

«The fact that the consultative meetings of the heads of state of the region have acquired a permanent character and now, after the meeting in Tashkent, have their own regulations, suggests that intra-regional integration is possible, because the process has already been launched», - Anuar Temirov, a young analyst from Nur-Sultan states in his article written specifically for CABAR.asia.

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On November 29 of the current year, the second consultative meeting of the heads of Central Asian state took place in the capital of Uzbekistan - Tashkent. The organization and holding of this event dispelled doubts that meetings of this format, the first of which was held in Nur-Sultan in March 2018, would not become a regular occurrence.[\[1\]](#)



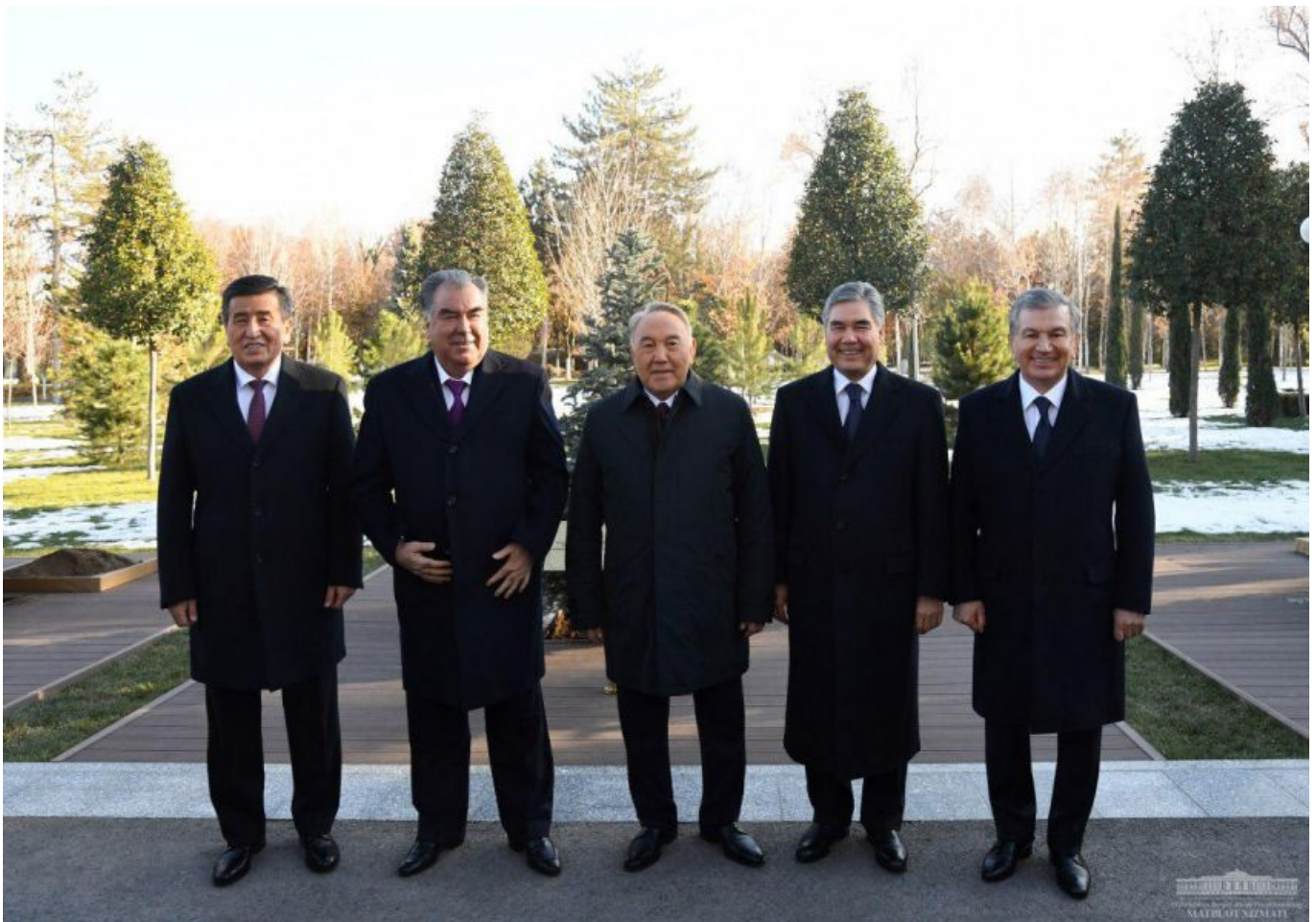
The key success of the meeting in Tashkent was the adoption of a detailed joint statement, in comparison with the first meeting. Photo: president.uz

A distinguishing feature from the first meeting was that President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov participated in it, which can be attributed to the clear victory of Uzbek diplomacy, due to the inactive participation of the Turkmen leader in regional initiatives, except for the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea. Perhaps the head of Turkmenistan, on his arrival, sent a signal to neighboring states about his readiness to engage in integration processes, with main focus on increasing the transit and transport potential of the region and strengthening water security and borders with Afghanistan.

Participation of the first president of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, instead of the current one, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev became another “surprise” for everyone. In Kazakhstan, this news was perceived by some experts^[2] as a manifestation of obvious dual power in the country, however, not everything is so obvious. In the current year, Nazarbayev [who has the status of Elbasy - Leader of the nation - ed. note] was awarded at once several new statuses for him in international organizations: on May 29, at the anniversary of the EAEU in Nur Sultan he was awarded the status of honorary chairman of

the organization, the same honor the first president of Kazakhstan was also awarded at the Turkic Council summit in Baku on October 15. From this point of view, the participation of Nazarbayev in the Consultative Meeting was able to give the event greater validity and significance, which the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev intended to do.

The key success of the meeting in Tashkent was the adoption of a detailed joint statement, in comparison with the first meeting, where the emphasis was on the Navruz holiday (Navruz, Nooruz). The parties traditionally expressed interest in deepening trade, economic, transport and energy ties, and strengthening water and environmental safety. Despite all the statements and a noticeable political will, one will not have to wait for “incredible” breakthroughs after this meeting, as some of the countries are already resolving these issues bilaterally or within the framework of international organizations, such as the EAEU. However, the forum’s platform is still very important from the point of view of maintaining a dialogue and “synchronization” on many issues on the regional agenda.



After fruitful negotiations, the heads of Central Asian states have planted seedlings of trees on the Alley of honored guests in the Kuksaroy

Meeting of the Heads of the Central Asian Countries in Tashkent: For the Sake of Growing Friendship

residence. Photo: president.uz

The statement highlighted several points on the deepening of cultural and humanitarian ties and youth support, which suggests that countries recognize the presence of significant human potential in the region in the person of the younger generation. This cooperation can be strengthened by cooperation between educational institutions of the Central Asian countries, and on the sidelines of the Consultative meeting, it is possible to hold forums of university rectors of the region in the future. Nursultan Nazarbayev mentioned during the meeting that he was ready to allocate 10 grants to each country in the Central Asian region for studying at universities in Kazakhstan.^[3] In addition to this initiative, it is possible for regional universities to develop a joint master's program under the working title "Central Asian Studies" with training in various cities of the region in order to deepen knowledge about Central Asia and prepare future specialists in the region.



In honor of the heads of Central Asia states, an official reception was held on behalf of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Photo: president.uz

According to the analyst, candidate of historical sciences Bakhtiyor Alimjanov, a different

interpretation of the history of the Central Asian countries causes only disagreement among societies.^[4] Therefore, a key task for students in the program should be to contribute to the formation of a common history. It should not be based on attempts to exaggerate the role of some and downplay the merits of others, but to objectively sanctify the historical processes of various eras that took place in Central Asia. Such joint programs are possible not only in the social and historical sciences, but also in the field of IT and new technologies, where the countries of Central Asia are in the role of “catching up” with developed countries.

One thing is clear - without continuing dialogue and intensifying cooperation in various fields, from expert to the highest level, the Central Asian countries have a risk of remaining developing countries. The fact that the consultative meetings of the heads of state of the region have acquired a permanent character and now, after the meeting in Tashkent, have their own regulations, suggests that intra-regional integration is possible, because the process has already been launched.

The opinions expressed in the article do not reflect the position of the editorial or donor.

[1] <https://jamestown.org/program/navruz-spirit-quietly-vanishes-from-central-asian-leaders-agenda/>

[2] <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/kazakhstan-nazarbayev-central-asian-summit/30299364.html>

[3] <https://tengrinews.kz/sng/nazarbaev-predlozil-uchredit-prazdnik-15-marta-385366/>

[4] <https://nuz.uz/svobodnoe-mnenie/40280-bahtier-alimdzhonov-uzbekistan-naselenie-centralnoy-azii-imeet-obschuyu-istoriyu-no-ne-obschee-nastoyaschee.html>



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