



**THE EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN
TO THE KINGDOM OF BELGIUM
MISSIONS TO THE EUROPEAN UNION AND NATO**

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POLITICS

Cooperation for peace, security and development

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov visited Turkmenistan on 11-12 December at the invitation of President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov to take part in the events, dedicated to the 20th anniversary of Turkmenistan's neutrality.

Main events of the visit took place on 12 December.

President of our country visited the Neutral Turkmenistan square along with other heads of foreign states. He laid wreath to the Monument of neutrality, a symbol of neutrality of this country.

On 12 December 1995 the resolution of the UN General Assembly on recognizing Turkmenistan's permanent neutrality status.

In connection with the 20th anniversary of this date an international conference "Policy of neutrality: international cooperation for peace, security and development" took place in Ashgabat. President of the Republic of Uzbekistan spoke at the conference.

- First of all, I would like to sincerely congratulate President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov and all Turkmen nation with the national holiday- the 20th anniversary of proclamation of Turkmenistan's neutrality, Islam Karimov said.

International recognition of Turkmenistan's neutral status was the event, that has become one of the turning point in recent history to have determined, in large, the main stages of state construction and priorities of foreign policy of the country.

The resolution of the UN General Assembly "Permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan", adopted on 12 December 1995, is a unique document and exclusive in the history of community of nations. Turkmenistan is the only state, which officially included this decision of the UN into the Basic Law of the country, having constitutionally secured its neutral status.

I would like to highlight that historical, geographical, ethno-cultural features of Turkmenistan, and first of all, mentality of Turkmen people, to whom such values and traditions as peacefulness and openness, diligence, tolerance and good-neighborliness has been attributed since ancient times, President of Uzbekistan said.

The people of Uzbekistan, the closest neighbor of Turkmenistan, know and highly value these features of Turkmen people. Our relations have been tested throughout ages by time, when we have overcome together ordeals and difficulties, shared joy.

Islam Karimov stressed that we are united by common history, language, religion and traditions, as well as by our common goals.

This conference will provide an opportunity to understand Turkmenistan's past path in these years, to sum up, to assess the current development stage of the country.

I think there is no necessity to prove to anybody the continuing role of the neutrality status not only for the long-term interests of Turkmenistan's people, but also in strengthening peace and stability in the region as a whole, the head of our state said.

The decision to declare Turkmenistan a neutral state was taken in a period, when practically all post-soviet republics were in active search of optimal path of their further development- an own national model of building the future of their countries after the collapse of the USSR.

It should be noted, that each of the former soviet republics has chosen its own path of independent development taking into account the specifics and characteristic features.

For young independent Turkmenistan, neutrality has become a fundamental basis and a form of implementing long-term goals and tasks, where internal and external policy of the country found their harmonious manifestation.

Modern period of development of Turkmenistan as a state with permanent positive neutrality status is inextricably linked with the name of Gurnanguly Berdimuhamedov. Turkmen

neutrality has been filled with qualitatively new content since his commencement at the Presidential post, President of our country said.

Declaring Turkmenistan's openness to international community and readiness for wide international cooperation from the UN tribune, the nation's leader completely dispelled the perception of neutrality in the world as a step towards self-isolation, restriction of international contacts and partnerships. This was the starting point of a new foreign policy strategy of Turkmenistan.

For the past period President of Turkmenistan has come up with several constructive ideas and proposals on topical issues of maintaining international peace and security, cooperation in transport-communications spheres and energy sector, environmental protection, saving the Aral Sea, including the initiative to establish in Ashgabat the UN Regional Centre for preventive diplomacy in Central Asia.

The President of Uzbekistan noted that proposals of Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov on developing an agreement on transport in the Caspian sea, adopting UN Special interregional program on transport development, convening in Turkmenistan of a high-level regional symposium, devoted to practical implementation of the UN General Assembly resolution on transport corridors deserve special attention and support.

Possessing a solid transit and transport potential, Turkmenistan currently with other neighboring countries forms an extensive network infrastructure of multimodal type, including railways, road, naval and air transportation. Transport arteries of our countries are destined to become an integrated link of the single system, ensuring for all countries of the region effective access to ports of Iran, Persian Gulf and the Black Sea coast countries, further to markets of South-East Asia and the Middle East as well as North Africa.

Our meeting today takes place in a rapidly changing and ambiguous international situations, growing geopolitical tensions and confrontations, continuing global financial and economic crisis, volatility in global markets.

The growing scale of international terrorism, extremism and radicalism calls for the most serious concern. The world is experiencing dynamic and deep transformation processes, the whole architecture of international security is changing.

I think there is no need to repeat the well-known truth that there is no vacuum in nature, the head of our state noted. Where there is a vacuum, it is populated primarily by various destructive and violent terrorist forces without barriers or restrictions.

Current situation in neighboring Afghanistan can be described as a sluggish confrontation between opposing forces - mainly government forces and the Taliban. Forced withdrawal of the ISAF military contingent and subsequent reduction of external financial support for Afghanistan has only exacerbated the situation.

And the natural result is what we see – the vacuum in this country, formed as a result of the withdrawal of foreign troops, is already being filled by aggressive terrorist groups, which are displaced from the Middle East.

I am convinced that however the situation unfolds in Afghanistan, there is no solution to the Afghan problem except peaceful political negotiations among the main confronting parties under the aegis of the UN, Islam Karimov underlined. It is important to resume the negotiation process between the government and the "Taliban" movement. The parties should not tie the commencement of the negotiation process with any preconditions. Any circumstances should not be an obstacle, but a subject for negotiation. It is also necessary to have a strong political will and readiness for mutual concessions and compromises.

Compromise, once again a compromise, mutual concessions of opposing sides is what can lead out of the impasse the Afghan problem.

Uzbekistan's position on Afghan settlement is clear and open, Islam Karimov noted. We, as a neighboring state with Afghanistan, build and will build with it stable and friendly relations on a bilateral basis on the basis national interests of both sides, principle policy of non-interference in internal affairs.

That is why Uzbekistan as a non-aligned state, took the well informed and thoroughly thought-out step, making for itself a fundamental choice to conduct a peaceful policy and not to engage in military-political alliances and coalitions, to prevent stationing of foreign military bases in its territory, not to participate in peacekeeping operations abroad.

The similarity of approaches to assessing and understanding ambiguous and complex changes in the global and regional balance of power, readiness for a frank discussion of these and other key issues of our time brings us closer with Turkmenistan, the President of our country said.

Uzbekistan has consistently supported fully balanced foreign policy strategy of positive neutrality of Turkmenistan, the initiatives, aimed at strengthening international and regional security, economic integration and sustainable development of our vast region.

I am convinced that the concept of neutrality, which proclaimed the openness of Turkmenistan to all forms of constructive international cooperation, will continue to serve to strengthen the independence and sovereignty of the country, promote its national interests on the world stage, Islam Karimov said in conclusion.

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov met President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov within the frameworks of the visit.

Cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are consistently developing all spheres. Friendship, trust and respect between the heads of the two states has a major significance in this.

The parties highly assessed the Uzbek-Turkmen relations and exchanged views on prospects of further developing bilateral cooperation, issues of strengthening regional and international security during the meeting.

The situation has exacerbated in various parts of the world, increasing the threat of terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking, the head of our state stressed. Today, terrorism is diverse and multifaceted, and it's necessary to combat its root causes and sources.

Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov expressed gratitude to President Islam Karimov for taking part in the festive events and international conference, highlighted the consistent development of fruitful cooperation between our countries in all spheres.

(Source: Press-service of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan)

On December 10 at the Oqsaroy, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov received credentials from the newly appointed ambassadors in the Republic of Uzbekistan

On December 10 at the Oqsaroy, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov received credentials from the newly appointed ambassadors extraordinary and plenipotentiary in the Republic of Uzbekistan – Saleh Ahmad Al-Javarneh of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Stefan Klötzli of the Swiss Confederation, Bahman Agharazi Dormani of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Christopher Allan of the the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Ahmad Khaled Abdullah Al-Jeeran of the State of Kuwait.

The head of our state congratulated cordially the new chiefs of diplomatic missions on their appointment to our country and stressed that Uzbekistan attaches vital significance to progressive development of relations with their countries, and wished them every success in their responsible and honorable assignment.

During a conversation with the Ambassador of Jordan established ties and contacts on different levels were highly assessed, mutual interest in further activating interactions has been noted, which will allow to implement the existing potential of the bilateral cooperation in many areas to a fuller extent.

Ambassador Saleh Ahmad Al-Javarneh conveyed the heartfelt greetings and regards of the King Abdullah II of Jordan, highlighting that leadership of Jordan attached special significance to strengthening relations with Uzbekistan, which will play an important role in the huge region.

The Ambassador of the Swiss Confederation Stefan Klötzli, well-known not only as an experienced diplomat, but also as a specialist on environmental problems in Central Asia, noted that he considers his mission in our country as an opportunity for further widening traditional links between Switzerland and Uzbekistan.

The visit of the President of Switzerland Didier Burkhalter to Uzbekistan last year and fruitful negotiations on the highest level allowed to strengthen the political dialogue, determine prospective directions of deepening bilateral cooperation in different spheres.

Iran is a close neighbor and prospective partner of our state, collaboration with which has been actively strengthening in all areas of mutual interest. First of all, the parties progressively developing ties in trade-economic and transport-communications spheres.

Ambassador Bahman Agharazi Dormani assured that he will utilize all his knowledge and diplomatic experience for further deepening friendly relations between Iran and Uzbekistan, between Iranian and Uzbek people, supporting implementation of intergovernmental treaties and reached agreements.

Great Britain is considered in Uzbekistan as one of the leading world powers, which possesses strong political, economic, humanitarian potential and has an impact on global and regional processes. Currently, mutual understanding and constructive approach constitutes the basis of Uzbek-British dialogue, which provides for gradual intensification of ties in various areas.

Christopher Allan corroborated the readiness of British government to reinforce relations with Uzbekistan on a long-term and mutually beneficial basis and his endeavor to use every effort to achieve this task.

During a conversation with the Ambassador of the State of Kuwait it was noted that at present the bilateral relations are consistently developing. Uzbekistan and Kuwait have accumulated joint positive experience of interaction in various spheres, including within the frameworks of the UN, Organization of Islamic Cooperation and other organizations.

The visit of the President of Uzbekistan to Kuwait in January 2004 and the visit of the Emir of Kuwait to our country in July 2008 have elevated our relations to a new level, activated political, trade-economic, investment and cultural-humanitarian ties.

Ambassador Ahmad Khaled Abdullah Al-Jeeran underlined, that he considers his mission as maintaining and multiplication of amassed experience of mutually advantageous cooperation, implementation of new joint projects, meeting the interests of Uzbekistan and Kuwait equally.

(Source: Press-service of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan)

ECONOMY

Development of small business and private entrepreneurship in Uzbekistan

Small business and private entrepreneurship represent a sphere of labour application and a source of income generation for a significant percentage of the country's population. Moreover, it is the most flexible part of the national labour market, covering a lion's share of predominantly low-skilled manpower, those with insufficient practical experience and those preferring flexible working hours. Very often, it is the only economic sector, where many socially vulnerable strata of population, such as women, young people, uneducated and unskilled persons, can find a job.

In his report at a Cabinet of Ministers sitting, dedicated to the results of the Republic's socio-economic development in 2014 and main priorities of the 2015 National Economic Program, President Islam Karimov accentuated, in particular, that the contribution made by small business and private entrepreneurship to the formation of GDP grew from 31 per cent to 56 per cent between 2000 and 2014. Their share of manufactured goods rose from 12.9 per cent to 31.1 per cent in the same period. At the present time, more than 76.5 per cent of all employed citizens are working in the sector, compared with 49.7 per cent in 2000.

In a move to accelerate the development of this sector of the national economy, the creation of an auspicious environment, including the provision of privileges and comprehensive assistance to indigenous entrepreneurs, is identified as a core priority. The activity carried out by many organizations and departments is aimed at achieving this very objective. And the Chamber of Industry and Commerce of the Republic of Uzbekistan is one of them. Set up on the initiative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, it runs structural sub-divisions in all the regions, including 14 territorial directorates, 127 information-consultative and business centers, 14 arbitration tribunals, 3 training-resource centers and 21 unitary enterprises. Closely cooperating with state authorities, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce is contributing considerably to a steady rise in confidence on the part of local entrepreneurs and to the solidification of their partnership with the state.

What's more, there are ongoing efforts by the government of the Republic of Uzbekistan to create in the country a business environment that is highly conducive to the rapid development of entrepreneurial activity and an attractive investment climate. This work includes, in particular, the improvement of the regulatory-legal base, the provision of a range of privileges and preferences intended for small businesses, entrepreneurs and overseas investors, and the elimination of bureaucratic barriers and obstacles they face when it comes to the organization and running of their entrepreneurial activity. In particular, a draft law, "On the introduction of amendments and additions in the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan, "On guarantees of free entrepreneurial activity" is designed to further facilitate the development of entrepreneurship, to grant a bigger freedom of entrepreneurial activity and to simplify the current procedure for their formation. The draft law also contains a separate norm concerning the presumption of innocence of an entity of entrepreneurship, which treats whatever contradictions and vague points that may emerge in the course of entrepreneurial activity in an entrepreneur's favour, with such a provision making an appreciable contribution to a fuller and more reliable protection of the latter's legitimate rights and vested interests.

The major purpose of the Law, "On family entrepreneurship" is to create a necessary legal framework for the development of family-based entrepreneurship in various sectors of the national economy as an essential form of small business and private entrepreneurship, as well as for the strengthening of legal guarantees intended for family businesses and creation of new jobs. In addition, the Law specifies a family enterprise's participants, outlines a mechanism of their registration and closing down, and simplifies procedures for linking up family enterprises to infrastructural facilities. Moreover, somewhat simplified procedures are stipulated for book-keeping and taxation of family enterprises.

The principles of stimulation and encouragement that ensure the development of small business and private entrepreneurship comprise the provision of tax breaks, application of a simplified taxation system, allotment of credit on preferential terms, reduction of both the periodicity and term for presentation of tax and book-keeping reports to the state tax and statistical bodies, as well as ways of cutting the periodicity of tax and other check-ups.

Tax breaks have an important role to play in supporting entrepreneurs and small businesses with the help of economic stimuli.

Tax privileges imply a complete or partial exemption from taxes of legal entities and physical persons with a taxable base, in conformity with the country's tax legislation. These privileges are introduced in conformity with the Tax Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, decrees and resolutions of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

(Source: «Business partner.uz» newspaper)

TECHNOLOGIES

First Uzbek version of the device for laser-arc quenching, welding and surfacing has invented in Uzbekistan

The Institute of Ion-Plasma and Laser Technologies has invented the first Uzbek version of the device for laser-arc quenching, welding and surfacing. In terms of performance, it is nearly as good as its foreign counterparts.

Ilhom Husainov, senior research fellow of the laboratory for interaction of laser radiation with matter at the Institute, has revealed more details to the correspondent of Uzbekistan Today about the invention that specialists intend to introduce in manufacturing enterprises.

“One of the pressing tasks that any industrial enterprise faces is the processing of metals, including their division into required size blanks. Electric arc or laser is used for cutting in the production sector. Our device simultaneously uses both of these physical phenomena. And the benefits are obvious.

Experiments have shown that with the help of the device, the pace of goal achievement when working with materials difficult to weld such as aluminum alloys can be increased up to three times as compared with the conventional arc welding.

The joint laser-arc heating of products being connected reduces electricity consumption by 40-50%. Moreover, these technologies have demonstrated the advantages of laser welding with regard to both shape and quality of the weld and the productivity of the process.

Another issue is the restoration of worn out parts of machinery and mechanisms. To reduce the wearing out span, the working surface of the machine needs reinforcing. Under existing technologies, parts are entirely placed in a heating furnace, and all the exposed part undergoes quenching. This process is long and inconvenient, especially when the item is large in size.

Our device allows you to solve this problem much easier. Under laser-arc processing, only the work surface is tempered. This makes the repair process many times faster. Hardened parts work much longer. For example, the life of the saw gin on cotton ginning machines can be increased 2.5 times.

To restore the worn out working surfaces we have invented an automated laser-arc welding of wear-resistant coatings. When this technology is at work, wear-resistant wire is applied to the old surfacing, which also serves as an electrode. At the same time, it is possible to apply hard coatings on a softer base without compromising the quality of parts.

The use of laser radiation together with an electric arc allows for smoothing the topography of the welded surface, minimizing and, in some cases, completely getting rid of further processing. Automated feeding of the surfacing wire and welding with electric arc in the field of laser radiation increases the deposition rate and improves the quality of the surface. Availability of a large coordinate table allows for processing large parts.

Now we need to proceed on to the finish line, that is, extensive application of the device in practice. We hope the manufacturers will appreciate our novelty.”

(Source: «Uzbekistan Today» newspaper)

Reference to the source is a must in reproducing materials