

The United States and Uzbekistan: Launching a New Era of Strategic Partnership

White House statement, 16th May 2018

President Donald J. Trump hosted President Shavkat Miromovich Mirziyoyev of Uzbekistan today, marking President Mirziyoyev's historic first visit to the White House and ushering in a new era of strategic partnership between the United States and Uzbekistan. During the meeting, President Trump reaffirmed the enduring commitment of the United States to the independence, territorial integrity, and sovereignty of Uzbekistan. President Trump also recognized Uzbekistan's tremendous progress on important political, economic, and social reforms under the leadership of President Mirziyoyev. The leaders resolved to strengthen the bilateral relationship between the United States and Uzbekistan with a new dialogue to reinvigorate the 2002 Declaration of Strategic Partnership, building on a broad range of mutual priorities.

President Mirziyoyev declared that progress in Uzbekistan is irreversible, underscoring that the government must always place the Uzbek people's interests first. President Mirziyoyev's "Five Year Strategy of Action" promotes good governance, judicial reform and rule of law, economic liberalization, social development, and an open and constructive foreign policy.

President Trump noted the historic partnership of the United States with Uzbekistan in the fight against terrorism. In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, Uzbekistan provided critical access and support to drive al-Qa'ida terrorists from Afghanistan. During his visit, President Mirziyoyev reaffirmed his full support for President Trump's South Asia strategy and discussed Uzbekistan's initiatives to strengthen bilateral cooperation, share burdens, and address regional security issues, including stability in Afghanistan.

President Trump highlighted the importance of a strong and independent Central Asia and applauded President Mirziyoyev's efforts to convene Central Asian leaders for a cooperative dialogue, as discussed during the November 2017 Samarkand Conference. President Mirziyoyev joined other Central Asian leaders in March in Astana, Kazakhstan, opening new possibilities for intraregional commerce and cooperative approaches to address security challenges. President Trump recognized Uzbekistan's key role in this important dialogue and pledged the United States' support to cooperation and development through the C5+1 regional format. Both presidents expressed support for including Afghanistan in multilateral cooperation formats in Central Asia.

Regional Security

President Trump congratulated President Mirziyoyev on the success of the 2018 Tashkent International Conference on “Peace Process, Security Cooperation and Regional Connectivity in Afghanistan,” which reaffirmed that the international community is united in its position that the Taliban immediately agree to peace talks with the Afghanistan government. Both President Trump and President Mirziyoyev condemned cowardly terrorist attacks against Afghanistan security forces and innocent civilians, and committed to expanding dialogue to overcome the challenges facing Afghanistan. President Mirziyoyev pledged steadfast political support to the Government of Afghanistan and discussed the December 2017 visit of Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani to Tashkent, Uzbekistan, where the two leaders signed a series of landmark agreements to increase trade and develop critical infrastructure. President Trump recognized the important role that Uzbekistan plays in regional economic development and praised Uzbekistan’s efforts to expand the development of trade and commercial ties with Afghanistan. He offered political support and planning consultations regarding Uzbekistan’s railroad and infrastructure projects in Afghanistan.

President Mirziyoyev assured continued support for the Northern Distribution Network and its contribution to achieving peace and stability in Afghanistan. The United States and Uzbekistan cooperate closely to secure the border with Afghanistan and to interdict the illicit movement of narcotics. The two leaders condemned extremism and international terrorism, and vowed to strengthen cooperation against these common threats. They also committed to pursue agreements that will enhance interoperability and improve regional security, and noted the importance of strengthening the defense relationship by implementing the first-ever Five-Year Plan of Military Cooperation.

Reforms and People-to-People Ties

President Trump applauded President Mirziyoyev’s ambitious reform program to improve the human rights situation in Uzbekistan, noting the release of prisoners of conscience, elimination of systematic child labor, and significant progress in reducing forced labor. These accomplishments have created the conditions for increased economic, political, and security cooperation. President Trump encouraged President Mirziyoyev’s initiative to increase government transparency and accountability to the people of Uzbekistan as a fundamental aspect of good governance and domestic stability. Both leaders vowed to intensify constructive cooperation to protect fundamental human freedoms, including the promotion of religious freedom. President Mirziyoyev committed to implement a comprehensive roadmap to advance religious freedom.

The presidents welcomed the pending accreditation of the American Councils for International Education in Uzbekistan, which will contribute to educational cooperation between the two countries. President Trump pledged United States

assistance to promote English language education programs in Uzbekistan and commended Uzbekistan's accreditation of Voice of America activities and the opportunities it creates for American media in the country.

Economic Cooperation

Both President Trump and President Mirziyoyev committed to explore deeper economic cooperation that will increase trade and create jobs in both countries. President Mirziyoyev pledged to create favorable conditions for businesses in Uzbekistan and open its markets for United States companies and investors by introducing international standards of transparency, accountability, and rule of law. The leaders vowed to explore greater economic cooperation, including in the fields of agriculture, energy, finance, chemicals, tourism, textiles, health, and digital innovation. During the visit, Uzbekistan signed over 20 major business deals with United States companies, which, if fully implemented, will be worth more than \$4.8 billion and could sustain more than 10,000 U.S. jobs and open opportunities for billions of dollars in future U.S. contracts.

President Trump commended President Mirziyoyev's reform program and recognized Uzbekistan's emerging role as an economic leader, as demonstrated by its offers to host the meetings of the Central Asia Trade Forum and the United States-Central Asia Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Council this year. President Mirziyoyev announced that Uzbekistan seeks accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), and President Trump pledged United States technical assistance as Uzbekistan undertakes a reform agenda to liberalize its trade regime in line with WTO agreements. Uzbekistan committed to protecting intellectual property by acceding to the Geneva Phonograms Convention and the World Intellectual Property Organization Internet Treaties. The realization of these initiatives will provide a solid foundation to explore future opportunities for improved bilateral trade, investment, and economic cooperation.