

Turkmenistan Independence Day

Working to address contemporary geopolitical issues

Gurbanmamet Elyasov
AMBASSADOR OF TURKMENISTAN

This year on Oct. 27, we celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Independence of Turkmenistan. Being an open and fast-growing country, Turkmenistan is actively developing its multifaceted cooperation in the global arena. Since obtaining its independence in 1991, Turkmenistan has been successfully strengthening its relations with all countries in the political, economic, educational, scientific and cultural fields, as well as other areas.

These relations are solely based on the principle of our Permanent Neutrality status, which was unanimously approved through a U.N. resolution on Dec. 12, 1995. To commemorate this event Turkmenistan solemnly celebrated the 20th anniversary of its neutrality last year. It may also be noted that in June 2015, a new U.N. resolution confirming the status of neutrality was adopted, thus cementing the unshakable character of our neutrality, which is engraved in Turkmenistan's Constitution.

Complete independence and positive neutrality constitute the two main pillars of our policy. Time has proven that these principles provide excellent opportunities for Turkmenistan to flourish. Outstanding achievements have been made in the political, economic, social and other sectors over the period of independence. Today Turkmen people are happy to be part of a sovereign nation with absolutely no dependence on other countries nor any political blocs or unions.

Our neutral status has also allowed us to put forward new global initiatives to create universal mechanisms for the solution of global geopolitical issues, including transit and transport.

One such initiative has been reflected in another important Turkmenistan-sponsored U.N. resolution on the "Role of transport and transit corridors in ensuring international cooperation for sustainable development" adopted on Dec. 19, 2014. This resolution came from the Ashgabat Declaration on the role of Transport and Transit Corridors adopted during a high-level international conference held in September 2014 in Turkmenistan.

Recognizing the fundamental role of sustainable transport in fighting climate change and achieving a sustainable future, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will convene the first-ever global conference on sustainable transport on Nov. 26 and 27 in Ashgabat. U.N. Resolution 70/197, "Towards comprehensive cooperation among all modes of transport for promoting sustainable multimodal transit corridors," dated Dec. 22, 2015, which was proposed by Turkmenistan and co-sponsored by 84 countries, welcomed this initiative.

This conference will build on the intergovernmental discussions on sustainable transport. The outcome document of the 2012 U.N. Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) stressed that transportation and mobility are central to sustainable development. It recognizes the need to promote an integrated approach to policymaking at the national, regional and local levels for transport services and systems to advance sustainable development.

Transport drives development — enabling trade, tourism and economic growth — allowing people to access jobs, services, education and the interactions that help create fulfilled lives. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015, also recognizes the global need to adopt policies that enhance sustainable transport systems. It is clear that advances in sustainable transport will contribute to the at-

tainment of several, if not all, of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in the 2030 agenda. In this spirit, the Global Sustainable Transport Conference will bring together key stakeholders from governments, the U.N. and other international organizations, the private sector and civil society to engage in a dialogue that emphasizes the integrated and crosscutting nature of sustainable transport and its multiple roles in supporting the achievement of the SDGs. All modes of transport — road, rail, aviation, ferry and maritime — will be addressed.

Safeguarding the peace, disarmament, energy security and environmental protection are some of the other important initiatives put forward by Turkmenistan. These ideas have

been well received, appreciated and supported by other countries, including Japan.

As is widely known, Turkmenistan pays special attention to the social protection of its citizens. As a result, gas, water and electricity are provided free to all citizens of Turkmenistan.

Another strategic direction of the foreign policy of Turkmenistan is to establish productive relations with Asia-Pacific countries. Therefore, Japan, which is the only G7 country in the region, is one of the most important partners of Turkmenistan.

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

Today Turkmen-Japanese cooperation is successfully developing in different fields. Our country's enterprises work in cooperation with dozens of major Japanese corporations implementing large regional projects, especially in the oil and gas field. The Japanese business community not only knows Turkmenistan 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.

Successful Turkmen-Japan cooperation is also taking place between our parliaments, government organizations and universities. Among the agenda of meetings are also issues related to Turkmenistan chairing the "Central Asia + Japan" Dialogue for 2015-2016.



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

In October 2015 Prime Minister Shinzo Abe paid an official visit to Turkmenistan. During this extremely successful visit, which brought our cooperation to a new level, dozens of agree-

ments and contracts worth \$18 billion were signed.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate the readers of The Japan Times on the 25th Anniversary of Independence of

Turkmenistan. I would also like to express my strong confidence that multifaceted and mutually beneficial Turkmen-Japanese cooperation will continue to flourish.

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on the Occasion of
the 25th Anniversary of
Their Independence

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