billion barrels of proven oil reserves, with probable reserves of more than 230 billion barrels. Exploration continues, however, and proven reserves are expected to rise dramatically. Current exports from the region are limited by export infrastructure options, but with the construction of the BTC pipeline could increase to more than one million barrels of oil per day by 2005.

Foreign investors and technology are critical to rapid development of new commercially viable export routes. Such development will ensure that rising Caspian oil production is effectively integrated into world oil trade. Specifically, U.S.-supported East- West pipeline routes, such as the BTC, will add substantial new oil transportation capacity to allow continued expansion of production and exports. The BTC pipeline, an overland route, will also help mitigate maritime risks in the crowded Bosphorus Straights.

The BTC pipeline project is under the management of an international consortium led by BP Oil and the State Oil Company of the Azerbaijani Republic (SOCAR) and, at its peak throughput level, is expected to transport 800,000 to I million barrels per day.

During the groundbreaking ceremony, Secretary Abraham read aloud a letter from President Bush congratulating Azerbaijan President Heydar Aliyev and the BTC partners on their success in the project and enhancement of international energy security.