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## **STRENGTHENING OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN UKRAINE AND AFGHANISTAN**

*– Mr. Ambassador, could you please tell us about your “political” background. We know that you have become a diplomat a little bit later.*

– First of all I would like to express my gratitude to GDIP for the initiative to communicate and for your attempts to strengthen friendship between our nations. Ten years ago after being elected by the Faryab (province in the north of Afghanistan) voters, I began serving in my country as a Member of the Parliament and Secretary-General. After the end of my parliamentary tenure, I was appointed as a trade and economic representative to South Korea. Then I worked for the Ministry of Economy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan as a candidate for the post of Minister and, before arriving in Ukraine, I worked as a Senior Political Advisor to the Prime Minister of Afghanistan.

I have obtained higher education in Vinnytsia in Ukraine and I feel particular affection for Ukraine and its people. The President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Doctor Ashraf Ghanī and the Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Salahuiddin Rabbani, appointed me to the position of the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to Ukraine and Moldova in order to regulate and strengthen political, economic and cultural relations. Therefore, I will make every effort to enhance relations with Ukraine, otherwise, the existence of a political representation of Afghanistan in Ukraine will be in doubt.

*– Your Excellency, you have noted countries where you have worked before the appointment to Ukraine. Could you name all the countries where you have served and recall the major difficulties you had to deal with?*

– Outside the territory of Afghanistan I worked as a Director-General of the Afghan International Association in Turkey, and then I served as a trade and economic representative in South Korea. In each of the countries I felt support and assistance of the state authorities while fulfilling the authorized duties, which helped to avoid many problems.

*– Mr. Ambassador, what in your opinion is the current state of cooperation between our countries, what priorities do you set for the Embassy’s team?*

– The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan recognized the independence of Ukraine after the collapse of the USSR. Diplomatic relations between Kabul and



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*Mubarak Almuawesharji, Advisor to the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the State of Kuwait to Ukraine; Bakir Ahmed Aziz Al-Jaff, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Iraq to Ukraine; Valentyna Zhebrivska; Sardar Mohammad Rahman Oghli, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to Ukraine, at Kupalski Rosy Festival, 06.07.2018*

established, the agreement on encouragement of private investors support has been concluded. All of the above testifies to the high level of cooperation between the two countries. Regarding the priorities, the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan strives to intensify bilateral political relations, develop and strengthen trade cooperation, achieve simplification of investment conditions for Ukrainian business sector in Kabul, as well as to develop cooperation in different areas and sectors, namely industry infrastructure, technologies, building materials with the assistance of Ukrainian specialists. We hope Ukraine will participate in the fight against terrorism, drugs traffic, organized crime, and will take part in the promotion of science and higher education that have huge potential in Afghanistan.

Another point of preference is efforts aimed at encouraging Ukrainian officials to re-open the representation of Kabul in Ukraine. At the end of 2011, Ukraine closed the Embassy without any specific reasons determined by Ukrainian government. The Ambassador of Ukraine to Tajikistan became concurrently the Ambassador to Afghanistan. It is important for our Embassy that the government of Ukraine will re-open its official representation in Kabul. I personally raised this issue at a meeting with the President, Mr. P. O. Poroshenko, and officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

Kyiv have been established as the result of the Protocol concluded in 1995. Following the formation of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Ukraine, both parties have started cooperation in the fields of politics, trade, economics, higher education, as well as in the technical, military and consular areas. Kabul and Kyiv have signed agreements and protocols on trade and economic cooperation, agreements on cooperation and exchange of scientific information among polytechnic universities of Ukraine and Kabul, on transit, agreement between the Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the one of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and others. Joint Economic Commission has been

Another priority of our Embassy is to encourage Ukrainian business sector to invest in Afghanistan that is considered to be reasonable market for Ukrainian manufacturers. In addition, I suppose that Afghan entrepreneurs should explore the market of Ukrainian manufacturers and strengthen economic relations between our countries.

– *Could you briefly name the most promising areas that have not been implemented yet?*

– Economic relations are the most important and promising area for further development of the dialogue. Otherwise, there will be no cooperation. That is why we strive to have solid economic relations between Kabul and Kyiv. For this reason we are going to invite Afghan entrepreneurs to study Ukrainian market, so they could expand import of those products that are in demand in Afghanistan.

– *Are there any already successful directions of cooperation?*

– To my mind, we have good relations with Ukraine in all sectors. Currently we fulfil large-scale and comprehensive work in the fields of politics, economics and trade, so these are the areas that is most effective.

– *Mr. Ambassador, I would ask you a question related to the history, which is today highly important for Ukraine. It is known that Afghanistan became a victim of the Kremlin invasion in 1979–1989; currently Ukraine fights war on Russia in Donbas, and before this Crimea was occupied. How do you think, is there any similarity between the Afghan war and the armed conflict in Ukraine?*

– If we compare the war of the USSR in Afghanistan and the invasion of the Russian Federation into eastern parts of Ukraine, several factors shall be considered. First of all, the war in Afghanistan was a consequential hostilities. The occupation of Afghanistan forced the Western countries to start combat operations against the USSR, as a result of which the war was won owing to selflessness and blood of the people of Afghanistan. Current conflict in the East of Ukraine is not a consequential bipolar warfare, as it engages Ukraine and the Russian Federation and it is conducted on a certain territory. Secondly, having occupied Afghanistan in 1978 the Soviet army captured some strategic regions, namely airport, air area of Afghanistan, important public buildings, strategically important cities (including large ones). The USSR actively intervened in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, governing conditions, internal and external policies of Afghanistan, the Soviets regulated the decision making process. At the level of governing bodies, the party from Moscow intervened in the process of electing or dismissing not only secondary officials, but also presidents. The assassination of Hafizullah Amin and election of Babrak Karmal, and later the appointment of Mohammad Najibullah as the President of Afghanistan, are the examples of such interference in internal political affairs of Afghanistan by the USSR. Meanwhile in Ukraine, there is only a part of the country

being in a state of crisis, and only that part can be controlled. An independent government that came to power through elections in Ukraine makes decisions independently, and Russia cannot intervene in internal affairs of your state.

The ongoing war in the East of Ukraine is limited by this very territory. It is known that the USSR failed to achieve its goals over the entire period of Afghanistan occupation and paid a high price as the result. After ten years of violence, the Soviets have finally left Afghanistan with shame.

In the end, the war in Afghanistan has given an impetus for the republics located between Central Asia to Eastern Europe to secede from the USSR and become independent. From economic and military points of view, the war in Afghanistan has brought unforeseen losses for the USSR. It has also influenced the fall of the Berlin Wall, the creation of the unitary Federal Republic of Germany. Countries that used to be part of the Soviet Union have obtained guarantees for independence under the Warsaw Pact.

Certainly, the features of the war in Afghanistan were different. It was an extremely armed superpower that had modern technologies and used hydrogen bombs, bomber planes and gaseous chlorine. Not only the so-called legendary invincible army of the USSR, but all the states that signed the Warsaw Pact, participated in the Afghan war. However, the Warsaw Pact does no longer affect the war in Ukraine. On the contrary, in the case with the Russian-Ukrainian war, all countries, including the West and the United States, support Ukraine. Each war has common features. For example, the 101 United Nations member states condemned the occupation of Afghanistan by the USSR at that time, similarly today the war in Ukraine and the occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation were recognized illegal by most countries of the world.

– *Please, tell us about your study at Vinnytsia National Technical University. What important events have happened there and what of gained experience helps you in the present day work?*

– Usually when you study in another country, you first learn the language and then its culture and history. When I studied in Vinnytsia, during the Soviet Union, the Ukrainian people treated us very well. Lecturers, especially in Vinnytsia, tried to teach us a lot. Why have I been assigned here? Probably because I know Ukrainian people and their culture thanks to those student years. In my opinion, Ukrainians have great potential, in particular, scientific and technical, and, of course, Ukraine is a large country in Eastern Europe with significant resources, especially human. That is why Ukraine holds a prominent place for us, the Afghans, and for me in particular. I am glad to return here after 27 years to introduce Afghanistan as an Ambassador. I sincerely wish to strengthen friendship between the peoples of Ukraine and Afghanistan. I like Kyiv and Vinnytsia, and Ukraine in general has become a second home country for me.