

Turkmenistan Independence Day

Celebrating the 20th anniversary of neutrality

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Today Turkmenistan is known as an energetic and promising country that is eagerly developing its cooperation in the world arena. Since obtaining its Independence on Oct. 27, 1991, Turkmenistan has been successfully improving its political and diplomatic, mutually beneficial trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian relations with all countries of the world. These relations are conducted based on our Permanent Neutrality status, which was unanimously approved through a Resolution of the U.N. General Assembly on Dec. 12, 1995. In June 2015, a new Resolution of the U.N. General Assembly confirming the Status of Neutrality was successfully adopted. Independence and neutrality constitutes the very essence of our internal and foreign policy. Achievements made in the political, economic, legal and social sectors over the period of independence and neutrality indeed have great historical significance.

Consistent strengthening of the legal status of independence and neutrality of Turkmenistan supports our country's international initiatives concerning constructive measures for peace and security. It also fosters cooperation not only in the Central Asian and Caspian Sea regions, but also globally. Moreover, our neutral status has also allowed us to put forward new international initiatives to create new legal mechanisms for the solution of global geopolitical issues.

Our country also successfully deals with the challenges of national economic development. In the economic and legal context, our neutrality has become an effective tool to attract foreign investment for major economic

projects aimed at the development of natural resources of Turkmenistan to supply energy to the world markets.

Peace, disarmament, energy security, environmental protection, improvement of transport systems in Eurasia and security, both in the region and globally, are some of the most important initiatives put forward by Turkmenistan through reputable international organizations. These initiatives are well received, appreciated and supported by other countries, including Japan.

Independence, neutrality and the "open door" policy of Turkmenistan have created favorable conditions for widening the country's foreign economic relations, further developing international cooperation, as well as participating in the world economy.

The current smooth economic growth of Turkmenistan is oriented toward modernization and diversification through the creation of new fields and the implementation of innovative and advanced technologies. Presently, the annual growth of the economy of Turkmenistan is about 10 to 11 percent.

As is well known, Turkmenistan also enjoys complete political and social stability and special attention is paid to the social protection of our fellow citizens. As a result, gas, water and electricity are provided free to all citizens of Turkmenistan.

In regard to international cooperation, one of the main strategic directions of the foreign policy of Turkmenistan is to establish productive relations with Asian and Pacific countries. And Japan, which is strengthening its position among developed countries, is one of the most vital partners of Turkmenistan.

As the ambassador of Turkmenistan in Japan, my main duty is to implement agreements reached during the visits of H.E. President of Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov to Japan in 2013 and in 2015.

Today Turkmen-Japanese cooperation is successfully developing in different fields. As many know, our country's enterprises work in cooperation with dozens of large Japanese corporations implementing economically beneficial and very important regional projects, especially in the area of oil and gas. Turkmenistan is known to the Japanese business community not only as a country that possesses the world's fourth-largest reserves of natural gas, but also as a politically, socially and financially stable, strong and loyal partner.

Another field of interaction is cooperation between parliamentarians of both countries. Presently about 30 Japanese Diet members have joined the

Japanese-Turkmen Friendship Parliamentary League. Likewise, the Turkmen-Japan Friendship Group has been established in the Mejlis (parliament) of Turkmenistan. Successful cooperation is also taking place with other government organizations of Japan. Leaders of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs regularly meet with high-level officials of Turkmenistan. Among the agenda of meetings are also issues related to the chairmanship of Turkmenistan in the "Central Asia + Japan" Dialogue for 2015-2016.

Besides the very successful September 2013 official visit of our president to Japan, which provided impetus to the strengthening of our bilateral co-

operation, in March Berdimuhamedov paid a working visit to Japan. During this visit, he made a speech at the U.N. World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, which was held in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture. During that visit our president also received an honorary doctorate from the University of Tsukuba.

Just few days ago Prime Minister Shinzo Abe paid an official visit to Turkmenistan from Oct. 22 to 24 as part of his Central Asian tour. Turkmenistan was the first destination on his trip and the visit is considered very successful as dozens of agreements and contracts worth \$18 billion were signed in just one day. During the visit, a large business forum, which saw partici-



Left: President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov; Above: emblem of neutrality EMBASSY OF TURKMENISTAN

tion by Japanese companies and Turkmen enterprises, also took place. It is obvious that the official visit of Abe to Turkmenistan strengthened the confidence of both sides for further develop-

ment of bilateral relationship. In conclusion, I would like to congratulate the readers of The Japan Times on our Independence Day and the 20th Anniversary of Neutrality of

Turkmenistan. I would also like to express my confidence that multifaceted, mutually beneficial and equal Turkmen-Japanese cooperation has a great future.

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to the People of Turkmenistan
on the Occasion of
the 24th Anniversary of
Their Independence

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