Peace and security strategy:  
joining efforts in countering terrorism

Turkmenistan is a competent member of international politics as one of active UN-member states, makes its significant contribution to consolidate international community efforts in countering the threats against humanity, especially terrorism and radicalism. The President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov underlines that, countering terrorism acquires strategic significance on the agenda of multilateral cooperation of Turkmenistan within Community of Nations along with global tasks in ensuring security such as disarmament and non-proliferation, transport and energy, environment and several other aspects defined by the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Turkmenistan’s position rests upon fundamental concept of the President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov when state formulates approaches in ensuring global security. The concept covers the completeness and indivisibility of this idea in terms of geopolitics and interconnectedness of its concrete aspects. The backbone of this concept is that security of one state may not be guaranteed when there is no security in the region, continent and world. In similar way, political and military security will not be long-term and complete without ensuring economic, energy and food security, preventing and neutralizing risks, threats of environmental and technological character, countering effectively international terrorism, organized crimes, proliferation of mass destruction weapons and other global challenges.

Terrorism and its all forms are very dangerous threats to humanity irrespective of development level of one specific country or others and regions. Countering terrorism is becoming very important issue at present when globalization process is deepening and where one of the most important conditions is to ensure sustainable development of states and regions under peaceful and safe environment. Terrorist movements acquire new forms at the time of rapidly advancing technology, technological progress, mass media communication development, different types of information dissemination and this requires effective measures of countering.

Turkmenistan takes all necessary measures and actions at the national and international level to eliminate threats against peace and security as well as counters terrorist and radical acts.
National legislation of Turkmenistan provides clear definition and forms legal framework in this field. More particularly, the Law of Turkmenistan “On countering terrorism” stipulates legal and organizational base for countering terrorism, authorities and responsibilities of state bodies, social associations, other entities and competent authorities, as well as it defines guarantees for legal and social protection of citizens involved in countering terrorism.

The Law of Turkmenistan defines terrorism as follows: «terrorism – is an ideology of violence and actions to influence central government, local government, either international organizations or other entities decision-making process; socially dangerous acts which use force intentionally for hostage taking, arson, murder, torture, intimidation of population and bodies of power or committing any offence against lives and health of innocent people or threats to commit any act for achieving such criminal goals»

The same Law defines international terrorism as follows: «international terrorism – is socially dangerous violent acts committed with terrorist groups or organizations on global or regional scale including the support of state bodies of other states with the purpose of achieving specific goals related to kidnapping, hostage taking, murdering innocent people or posing threat to their lives and health, destructing or threat of destructing important facilities, life support, communication systems or using or posing threat of using nuclear, chemical, biological other weapons of mass destruction.

It is evident that, the terrorism may be countered successfully with only joint efforts of states in close cooperation with international agencies. In this regard, Turkmenistan cooperates closely with other states, as well as, reputable international bodies, first and foremost the UN, EU and OSCE.

Turkmenistan closely coordinates its actions with the UN on countering terrorism, drug trafficking and other threats. Strategic partnership between Turkmenistan and the UN is long-term, implemented in systemic basis and similar principles and views on final outcome are shared. In this context, Turkmenistan supports efforts of international community to create effective mechanism for countering terrorism and is for fully implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

These facts demonstrate that, Turkmenistan maintains constructive and efficient cooperation with international agencies such as the UN Counter-Terrorism Office, UN Regional Center for Central Asia for Preventive Diplomacy and neighboring countries.
Turkmenistan demonstrates its strict adherence to UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in practice and attaches regional context to it taking into account historical, economic, social, cultural and other features of one or another region. In this regard, high level dialogue in the region will give political impetus to adopt necessary, complementary and coordinated strategic approach to counter terrorism for Central Asian States. Consolidating efforts and developing commonly accepted approach in the states of the region to address existing issues will lead to explore and find effective ways of addressing them.

It is a fact that, International community recognized the peaceful policies of the President of independent and neutral Turkmenistan – Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov when the Resolution on «The role of UN Regional Center for Central Asia for Preventive Diplomacy» was adopted.

Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force was created with the purpose of ensuring the consistency of UN activities in given field. The Office coordinates membership in CTITF which covers 36 UN agencies, World Customs Organization and Interpol. United Nations Counter-Terrorism Center (UNCTC) which was established within CTITF in 2011 provides assistance to member states in capacity building in Strategy implementation.

Turkmenistan participates in project implemented jointly by Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) of United Nations Counter-Terrorism Center (UNCTC) and UN Regional Center for Central Asia for Preventive Diplomacy (UNRCCA) in Ashgabat with the support of EU and Norway. UN Regional Center for Central Asia for Preventive Diplomacy implemented project on applying abovementioned UN Strategy in Central Asian States jointly with Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and EU. On November 30, 2011, Joint Action Plan on implementing UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Ashgabat Final Declaration were approved in the high level meeting jointly organized by the Government of Turkmenistan, CTITF, EU and UNRCCA in Ashgabat. This Action Plan was the first document ever adopted. The projects on Action Plan items were implemented in the past years. On June 13, 2017, the final event in the second phase of project “on implementing Joint Action plan to realize UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy” took place when “High-level UN Central Asian Dialogue among countries and the on implementing the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia” was held in Ashgabat. The main objective of the meeting was to discuss the issues related to improving stability and security and the ways to achieve them.
General Secretary of the UN Antonio Guterras, ministers, senior officials, the representatives of countering terrorism agencies and national security agencies from Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan participated in the sessions. The review of joint Action Plan for Central Asia to implement UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy at the regional level was presented.

Joint Declaration on strengthening regional cooperation in countering terrorism was adopted at the end of meeting. UN General Secretary Antonio Guterras welcomed Ashgabat Declaration on countering terrorism adopted by Central Asian countries and their permanent efforts to implement UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and joint Action Plan for Central Asia. The Declaration represented support given to General Secretary’s initiative of to reform the UN countering terrorism office by creating new Office for countering terrorism and recognized the importance of efforts to counter terrorism in the region by the community of nations.

There was a high-level meeting "Towards a comprehensive implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia" at the end of April 2018, in Ashgabat and the third phase of a joint project on supporting the Joint Action Plan for Central Asia was launched. The first and second phases of the project were implemented in 2010-2017 and are dedicated to consider four main directions of the Global Strategy for drafting recommendations for the development of the JAP, which was adopted in December 2011 in Ashgabat.

While delivering speech , the UN Under-Secretary-General and head of the UN Counter-Terrorism Office, Vladimir Voronkov underlined that the main activities of the project would include providing targeted support in developing national and regional strategies to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism, further strengthening the capacity of the Central Asian countries in priority areas identified in the JAP for Central Asia and facilitating the exchange of best practices in the region and beyond it.

During the meeting, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov stated the readiness of Turkmenistan to cooperate with the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Center (UNCTC) on the implementation of the Ashgabat Action Plan of the UN Counter-Terrorism Strategy. In this context, the Turkmen side made several concrete proposals by using the UNRCCA in given direction.

The Statement on the outcomes of High-level meeting "Towards a Comprehensive Implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia" was adopted at the end of the forum. It is expected
in the long term that the new phase of the joint regional counter-terrorism initiative of UNRCCA and the UNCTC entitled "Towards a comprehensive implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia" will be aimed at further strengthening the capacity of the Central Asian states in the field of countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism in a strategic basis.

One of the emerging and acute problems is the elimination of terrorist financing sources, where special attention needs to be paid to combat drug trafficking. Enormous work is being done in this direction under the leadership of President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, including legal framework and the organizational basis development for this work in Turkmenistan.

Turkmenistan maintains close, effective and targeted cooperation with neighboring states, as well as with specialized UN agencies, primarily with the UNODC. Long-term national programs for combating drug addiction and drug trafficking have been adopted and are being implemented and good results are obtained.

Thus, Turkmenistan pursues foreign policy directed at eliminating threats and dangers against peace and makes its significant contribution to consolidate international efforts.

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