

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AND SECURITY ISSUES

UZBEKISTAN: STRATEGIC
CHANGES

NEW POLITICAL DYNAMISM IN
CENTRAL ASIA: SECURITY ISSUES
AND PROSPECTS FOR REGIONAL
COOPERATION

UNGA ADOPTS RESOLUTION ON
STRENGTHENING COOPERATION
IN CENTRAL ASIA

APPROACHES OF UZBEKISTAN
TO RESOLVING THE SITUATION
IN AFGHANISTAN

TAKING THE U.S.-UZBEKISTAN
RELATIONSHIP TO THE NEXT LEVEL:
MIRZIYOYEV'S HISTORIC VISIT



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ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT SHAVKAT MIRZIYOEV AT THE SOLEMN CEREMONY DEDICATED TO THE 26TH ANNIVERSARY OF ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

7 December, 2018.



Dear compatriots!

Dear guests!

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Allow me from the bottom of my heart congratulate you, who gathered in this magnificent palace today, and in your person all of our people on the 26th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan and express my best wishes to you.

Our Constitution, as a vivid embodiment of the political and legal consciousness of the multinational people of Uzbekistan, serves as a solid foundation for building a democratic state and civil society, and finding a worthy place in the international arena.

Indeed, the difficult and at the same time glorious path traversed by us for over the last 26 years confirms the vitality and high potential of our Main Law.

The Strategy of actions, developed on the basis of the Constitution, today plays a crucial role in bringing the country to a new, innovative and industrial level of development.

Constant dialogue with people, addressing urgent problems of the people, satisfaction of their needs and requirements are becoming the main criteria of our activity.

Life proves that in the course of the effective implementation of large-scale reforms we have begun, the importance of these issues increases.

That is why in-depth study and understanding of the Main Law, strict compliance with its requirements is the duty of each of every citizen of Uzbekistan.

Dear compatriots!

Over the past two years, the main task for us has been to assert the priority of human dignity and honor in society and formation a justice system that can always ensure justice.

It is not by chance that our great ancestor Sahibkiran Amir Temur perpetuated the following saying on the portal of Oksaroy palace: **«Justice is the basis of the state and actions of wise rulers»**. This idea has not lost its relevance today.

At the Asian Forum on Human Rights held in November in Samarkand, prominent politicians, foreign scholars and experts gave a decent assessment to the work we have done in this short period of time.

It should be noted that this event has further enhanced prestige of Uzbekistan in the world. Most importantly, the Asian Forum introduced the notion of **«Samarkand spirit»** into international practice in the field of human rights.

Today, in our country a lot is being done to ensure the protection of human rights and freedoms. In particular, strict liability has been established for the use of information obtained by unlawful methods as evidence of the prosecution.

Taking this opportunity, I want to emphasize once again that **only one goal – justice should be in a judge's mind, truth – in a judge's mouth and purity in his soul.**

In this regard, the following words of our great poet and thinker Alisher Navoi acquire a particularly deep meaning: **«People, do not do evil, build a temple of justice and justice in your heart and soul of the people»**.

When does justice prevail? When judicial bodies, judges strictly follow the principles of legality and fairness, they honestly and conscientiously perform their duties.

In the past two years, important measures have been taken in this area, in particular, to ensure the independence of the courts.

This year alone, 1 881 criminal cases were discontinued for lack of evidence. Five hundred and ninety persons have been acquitted, whereas in 2016, pay attention – only 28, and in 2017 – 263 persons.

In addition, the corpus delicti unreasonably applied during the investigation were excluded from the charges against 5 462 persons, 2 449 persons were released in the courtroom.

The practice of reconsideration of cases by courts during many years has been completely discontinued.

Based on the principles of humanism, a completely new system was introduced. As a result, 993 people were released from punishment under the guarantee of the Youth Union, Makhalla and Women's Committees, including 456 young people and 113 women who have committed crimes of ignorance and sincerely repented.

Besides, 3 thousand 333 people who are serving their sentences, including 646 convicted for participating in the activities of banned organizations, were granted pardon and returned to their families.

On the occasion of this grand holiday, today I have signed a special Decree. According to it, 136 people, who have sincerely repented, returned to path of correction and are now serving their sentences, were granted pardon.

More than 20 thousand citizens suspected of having links with religious extremist groups were removed from the register.

The Republican Interdepartmental Commission for the Consideration of Citizens' Appeals has been established, which is charged with considering the appeals of citizens who got involved in banned organizations, sincerely repented, took the path of correction.

Public commissions have been established on the ground to study the personal and professional qualities of candidates for the position of judge.

To ensure fairness, openness and transparency of the consideration of cases in courts, a system of electronic distribution of cases has been introduced. From now on, it is the electronic program that determines which judge will consider the case, without human intervention.

In order to ensure openness and legality of the judicial-investigative activities, as well as to reduce costs and bureaucratic red tape, the systems of "electronic criminal case" and "remote interrogation" are being introduced. The powers of lawyers in ensuring the rights and freedoms of citizens have been expanded.

All of this is the result of our judicial and legal reforms.

At the same time, a truly democratic and transparent system of selection of candidates for the position of judge, studying their personal and professional qualities should be created.

In particular, I consider it expedient to legislatively fix such a procedure, when candidates for the position of judge are recommended taking into account public opinion.

It is necessary to introduce a system in which applicants who are deemed worthy will undergo training for at least one year and be appointed to the position by trained judges. In this view, I propose to organize the Higher School of Judges under the High Judicial Council.

Unfortunately, some judges still make decisions that do not meet the principles of justice. Naturally, this undermines citizens' confidence in justice.

Therefore, to improve their professional skills and culture, always be guided by the law, the principles of justice and humanism – these are the main tasks of each judge.

Every decision made by the courts should be, above all, fair, lawful and justified. Only then will people be firmly convinced that justice will prevail in any situation.

This year, the tasks and powers of state security agencies have been completely revised, an objective assessment of the activities of employees at all levels has been given.

For the first time, the Law «**On the State Security Service**» was adopted, according to which the main task of the newly formed special service is to provide reliable protection of the interests of the state from internal and external threats.

In the present alarming times, when threats of extremism and terrorism persist, encroachments on the constitutional order and the economic foundations of our country, brave soldiers and officers of the State Security Service must ruthlessly fight against any destructive forces and be a reliable shield in defending our Motherland.

As you know, recently in order to check the combat training of the troops of the Ministry of Defense, field exercises were conducted in the city of Chirchik. They clearly showed that in the last two years a great work has been done to strengthen the defense power of our country. We will continue this work on a systematic basis and on an even wider scale.

In addition, in order to ensure public order and the security of our citizens, a number of effective measures have been taken to fully support the units of the internal troops and the National Guard.

As a result of our efforts to protect public order and early warning of offenses, primarily with the participation of the general public in this process, a 36 percent reduction in crime has been achieved. Not a single crime was committed this year in 3 205 makhallas or in over 35 percent of existing ones.

In order to strengthen the achieved results, these issues, including the full implementation of the projects "Safe City", "Safe Territory", will continue to be priorities for the internal affairs agencies and the National Guard.

To ensure the right of free movement for citizens guaranteed by our Constitution, difficulties in registration and obtaining visas have been eliminated.

Thanks to the simplification of the procedure for issuing visas to citizens of 39 countries, and the introduction of the electronic visa system this year almost 4 million foreign tourists visited our country.

The citizenship of the Republic of Uzbekistan was granted to 2,528 persons who have been living in our country for many years, making a worthy contribution to the development of society and dreaming of becoming our compatriots.

It should be noted that **concrete measures were taken to prevent and resolutely fight against corruption**, which causes serious harm to the development of the state and society, which undermines people's faith in justice. This is evidenced by the prosecution of 1 177 officials who have committed such crimes.

No matter how hard the law enforcement agencies try, without irreconcilable attitude of our citizens towards this disgusting phenomenon, and effective public control it is impossible to effectively combat corruption.

This evil must be seriously fought not only by law-enforcement agencies but also by public at each and every institution.

Therefore, each state institution must have its own internal program on combating corruption the supervision of which shall be undertaken by public.

As world experience shows, in parliaments of many countries, including the United States, Russia, Great Britain, Bulgaria, Greece, Latvia, and Estonia, there are commissions and committees to fight corruption.

Considering this best practice and proceeding from the requirements of our Constitution, I propose to form anti-corruption committees in the chambers of the Oliy Majlis. As representative bodies, these committees should contribute to strengthening the fight against corruption in public institutions at all levels.

Another important issue: the time has come to improve the system of ensuring of the rights of persons serving sentences on the basis of humanism and generosity inherent in our people.

As you are aware, our Constitution guarantees the right to education to all citizens. In this regard, it would be necessary to introduce a distance education system in correctional institutions in order to assist those who are serving their sentences in social adaptation in the future. In perspective, it is also advisable to revise the norms restricting electoral rights of persons sentenced to imprisonment on the basis of international requirements.

Dear compatriots!

The main goal of the Constitution of Uzbekistan is to create decent living conditions for our people.

As a result of the reforms, living standards and real incomes of the population are rising.

At the same time, in this area, the government and central economic departments, as well as administrations of all levels, face many tasks.

Life itself confirms that the most effective development of the country and the growth of the welfare of the population are provided by supporting entrepreneurship.

Our Constitution enshrines the guarantees of freedom of economic activity, entrepreneurship, equality and legal protection of all forms of ownership. However, a high level of state presence in the economy, bureaucracy, problems in the tax and customs spheres, the banking system hamper the growth of domestic investment and the wider attraction of foreign capital.

As the well-known Chinese philosopher Sun Tzu said: **«The collection of exorbitant taxes is the path leading to abuse, enrichment of the enemy, the crisis of the state».**

For years, high taxes created the conditions for growth in the share of the «shadow sector» of the economy.

Taking into account the current situation, in order to accelerate the development of the economy and increase the investment attractiveness of our country, we adopted **the Concept of enhancing tax policy.**

Much work has been done on its drafting. The draft concept has passed a wide and comprehensive public discussion in the country with the participation of the business community, international financial institutions, and renowned experts.

On the basis of this Concept, important changes are being made in the tax policy of the state. Instead of the maximum income tax rate that was still in force and stood at 22.5 percent, the personal income tax rate was introduced at 12 percent, and 8 percent insurance deductions were abolished.

The high single social payment rate has been reduced from 25 percent to 12 percent. Mandatory deductions in the amount of 3.2 percent to the Extra-budgetary pension fund, trust road and educational funds were abolished.

The rates of customs payments were revised and the size of duties was reduced for almost 3,500 types of goods, the excise tax rate on goods was reduced for about 800 items. Raw materials, equipment and equipment not produced in Uzbekistan and imported for the organization of production will not be subject to state duties.

Scheduled inspections of financial and economic activities of business entities have been cancelled. The requirements for obtaining 138 types of licenses and permits have been simplified, 42 of them have been completely abolished.

In order to eliminate obstacles and barriers, manifestations of corruption in the allocation of land plots for business, a procedure has been introduced to acquire them through an electronic auction.

There is a strict ban on the seizure of land for state and public use, demolition of real estate until the owner is compensated for the damage.

The procedure for a full compensation of damage caused to the property of investors and entrepreneurs has been guaranteed.

It also provides for the exemption of entrepreneurs from the payment of income tax and the single tax payment for the export of products, works and services starting from next year. Targeted work continues to accelerate the development of tourism, further improve the quality of services, effectively utilize the tourist potential of the regions and create jobs, form new national tourism products. Next year we will continue to work to reduce the level of inflation, comprehensively support active entrepreneurship, and create wide opportunities for investors.

Dear friends!

As you are aware, this year **the population of our country exceeded 33 million people.** Certainly, this is a considerable figure.

We must guarantee the realization of the social rights of our citizens, in particular, decent living conditions, education and vocational training of young people, their employment and housing.

The Constitution of the country enshrines the right of every person to qualified medical care. The practical implementation of this important provision is a guarantee for the preservation of the gene pool of the nation, development of the state and society.

As a result of broad, comprehensive reforms, life expectancy in the country increased from 67 years in 1990 to 74 years in 2017. Child mortality has decreased by 3 times. We must strive to further improve these indicators.

Our country is adopting important practical programs aimed at improving the health of the population.

So, just the other day, according to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, **the Concept of development of the health care system was adopted for 2019-2025.** In accordance with the requirements of the time, much is being done for the development of private medical institutions. In 2018 alone, over 400 of them were established in the republic.

As they say, **a child is raised from the birth.** Therefore, we began to reform the sphere of education and upbringing from the very first level – preschool education.

For comparison, I would like to give one example: over the past two years, the number of kindergartens in the country has increased by 1,400 and has now reached 6,367.

The number of kindergartens created on the basis of a public-private partnership has doubled over the past year, today there are already 568 of them. Practical work has begun on organizing another 1,000 such pre-school institutions.

This year, significant work has been done to reform the public education system and improve the working conditions of teachers. The wages of teachers are gradually increasing, new mechanisms for encouraging their work are being introduced.

Major reforms also carried out in the next link in the system – the higher education. Over the past two years, 5 new universities and 12 branches of prestigious foreign universities have been created in the country.

As you are aware, the foundation «El-Yurt Umidi» («Hope of the country») has been established with a view to training and retraining of personnel which is necessary for the development of the country in leading foreign educational centers.

We should admit that, we are forced to train enterprising, talented young personnel demanded by the most popular sectors of the economy abroad, in developed countries. Therefore, the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education, universities, research centers of Uzbekistan need to work effectively in close cooperation with “El-Yurt Umidi” Foundation.

Based on the tasks set out in the Strategy of Action, as well as proposals from citizens received during the dialogue with the people, we must solve the following key issues in the social sphere.

First, it is necessary to ensure compliance of the social protection model in force in Uzbekistan with generally accepted international standards and modern requirements.

It is noteworthy that our country pays great attention to the support of people with disability, who lost their breadwinners, socially vulnerable and low-income families, in particular, providing them with affordable housing.

This year alone over 21 500 families have received affordable houses.

Moreover, this year people with disability were provided 30,5 thousand Prothetic-Orthopaedic devices and means of rehabilitation. 16 thousand disabled people have been treated in rehabilitation centers.

No doubt, we will further continue this noble cause on a systemic basis. One of the most important issues is to ensure important social right to have pensions enshrined in our Constitution.

In particular, **effective 2019 the retirement benefits (pensions) will be increased 8 to 10 times of minimum wages and working pensioners will be entitled to have full amount of their pensions.**

Second, it is essential to strengthen social support for medical workers, create decent working conditions and improve the incentive system.

I believe, there is no need to once more speak about how complex the profession of a doctor is, and what kind of painstaking work, willpower and resilience it requires.

However, it raises a question: did we create appropriate conditions for medical workers? Do their wages and working conditions meet the complexity and responsibility of their work? Unfortunately, no.

Since December 1, 2018, we have increased their wages, and this is only the first step. We will continue to fully support medical personnel – representatives of the noble profession.

In the future, in order to provide guaranteed medical services to the population, we must introduce a system of compulsory medical insurance.

Third, taking into account the advanced foreign experience it is necessary to revise the educational standards and teaching methods in the field of public education from the point of view of identifying the individual abilities of students.

Having done everything possible to realize the talents and potential of our children from an early age, making every effort for their harmonious development, we will nurture many more such great figures as Beruni, Ibn Sino, Ulughbek. I am completely sure of this.

Fourth, in many cases, professional colleges unfortunately have become institutions for the issuance of diplomas in unclaimed professions.

During trips to the regions of the country, I try to talk with people as much as possible. You will be surprised, but there are not enough qualified tractor operators, machine operators in the field. It is difficult to find a land surveyor or a water conductor who knows his business. College graduates are often have to be re-trained to the right professions.

So where is the vocational training? Why the labor market has not being reviewed? Unfortunately, no one has seriously asked themselves these questions yet.

The Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education along with the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations should undertake the measures to anticipate the demands of the real sector of the economy in personnel for at least 10–15 years ahead and arrange their training accordingly.

Fifth, we need to undertake urgent measures to ensure employment and reduce unemployment.

However, the question arose: what is the real number of unemployed in our country? What is the percentage of the population engaged in the informal sector? How many of our compatriots went abroad in search of employment?

We need to understand that one unemployed causes ten problems. If you try to assess the potential damage to the family, community, and society, you will see how thorny this issue is.

Substantive work has been done in the framework of this year programs «**Every family is an entrepreneur**» and «**Youth is our future**». The population, especially young people, are provided with greater benefits in order to support their initiatives and business startups.

We will further extend them comprehensive assistance next year and will take under strict control the implementation of these programs.

We will be able to solve not only economic, but also many social problems if we develop business activities and initiative of our youth, teach them to manage financial resources

Sixth, we have to enhance the work on the construction of affordable houses on updated model projects in rural areas and apartment houses in cities.

Virtual reception receives a lot of appeals and complaints from remote regions of the country about the quality of these houses.

Taking into account the requests and wishes of citizens, we recently adopted a program providing measures to scale up and improve the quality of housing construction for socially vulnerable groups of the population.

The heads of departments responsible for the implementation of this program must conscientiously consider the execution of the tasks assigned to them.

Dear compatriots!

Over the past two years, 90 laws and over 2,000 decrees and resolutions have been adopted, aimed at the realization of constitutional rights and freedoms, improvement of the living conditions of our citizens, solution of the problems accumulated over many years.

It should be noted that 20 percent of more than 13 thousand tasks defined in the adopted acts of the legislation were not fulfilled in a timely manner. This indicates that the Cabinet of Ministers and heads of a number of state and economical departments, as well as local hokimiyats, are irresponsible in this matter.

We must drastically reduce the number of unnecessary meetings in the Centre and local authorities, from which people are already tired, and to do more practical work to achieve concrete results.

Based on the goals and objectives of our reforms, I think **the time has come to radically reconsider the activities of the Cabinet of Ministers in order to turn it into a truly supreme body of executive power.**

I would like to note that in no country deep socio-economic reforms were carried out easily and quickly.

It should also be openly said that reforms are not to the liking of some officials, accustomed to think and work in the old way. After all, changes, updates, you see, disturb their peace and measured existence.

However, reforms are a requirement of life itself and cannot be stopped. This truth must be deeply grasped by the leaders of all levels.

Dear participants of the meeting!

It is known that the organization of control over the implementation of laws is among the constitutional powers of the Chairman of the Senate and the Speaker of Legislative chamber. But, unfortunately, we do not see drastic changes in the activities of Parliament in this direction.

This year the Senate sent only 2 parliamentary requests to the state authorities and officials, and the Legislative chamber-3.

We consider it as an achievement that reports of the leadership of central authorities and regions are heard at the parliamentary meetings. But the question arises: if the leaders reported at the Parliamentary hearings, what decisions has the Parliament made and sent for execution based on the results of the hearings? Have measures been taken with regard to Ministers or Khokims (Mayors) whose activities are considered unsatisfactory?

Where, finally, is a clear position of the people's representatives?

For example, what senator or deputy sent a request to the leadership of the Ministry of Finance or the State Tax Service (State Tax Committee), inquired about the state of implementation of the Concept of improving tax policy?

The main drawback - the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) has not become the arena of debate on topical issues of the country's development.

In this regard, I consider it appropriate that the houses of the Oliy Majlis shall not be limited to reviewing the implementation of laws and hearing reports from leaders, but also should put into practice a systematic study of the state of affairs with direct field visits and the development of appropriate proposals.

In their turn, citizens should also feel their involvement in the ongoing reforms. Only in this way we will achieve our goals and accomplish the tasks we set ourselves.

In this process, the role of strong and effective public scrutiny is extremely important. Therefore, we decided to create a «Public Opinion» portal next year.

We all well understand that in the implementation of public control mass media play an important role.

I constantly monitor their activities. Unfortunately, in newspapers, on television and radio, critical articles and programs about the essence of reforms, problems related to the execution of adopted laws and decisions, investigations on appeals of citizens - very rare phenomenon.

And yet, mass media are called upon to become real advocates of the interests of the people in the process of transformation. To do this, they must have determination and professional skills, objectivity and the ability to deep analysis.

In order to increase the effectiveness of the ongoing radical reforms, we need to implement the following tasks.

First, the parliamentary requests of the houses of the Oliy Majlis and the parliamentary hearings should be turned into a powerful means of ensuring the implementation of laws and decisions, the effectiveness of reforms.

Second, it would be worth, if the deputies and senators during field trips systematically and deeply study the problems that worry the population and put forward relative tasks before the government and local authorities, demand their solutions as well as take concrete measures on the perfection of legislation.

Third, I think the time has come to give up the practice of adopting sub-legal acts and make laws of the direct action.

For example, nowadays there are 8 laws, 14 decrees and more than 100 sublegal acts apply, that regulate relations in the sphere of foreign investments.

However, it is not important for local and foreign investors how many decrees and ordinances are adopted, more important only clear and effective work of the whole system in this sphere.

I would request our esteemed deputies to become more active, take initiative in their hands on the elaboration of the draft laws. They should not be a third party observers, but initiators and authors of laws. It is what the electorate/voters – our people are waiting for.

We need immediately to form a list of laws that lost their meaning and adopt laws of direct action on the basis of deep critical study of existing problems, taking into account up-to-date world practice.

Fourth, creation of any law or ordinances demands deep analysis of the existing problems in one or another sphere, study of advanced experience, in a word, painstaking work.

We should not to forget that the improvement of living conditions of our people – is the final goal of the adoption of legislative acts.

The key matter is timely bringing of its essence and meaning to the people in charge and the population, maintaining their inexpressibly realization. We need to strengthen the role of justice bodies in this matter.

Dear compatriots!

Any law, besides its introduction of certain right, imposes also obligations. **The basic Law of our country imposes citizens to observe the Constitution and laws, respect the rights, freedom, honor and dignity of other people.**

The formation of the legal awareness and legal culture in the society depends first of all on the environment and education.

I will give one example. In the city of Calgary in Canada that counts more 1 million vehicles during 10 months of the year of 2018 10 people have died in the road traffic accidents. For comparison, in our country where there are 2,5 million units of vehicles in total, during 10 months of the same period over 1600 people have died on the roads. Isn't it a tragedy, a big loss?

We raised the responsibility for the traffic offence. Is it enough to solve the problem? I think not. The cause of such offences is connected with the problems of legal culture.

Until we do form a high legal culture in our society, do not put an end to such phenomenon, offences of law will continue.

Respect of law is being educated on the basis of legal awareness and legal culture of our people. In other words, some abide by the law out of fear of being punished; others respect the law thanks to gained education in childhood.

That is why we must at first place to conduct a wide explanatory work among the population, especially youth, on the legal matters. Simply speaking we must teach our children from the yearly years to understand what is right and what is wrong, whereas we ourselves must be example for them.

Surely, lessons on the subject of «Law» are in the school curriculum, but they are pro forma conducted, an educative meaning of the law recedes into the background. A systematic propaganda of legislative acts is not arranged by responsible bodies.

We need to increase the legal knowledge of the population in order to promote the content of laws by effective methods, using the capabilities of educational institutions, the media, Internet resources, literature, art, religious agencies.

Unfortunately, we often start talking about the Basic Law only when there is 10-15 days left before Constitution Day, although the study of the Constitution and the underlying ideas should be a continuous process.

You, probably, recall that many years ago the Oliy Majlis adopted a resolution on extensive study and promotion of the Constitution among the population.

However, over the past time, many changes have occurred in the socio-political and economic life of our society. It is necessary to update this resolution, to bring it in line with modern requirements.

In a word, **every article of our Constitution should become a rule of life, a guide to action.** To do this, we need to create effective mechanisms for systematic study of the Basic Law in schools, universities, communities and labor collectives.

We must create in our society a legal culture in which respect for the Constitution and laws, respect for rights and freedoms, the honor and dignity of a person will not be an obligation, but an integral part of everyday life.

In general, our citizens should not only not violate laws, but also be interested in their observance. I want to draw your attention to one more question.

Unfortunately, our society has not yet completely gotten rid of dependent moods.

Each of us needs to realize: **in order to live well, first of all you need to work hard and, in addition to understanding rights and freedoms, deeply feel your responsibility. Affirmation of this important principle in our life depends only on us.**

No matter how lofty and difficult our goals may seem, we have every opportunity to achieve them. The source of strength and energy on this path is the rich spiritual heritage, the creative potential of our people.

We will continue, by uniting the efforts of the whole society, to direct our knowledge, experience and resources to ensure a prosperous life in the country, the future of our children. The issues of strengthening peace and stability, the rights and freedoms of citizens, the comprehensive support of the younger generation in their striving to acquire modern knowledge and professions, the realization of their talents and abilities will continue to be at the center of our reforms.

In foreign policy, we will cherish and develop friendly relations and cooperation in all spheres with the countries of the near and far abroad, primarily with our neighbors.

Taking this opportunity, let me sincerely welcome the distinguished ambassadors of foreign countries participating in today's solemn event, representatives of international organizations, and wish peace and well-being to their countries and peoples.

Dear friends!

The history witnesses that comprehensively developed generation is a buttress of great future, the creative labor of the people is a buttress of prosperous life, and the friendship and cooperation are a guarantee of prosperity!

These most important and time-honored principles inspire and mobilize us to achieve yet new horizons.

Dear compatriots!

I once again cordially congratulate you on the Day of Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan. I wish you, all our entire nation a sound health, happiness and kindness, new successes and best of luck!

Thank you for your attention.

BY EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Dear readers!



We are presenting you the first edition of the journal “The Strategic Issues of Security and Development” of the Institute of Strategic and Regional Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Publication of the Institute’s printed journal became highly demanded when large-scale reforms initiated by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in the framework of the Development Action Strategy in five priority areas of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021 started.

In 2017, by overcoming a difficult historical period of state building after the proclamation of Independence, Uzbekistan entered a fundamentally new era of development, aimed at building a free, democratic rule of law, strong civil society and market economy. In a very short time, the processes of modernization and liberalization have acquired a dynamic and comprehensive character in all spheres of public and political life of the country.

It is no coincidence that systemic changes in the largest country in Central Asia, bordering with all the states of the region, including Afghanistan, started attracting the close attention of international policymakers, academia and experts circles. According to their assessment, with the adoption of the Strategy of Action, Uzbekistan entered a new era, which actually marked the end of the post-soviet period of the country’s development. Reforms have taken irreversible character.

Today we are the witnesses and participants of significant transformations in the country. The goal of the implementing the principles are “Human interests above all,” “Not the people serve the state bodies, but the state bodies serve the people”, which are at the center of all reforms.

With the adoption of the Strategy of Action, Uzbekistan entered a new era, which actually marked the end of the post-soviet period of the country’s development. Reforms have become irreversible.

First, reformed the state apparatus system: government, ministries, departments and industries have been reformed, which has allowed them to reconfigure their functions, improve the efficiency of government institutions, and improve the business environment. In 2017, the Concept of administrative reform and the Road map for the implementation of its provisions were adopted. An important step was the introduction of the policy of decentralizing power by transferring executive authority from the center to local authorities and citizens’ self-governing bodies.

At the same time, the key principles as defined following: openness of the activities of state authorities and administration, the dialogue of the state with the people, the responsibility of state bodies and officials to citizens, the inevitability of punishment for corruption offenses. In January 2017, it was adopted the Law “On countering corruption” and consistent large-scale work started in improving legal awareness in society and intolerant attitude to various manifestations and forms of corruption.

Second, the judicial-legal system has been reformatted. For the first time in this process both national NGOs and reputable international organizations played an important role. The main goal of common efforts is to ensure the true independence of the courts, strengthening the principles of the rule of law in the country.

Legal and control mechanisms are being introduced to ensure the protection of the rights and freedoms of citizens in judicial and investigative activities. Torture and other inhuman, cruel, degrading punishment and treatment are eradicated. Courts obtained the right to issue sanctions to search and record telephone conversations. Temporary detention facilities, pre-trial detention facilities and penal institutions are equipped with video recording systems.

Third, in a short time introduced the system of free conversion of the national currency, the state's presence in the economy is being reduced gradually, and the investment climate has been improved totally. Despite the high speed of reforms, financial and macroeconomic stability is ensured, economic growth is sustainable, well-being of citizens is increasing. Due to the full support of small and medium-sized business, private entrepreneurship and private property, the middle class is strengthening.

The processes of modernization and diversification of national economy have entered the active phase, increasing their competitiveness through effective technological renewal, by the introduction of modern forms of strategic planning, innovative ideas on development into the government system. Agriculture is developing intensively, the transport and communication infrastructure is being improved the geography and structure of exports to world markets are expanding. The government is working on forming modern, competitive tourism industry, which is designed to become a strategic sector of the national economy.

Economic reforms are already giving the initial results. In particular, according to the World Bank's Doing Business 2018 report on reforming the system of job creation, Uzbekistan entered the top ten reformers to create the most favorable conditions for doing business. The ongoing reforms allowed Uzbekistan to become a leader among the countries of Europe and Central Asia to improve the business environment and simplify business conditions.

Fourth, increase the level of employment and incomes of the population, the modernization of the social protection system, the improvement of the state youth policy are the priority tasks of reforms in the social sphere. Transformations are carried out under the acknowledgment of the immutable truth: "people want to see positive changes in their lives today, not tomorrow, not in the distant future". This policy is distinguished by a strong social protection of vulnerable groups of population, providing them with a decent level of housing and social conditions.

Due to this, the image of the cities and villages of the country is changing day by day. At the same time the outlook of our citizens are changing with a strong confidence to the future.

Particular attention is paid to the solution of problems of improving the accessibility and quality of education and health care, the full development of the educational and scientific potential of society, by taking into account international standards. Considering the fact that a significant part of the country's population is young people (about 60%), the priority of social policy is to growing up a physically healthy young generation with stable life guidelines in the spirit of patriotism, religious tolerance, respect for laws, national and human values.

Fifth, the key task in the area of internal security is to ensure the inter-ethnic harmony and religious tolerance. Uzbekistan is a country, which is historically located at the crossroads of world cultures, civilizations and religions. Over the centuries, values and traditions based on inter-ethnic and interfaith tolerance have been formed here, which has become a characteristic feature of modern Uzbek society, an integral part of the culture and mentality of the people of Uzbekistan.

The government implementing a systematic policy in the field of interethnic and interfaith relations, considering it as one of the key factors of stability, security and sustainable development, ensuring human rights and freedoms.

It is no coincidence that the Republic of Uzbekistan is among the few countries of the post-soviet space, where did not arise any conflict on inter-ethnic or interfaith bases during the years of independence. In Uzbekistan, more than 130 ethnic groups with various religions live in peace and harmony. More than 2.200 organizations of 16 religious groups and confessions carry out their activities in a country, which have predominantly Muslim population (93%). Citizens of our country - representatives of various ethnic groups are widely represented in central and local authorities of the country. Among them are senators and members of parliament.

Large-scale transformations in Uzbekistan are carried out by considering the rapid changes in the world, which is acquiring intensive, less manageable and unpredictable character. The system of international relations is going through the period of profound transformation, along with a number of disturbing trends, such as:

- the growing geopolitical confrontation for spheres of influence and natural resources, the arms race and militarization, the confrontation in cyberspace;
- the expansion of the spectrum of threats of international terrorism and extremism, the aggravation of interethnic and interfaith contradictions, the strengthening of xenophobia and aggressive nationalism;
- free interpretation and selective application of generally accepted principles and norms of international law, reducing the effectiveness of multilateral institutions and mechanisms designed to ensure international peace and security;
- aggravation of the problems of food, energy and environmental security, which causes to the growth of strategic tension and turbulence in distant and neighboring regions of the world.

Against this background, large-scale reforms are being carried out in Uzbekistan in the military sphere. In January 2018, a new Defense Doctrine of Uzbekistan was adopted, which ensured the openness of the country's defense policy for the first time. The document establishes the fundamental principles of ensuring security in the military sphere on the basis of adherence to the norms of international law, policy of peace and cooperation with all countries, primarily with neighboring states. The principles of non-participation in military-political blocs and operations abroad, and the prevention of the deployment of foreign military bases and facilities on its territory are preserved.

The main priority of Uzbekistan's foreign policy is Central Asia. As President Sh.M.Mirziyoyev noted "Central Asia is a single organism that for centuries had a common geographical, economic, and cultural space. Our main goal is turning Central Asia into a stable, economically developed and prosperous region jointly".

In a short time, an active and productive dialogue of Uzbekistan with the neighboring countries of the region was developed following the principles of good neighborliness, mutual trust and respect, and mutual interests. Mutually beneficial solutions have been achieved on a number of actual issues related to water use, demarcation and delimitation of borders, the resumption and expansion of transport links, trade relations, and interregional cooperation. The leaders of the countries of the region showed the unprecedented readiness to eliminate all the conditions and prerequisites that fueled the conflict potential in Central Asia. The open, constructive and pragmatic foreign policy of Uzbekistan has created a fundamentally new, strategically crucial situation in the region.

In a short time, an active and productive dialogue of Uzbekistan with the neighboring countries of the region was developed following the principles of good neighborliness, mutual trust and respect, and mutual interests.

Uzbekistan, not in words, but in facts, proactively involved in laying a solid foundation for turning Central Asia into a zone of stability, sustainable development and good neighborliness.

The agenda proposed by Tashkent for the countries of the region is seen by the international community as a platform for changing the logical essence of regional cooperation towards its development and strengthening the geo-economic role of Central Asia in the world.



The adoption of a special resolution of the UN General Assembly “Strengthening regional and international cooperation to ensure peace, stability and sustainable development in the Central Asian region” on June 22, 2018 by the initiative of Uzbekistan was a significant indicator of broad support by the international community. This is the first UN document that presents the overall consolidated position of all five Central Asian states on the most acute problems of the region, ranging from environmental challenge and issues related to water use, to counteracting international terrorism and religious extremism.

Other initiatives declared by the President of Uzbekistan at the Samarkand International Conference in November 2017 “Central Asia: Shared Past and a Common Future, Cooperation for Sustainable Development and Mutual Prosperity” received similar support. Tashkent’s strategic proposals, which laid the foundation for a viable and efficient model of cooperation in the region, includes the launch of a mechanism for consultative meetings of the heads of Central Asian states, the creation of a Regional Economic Forum, the establishment of the Association of Regional Leaders and the business communities of the region.

Today we can confidently assert that the “Samarkand consensus” reached by the countries of Central Asia during this conference was the starting point not only for “resetting” intergovernmental relations in the region, but also entering the fundamentally new dialogue areas, qualitatively new interaction with international community. Moreover, for the first time, Afghanistan actively involved in regional cooperation processes, as evidenced by the results of the high-level international conference “Peace Process, Security Cooperation and Regional Co Collaboration” held on March 27, 2018 by the initiative of President Sh. M. Mirziyoyev.

The new regional dynamics in Central Asia has given a powerful impetus to the multidimensional international cooperation of Uzbekistan with the foreign partners. Opening its enormous potential, the Republic of Uzbekistan is becoming one of the most attractive political and economic partners for the CIS countries, Asia, Europe and America, international organizations and financial and economic structures.

The results of the foreign visits of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev since the beginning of 2017 and the bilateral talks at the highest level in Tashkent confirm that the world community welcomes and supports Uzbekistan's foreign policy on building and strengthening a balanced, mutually beneficial and long-term cooperation with leading countries of the world. Moreover, in a short period more than 400 international agreements and contracts worth about 100 billion dollars were signed in the trade, economic, investment and financial spheres.

Based on its strategic priorities in domestic and foreign policy, Uzbekistan is consistently developing and deepening multifaceted cooperation with highly reputable international and regional organizations - the UN, OSCE, SCO, CIS, OIC, IMF, WB, EBRD, ADB, IDB and others.

The international community looking with optimism about the long-term development prospects of the Republic of Uzbekistan and regional cooperation in Central Asia.

There is a clear understanding among foreign political and expert-analytical circles, that only a stable, dynamically developing and prosperous Uzbekistan can become a reliable and long-term partner.

Having begun unprecedented reforms within the framework of the Strategy of Action, Uzbekistan progressively becomes a modern competitive state, capable, on the one hand, of responding effectively to modern challenges and threats and making full use of all the opportunities offered by globalization processes, on the other.

By launching unprecedented reforms within the framework of the Strategy of Action, Uzbekistan progressively becoming a modern competitive state, capable on the one hand effectively responding to modern challenges and threats and making full use of all the opportunities of globalization processes. It is precisely in this respect that the relevance of our publication lies - a comprehensive, in-depth analysis

of the strategic issues of security and development trajectory of Uzbekistan, which depends largely on the strategic future of Central Asia - a hub region in the vast expanse of Eurasia.

In this context, the main mission of the ISRS journal is to provide information and analytical support for the internal and foreign policy of Uzbekistan by creating an open discussion platform for presenting and discussing a wide range of processes, trends and forecasts, assessments and research results. The target audience of the journal includes experts of expert-analytical and academic profile, as well as representatives of government bodies, business, the public, the student community and the wide audience of readers interested in the issues of domestic and international politics of Uzbekistan.

We hope that the magazine as an effective platform for fruitful exchange of advanced knowledge and experience, constructive discussions, presentation of innovative assessments and approaches will make its worthy contribution to the consolidation of the efforts of Uzbekistan's specialists in the information and scientific and methodological support of the processes of economic and political modernization of our country.

With regards and best wishes,

Vladimir Norov,

Director of the Institute of Strategic and Regional Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

REFORMS IN UZBEKISTAN: ASSESSMENTS OF FOREIGN EXPERT COMMUNITY

The First Address of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev, to the parliamentarians of the country, rated as "historical" and "new strategic vision", is aimed at forming a new image of Uzbekistan in the international arena.

The main provisions of the Address and ongoing reforms have provoked a widespread response among representatives of the diplomatic community, various international organizations and financial institutions, the world's leading media and the expert-analytical community. On the whole, it is noted that Uzbekistan, thanks to the initiatives of the President of the country Sh. Mirziyoyev, has managed to achieve breakthrough results in a short time both in the sphere of democratic modernization of the country and in the field of international relations.

According to the Founder of the Institute of Central Asia and the Caucasus at J. Hopkins University (USA), Frederick Starr, «in a broad sense, the Address of the Head of State is a comprehensive vision of the development of Uzbekistan as a modern nation with a global competitive economy and an open system of government»¹.



Mathias Dornfeldt, Director of the European Institute for Caucasus and Caspian Studies (Germany) research center (Germany), calls the address of Sh. Mirziyoyev to the parliament a «revolutionary step». According to him, the President of Uzbekistan « presented the idea of the need for radical reformatting of all areas of life of Uzbek society,» while receiving « strong support of his compatriots and great respect from leading politicians of the world»².



According to **Li Xin**, Director of the Center for Russia and Central Asia of the Shanghai Academy of International Studies (PRC), «The Republic of Uzbekistan under the leadership of Sh. Mirziyoyev has embarked on the path of innovative development aimed at a radical improvement in all spheres of state and society»³.



¹ <http://jahnnews.uz/ru/aktualno/124/46245/>

² <http://uzbekistan.lv/preobrazovaniya-v-uzbekistane-v-ocenax-inostrannyx-ekspertov/>

³ <http://www.uzbekistan.kg/news0801.htm>



The Deputy Director of the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan **Sanat Kushkumbayev** emphasized that the new vision and the proposed transformations are not tactical, but strategic.

According to the expert, economic changes, which have become one of the cornerstones of the new policy of Uzbekistan, are of particular interest; environmental initiatives in the Aral Sea region, a region critical for Kazakhstan; serious efforts to preserve and popularize Islamic culture in the region, as well as foreign policy pursued by the administration of Sh. Mirziyoyev, focused primarily on Central Asia.



According to the expert of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, PhD in History Science, Professor **Irina Zvyagelskaya**, «the message aims to shorten the inevitable period of uncertainty as much as possible and clearly identify priorities and methods for achieving the stated goals». According to her, the need for new impulses for the development of the country means for the legislative, executive and judicial authorities the need to move away from the usual stereotypes, start changes from themselves (which is always especially difficult) and offer a clear, comprehensive and long-term program of action. The message of the President can be considered such a program.



The role and significance of the address to highlight reforms in the judicial system are also noted by the Head of the NGO Regional Dialogue (Slovenia) **Myusa Sever**. According to her, « the utmost importance in the speech of the Head of State is an idea of strengthening the role of the defense in court proceedings. Without an increase in the skills and knowledge of lawyers, their revitalization during procedural hearings, one cannot expect a fair and effective administration of justice». ⁴



Andrea Moggi, Research fellow of the European Institute for Asian Studies, notes that Shavkat Mirziyoyev launched the process of the Central Asian «Revival», which has a positive effect on society, economy, culture, art, national and regional security and international relations.

⁴ <https://www.uzbekistan.de/ru/nachrichten/nachrichten-aktuell/> в-своа-комментируют-послание-президента-узбекистана-олий-мажлису

UZBEKISTAN IN INTERNATIONAL RATINGS

- Uzbekistan is placed to the second rank among the fastest growing countries in 2017 in the ranking of the World Economic Forum, based on the latest edition of the World Bank's Global Economic Perspectives.
- According to the World Bank, in 2017 Uzbekistan entered the top ten countries that significantly eased business conditions.
- According to the Doing Business 2018: Reforming for the Creation of Jobs report, Uzbekistan ranked 74th among 190 countries, improving its rating by 13 positions than 2017. Uzbekistan has also entered the top ten reformers to create the most favorable conditions for doing business.
- The scale and effectiveness of measures taken in order to create a favorable business environment is confirmed by a significant improvement in 6 out of 10 indicators of the World Bank Doing Business 2018 report.
- In the last Financial Times ranking, Uzbekistan ranked second place in terms of improving the business climate - this indicator improved by 23.59 points against the background of a total 63.03. The Financial Times considers Uzbekistan one of the leaders in the field of improving the business climate in 2017 in the post-Soviet space.
- In the Financial Times ranking of 2017, Uzbekistan was in 2nd place in the list of hot destinations for tourism. This ranking was based on a survey of tourism industry leaders, including owners and managers of Wild Frontiers, KE Adventure Travel, Discover the World, Ampersand Travel, Oetker Collection, Red Savannah and Cazenove and Loyd.
- According to the UN's e-government rating, Uzbekistan has the largest growth. In the new rating of the "electronic government" of the UN, Uzbekistan entered the top ten countries of the world, which most noticeably improved their "electronic government" systems, and rose immediately to 20 points.
- According to the rating of the Italian newspaper ilSole24ore, Uzbekistan became the most attractive country for travelers from the Eurozone. Rating called "Affordable vacation? Seven places where the euro still has weight" compiled by experts of the newspaper and the international company LG.
- According to the rating of countries of the world in terms of living standards, in 2017 Uzbekistan was ranked 74th among 142 countries of the world.
- According to the survey of the American company Gallup International, the citizens of Uzbekistan feel most protected compared to other CIS countries. In the Index of Law and Order, the rating of Uzbekistan indicated 95 points. That is, according to this indicator, the country became the first in the CIS and the second in the world.
- According to surveys of the American company Gallup "World law and order index", Uzbekistan is on the 2nd place in the world in the rating of safe countries. This survey was conducted among more than 136 thousand residents of 135 countries to determine the level of crime in the areas of residence and the reliability of local law enforcement.
- According to the annual Global Firepower rating, the Armed Forces of Uzbekistan in 2017 occupied the 48th line in the world ranking, remaining the most powerful army in Central Asia. Among the CIS countries, Uzbekistan is second only to Russia (2nd position) and Ukraine (30th row).

ISSUES OF INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT

UZBEKISTAN: STRATEGIC CHANGES



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Annotation

This article analyzes the strategic changes taking place in Uzbekistan. The author describes in detail progressive ideas and historical actions of the government in the field of public policy, creative models of the country's economic development, as well as assessments of foreign experts and reputable international institutions on the positive changes achieved.

Progressive ideas and breakthrough actions

Today it is noticeable that the updated course of the state policy is "imbued" with progressive ideas and real actions. The development of the country's economy is viewed through the prism of improving the welfare of the people. This becomes one of the key factors in the context of carrying out the large-scale reforms, and this, experts say, enables the leadership of Uzbekistan to minimize risks from structural changes in the economy, avoid recession, ally government agencies and the population in achieving strategic goals and priorities.

In the second year of the implementation of the **Strategy of Actions on the five priority areas of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021** it is more clear the desire to create the **new image of Uzbekistan**. There are tendencies on strengthening democracy in the country, many initiatives are raised by the citizens themselves, the decisions are taken through a wide public discussion. There are changes in critical thinking of people and their attitude to the reforms, social activity increases, the civic position and awareness of involvement increases in making socially important decisions.

As a result, today many citizens of the country offer their innovative ideas put forward relevant proposals on a particular socially significant issue.

In this regard, there is a process of institutionalizing the dialogue of the state with the people, including civil society,¹ as well as the implementation of the principle of **feedback**, the analogy of which can serve as a model to apply in order to improve business sphere. For example, while improving the quality of company's services, it is necessary to receive some feedback from its customers constantly in order to know about the existing problems and solve them in time. This is the most effective way of marketing research in dealing with customer complaints, which ultimately ensures the company's prosperity. The study of citizens' appeals, organization of the socio-political dialogue of the government and society are the same marketing research strategy of a socio-political nature.

As a result, today many citizens of the country offer their innovative ideas, initiate relevant proposals on a particular socially significant issues. In this context, the activities of the Virtual Reception Office of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan (pm.gov.uz) deserve special attention.

In a short time, it has become one of the main and effective tool for establishing direct dialogue with people, an indicator of effectiveness of government agencies and local authorities, a deep analysis

The cornerstone of the successive reforms in Uzbekistan implemented in all spheres of the life of society and the state are, above all, ensuring the interests of the people, creating decent conditions for a prosperous life of people.

At the same time, large-scale programs initiated by the leadership of the country take into account the current situation in the global economy.

¹ Institutionalization of the state's dialogue with the people, including civil society, implies horizontal relations based on the implementation of an equal bilateral dialogue interaction between the subjects.

mechanism of complaints to take immediate action to them. Since its opening on 24 August, 2018, more than 2 million complaints have been received from the population, out of which 97.2% found their solution. This Work indicates the adherence to implementation of the principle of "the responsibility of state bodies and officials to the public".

In 2018, new forms of communication were introduced into the process of dialogue with people. An updated version of the Virtual Reception Office of the President of Uzbekistan was launched. In particular, such new types of communication as "Online Consultant", "Frequently Asked Questions", "Contact Heads of Government Agencies", "Schedules for Reception of Citizens by Heads of Ministries and Agencies and Referral to them", "Addresses of People's Reception" started their activity.

An important innovation in the Virtual Reception has become the "Report on the Persecution" module, which created to protect the rights and freedom of applicants. Now, if someone is persecuted for sending a comment statement or complaint, he can quickly report it by pressing a special button. Such messages will be reviewed quickly with the involvement of law enforcement agencies.

For citizens in order to express their civic position online, it was created a special web page "My opinion" (meningfikrim.uz). As an advanced mechanism of democracy, a procedure for making a collective electronic appeal has been introduced. Public initiatives that have received support from more than ten thousand citizens of the country are obligatory for consideration by the Parliament.



According to experts, effective mechanisms of interaction between government agencies and citizens have appeared in Uzbekistan. This has become the *driver of the domestic policy* of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev.

Thus, the ongoing domestic policy, as well as the observed changes in the country, indicate a desire to move to a new stage of development of the public administration system. One of the key principles of this model is to establish a new type of interaction between the state and the population, in which the government recognizes serving the people as its main function.

Towards a creative model of economic development

The analysis shows that if the main trend of 2017 in Uzbekistan was "dialogue with the people", then in 2018 the focus moved on the transition to the innovative economy.

Announcing 2018 as the "Year of support for active entrepreneurship, innovative ideas, and technologies," the head of state gave a clear signal that in the face of fierce competition in the world, only the presence of high innovative potential is an important condition for the country's economic growth in the 21st century. In this regard, the Ministry of Innovation Development has been created, with specific tasks. In particular, this authority is called upon to play the role of locomotive in the implementation of the most important projects not only in the economic sphere but also in daily life of the whole society.

In the Address to the Parliament, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev declared how he understands the active entrepreneurship. According to him, "this is a direction in the economy when business activity is organized on the basis of innovative, modern approaches, advanced technologies, and new management methods. The President stressed out that "the priority task should be the provision of full support to entrepreneurs, in particular, in creating favorable conditions for the importation and introduction of high technologies and the new scientific achievements into production". This means the "transition to innovative development aimed at a total improvement in all spheres of the life of the state and society"².

The active economic agenda initiated by the leadership of the country implies diversification of the economy, restructuring of agriculture and the expansion of foreign economic relations. In order to implement the objectives in this direction, new measures are being taken in Uzbekistan in order to develop a creative economy based on innovative development and accelerating economic growth rates.

The basic idea of a creative economy is to create new industries and products (both goods and services) that would ensure not only export growth but also the creation of new high-quality jobs. It is designed to create a favorable investment climate, to promote the growth of share of modern technologies and science in the national economy, the development of the social sphere, the modernization of the education system, etc.

²The same source.

At the same time, the engine of the creative economy is the creative class, which in turn depends on personal development, self-realization and the manifestation of individuality.



The creative economy also involves active participation of citizens in the development of new products and services through support for start-ups (start-up - new business projects, original business ideas, and models), new types of entrepreneurship, cooperation of research institutions, universities and industrial enterprises.

Currently, start-ups are actively introduced and are popular among young people in the country. There is a "Program to support youth start-up initiatives", in which participate more than a thousand students from all universities of Uzbekistan. The scope of projects are very broad, but the most popular areas are e-commerce, education, communication and navigation technologies, transport and road infrastructure, as well as medicine and biotechnology.

In order to achieve the goals in this direction, the important organizational and legal measures are being taken in the country.

In particular, a solid legal base has been formed and the necessary conditions have been created to support business entities. The Guarantee Fund for the Development of Small Business and the Institute of the Presidential Representative for the Protection of the Rights and Legal Interests of Entrepreneurship Entities (*Business Ombudsman*) carry out their activities.

According to experts, the turning point in the financial and economic sector of Uzbekistan in 2017 was the liberalization of monetary policy. The Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on priority measures to liberalize monetary policy of September 2, 2017 noted that "excessive administrative regulation in the sphere of currency circulation created an ineffective system of benefits and preferences for individual industries and economic entities and violated the market principles for competition. Moreover, it has become a

The German magazine "Wostok", among the achieved positive changes, highlights the gradual elimination of administrative barriers to do business, the abolition of all types of unscheduled inspections of business entities, simplification of the process of issuing loans to small and private entrepreneurs, as well as the creation of the institution of the Plenipotentiary under the President to protect their rights and legitimate interests.

containing factor for attracting foreign investment, increasing exports of goods and services, and of the country's development"³. This decision is primarily aimed at reducing the share of the "shadow economy", as well as achieving a positive impact on most of the key economic indicators. According to experts of international financial institutions, despite certain risks, including currency risks, the country's banking sector managed to minimize them, compensating for its own assets⁴.

Another important aspect of the economic agenda was the development of the "Concept of reforming the tax system of the Republic of Uzbekistan" project aimed at reducing the tax burden, reducing the VAT rate, unifying and eliminating a number of taxes and obligatory payments, as well as measures to improve tax administration in general⁵. This document assumes a simplification of the sophisticated tax system: reduction of the number of taxes, tax regimes, unification of tax payment rules for different categories of taxpayers, simplification of tax calculation methods, categorical rejection of individual tax benefits.

At the same time, in order to create favorable conditions for active inflow of foreign investments, to increase the production of export-oriented products in the regions of the country free economic zones (FEZ) were created. Today, investors can open production in the FEZ "Navai", "Angren", "Jizzakh", "Gijduvan", "Urgut", "Hazorasp", "Kokand", as well as in several specialized production of pharmaceutical products, sports goods, breeding fish zones.

At the same time, the cluster system approach is being actively implemented in almost all areas. In particular, clusters are created in such areas as agriculture, tourism, industry, textiles, etc. In order to strengthen the cluster policy, a Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted

³Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On priority measures to liberalize monetary policy" dated September 2, 2017. / <http://lex.uz/docs/3326423>

⁴Moody's on trends in the banking system of Uzbekistan / <http://finance.uz/index.php/ru/fuz-menu-biznes-ru/2506-moody-s-o-tendentsiyakh-v-bankovskoj-sisteme-uzbekistana>

⁵The concept of reforming the tax system of the Republic of Uzbekistan <http://taxreform.regulation.gov.uz/>

"On Measures to Create a Modern Cotton-Textile Cluster in the Syrdarya Region"⁶. As international practice shows, the development of a cluster as a new form of economic management, economic interaction and relations allows achieving a certain socio-economic effect. It contributes to the growth of the level of production, innovation opportunities, economic sustainability, social guarantees for the population and increases the competitiveness of the real sector of the economy to stimulate new organizations and firms. The renewed internal and external progressive policy of Uzbekistan has rallied the state and society to achieve a common goal - to make people's lives better, worthier, to ensure peace and prosperity in the country. The internal transformation, undoubtedly, reflected in the actions of the state in the foreign policy arena, riveting the attention of the wide world community. Assessing the role of the country in the international arena, foreign observers write that Uzbekistan started the policy of open doors and has great potential in this area.

Foreign specialists and media are most impressed with the new economic policy of the Uzbek leadership, aimed at further strengthening macroeconomic stability and maintaining high economic growth rates, enhancing its competitiveness, modernizing and intensively developing agriculture, continuing institutional and structural reforms to reduce the state's presence in the economy, further strengthening the protection of the rights and the priority role of private property, stimulating the development of small business and private enterprise.

Experts say that the reforms will advance Uzbekistan to create its new image, and in this context, they urge the world community to pay attention to the breakthrough development observed today in the country. In this regard, they believe: if Uzbekistan succeeds in reforming statehood, the republic can become a "laboratory" of reforms⁷, and its best practices will be studied and applied by other developing countries.

According to experts, the intensification of Uzbekistan's policy in the international arena, some "external players want to see Tashkent as a moderator of their dialogue with Central Asia⁸. It is noted that official Tashkent proceeds exclusively from its own national interests. "Remains on its own. Neither pro-American, nor pro-Turkish, nor pro-Russian - only and exclusively pro-Uzbek". It is alleged that "in this process, Tashkent is an independent entity that takes into account the interests of all external actors, but focuses primarily on the interests of Uzbekistan".

Thus, a number of large-scale projects have been implemented in Uzbekistan over a short period of time, dozens of programs have been initiated, and favorable conditions are being created for foreign investors. In this context, we can say that the past year and a half have become a kind of "awakening of consciousness" for many Uzbeks, a time of strategic changes for the country as a whole.

The influential American analytical magazine The National Interest also published material on reforms in Uzbekistan. It highlights the importance of the decisions "to weaken currency control and the transformation of the Uzbek sum into a fully convertible currency". In 2017 there was a surge in foreign trade of the republic with neighboring countries, numerous transactions between Uzbek businessmen and foreign companies worth billions of dollars were concluded.

⁶Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan of 15.09.2017, №PP-3279 "On measures to create a modern cotton-textile cluster in the Syrdarya region <http://lex.uz/docs/3352681>

⁷The same source.

⁸I.Pankratenko, Who are you with, Tashkent? / www.ng.ru/dipkurer/2018-05-28/11_7233_tashkent.html

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE ARE THE MAIN PRIORITIES OF THE REFORMS



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Annotation

This article analyzes the current social policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan, developed and carried out in the context of ongoing reforms in the country in the field of health care, education, and social support to the poorest segments of population. It was noted that its relevance, focus, and validity on the principles of humanism and social justice.

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), today only 45% of the world's population has access to social protection. At the same time, 29% of the world's population uses comprehensive social security services; 68% of people of retirement age receive elder-age pension. 56% of the world's population is deprived of opportunities of health care, which is especially true for rural residents. These facts indicate that it is vital for each country of the world to address the issues of improving the effective management of the social sphere.

International practice shows the conjugacy of a market economy with a set of problems: the differentiation of society, inflation, unemployment, decline of living standards, including the incomes of population. In this context, one of the leading principles of renewal and development of Uzbekistan is based on the implementation of a strong social policy at all stages of transformation. According to this, every year about 60% of the state budget goes to the social sphere: education, health care, social protection of the poor layers of the population, culture.

It should be noted, that today there is a need in the transition to move to a qualitatively new level of social policy in order to improve social protection mechanisms. In this regard, social sphere is among the main priority areas of Strategy of Actions. We should note that special emphasis paid on the needs of population, strengthening social justice and increasing the welfare of people, when developing appropriate measures in this direction.

A special role in the implementation of these tasks paid to the mechanisms of direct dialogue with the people - the Virtual Reception and the People's Reception of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Due to this, based on the number of appeals and proposals of citizens, a list of priorities in the social sphere was formed, the distinguishing features of the implementing reforms in the social sphere were identified, implementation mechanisms are defined in three key areas:

The first is improvement of living conditions of population, especially low-income people segment. In this direction, measures are being taken to meet the housing needs of the population. In 2018, it is planned to provide about 1.5 thousand apartments for young families, 3 thousand apartments for people with disabilities, 100 apartments for military personnel. In rural areas, more than 20 thousand houses with all the necessary conditions will be built at preferential prices and loans.

Compared to previous years, the volume of house construction has increased significantly. For example, this indicator has increased by 20 times compared to 2007, by 3.5 times to 2010, and 2 times to 2014. At the same time, taking into account the needs of population, the criteria for obtaining concessional mortgage loans were updated. According to the new system, a list of individuals with disabilities who need to improve their living conditions has been compiled.

4 billion 210 million sums were allocated to provide these people with an opportunity to obtain houses (apartments). Due to such assistance, during 2018, 385 disabled citizens will receive modern housing.

In addition, by the decision of the President of Uzbekistan the conditions for mortgage to purchase affordable housing were changed on July 18, 2018. Until the 1 January, 2020, the mortgage will be issued for 20 years with a 3-year refinement period and an interest rate of 7% per annum for the first 5 years, and later - at the Central Bank's rate.

Young families, residents of old houses and other categories of citizens who need housing improvement, in order to buy apartments in cities, will be decreed 15 % initial credit by the government.



At the expense of the state budget, the Council of the Federation of Trade Unions and the Makhalla Charitable Foundation (in equal shares), gratuitous assistance will be provided to families living in difficult conditions, and for people that are caring for disabled. In 2018, on average 10 - 25 low-income families from each district and city will have an opportunity to repair their houses.

On average, up to 70 families from each region of the country will receive household appliances (gas or electric furnaces, refrigerators, sewing machines) or one unit of cattle during 2018-2019.

The second is improving the system of providing population with medicines at affordable prices. Solving this issue, it is planned to build and open 2 thousand social pharmacies that will have to provide population with high-quality medicines at a low price. Currently, there is an automated system for registering medicines in public medical institutions and social pharmacies, a special public commission has been formed to monitor problematic issues in providing population with medicines, as well as collecting and analyzing opinions, feedback and recommendations of citizens on this issue. The main task of the commission is to identify the reasons for possible increase in the cost of medicines.



According to the National Vaccination Calendar, children receive the prophylactic vaccination against 12 controlled infections at the expense of the state. The cost of vaccines against infectious diseases is fully covered by the state budget. At the same time, vaccination coverage in 2017 reached 99.5%, as a result of which Uzbekistan was recognized by the World Health Organization as a territory free from measles and rubella.

It should also be noted that the state pays special attention to preservation and modernization of the system of free medical care. In this regard, the activities of screening centers focusing on maternal and child health care, are radically revised. By the end of 2018, on the basis of 46 district and city medical associations, it is planned to organize inter-district perinatal centers, which will be provided with modern medical equipment and staffed with qualified personnel.

In addition, as part of activities to provide targeted assistance to the low-income part of population, an average of 6 families from each district and city will be reimbursed for medical services in case serious diseases and lack of funds for treatment are identified.

The third is educational system reform. The result of transformations in this direction was the formation of a system, including the regulation and control of the functioning of preschool, general education, and higher education entities.



In this regard the Ministry of Preschool Education was established. Given the urgency of raising children from an early age, strengthening the material and technical resource base of this sphere, a network of private kindergartens is being formed in the country. At the same time, they are granted significant benefits. According to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to further stimulate and develop the system of pre-school

education" (2018), pre-school educational institutions established on the basis of a public-private partnership, who are free from paying taxes (for 10 years), customs duties (for 2 years). They take land for (for 30 years) their buildings at "zero" cost by the government.

These measures will reduce the fees in private kindergartens, specifically for those from low-income families, and expand the coverage of children with pre-school education.

A number of innovations have been introduced in the educational system. Responding to the proposals of the general public education, taking into account the wishes of parents, teachers, and pupils, the 11-year general education system restored. At the same time, in order to minimize possible "gaps" in the vocational education of young people, conditions were created for students of 10-11 grades to acquire professional skills. A special curriculum has been developed, in which one day per week is devoted to vocational training.

Graduates of the 11th grade with a certificate will be issued a state document (certificate), giving the right to be employed. Thus, the transition to eleven-year education contributes to the process of mastering the profession. In order to further support the training of high school students, appropriate training facilities have been established at colleges across the country.

Today, schoolchildren study more than 50 professions, e.g. a mechanic, a driver, a cook, a pastry chef, a barber, a carpenter, a painter. In turn, vocational colleges are reoriented to educating narrow-profile specialists with special training.

The reforms have also affected the higher education system. The changes in this sphere primarily aimed at establishing transparency and social justice during the organization of entrance examination process to expand the enrollment of young people in higher education. In order to implement these tasks, the President of Uzbekistan adopted a Resolution "On Improving the Procedure for Conducting Entrance Tests to the Bachelor of Higher Educational Institutions of the Republic" on October 16, 2017.

The normative legal act stipulates that from the 2018-2019 school year, the entrance examinations to higher educational institutions will be held from August 1 to August 15 in allocated spaces. The exam process will be monitored online. The results are scheduled to be published the day after the test. This measure should contribute to ensuring the transparency and openness of the examination process for public, including parents of applicants.

Enrollment to universities in the subject area of culture, design, sports, visual and applied art, architecture, music and art history will be conducted through creative exam tasks without any tests. At the same time, the government of Uzbekistan plans of to further expand public access to higher education. The program for integrated development of higher education system for 2017-2021 has been approved with the amount of financial resources about 1.7 trillion sums. By 2021, an increase in the quota of admission to universities by 18% is envisaged.

Thus, the reforms being carried out in Uzbekistan in the social sphere, in health care, education and the provision of social support to the low earning segments of population not only preserve the principle of humanism, but also gave effective results. In this case the main guideline is addressing attention to each person, his daily needs and concerns and that is why the ongoing transformations receive recognition and popular support by the population.

IMPROVING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN UZBEKISTAN IN THE INFORMATION EPOCH

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Annotation

The article deals with the issues of improving public administration, modernizing all spheres of activity of state and public institutions in Uzbekistan through developing information and communication technologies. As it is noted that the positive results of measures taken by the Government on the formation and development of the information society. The author identifies current problems in this direction that require an early resolution.

The intensive development of information and communication technologies "challenges" the classical methods of state and public administration, highlighting the issues of modernization in all spheres of activity of state and government institutions. The use of ICT achievements in the improvement of the management system contributes to the accelerated adoption of political, economic and social decisions on the acute problems of public and state life. Uzbekistan also is actively implementing the achievements of ICT in the system of state and public administration.

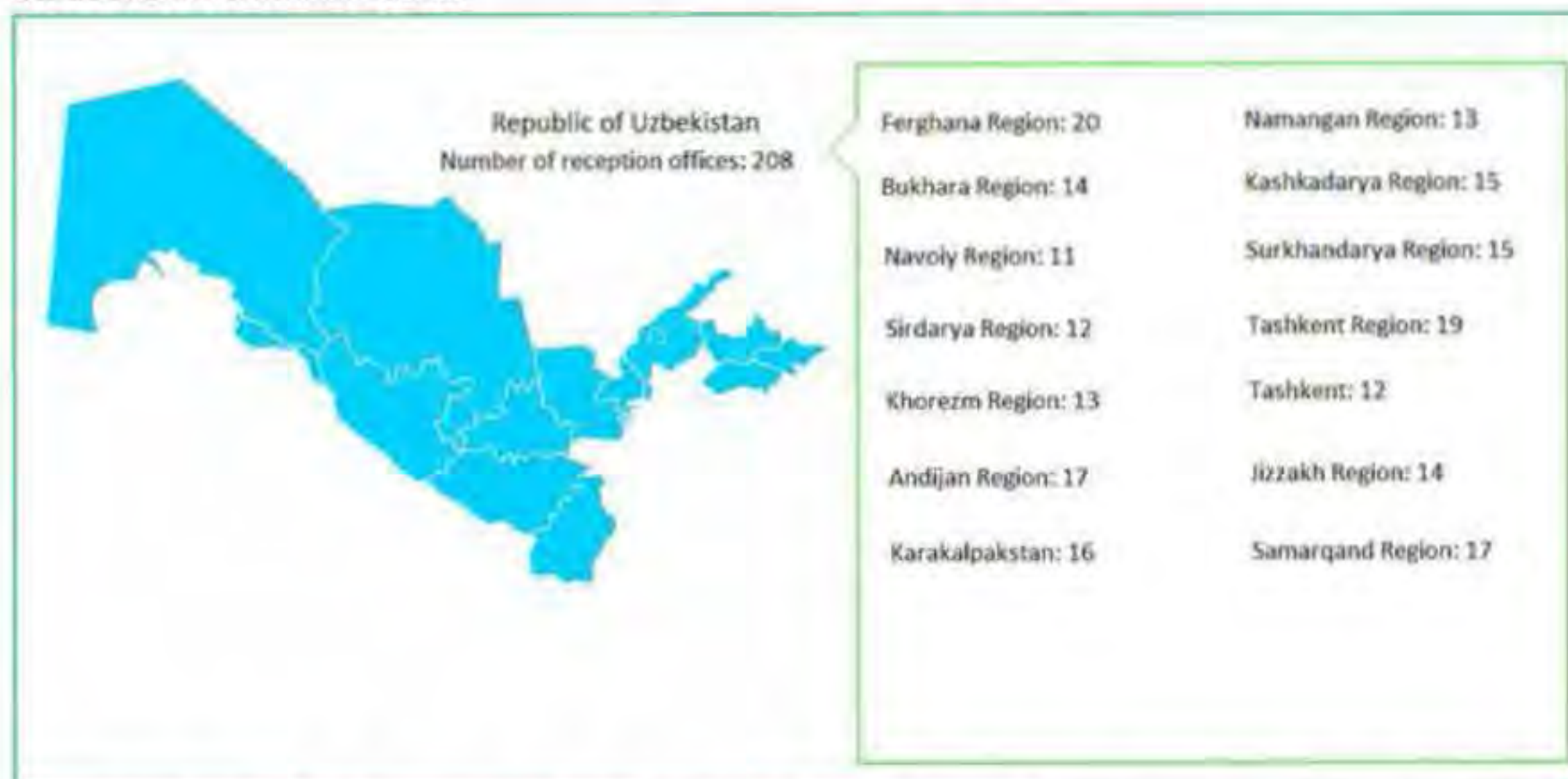
The start implementation of practical measures using digital technologies, especially in dealing with citizens' appeals in 2016 was a breakthrough for Uzbekistan. The Virtual Receptions of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan laid a stable foundation for the use of ICT in public administration. It has become a kind of trend for the exchange of information in "online dialogue" between the population and the state authorities and administration.

The experience of the Virtual Reception showed the need to develop a strategy for creating a state management system for creating the information society and to meet the information needs of the population, the achievement of which is due to the implementation of the Strategy of Actions which envisages a number of major tasks for the development of the information technologies sphere. In the framework of the Action Strategy, the Concept of Administrative Reform of the Republic of Uzbekistan was also adopted specifying several important tasks:

- further implementation of the e-government system and modern ICTs in the activities of executive branch at all levels in order to streamline administrative procedures, automate management processes, create an effective information exchange system for timely and adequate response to emerging challenges and problems at the territorial level and the country as a whole;
- ensuring the transparency and openness of the activities of the executive branch, introducing modern forms of providing information to individuals and legal entities, eliminating excessive administrative costs in the interaction with society and business.

The innovation in the judicial-legal system of Uzbekistan was the introduction and consolidation at the legislative level of the practice of making petitions by the population (e-civil society) on topical issues for consideration by the country's parliament.

By December 1, 2018, it is planned to launch a pilot project “Electronic Criminal Case” to introduce a protected system that allows to conduct criminal proceedings in electronic form and the exchange of information by inquiry bodies between prosecution authorities, courts and penal enforcement agencies, as well as other organizations when conducting legal proceedings, including through the integration of information systems and databases, automation conducting statistics on criminal cases.



Since 2013, the introduction of “E-SUD” e-justice system into the civil courts has shown its positive results. Today, the system successfully operates in all 75 civil courts of Uzbekistan.

A new step in the use of ICT achievements in the provision of services to the population can be considered the introduction of a pilot project ID-civil passport cards of residents of Tashkent. ID-cards will contain a single identification number of each citizen, his personal data for identification in order to obtain public services.

The country has begun a gradual implementation of the Safe City Concept, the purpose of which is to integrate and automate information systems for receiving and registering reports of crimes and incidents sent to the on-call and dispatch services of emergency operational services of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Emergency Situations, the city of Tashkent, and other ministries and departments, in a single duty dispatching service “112”. The project initially consists of five elements: public safety; monitoring compliance with the rules of the road; Fire safety; ambulance system; emergency assistance. The last stage of the project “Safe City” should cover the whole country by 2023.

Moreover, by 2025 it is planned to implement an innovative project “Innovative Smart City” in the city of Nurafshon, Tashkent region. The “smart city” will be built utilising and merging new technologies, eco-city systems and traditions of Uzbekistan.

By the end of 2018, the relevant ministries and departments of Uzbekistan plan to implement the “Smart Medicine” Concept in the country and create a “Center for Unified Medical Information” within its framework, the main objective of which is to offer maximum convenience for the population of our country.

This Concept allows for early detection of diseases and remote treatment of patients. It will assist, to raise the level of qualification of doctors and the material and technical equipment of

For 2017 through the information system of electronic justice “E-SUD”:

- **442.4** thousand applications were filed, including lawsuits, which is **40%** of all considered cases;
- The average number of visits to courts was reduced from 6-7 to 2-3 times, due to which the parties' expenses decreased by **10%**;
- **3 thousand** women from the most remote regions of the country were positively resolved through the courts disputes related to the recovery of alimony for minor children.

medical institutions introducing the system of electronic (online) management in medical institutions.

At the government level, a number of decisions have been taken regarding the proper provision of electronic public services to the public. In particular, a single portal of interactive public services has been created, providing about 400 types of services. There are Public Service Agencies under the People's Reception Office of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan in districts, cities and regional centers that provide 58 types of public services according to the "one window" principle.

Currently, 114 government agencies have electronic portals, of which 79% have mobile apps, which creates additional convenience for the public. In addition, the possibility of subscription is implemented on the websites of ministries and departments, allowing users to automatically receive newsletters of current news.

In the framework of the Strategy of Actions the existing system of "Open Data" is being improved, a special portal of the same name has been created. Currently, 129 state, public and private organizations provide information to Internet users. The portal contains 3,705 types of "open data", the amount of downloaded information from the portal is 3 million downloads.

The first pilot phase of the project "Safe City" is designed for 2017-2019. Within the framework of the project, it is planned to install over 16 thousand video cameras in Tashkent. At the second stage - in 2019-2021. - "Safe City" will be implemented in regional centers and major cities of Uzbekistan. At the third stage - 2021-2023. - will cover the whole country.



The government takes measures to expand administrative and technical capabilities for the development of the "information society". This includes reducing the cost of Internet services and improving their quality. These measures take into consideration the increase amount of Internet users in the country, which by the beginning of 2018 amounted to 20 million in total, increasing annually by 5.3 million (or 36%). In 2017, the cost of 1 Mbit/s Internet decreased more than twice from \$ 76.6 to \$ 30.2.

These measures contributed to the raise of the possibilities of Uzbekistan's population effectively use the virtual space. Creation and active implementation of effective e-government mechanisms, expansion of openness of the activities of state bodies pave the way for the formation and development of e-civil society in the country.

In this context it is appropriate to point to an active use of social networks as a tool (channel) to contact with population. In this direction in Uzbekistan, as well as throughout the world, the following these trends:

firstly, the activity of state bodies in social networks is constantly increasing;

secondly, the observance of transparency through the use of social networks creates the condition for "virtualization" of dialogue between officials and Internet users around the world;

thirdly, this practice becomes a convenient format for the timely communication of state bodies with the "electronic civil society";

fourthly, the social networking platform becomes a source of its own information, intended both for the media and general public.

Speaking about the peculiarities of formation of the information society in Uzbekistan, one should also take into account that the share of young people from the total population of the country is more than 63%, while about 75% of young people use social networks and instant messengers. The increase of the influence of the Internet on mind and value orientations, especially of young people, their civil socialization it can be predicted that the impact may be both positive and negative. This raises a problem of information-psychological protection of society to

As part of the implementation of the Strategy in 2017, the State Program "Year of Dialogue with the People and Human Interests" adopted 29 laws and over 900 other legal acts aimed at the development of all spheres of state and public life. In 2017-2021 it is planned to implement sectoral programs, providing for a total of 649 investment projects worth \$ 40 billion. As a result, in the next five years, the production of industrial goods will increase by 1.5 times, its share in GDP will grow from 33.6% to 36%, the share of the processing industry to 85%.

ensure the security of information and information systems in the country. There is a Center for Information Security and Assistance in Ensuring Public Order, as well as "UZCERT" - the Information Security Incident Response Service whose tasks are to reduce the level of information security threats for users of the Uzbek national segment of the Internet. To this end, UZCERT assists domestic and foreign legal entities and individuals in identifying, preventing and suppressing illegal activities directed against information systems and resources of the UZ domain. The government pays great attention to the improvement of information and communication technologies in all directions. In particular, in February 2018, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev initiated activities aimed at further improvement of the ICT management system, expanding the range of electronic public services and developing the telecommunication infrastructure in the country.

To follow these the government takes the responsibility to adopt the ICT development program in the country's regions for 2018-2020, to solve the following tasks: further development of the infrastructure to take advantage of ICT capabilities; improvement of the mobile communications quality; increase in the level of Internet access; increase in the integration of information systems of state bodies; development of the software development industry.

The President of Uzbekistan also paid attention to insufficient implementation of advanced information and communication technologies in foreign policy and foreign economic activity, the development of tools of "digital diplomacy", which is a key element in international relations, since its main purpose is to promote the foreign policy interests of the state.

Despite the fact that there are already positive results from the measures taken by the state to form and develop the information society in the country, there are some tasks of national importance that need to be addressed as soon as possible. These, in particular are:

- improvement of legislation aimed at ensuring informational, ideological and psychological protection of society, its spiritual and moral values when using information and communication technologies, improving the culture of behavior of the population (Internet users) in the virtual space, as well as protecting state interests in the international information space;
- adoption of a strategic conceptual document on the gradual establishment and development of the information society in Uzbekistan and the national digital economy;
- development of the national information software that meets international standards to protect information and national information and communication systems from external cyber-attacks;
- activating the work of state and economic management bodies through the use of information and communication technologies in their activities, especially local government bodies.

THE BASIC TRENDS IN CENTRAL ASIA

NEW POLITICAL DYNAMISM IN CENTRAL ASIA: SECURITY ISSUES AND PROSPECTS FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION

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Annotation

The article examines the issues of regional security and prospects of cooperation between the countries of Central Asia in the context of a new world order. As factors of sustainable development and security the author considers preservation of geopolitical balance in Central Asia; development of multivariate system of transport and communication corridors; cardinal increase of efficiency of counteraction to terrorism and religious extremism; the solution of the Afghan problem; settlement of problems of fair water use and ecology in the region.

Under the influence of globalization, structural changes are taking place in the modern system of international relations, and political and economic interdependence between countries is growing rapidly. Under these conditions, the development of the international political situation is becoming intense, practically uncontrollable and unpredictable. The range of threats to regional security and stability is expanding, including terrorism, religious extremism, drug trafficking and transnational crime. The problems of food, energy and environmental security in some regions of the world are being exacerbated. Moreover, the growing gap between rich and poor countries is escalating inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions.

The rapid changes taking place in the modern world, the growth of challenges and threats, and the escalation of tensions in various parts of the world require the Central Asian states to pay close attention to ensuring security at the national and regional levels. In particular, geographically surrounded by four nuclear powers – Russia, China, India and Pakistan, Central Asia is in close proximity to today's major hot spots of armed conflict and frozen conflicts.

At the same time, according to experts, the situation in the neighboring and remote regions, where armed confrontation continues, the growing scale of challenges and threats of terrorism and religious extremism, drug trafficking and organized crime will systematically affect the stability and security in Central Asia. In this regard, the security of Central Asia is an integral part of global security.

As President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev stated that "Central Asia is a single organism that has had a common culture for centuries. Historical community, linguistic similarity, common traditions and customs give us enormous opportunities to be together and to build our common future together, to turn Central Asia into a stable, economically developed and prosperous region." Meanwhile, the ability of the Central Asian countries to work together with a view of ensuring peace, stability and prosperity in the region will largely determine the dynamics of the most important processes in Eurasia. The States of the region, aware of the indivisibility of security and the common historical destinies of the peoples living in Central Asia, are making concerted efforts at both the bilateral and multilateral levels to ensure peace and stability in Central Asia.

The status quo in Central Asia can be described as favorable for the development of multifaceted and mutually beneficial inter-state cooperation between the countries of the region. Thus, over the past two years, the political dialogue at the highest level has significantly intensified, interdepartmental and inter-regional relations of neighboring countries have improved, as a result of which there is an increase in trade and economic relations. But most importantly, a new impetus has been given to the process of solving long-standing regional problems.

The pundits say that 2017-2018 will remain in history as the years of the beginning of a new era in the interstate relations of the Central Asian countries. Thanks to the political will and active strategic actions taken by the leaders of these neighboring states, the region has begun to show new signs of political life, and the level of political trust among the countries of Central Asia has increased significantly. Moreover, in a very short period of time, a completely "new political atmosphere" has been created in the region, which contributes to strengthening contacts in all areas and reducing conflict potential in the region.



On this occasion, the Vice-President of the American Foreign Policy Council I. Berman notes that the main driving forces of the current changes taking place in the region are "the peaceful transition of power in Uzbekistan in 2016 and the new large-scale economic reforms initiated in the country by the President Sh. Mirziyoyev." Uzbekistan's open, friendly and pragmatic regional policy has contributed to the creation of a fundamentally new situation in Central Asia. The countries of the region have begun to talk less about differences, increasingly focusing on the need to find sound compromises on critical regional issues.

Having a common border with all Central Asian States, including Afghanistan, Uzbekistan is objectively interested in turning the region into a zone of stability, sustainable development and good-neighborliness. Economically prosperous and safe Central Asia is an absolute imperative for Tashkent. However, as repeatedly stated by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev, the main priority of our foreign policy is Central Asia region, which is associated with the country's national interests. In his speech at the meeting of the UN General Assembly in September 2017, declaring the main directions of modern foreign policy of Uzbekistan, he stressed the strengthening of interstate contacts and initiated the organization of the summit of the Heads of states of Central Asia.

Practical confirmation of the priority of the Central Asian direction in the foreign policy of Uzbekistan is the concrete political and diplomatic steps which have already taken towards deepening relations with all countries of the region in all spheres of cooperation. The new regional course of Uzbekistan has become a timely and effective response to the long-overdue issues of regional rapprochement, restoration of trust and mutual understanding, as well as prompts solution of the accumulated problems on the basis of reasonable compromises and taking into account the interests of all parties.

A lucid example of this was the first consultative meeting of the heads of state of Central Asia, which was held on March 15 this year in Astana, during which the parties discussed many problematic issues of the regional agenda. Such areas of cooperation as trade and economic, transport and communication, cultural and humanitarian spheres have received a new impetus, and the solution of the issues of delimitation and demarcation of state borders has significantly advanced. In 2017, the trade turnover of Uzbekistan with the countries of the region increased by 20%, and with individual States - by 70%, for the 1th half of 2018 - by 50%.

The improvement of trade and economic relations between the countries of Central Asia contributed to the increase of investment attractiveness not only of the country, but also of the region as a whole. In particular, in 2017 alone, Uzbekistan and foreign countries signed more than 200 international agreements, as well as contracts and agreements worth about \$ 60 billion.

For the first time in 26 years, an Agreement on the state border between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan was signed, providing for the delimitation of 85% of state borders. Following the visit of the Head of Uzbekistan to Tajikistan in early March this year, the parties approved the Agreement on certain sections of the Uzbek-Tajik state border.

As the expert on Central Asia E. Lemon noted, the resumption of air transport lines and the simplification of the visa regime will undoubtedly improve the lives of the population of the border areas, and, in particular, favor the economy of Tajikistan¹.

Owing to their launch, it is possible to implement the idea of creating a transport and communication highway on the route "Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Caspian Sea-South Caucasus" with access to Baku - Tbilisi-Kars and the black sea ports of Georgia, Turkey, Romania and other States. In addition, after 20 years of negotiations, significant progress has been made in the construction of a railway connecting China and Central Asia through Kyrgyzstan. In the



implementation of this project, the delivery time of goods will be reduced by 7-8 days, the length of the route from East Asia to the Middle East and southern Europe-by 900 km.

Important agreements on the formation of the trans-Afghan transport corridor along the Mazar-e-Sharif-Herat route were reached during the visit of the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in December 2017. The new highway is a continuation of the first railway line "Hairaton-Mazar-e-Sharif" built by Uzbekistan earlier and will provide access to the sea ports of Iran and Pakistan.

The strategic importance of the above projects lies in the fact that they can be integrated into an extensive network of transport corridors «One Belt, One Road» and provides access to promising markets in almost all directions, including in the Indian Ocean.

In this context, the adoption of the resolution "Strengthening regional and international cooperation in order to ensure peace, stability and sustainable development in the Central Asian region" by the UN General Assembly is essential. At the same time, it should be noted that the draft of this document was developed by Uzbekistan together with neighboring countries of Central Asia. In addition, 55 states co-sponsored the resolution.

A new level of political confidence in the region gave a powerful impetus to the development of public diplomacy institutions, cultural ties, and expansion of contacts between border regions, parliamentarians, public organizations and citizens. In this vein, experts note that the problems of Central Asia can be eliminated through increased regional cooperation².

According to experts, a new complex of regional security is being formed in Central Asia. In the meantime, the conditionality of the content of regional security by the relations of the states of the region is emphasized. Thus, the expert from Uzbekistan I. Bobokulov notes that regional security is "the awareness of regional States of the unity of their destinies, the commonality of existing threats, problems and interests"³.

At the same time, with the formation of a new world order, on the one hand, favorable opportunities for regional cooperation are opening up; on the other hand, direct and potential challenges and threats to its implementation are increasing. In these circumstances, the following factors are the main motivators for sustainable development and security in CA.

First, maintaining the geopolitical balance in Central Asia is a fundamental condition for ensuring regional security. The peculiarity of external actors in the region is characterized by the existing different levels of correlation of political, economic and military-strategic interests between them.

¹ The Central Asian and Caucasus Analyst, October 19, 2016. "Signs of improving relations between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan but tensions remain", Edward Lemon
<https://cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13405-sings-of-improving-relations-between-uzbekistan-and-tajikistan-but-tensions-remain.html>

² Diplomat, September 30, 2017. "Uzbekistan in the Spotlight The center of Central Asia has turned its focus to multilateral regional cooperation", Catherine Putz
<https://thediplomat.com/2017/09/uzbekistan-in-the-spotlight/>

³ Центральная Азия и Кавказ, Том 15, выпуск 3, 2012 год. «Центральная Азия как комплекс безопасности: теория и практика». Бобокулов И.И

While building relations with major powers, Uzbekistan essentially proceeds from the fact that the development of relations with one state should not prevent the strengthening of relations with other countries. Central Asia must become a region of dialogue and cooperation, not confrontation.

According to the Concept of Foreign Policy, Uzbekistan pursues a peaceful policy and does not participate in military-political blocs, reserves the right to withdraw from any interstate entity in the event of its transformation into a military-political bloc. Uzbekistan does not allow the deployment of foreign military bases and facilities on its territory.

Second, the development of a multivariate system of transport and communication corridors, ensuring stable access of Central Asian countries to foreign promising markets. The implementation of major infrastructure projects in the transport and communication sectors, linking Central Asia with the world markets, will contribute to the development of interregional trade and economic cooperation, attracting foreign investment and advanced technologies, modernization of industrial infrastructure.

Third, we need to fundamentally ameliorate the effectiveness of counteracting terrorism and religious extremism. There is a necessity to put reliable barriers to the penetration of the ideology of radicalism into the public consciousness. Today, the world community is realizing that one of the key reasons for the radicalization of citizens is ignorance and intolerance. In this regard, the most important task in leveling the challenges and threats of religious extremism and terrorism not only in CA, but also in the world is to fight for the minds of people. Most crimes of extremist activity and violence are committed by people under 30 years of age.

The core task in this course is to bring about young people with the necessary conditions for their self-realization and to create a barrier to the spread of the "virus" of the ideology of violence. In order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the international community's efforts, the President of Uzbekistan at the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly initiated the adoption of the UN General Assembly resolution "Education and religious tolerance" and the development of the UN international Convention "On youth rights".

Fourth, the conflict in Afghanistan remains one of the most acute regional and global problems, which has been going on for almost 40 years. The involvement of more and more forces in the conflict has led to an unprecedented escalation. It has ceased to be purely Afghan, becoming more and more a complex international problem. The expansion of the presence of international terrorist groups in Afghanistan, the ongoing violence and bloodshed, and the drug business – all these speak of the inadmissibility of ignoring the situation in this country by the world community.

Fifth, the key tasks of ensuring stability in Central Asia include the settlement of problems of equitable water use and environment in the region on the basis of international legal norms that take into account the interests of all States in the region. Uzbekistan supports the UN draft conventions on the use of water resources in the Amu Darya and Syr Darya basins.

Without appropriate consolidation, both at the regional and international levels, it is impossible to develop an adequate response to the Aral Sea disaster.

Overall, due to its geopolitical and geostrategic importance, the region continues to be the focus of attention of the world community. It is noteworthy that today every country in Central Asia brings new conceptual emphasis to its policy in the region and is ready to play an active, creative role for its development. The states of the region are more focused than ever on consolidating efforts to improve their competitiveness on the world stage and strengthening the international political subjectivity of the entire region. Central Asia has all the necessary conditions for dynamic and fruitful cooperation both on a bilateral and multilateral basis.

The existence of unifying factors in almost all vital areas is a reliable basis for the further development of regional cooperation and overcoming differences through joint efforts supported by the desire of peoples for peace, stability and prosperity. Moreover, the states of the region are aware that only by strengthening bilateral and multilateral ties in the region they can achieve their economic and political goals. Today, economically prosperous and safe Central Asia is an absolute imperative for all states in the region. Any major regional projects in the fields of transport, communications and energy cannot be implemented without active cooperation, ensuring a high level of cooperation and mutual political trust.

APPROACHES OF UZBEKISTAN ON THE SOLUTION OF THE AFGHAN CONFLICT

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Annotation

The article is devoted to the problems of settlement of the situation in Afghanistan, the author analyzes the approaches of Uzbekistan to the issues related to ensuring Afghanistan's security and development through the prism of security and well-being of the entire region. He highlights the main factors that contribute to Uzbekistan's efforts aimed at achieving peace and stability in the IRA, and disclose the terms of the commitment of Tashkent to the principle of indivisibility of security.

Referring to Central Asia as the main priority of Uzbekistan's foreign policy, we also consider the development of relations with neighboring Afghanistan. Today, nobody can deny that the conflict in Afghanistan remains one of the hot problems of regional and international security.

Analysis of the status quo in Afghanistan shows that the military and political situation in the country remains turbulent and controversial that is, evidenced by the strengthening of the military and political influence of the Taliban movement, the expanding influence of the so-called "Islamic state", the deterioration of the socio-economic situation and the growth of narcotics production.

Taking this into account, the current difficult situation in Afghanistan requires a thoughtful assessment of the internal situation and consideration of its solution is as followings:

Firstly, the results of the international community efforts, undertaken during more than three decades convincingly demonstrated that there is no military solution to afghan conflict. The only way for establishing peace is a direct dialogue between the opposing sides.

At the same time, one important thing is that the Afghans themselves should suggest the format of future negotiations, and negotiations should take place without putting forward preconditions by sides under the auspices of the United Nations;

Secondly, today the Afghan conflict has become fully international, its content and structure have changed fundamentally.

In this regard, in addition to form an intra-Afghan consensus, it is necessary to form a consensus at the regional level, as well as to develop an understanding and common approaches between extra-regional players. At the same time, the Afghan issue should not be in the international agenda on the "residual" principle because of the emergence of new "hot spots" in various regions of the world;

Thirdly, the most important condition for stabilizing the situation in Afghanistan, along with a political settlement, is integration of the country into international economic relations, including also to the regional economic processes in Central Asia. We should consider Afghanistan not as a problem, but as an opportunity, as a new prospect for mutually beneficial regional cooperation. All these meet the fundamental interests of the Central and South Asia countries, opening a strategic opportunity for realizing all existing potential in spheres such as trade, economic and cultural-humanitarian cooperation, "breakthrough" in the field of transport communications.

The development of the trans-Afghan corridor will have a positive impact on the access of the Central Asian countries to the ports of South Asia, the Persian Gulf and the Middle East.

In this context, Uzbekistan, considering the intensification of the political dialogue, trade-economic and cultural-humanitarian cooperation as the most effective factor in the settlement of the situation in Afghanistan, takes concrete practical measures to intensify bilateral cooperation.

During several meetings with leaders of foreign countries, including the President of Afghanistan, as well as in his speeches, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev outlined that Uzbekistan remains committed to conducting a friendly and pragmatic policy towards Afghanistan.

Thanks to the serious intentions of the parties to build constructive and friendly relations, over the past 2017 the cooperation of Uzbekistan and Afghanistan has received a new impetus, which can be declared as unprecedented.

High level contacts - meetings of the heads of states, ministries and departments have become regular. President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Afghan leader Ashraf Ghani met in the framework of the SCO and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (Astana) summits, the UN General Assembly (New York).

In this context, it should be noted that the establishment of the institution of the Special Representative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Afghanistan in May 2017 once again demonstrated the special relationship of the Uzbek leadership to the development of comprehensive relations with Afghanistan.

Special attention was paid to the outcomes of the visit of Afghan President A.Gani to Uzbekistan in December 2017, during which agreements on the implementation of the project for the construction of the Surkhan-Puli Khumri railway line and the Mazar-e Sharif-Herat railway, 20 documents and 40 export contracts with more than 500 million dollars were signed.



During the meeting, as a sign of sincere friendship on behalf of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 25 buses of "Isuzu" brand and 3 modern tractors of "New Holland" brand produced in Uzbekistan were donated to Afghanistan.

Highlighting cooperation in energy sector we should note that compared to 2002, the volume of electricity supplies from Uzbekistan to Afghanistan increased by 30 times. At the same time, since January 2018, Uzbekistan has lowered the price of electricity supplied to Afghanistan from 7 to 5 cents. In this vein, we are convinced that launching the Surkhan-Puli Khumri transmission line will help solve energy shortages and create new enterprises and jobs.

Moreover, the construction of the new Mazar-i-Sharif-Herat railway will also make a significant contribution to the economic reconstruction of Afghanistan.

According to preliminary data, after the launch of the railway, the foreign trade turnover of the Afghanistan will increase by 50%, and the projected volume of cargo transit will be about 5 million tons per year.

As a result of 2017, the volume of trade increased by 15%, amounting about 600 million US dollars. By the initiative of the President of Uzbekistan, in 2017, the roadmap was adopted on the development of cooperation, full implementation of which will allow significantly increase the trade turnover in the coming years bringing its volume to 1.5 billion US dollars.

In order to create additional conditions for enhancing cooperation between two states, the international logistics center with a customs terminal was established in Termez. This "Cargo-center" aims to facilitate export-import and transit traffic between two countries with access to the markets of Europe and Asia.

Considering the key role of education of Afghan citizens in ensuring security and stability in Afghanistan the educational center was opened in Termez city in January this year where

Afghan youth will be trained in two, four and six-year full-time study programs in 17 subject areas of higher and 16 of secondary specialized education. During the opening ceremony of the Center, the first 110 Afghan students were enrolled onto the Uzbek language and literature course. In the nearest future, it is planned to increase the students number up to 300.



A new impetus was given to the interaction between the law enforcement agencies of Uzbekistan and Afghanistan to discuss problems of regional security. In particular, in February of this year the first meeting of the Uzbek-Afghan joint commission on security issues was held in Tashkent/



Uzbekistan also takes specific political and diplomatic measures aimed at peaceful settlement of the Afghan crisis. The international conference on Afghanistan "Peace process, cooperation in the sphere of security and regional interaction" was held in Tashkent on March 27 this year.

The event attracted close attention of the majority representatives of policy making circles of foreign countries. In this regard, I would like to note that the proposal to hold an international conference in Uzbekistan and the need to combine efforts aimed at ensuring peace and stability in Afghanistan are conditioned by the following factors:

First, the initiative to hold this conference is an integral part of Uzbekistan's overall strategy to ensure regional security and stability;

Second, for thousands of years, the peoples of Uzbekistan and Afghanistan lived in one cultural and civilizational space. Today, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan have close political, trade-economic and cultural ties;

Third, Uzbekistan's commitment to the principle of indivisibility of security is vital. From this point of view, we consider the security of Afghanistan as the security of Uzbekistan, the guarantee of stability and prosperity of the entire the region of Central and South Asia;

Fourth, Uzbekistan has experience in promoting peace process in Afghanistan. In 1999, in Tashkent, by the initiative of the Uzbek side, the "6+2" Group met bringing heads of foreign affairs agencies of the neighboring countries of Afghanistan, Russia and the United States. The representatives of the Northern Alliance and the Taliban movement were also participated in this meeting.

Following the talks, the Tashkent Declaration on the Basic Principles for the Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict in Afghanistan was adopted, which became the only official document agreed and accepted by all domestic political forces of this long-suffering country, and approved by the UN.

Within the framework of Tashkent Conference on Afghanistan participants of the event adopted the final declaration, which includes the following : 1) supporting the proposals of Afghan government on launching direct negotiations with Taliban without any preconditions; 2) guaranteeing the inclusion of the Taliban in the political process as a legitimate political actor; 3) adopting a "road map" by international community in order to assist the process of national reconciliation and socio-economic development in Afghanistan; 4) recognizing the importance of international and regional initiatives to ensure peace and stability in Afghanistan.

In this context, we consider the active participation of the Indian delegation with the head of the state foreign minister Mubashir Dzhaved Akbar at the international conference on Afghanistan in Tashkent, to be an important factor in consolidating the efforts of the international community in establishing peace and stability in Afghanistan.

As possible areas of interaction in the Afghan direction, I would like to note the following:

The first factor is India's participation in the construction of the Mazar-i-Sharif-Herat railway. This project is a continuation of the previously constructed first railway line "Hairaton-Mazari-Sharif" by Uzbekistan, which is important for the economy of Afghanistan. The creation of the transport corridor Mazari-Sharif-Herat with an access to the Iranian ports Chabahar and Bandar

Abbas will allow India to get the shortest access to the markets of Afghanistan, Central Asia and the CIS.

Due to the lack of direct transport routes, the trade between India and the Central Asian states is far from its potential and does not exceed 1.1 percent.

India invested 500 million US dollars in the development of the port infrastructure Chabahar, and participates in the construction of the Iranian-Afghan railway line as part of the development of the Chabahar-Zahedan-Zaranj Southern Trade Corridor, followed by the exit to the Afghanistan main road connecting such large Afghan cities as Herat, Kandahar, Kabul and Mazari-Sharif.

The second factor is the establishment of cooperation between Uzbekistan and India in the training of Afghan civilian cadres. In this context, it is noteworthy that India is one of the key states in the training of military personnel in Afghanistan. In recent years, more than 4,000 Afghan officers have been trained in the Indian military institutions. At the same time, this year it is expected to increase the number by 50%.

In our firm belief, the formation of the prestige of education and the stimulation of the aspirations for self-improvement among young people in the Afghan society is the key to achieving sustainable and stable development. In this regard, it is relevant to support India and jointly promote the initiative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan to establish a special International Fund for the Support of Education in Afghanistan.

The third factor is the interaction of Uzbekistan and India in the provision of medical services to the Afghan population. According to the United Nations Health Organization, each year about 100-110 thousand people die from various diseases and lack of necessary medicines in Afghanistan. In this context, I would like to note that currently 7 free economic zones (FEZ) specializing in the production of pharmaceutical products operate in Uzbekistan and one of them, "Boysun Farm", is located in the border with Afghanistan in Surkhandarya region. In this regard, taking into account the logistics and favorable conditions created in Uzbekistan for foreign investors, in our opinion, the creation of joint Uzbek-Indian enterprises for the production of medicine based on the needs of the Afghans can make a significant contribution to improving the health situation in Afghanistan.

In general, it should be noted that Uzbekistan would continue its practical assistance in creating the infrastructure of Afghanistan, considering this to be an indispensable condition for promoting peace and prosperity in this country. Taking into account the fact that ensuring security in Afghanistan is a decisive factor not only of regional but also global security context, Uzbekistan is ready to recognize and support any political processes that are aimed at maintaining peace and stability in Afghanistan.

NARROWING UNITED STATES CONCEPTUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN AFGHANISTAN: INDICATORS AND SCENARIOS

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The Afghan conflict is currently in a state of dynamic development at many levels, ranging from hostilities to a fine geopolitical game that has unfolded between the leading global and regional actors, which is still very far from reaching a win-win situation. Assessments of the experts about what is happening in the country seriously differ from one another. According to some, the situation went into a general conceptual crisis, but according to other estimates, the conceptual crisis concerns only the "US-official Kabul" bundle, while for the Taliban, Russia, China, Iran, Pakistan, the situation is seen as an open field of opportunity to implement their own tactical and strategic plans and interests.

Socio-economic and political-military groups

If we take the second group of assessments as a starting point, then the question arises how true is the assertion about the conceptual impasse in which the linkage ended up between "US-official Kabul". The answer to it, it seems, lies in the analysis of the situation with the effectiveness of this group of two key challenges for the Afghan crisis - socio-economic and military-political.

Regarding the group of socio-economic challenges, we can immediately say that the responses from the United States and Kabul were partial and, first of all, because they did not create a full-fledged economic basis that would lead Afghanistan to a path of sustainable growth and high self-sufficiency in a number of basic sectors. According to statistics, the United States, before reducing its military presence in 2014, poured 103.8 billion dollars financial aid to Afghanistan, which exceeded the amount of aid under the Marshall Plan for restoring Europe after the Second World War (102.97 billion dollars¹). However, the return on the billions spent was relatively low, as confirmed by at least four of the following indicators:

1. *The ratio of exports and imports.* According to the World Bank (WB), in 2016, Afghan imports exceeded exports by almost 11 times. Afghanistan imported various goods for \$ 6.534 billion, and exported only for \$ 0.596 billion².

2. *Structure of export and import.* Afghan exports mainly consist of agricultural products, minerals, various types of raw materials, carpets, skins and leather, i.e. industrial products are not represented in exports, which is one of the key indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of economic reforms³. At the same time, imports, due to the weakness of the national industry, are represented by a wide range of goods and products, ranging from consumer and food products to fuel, metals, chemicals, machinery, and electricity.

3. *Damage to the economy resulted from the withdrawal of most of the foreign troops.* According to Afghan and international data, the withdrawal of troops in 2014 led to a sharp drop in GDP growth rates from an average of 6.9% in the period 2007-2012 up to 1.3% in 2014. The transport sector suffered the most, forming about 22% of GDP, 100 thousand jobs were lost. Due to the reduction in orders from the American army, the construction sector and the services sector, which accounted for 40% of GDP⁴, were also severely affected.

¹ Расходы США на программы по восстановлению Афганистана превысили размеры плана Маршалла. 1 августа 2014. <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/1354583>

² Afghanistan trade statistics. <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/AFG>

³ Afghanistan Product exports and imports 2016. <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/AFG/Year/LTST/TradeFlow/EXPIMP/Partner/WLD/Product/All-Groups>

⁴ Afghanistan's surprisingly predictable economic crash. <http://www.irinnews.org/analysis/2016/03/14/afghanistan%E2%80%99s-surprisingly-predictable-economic-crash>

According to the World Bank, the Ashraf Ghani government managed to slightly increase the GDP growth rate to 2.2% in 2016 and 2.6% in 2017, however, the Afghan economy is unlikely to be able to recover in the foreseeable future⁵.

All this confirms the assessments that most of the economic growth in the period up to 2014 was generated not by the development of basic industries and agriculture, but by various kinds of orders from foreign troops.

4. *High dependence of the Afghan budget on foreign financial assistance.* Afghanistan has only partially created its sources for the formation of the national budget. In the national budget for 2017-2018, international assistance provided by 30 different donors, which is approximately 66%⁶. The World Bank points out that Afghanistan is "a unique country in its extraordinary dependence on foreign aid"⁷. Although it should still be noted that budget revenues as a whole grew by 1.75 billion to 2.5 billion dollars in the period from 2008 to 2018 including improving tax collection by 13%⁸.



The four indicators above show that the US-Kabul combination needs a new concept for the creation and development of the Afghan economic basis, and it is here that the first serious difficulty is noted, since this requires two conditions of a quantitative and qualitative nature.

The "quantitative" condition provides for a sharp increase in the scale of investment in the Afghan industry, agriculture, science and education. If this is done with the same degree of efficiency as it was in the period 2002-2014, when, as already mentioned, more than \$ 103 billion was poured into the economy, Afghanistan will need at least another decade and several tens of billions of dollars with condition of stable

internal situation. Kabul, naturally, has no such means. As for the United States, under President D. Trump, one can hardly expect large investments in the Afghan economy. Thus, in the costs of the military operation in Afghanistan in 2018, only \$ 780 million was allocated for the provision of economic assistance⁹.

In turn, the "quality" condition provides for a fundamental change in the psychological model of the development of Afghan society, which is a very difficult task. In fact, as observations show, in countries where there is internal instability and there is no firm confidence in the future, a certain part of society and the elite is criminalized and ceases to associate itself with its country in the long term, considering it mainly as a source of profit. From this, in turn, the problems of corruption, capital outflow, money laundering, and investing in those industries grow, which give a quick return on investments, including illegal areas such as drug production. A classic example is Russia of the 1990s, which turned into a supplier of raw materials, and was seriously criminalized according to some data in the period 1992-2000. According to various schemes, no less than \$ 150 billion outflowed abroad.¹⁰

Afghanistan is also an excellent illustration of this problem against the background of continuing military-political instability. According to the Afghan Ministry of Finance, approximately 65% of all financial resources in the country are illegally earned, transferred and spent.

⁵ THE WORLD BANK PRESS RELEASE. Afghanistan's economic growth to pick up slightly, World Bank Says. November 21, 2017. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2017/11/21/afghanistan-economic-growth-to-pick-up-slightly-fall-2017>

⁶ The State of Aid and Poverty in 2018: A new look at aid effectiveness in Afghanistan. Author: Jelena Bjelica and Thomas Ruttig. Date: 17 May 2018. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/the-state-of-aid-and-poverty-in-2018-a-new-look-at-aid-effectiveness-in-afghanistan/>

⁷ The State of Aid and Poverty in 2018: A new look at aid effectiveness in Afghanistan. Author: Jelena Bjelica and Thomas Ruttig. Date: 17 May 2018. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/the-state-of-aid-and-poverty-in-2018-a-new-look-at-aid-effectiveness-in-afghanistan/>

⁸ The 2018 Afghan National Budget: Confronting hard realities by accelerating reforms. Author: Bill Byrd and Kate Clark Date: 5 December 2017

⁹ Pentagon: Afghan War Costing US \$45 Billion Per Year. Feb. 6, 2018. <https://www.usnews.com/news/politics/articles/2018-02-06/pentagon-afghan-war-costing-us-45-billion-per-year>

¹⁰ КАНАЛЫ УТЕЧКИ КАПИТАЛА ДЕЙСТВУЮТ ПО ЗАПАДНЫМ ТЕХНОЛОГИЯМ. 15 Марта 2001 г. <https://www.novayagazeta.ru/articles/2001/03/15/12147-kanaly-utechki-kapitala-deystvuyut-po-zapadnym-tehnologiyam>

The category of "illegal financial assets" includes funds obtained as a result of money laundering, tax evasion and customs duties, corruption and bribery¹¹. Despite the development of the state banking system, approximately 90% of all transactions pass through the unofficial hawala system. The vast majority of hawaladars work without licenses and therefore it is extremely difficult to track who is the real owner and recipient of the transferred money. The phenomenon of corruption itself is deeply rooted in Afghan society. In the latest annual Corruption Perceptions Index, compiled by Transparency International based on an analysis of the situation in 180 countries, Afghanistan ranked 4th in the list of the most corrupt countries, second only to Syria, South Sudan and Somalia¹².

A similar psychological model has emerged and taken root in the public consciousness over the past decade and a half, and it is completely unclear how the US-Kabul bundle can replace it with a more positive model.

The narrowing of the conceptual possibilities of the US-Kabul bundle is also observed with regard to the group of military-political challenges. In the period from 2002 to 2014, the United States spent \$ 640 billion on the maintenance of the 90-thousand American group of troops in the ISAF and 30 thousand soldiers who are not in the ISAF¹³. It also spent \$ 55 billion on the creation of the Afghan army. However, despite all these enormous costs, the situation has steadily deteriorated since 2005 due to the resurgence of the Taliban. The first attempt to stop the Taliban's resurgence was the decision of President Barack Obama to send an additional 47,000 soldiers to Afghanistan in 2009 to turn the tide in their favor. But this attempt did not lead to desired results, and the Taliban continued to increase their activity. As experts predicted, the withdrawal of American troops in 2014 was the trigger for a sharp increase in the intensity of hostilities, and with the gradual interception of the initiative by the Taliban.



The D.Trump administration also attempted to stop the Taliban by relying on pressure. In 2017, the total number of the American contingent was increased from 8 to 16 thousand bayonets. Air strikes were intensified. At the turning point of the situation, the US Congress allocated \$ 45 billion, of which \$ 13 billion was intended for the maintenance of the American contingent, \$ 5 billion for the Afghan security forces¹⁴. The remaining funds went to the provision of economic assistance to Afghanistan and logistics support. But, as before, these measures did not have the desired effect, and the Taliban continued to advance, expanding their zones of control¹⁵. If as of August 2016, under the control of official Kabul, 63.4% of the country's districts (in May 2015 - 70.5%), then by the end of 2017, it lost another 5% of its controlled territory¹⁶.

At the beginning of 2018, according to estimates by the Air Force, the physical presence of the Taliban was recorded on 70% of the territory of Afghanistan and 14 regions of the country were under their complete control.

At the same time, the losses of the Afghan security forces, trained by American instructors, began to grow sharply. The peak of casualties was in August 2018, when in only three days of the first half of the month the Afghan army lost more than 200 soldiers killed on four fronts at once. Half of them died during the heavy fighting for the strategically important city of Ghazni, located on the Kabul-Kandahar highway. Between 40 and 100 soldiers of the Afghan elite units died in a Taliban attack on Ayristan, 160 km west of Ghazni. In the northwestern province of

¹¹ CURBING ILLICIT FINANCIAL FLOWS IN AFGHANISTAN. Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing, and Hawala. <https://iwaweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/IFF-report-English-2-for-screen.pdf>

¹² Afghanistan Ranked 4th Most Corrupt Country for This Year. 22 Feb 2018. <https://www.toloneews.com/afghanistan/afghanistan-ranked-4th%2%A0most-corrupt-country-year>

¹³ Андрей Веселов. Афганский раскол. http://expert.ru/russian_reporter/2013/27/afganskij-raspil/

¹⁴ Pentagon: Afghan War Costing US \$45 Billion Per Year. Feb. 6, 2018. <https://www.usnews.com/news/politics/articles/2018-02-06/pentagon-afghan-war-costing-us-45-billion-per-year>

¹⁵ A new Taliban tactic is racking up a huge body count in Afghanistan. <http://www.businessinsider.com/a-new-taliban-tactic-is-racking-up-a-huge-body-count-in-afghanistan-2017-10>

¹⁶ Taliban threaten 70% of Afghanistan, BBC finds by Shoaib Sharifi and Louise Adamou. 31 January 2018. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-42863116>

Faryab, half the garrison of 100 people died at isolated Afghan military base. In the east of the country, the Dzhangal Bag military base located on the strategically important Puli Khumri-Kunduz highway was attacked, killing 16 soldiers and policemen. An influential American New-York Times in an article on Afghanistan called these three August days a "catastrophe."¹⁷

Afghanistan's Minister of Defense Tariq Shah Bahrami, speaking in September 2018 in the Dy Mysrano Jirga (the upper house of the Afghan parliament), said that in August, as a result of fighting in 18 provinces of the country, primarily in Ghazni, Faryab, Farah and Uruzgan, more than 500 soldiers were killed¹⁸. Many publications in this regard note not only the increased activity of the Taliban and other groups, but also their improved fighting qualities, due to the fact that the militants had well-equipped and trained special units.

Most likely, in the coming months of 2018, military activity in Afghanistan may decline slightly, since it is traditionally seasonal in nature, increasing in the warm season and decreasing in the cold months. However, the trend itself to intercept the Taliban of a strategic initiative is likely to continue to increase in the next fighting season. The Taliban are negotiating: A chance for a peace process or a tactical ploy?

The complexity of the situation for the USA-Kabul bundle with the formulation of new conceptual moves lies in the fact that the time frame for finding a model for dismantling the two specified groups of calls is increasingly narrowing, since the pace of their mutual influence demonstrates the acceleration that is caused by fairly simple logic.

As the main message, you can take the increase in demographic pressure. Despite the war, the population of Afghanistan has already exceeded 35 million people, and according to the forecast of the World Bank, by 2050 it will grow to 56.5 million people¹⁹. Due to the rapid growth of the population, 400 thousand people enter the labor market every year at the age of 17.3 years, of which only 200 thousand have the opportunity to find a job.²⁰

The remaining 200 thousand are either forced to emigrate, or join the ranks of criminal and terrorist groups, to look for work in the drug industry, which has become a source of funding for terrorist groups. In 2014, 411 thousand people worked in the drug industry.²¹ In 2017 - already 590 thousand²². In this regard, it is no coincidence that the explosive growth in drug production in recent years (in 2017, the production of opium poppy increased by 87% to 9 thousand metric tons compared to 2016) coincided with an increase in military activity by the Taliban and ISIL²³. To counter the opponents, the government is forced to devote more and more resources to support security agencies, which could be used in the implementation of economic projects. Also, instability in the country negatively affects the investment climate.

The peculiarity of this process lies in the fact that at each next round of interaction and interpenetration of the two groups of calls will only increase and lead to a further deterioration of the overall situation. Against this background, only two options remain in the arsenal of the Donald Trump administration either to retain the leading role of the United States in the Afghan field or to further expand the size of their military group and increase the intensity of combat operations (model of George W. Bush and the first term of President Barack Obama"), or to convince the Taliban to begin peace negotiations.

So far D. Trump took a pause in the matter of further increasing the number of troops and trying to rely on peace negotiations. In July 2018, American diplomats and the military were instructed to establish contacts with the Taliban to launch direct peace talks and discuss the future role of international forces in this country. In turn, the Taliban responded to the shift in

¹⁷ Taliban Kill More Than 200 Afghan Defenders on 4 Fronts; 'A Catastrophe' By Rod Nordland, Fahim Abed and Mujib Mashai. Aug. 12. 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/12/world/asia/afghanistan-ghazni-taliban.html>

¹⁸ Critics Slam Security Chiefs For Poor War Management by Tamim Hamid. 24 September 2018. <https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/critics-slam-security-chiefs-poor-war-management>

¹⁹ Quick facts about the population of Afghanistan. Current population (as of Saturday, April 07 2018). <http://countrymeters.info/en/Afghanistan>

²⁰ Labor Migration Can Help Boost Afghanistan's Growth. February 5. 2018. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/afghanistan/publication/labor-migration-can-help-boost-afghanistans-growth>

²¹ Afghan opium crop set for record high. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/12/afghan-opium-crop-record-high-united-nations>

²² Disease or Symptom? Afghanistan's burgeoning poppy economy in 2017 by William A. Byrd. <https://areu.org.af/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/1733E-Disease-Symptom-PN.pdf>

²³ Производство афганского опионого мака выросло на 87 процента: Обзор. https://www.unodc.org/unodc/ru/frontpage/2017/November/afghan-opium-production-jumps-to-record-level-up-87-per-cent_survey.html

American politics and declared their readiness to talk with the United States, but at the same time rejected the option of bilateral talks with Kabul. They also identified the key topic of future negotiations with Washington, which should be the complete withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan, and it is here that the main intrigue of the negotiation process is born²⁴.

The problem is that the US has several military bases in the country, which serve as a kind of support for the American geopolitical presence and influence in the region of South Asia and the Middle East. Therefore, meeting the Taliban's demand for closure seems completely unacceptable for Washington, which in turn the Taliban leadership cannot but understand. Then the question arises: "What, in reality, is behind such a demand of the Taliban? Does it represent an invitation to bargain or is it, nevertheless, really a strong desire to see a future Afghanistan without foreign bases?"

If this is an invitation to bargain, then what are the potential points of intersection and divergence of interests of the parties? The United States and Kabul will certainly be interested in maintaining the American military presence. For Washington, this is a question of geopolitical influence, and for the official Afghan authorities it is a guarantee of their security. Both players are also interested in the recognition by the Taliban of the current constitution, the well-established political and administrative system of the country, electoral and judicial systems, which combine elements of traditional Islamic law and European legal systems. The ideal model for the United States and Kabul would be to embed the Taliban in existing institutions and branches of government.

Theoretically, the Taliban leadership could accept these conditions, however, it is more likely that it will face a number of risks for itself that will come from hardliners insisting on the rebirth of the Islamic state system that underlay the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (1996-2001). The split of the movement and the departure of a significant part of the "ideological" commanders to ISIL can be quite likely the result of the manifested disagreements. The so-called "Islamic state" has already been a challenge for the Taliban for several years, because on the one hand it took part of the military resources from the Taliban, and on the other hand, following a tough ideological and military course, forced the Taliban to noticeably tighten ideological rhetoric and intensify military action to maintain its influence. The Taliban are forced to constantly look at ISIS, since they no longer have the same monopoly to oppose official Kabul and the Western contingents.

Thus, in order for the Taliban to decide on integration into the existing system of power in Afghanistan, its conditionally "moderate wing" will need to be somehow convincing the "radical wing" to integrate into the system created by the United States and Kabul. How to do this without conflict is unclear. The ideal option would be the complete liquidation of the ISIS presence in Afghanistan, which would prevent radicals in the Taliban from joining this terrorist group and taking advantage of its military and financial capabilities. In August 2018, the Taliban were able to crush the ISIL bridgehead in the northern province of Jowzjan, however, the eastern province of Nangarhar is still a stronghold of the so-called "Islamic state".

If the Taliban really want to see Afghanistan without foreign military contingents and bases, then the negotiations may constitute nothing more than a tactical ploy in the framework of a more subtle multi-way game to further enhance and legalize the status of the movement as a full party in Afghan and international affairs, as well as to expand their zones of control in the country. On this occasion, Omar Samad, the chief adviser of Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, in his article "Can peace be won in Afghanistan?" published on the website of the Atlantic Council, writes that it is extremely important for the United States to work out plan "B" for unforeseen circumstances, including delaying or disrupting negotiations with the Taliban, in order to avoid a complete fiasco. The expert does not specify what kind of plan "B" is, but it seems that, apart from building up the military group, there are no other options yet²⁵.

²⁴ Trump sends envoys to Afghanistan to open talks directly with Taliban over peace deal by Ben Farmer, Islamabad Rozina Sabur, Washington, 16 JULY 2018. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/07/16/trump-sends-envoys-afghanistan-open-talks-directly-taliban-peace/>

²⁵ Can Peace Be Won in Afghanistan? By Omar Samad, September 11, 2018. <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/can-peace-be-won-in-afghanistan>

If we assume that the Taliban adhere to the second option (with a high degree of probability, it can be argued that this is the case) and hopes to strengthen their bargaining position, and at the maximum, to win a military victory, then many of their recent actions acquire clear semantic outlines. The point is that the Taliban, along with contacts with the United States, began to use other negotiation platforms, in particular, the Moscow Format, created about two years ago by Russia to resolve the Afghan crisis. The Taliban leadership cannot but understand that the Afghan crisis today is an integral part of larger geopolitical and geo-economic processes in which the United States has entered a clinch with many of the world's leading players, who simultaneously have their own interests in Afghanistan. Among them, of course, it is necessary to mention Russia, China, Iran and Pakistan.

Washington's most difficult relationship is with Moscow, in which they see one of their most significant geopolitical opponents. The parties are in a mode of permanently expanding sanctions war and confrontation in Syria and Ukraine. With Beijing, Washington began a trade war for economic domination in the world. D. Trump also brought the United States out of the Iranian nuclear deal and resumed direct and secondary sanctions, trying to limit Tehran's ability to pursue an offensive policy in the Middle East. Difficult relations between the United States and Pakistan, which reduced the issuance of the US military aid by \$ 300 million (total aid amount for 2018 was 900 million) due to insufficient support for D. Trump's Afghan strategy.²⁶

In the foreseeable future, the tension in the relations of all these actors with the United States will only increase and, given this, it would be naive to expect that Afghanistan will not increasingly become one of the sites of their global rivalry.

The main reason that forces Moscow, Beijing and Tehran to be more active in the Afghan field is the issue of their national security. Afghanistan has become an ISIS home base, which does not hide its expansionist plans, as well as a drug factory that undermines the health of the nations of these countries.

All these players are not satisfied with the situation in which the United States, maintaining the course of exclusive domination in Afghanistan, does not cope with the task of completely eliminating all these threats and moreover does not go for full-scale cooperation against the background of further deterioration of the situation with opium production and increasing influence of LIH in this country. As for Pakistan, they are not satisfied with the attempts of the United States to deprive their policy in Afghanistan of the freedom of the hands that Islamabad needs to play against India, which has relied on relations with Kabul. The Pakistani establishment sees in this bundle a threat to national security.

At the moment, there are several indicators that indicate the rivalry of the parties in Afghanistan. First of all, it is the repeated statements by the US officials and experts that Russia is undermining the US efforts to stabilize Afghanistan through clandestine supplies of weapons to the Taliban, since it regards this movement as a legitimate force in the fight against ISIL-Khorasan²⁷. Similar accusations are made against Iran, which is charged with provoking instability in the western provinces of Afghanistan²⁸. Indicators of rivalry are also the efforts of Russia and China to create several formats of dialogue with official Kabul, which either minimize or exclude the US presence in them. These are the aforementioned "Moscow format" and the trilateral negotiation format "Beijing-Kabul-Islamabad." As for another indicator, we can note the incoming controversial reports about the possible construction by China of a military base in the Vakhn corridor (the extreme north-east of Afghanistan). The message first appeared on the pages of the South China Morning Post, but then a refutation by Chinese diplomats followed, but the situation still remains not clear enough²⁹.

²⁶ Can Peace Be Won in Afghanistan? By Omar Samad, September 11, 2018. <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/can-peace-be-won-in-afghanistan>

²⁷ State Department: Russia, Iran 'hedging their bets' to back Taliban by Joel Gehrke. June 20, 2018. <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/defense-national-security/state-department-russia-iran-hedging-their-bets-to-back-taliban>

²⁸ Iran's Support for the Taliban Brings It to a Crossroads with Afghanistan by Aziz Amin Ahmadzai, May 21, 2018. <https://thediplomat.com/2018/05/irans-support-for-the-taliban-brings-it-to-a-crossroads-with-afghanistan/>

²⁹ China is helping Afghanistan set up mountain brigade to fight terrorism by Minnie Chan. 28 August, 2018. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2161745/china-building-training-camp-afghanistan-fight>

Naturally, the leadership of the Taliban closely watching the ongoing processes and trying to take them into account in building such a model of an action that would allow the efficient use of the energy of confrontation between external actors in their own strategic interests. The ideal option for the Taliban would be for the United States to get into a situation of "strategic loneliness" in Afghanistan and in the region, which would hinder their freedom of maneuver and the ability to use regional transport communications to supply their contingents.

Conclusion

So, a serious narrowing of the conceptual possibilities of the "US-official Kabul" bundle today can actually be considered one of those factors that must be taken into account when analyzing and forecasting processes in the Afghan crisis in the foreseeable future. This is confirmed by the opinions that are increasingly heard in the Western media, which reflect the understanding of the presence of a conceptual crisis in American politics in Afghanistan and urge Washington to find at least some way to end this endless war, including the withdrawal of troops. A clear example is the opinion of Gil Barndollar, director of the Middle East study program at the Center for the National Interest (USA), who suggests justifying the withdrawal with the formula "declare victory and go home." He believes that this was what should have been done in 2011 after the elimination of Osama bin Laden.

However, for now the main line of the White House will still be the policy of preserving its geopolitical positions in Afghanistan, and at least in 2019 the main trend in its policy will be to hold peace talks with the Taliban. Considering that next year, with a high degree of probability, it will also be possible to expect a new round of exacerbation of relations between the United States on the one hand, Russia, China, Iran and Pakistan, on the other; at the global and regional level, a serious intrigue will twist around Afghanistan, extract dividends from which the Taliban will certainly try.

Therefore, most likely, we will witness a sharp increase in its activity in at least three areas - negotiation, military and information- which will further complicate the structure of the Afghan crisis and, as a result, make it difficult for Washington and Kabul to develop a new strategic concept. economic and military-political challenges.

TRANSPORT PROJECTS IN CENTRAL ASIA



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Annotation

The article discusses international transport projects in the Central Asian region that will contribute to the formation of regional transport communications in Central Asia, as well as the interests and prospects of Uzbekistan's participation in their implementation.

The radical changes taking place in the Central Asian region in recent years facilitated states of the region becoming more active in turning Central Asia into crossroads of transportation corridors that connect the East with the West, the North and the South, and to link their strategic future with joint regional efforts and actions, in connection with which transport opportunities of international importance have increased.

Taking into account the importance and urgency of the development of Central Asia as a coherent whole region, the first days of the presidency focused the attention on the implementation of proactive regional policies, the creation of a favorable political atmosphere in Central Asia, the building of constructive and mutually beneficial relations with the countries of the region in all directions, including transport – the main priority of Uzbekistan's foreign policy. Speaking at the consultation meeting of the heads of states of Central Asia in Astana, President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev stressed that the priority should be given to the implementation of transport and communication projects that will connect Central Asia with major seaports and world markets.

In our country special attention is paid to further development of transport infrastructure and the increase in the volume of transit cargo transportation.

Currently, the government of Uzbekistan is implementing the Program for development and modernization of engineering communications and road infrastructure for 2015-2019, which provides for the elaboration of a single complex development strategy for the national transport industry, which meets high international standards, and ensures its broad integration into international transport communications, taking into account the long-term needs of domestic manufacturers in promoting their products to the local and world markets.

It should be taken into account that today all the necessary conditions have been created for the further development of the transport and transit potential in the country.

The country is making efforts to increase the capacity of the transport system, remove existing barriers to unimpeded transit through the territory of Uzbekistan, which has the great importance in the development of international transport corridors in Central Asia.

Recently, under the conditions of a confident and friendly atmosphere in Central Asia, it is becoming possible to take practical measures to implement real transport projects. The countries of our region have recently intensified their efforts to increase their transport capabilities of international importance. Today, a number of international transport projects are being laid across Central Asia.

According to some reports, the length of the railway communication system of Central Asian countries extends more than 22,000 km. Kazakhstan has the largest and most exploited railways, which accounts for 66 percent of the total length of the region's railways and accounts for 84 percent of all freight transport. About 18 percent of regional railways pass through Uzbekistan, accounting for about 11 percent of all traffic. Turkmenistan has about 12 percent of regional railways and 4 percent of all traffic.

I. "Eurasia" transport corridor. This corridor is planned to be built and launched during 2018-2023, which will connect China and Western Europe.

The highway will pass from Beijing via Astana, Moscow and Minsk to Berlin. According to some forecasts, by 2050, 20 million tons of cargo and 37 million passengers will be transported through the highway annually.

II. Western Europe-Western China. The China-Kazakhstan section began operating in 2016, which will become the shortest route to Europe with a transportation period of 10 to 12 days. The full-scale launch of the project is not expected until 2030. The corridor will run along the route St. Petersburg- Moscow-Orenburg-Aktobe-Almaty-Khorgos.



III. Lapis Lazuli. In 2017 the representatives of Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey signed an agreement on the creation of the transport corridor "Lapis Lazuli". It is supposed that the railway and automobile routes will connect the city of Torgundi (Afghanistan) with Ashgabat, the port of Turkmenbashi on the Caspian Sea. The corridor will

further pass through the Caspian Sea to Baku, then through Tbilisi to Ankara with branches to Poti and Batumi, further from Ankara to Istanbul, Kars in Turkey with further access to the transport system of Europe.

It is expected that the railways and motorways will connect the city of Torgundi in the Afghan province of Herat with Ashgabat, then with the Caspian port of Turkmenbashi. The corridor will continue to Baku, then through Tbilisi to Ankara with branches to Poti and Batumi, then from Ankara to Istanbul. The cost of the project, which is aimed at facilitating transit logistics and simplifying customs procedures, is estimated at 2 billion dollars.

IV. Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran. In May 2018 a container train travelled along the route China-Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran. The total travel time along the railway route was about 2 weeks, which is on average twice as fast as by sea. It is believed that by 2022 the volume of cargo transportation by rail will be 15 million tons per year.

V. East-West. The project is designed to provide transport links between China and Europe. The key link in the East-West transport corridor is the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway line. This project will play a key role in establishing regular shipments of goods from Turkey and Europe to the countries of Central Asia and China, as well as to Iran.

Uzbekistan is interested in participating in this project. According to the decree of the President of Uzbekistan "On measures to improve the transport infrastructure and diversify foreign trade routes for carriage of goods for the period from 2018 to 2022," measures are being taken to implement pilot transit of foreign trade goods via the Baku-Tbilisi-Akhalkalaki-Kars railway line with access to ports.

VI. North-South. According to some information, the opening of the transport corridor is planned for 2020. This transport corridor will connect the port of St. Petersburg with the Iranian ports of Bender-Abbas and Chakbahar, across which the sea branch reaches the Indian port of Mumbai.

The importance for Central Asia is that the transport corridor will simplify the transport of goods from Central Asia, passing through Iran to the countries of the Persian Gulf. The corridor will be able to provide transit of 3-5 million tons of cargo annually. This transport corridor is of great importance for Uzbekistan.



During the SCO summit in Qingdao in June 2018 the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev said that Uzbekistan supports the construction of the railway lines Mazare Sharif - Herat, China - Kyrgyzstan – Uzbekistan, and the development of the trans-regional corridors Central Asia-Persian Gulf, North-South and East-West.

VII. "China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan". The construction and launch of this transport project have been discussed for many years. The project demonstrates relevance in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization space because China, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are members of this organization and in case of functioning, this transport project, trade and economic relations will increase and expand not only among the project participants, but also among the countries of Central Asia and China. In particular, according to the experts' estimates, the functioning of the project will allow to: **1)** to transport goods to the Eastern Europe countries; **2)** to reduce the time of delivery of goods from China and the countries of Central Asia to the countries of Europe and the Middle East; **3)** to import Chinese goods to Central Asian countries; **4)** to export goods from Uzbekistan to foreign countries.

Mazar-e-Sharif-Herat. Uzbekistan borders with Afghanistan are building a special foreign policy with this country. The development of transport relations with Afghanistan and the establishment of new railways in the future will open and provide Central Asia with the shortest access to the ports of the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf and will connect South Asia to the markets of Europe and China. One of the strategic transport facilities connecting Uzbekistan and Afghanistan is the bridge "Friendship" (Dusty Puli), which connects Termez and Hairaton. In Afghanistan, there are about 15 border crossing points, but it was through the checkpoint on the bridge "Friendship" that enters the bulk of imports into the country. In the future, the launch of the Mazar-e-Sharif-Herat transport project with a length of 760 km will contribute to: **1)** the increase in the transportation and delivery of cargo from Uzbekistan to the ports of the Persian Gulf; **2)** the access of Uzbekistan to the sea through Afghanistan and Pakistan.



IX. "Central Asia-Persian Gulf". In April 2016, the Agreement on the Establishment of an International Transport and Transit Corridor (Ashgabat Agreement) entered into force. Ashgabat Agreement was signed between the Governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Sultanate of Oman, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan on 25 April 2011. In 2017, within this transport corridor, the Turkmenabad-Farab railway and road bridges through Amu Darya began to function, which made it possible to increase the volume of freight traffic by 2.5 times.

According to the experts, functioning of this transport corridor will be the key to prosperity and the development of economic cooperation between the countries of the project, and to the creation of new jobs, construction of new innovative logistics hubs, as well as creating conditions for raising foreign investment.

Thus, these transport projects are very relevant for Central Asia, including Uzbekistan. In the context of globalization of the world economy, the development of transport capabilities is one of the important areas of integration processes, the issues of developing new transport and transit corridors, creating conditions for the efficient transportation and handling of Uzbekistan's cargo in neighboring countries.

Today, Uzbekistan is already considering its participation in the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars transport corridor, active work is carried out within the trans-Afghan corridor, China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan and Central Asia-Persian Gulf. This confirms a keen interest in turning the Central Asian region into crossroads of transport corridors connecting East, West, North and South.

UNGA ADOPTS RESOLUTION ON STRENGTHENING COOPERATION IN CENTRAL ASIA

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Annotation

The adoption of the resolution was a historical event, not just for the Central Asian countries. Indeed, it is difficult to overstate its significance in a broader, international context. It marked a new stage in the history of the Central Asian countries and signaled the region's consolidation. For the first time since their independence in 1991, the Central Asian states confirmed their ability not only to take joint action in order to resolve common regional problems, but also to ensure the wellbeing and prosperity of their citizens.

At its June 22, 2018 plenary session, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on "Strengthening regional and international cooperation to ensure peace, stability and sustainable development in the Central Asian Region." According to Uzbekistan's Foreign Ministry, all UN members unanimously supported the draft document, developed by Uzbekistan along with the other Central Asian states.

Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev initiated the process of developing the document at the UNGA's 72nd session in September 2017. Speaking in New York on the organization of an international conference on Central Asia in Samarkand in November 2017, Mirziyoyev proposed to develop a UN resolution after the conference in order to support the Central Asian countries' efforts to ensure security and strengthen cooperation in the region.

The fact that the resolution is now adopted signifies the implementation of Uzbekistan's initiative, and confirms international recognition and support of Tashkent's new regional policy. As Mirziyoyev noted during the Samarkand Conference, "Our main goal is to turn Central Asia into a stable, economically developed and prosperous region through joint efforts." Indeed, Uzbekistan's foreign policy under Mirziyoyev has unlocked regional divisions and opened the way for the development of the entire region¹.

The other Central Asian countries – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan – not only actively supported Uzbekistan's initiative, but also co-sponsored the UNGA resolution on Central Asia. The document reflects mutual support for the initiatives of the Central Asian states, which have made a significant contribution to strengthening regional security and ensuring sustainable development.

The resolution particularly reflected the outcomes of the debate in the Security Council on Afghanistan in January 2018, when Kazakhstan chaired the UN Security Council, as well as the regular arrangement of the World Nomad Games in Kyrgyzstan. Moreover, the resolution included the results of the international conference dedicated to combating terrorism and extremism, organized in Tajikistan in May 2018. Central Asian countries welcomed an upcoming summit of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea in Turkmenistan. They also supported Uzbekistan's initiative to hold annual consultative meetings of the Central Asian countries' leaders.

In sum, the resolution has become the Central Asian states' consolidated response to regional problems and threats, and the challenges stemming from globalization. The region's consolidation has allowed the Central Asian countries to significantly strengthen their role as independent actors in the international system as well as their capacity of taking responsibility for the region's present and future.

¹ Cornell: Uzbekistan in its politics has changed from the position of the defender to the attacker June 30 of 2018, <http://podrobno.uz/cat/politic/kornell-uzbekistan-v-svo/>

These positive dynamics in Central Asia are unprecedented since the regional states gained independence, and they have now reached a qualitatively new level of regional cooperation.

IMPLICATIONS: There are two main reasons for these recent developments. First, the Central Asian states gained their independence during the disintegration of the bipolar world order, associated with the emergence of new challenges and threats to stability, increased geopolitical rivalry, and escalated armed confrontation in neighboring regions. In addition, the heavy burden of internal political, socio-economic, ideological and other problems that the



Central Asian countries faced in the 1990s and the subsequent period exacerbated the security situation in the region². The newly independent Central Asian states were preoccupied with vital issues of state building and the search for identity in a globalized world. All regional states lacked experience both in domestic and foreign affairs and had to focus on their own problems, as well as on the most acute security threats. Yet over time, the Central Asian states have proven to be able to strengthen their political systems and administrative institutions, and elaborating their own models of national development. Through their integration into the international community, the Central Asian countries have gained experience in devising foreign policies capable of accommodating the strategic prospects and advantages of regional cooperation in the globalized world.

Second, over the two years since Mirziyoyev's ascendance to power, Uzbekistan has pursued a new regional policy in Central Asia, which has served to defuse the country's conflicts with its neighbors. The Central Asian countries currently express a firm readiness for constructive changes in bilateral and multilateral relations. The states of the region now concentrate on consolidating their efforts to increase their competitiveness in the world and to strengthen the region's unity.

According to the Uzbek Foreign Ministry, all the Central Asian countries' leading partners, including Russia, China, the U.S. and the EU, actively participated in the consultations on drafting the document. The adoption of the UN resolution on Central Asia gained unanimous support from countries representing all the continents of the world, namely Australia, North and South America, Asia, Africa and Europe. Thereby, the international community expressed its firm and unconditional support for the Central Asian countries' efforts to deepen regional cooperation, which is one of the most important preconditions for stability and development of the region³.

Indeed, Central Asia's security is integral to global security. In the current period when other regions of the world undergo political tensions and conflict, the strategic prospect of regional cooperation in Central Asia is particularly important for international security. Growing uncertainty, turbulence and imbalances in the global economy require Central Asian states to undertake closer, coordinated interaction to implement common regional development projects.

The international community, including the regional states, recognizes that only a stable, dynamically developing and prosperous Central Asia can become an attractive, constructive and long-term partner. If the Central Asian countries prove successful in realizing this vision for their region, Central Asia can become a new geopolitical laboratory of stability and peace in Eurasia.

CONCLUSIONS: The UN resolution on Central Asia marked the entry of the Central Asian countries into a new era of interstate relations. It signaled that the Central Asian states have embarked on a decisive course towards regional cooperation, with the support of the international community. These changes in regional dynamics have encouraged international partners to fundamentally reconsider their approaches to Central Asia, and indeed strengthened the prospect

² Uzbekistan's foreign policy is a regional policy, <http://thehill.com/opinion/international/361449-uzbekistans-foreign-policy-is-a-regional-policy>, 22 November of 2017

³ A.Kazantsev The Uzbek leader in the United States: what stands behind the multi-vectoredness of Tashkent, 19 May of 2018, <http://afghanistan.ru/doc/120816.html>

of promoting security, development and prosperity in a strategically important region, located in the heart of Eurasia.

FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITIES UZBEKISTAN AND RUSSIA: BILATERAL AND REGIONAL DIMENSIONS OF THEIR PARTNERSHIP

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Annotation

The article analyzes the bilateral and regional dimension of the Uzbek-Russian partnership in the context of the current relations between the two countries. The author researches the perspectives of Uzbek-Russian economic cooperation, as well as coordination in the field of digital economy development, personnel training, and in the issues of making joint efforts to ensure regional and international security.

The current relations between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Russian Federation are the result of the intersection of the important historical process that consolidated the Uzbek and Russian nations with close ties of friendship and good-neighbourliness. "In the early 1990s, at the dawn of the transition of cooperation from the intra-Union to the interstate level, Russia and Uzbekistan were able to painlessly and trustfully adapt their interaction to the political and economic realities that changed after the USSR's collapse, which largely determined Uzbek-Russian long-term partnership"¹.

Over the past quarter century, Uzbekistan and Russia managed to create solid foundation for long-standing and mutually beneficial cooperation, which now includes more than 340 interstates, intergovernmental and interdepartmental treaties. There is no doubt that "a significant merit of this belongs to the First President of Uzbekistan I.Karimov, who outlined the key areas of interstate relations"².

In building relations with Russia, Tashkent proceeds from the fact that Moscow has always been and remains an important strategic partner and ally of Uzbekistan. Tashkent has a firm intention not only to promote the steady turn of existing agreements into new mutually beneficial projects, but also actively expand cooperation in prospective areas. This goal found its actual embodiment during the state visit of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.Mirziyoyev to Russia in April 2017, when 55 agreements were signed for an unprecedented amount – \$ 16 billion.



¹ From international round table materials («Uzbekistan's Foreign Policy Transformation at the present stage: new directions, opportunities and challenges» 7 May of 2018, Tashkent). <https://ia-centr.ru/publications/sovremennyy-uzbekistan-na-mirovoy-arene/>

² From the report of the Chief of the Center for geopolitical studies «Berlek-Unity» (Ufa) R.Murzagaleev «Uzbekistan and Russia – intensification of political and economic cooperation at the present stage» //International round table «Uzbekistan's Foreign Policy Transformation at the present stage: new directions, opportunities and challenges» 7 May of 2018, Tashkent, <https://ia-centr.ru/publications/sovremennyy-uzbekistan-na-mirovoy-arene/>

In his speech, Sh.Mirziyoyev expressed hope that "the countries' mutual desire will fill bilateral partnership with new practical content, objectives, specific programs and projects".³ Subsequently, the Russian expert community unanimously evaluated this visit as an important historical event. A Chief of Russian Institute for Strategic Studies M.Fradkov admitted that the meeting of the leaders of the two countries in Moscow in April 2017 demonstrated a turning point in bilateral relations, which set a new tone for a trustful political dialogue between Moscow and Tashkent."⁴ At the same time the Head of the Central Asia Department of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations Russian Academy of Sciences (IMEMO RAS) D.Malysheva considered the meeting to be "unprecedented event", which gave a powerful impetus to the Uzbek-Russian cooperation at almost all levels and relevant areas"⁵.

The agreements reached by the Uzbek and Russian leaders formed the basis for intensive multi-level joint work, which allowed the countries to get practical outcomes in such fields as trade, economy, policy, security, culture and humanity in 2017. In order to implement the specially developed "Road map for enhancing cooperation", governments, parliaments and business circles of two countries significantly intensified mutual interaction. Bilateral coordination at the interregional level between Uzbekistan and Russia has also been established.

The steps taken by Uzbekistan and Russia to deepen cooperation brought new dynamism to their bilateral trade. In particular, nowadays Russian investments in Uzbek economy have already exceeded \$8.5 billion. Moreover, in 2018, according to the economists, the trade turnover will go up to \$6 billion. This figure exceeds the expectations. Sh.M.Mirziyoyev noted that the priority for the coming years is to reach the level of \$10 billion. In this regard, Uzbekistan intends to take steps to increase mutual trade considerably.

A solid foundation for achieving this goal was created when Russian President Vladimir Putin signed an impressive number of documents, total number of which was \$ 27 billion, in the field of trade, economy and investment during his state visit to Uzbekistan in October 2018. Additionally, cooperation projects for more than \$ 2 billion signed during the First interregional forum in Tashkent, are also considered to be a part of that foundation. As an outcome of this important political event, the Uzbek and Russian leaders agreed to open more than 70 joint ventures in Uzbekistan. At the same time, "Rostselmash", "Kamaz", "Eurocement" and other Russian companies have been enhancing their cooperation with us. The Russian company "Promtractor" has agreed on tractor and heavy machinery production in our country. The question of building cars of the Ulyanovsk automobile plant in Uzbekistan has also been discussed.

All of these achievements were possibly reached by hard work of Uzbek and Russian regions over the past two years. Since 2016 there has been a noticeable expansion of business circles' activity geography. Uzbekistan has established cooperation with 70 Russian regions: 24 business delegations from 30 regions of the Russian Federation and more than 200 representatives of Russian companies visited our country.

In the sectoral context, a successfully functioning "green corridor" for the export of Uzbek fruit and vegetables to Russia has been possibly formed. Besides this, a mechanism for the production of composite materials and metalworking products has been launched, as well as cooperation between enterprises of the automotive industry has been started.

³ Mirziyoyev's statement to the press following the Russian-Uzbek talks// 2017. 5 APR. city of Moscow city. <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54223>

⁴ From M.Fradkov's speech at the international conference «Actual security problems of the Central Asian region and the solution strategy – approaches of Russia and Uzbekistan» // April 3 of 2018, Moscow.

⁵ Materials of the international round table «Foreign Policy and Economy of Uzbekistan in the Framework of the Action Strategy for 2017-2021» / International relations: interdisciplinary scientific and theoretical journal of University of World Economy and Diplomacy. - № 4 (70) of 2017.- p. 29.

The establishment of direct interaction between Uzbek companies and Russian regions is of particular importance in the light of the possibilities for both creating new production chains and strengthening those that exist. Without this, the Uzbek and Russian economies are largely short of social and economic benefits in goods production. Tashkent and Moscow's joint efforts in creating joint high-tech industries will expand cooperation for the production of demanded goods in order to enter into developing world markets.

As Sh.M.Mirziyoyev stated at the meeting with V.Putin in the framework of SCO Qingdao summit on June 9, 2018, "Uzbekistan makes cooperation with all Russian companies in all directions on the base of trust and accuracy. And if a year ago only the oil and gas industry was the point of Uzbek-Russian coordination, today two states make attempts to cooperate almost in all spheres".⁶

It should be noted that this year Uzbek-Russian relations has been enhanced by a new important realm of cooperation – the beginning of the construction of the Russian nuclear power plant in our country. Current opportunities to work with Russia in this area will form a completely new cluster, the implementation of which will serve the further development of industrial potential and job creation in different branches of Uzbek economy. In fact, this project marks the formation of a high-tech sector of



Uzbek economy. As noted by the leading research fellow of the Institute of market problems of Russian Academy of Sciences N.Ziadullaev, the President of Uzbekistan Sh.Mirziyoyev has set the task to revive the nuclear industry of Uzbekistan. "The Institute of nuclear physics in Tashkent was a leading one in the Soviet Union. In the coming years Moscow will start to assist us in the restoration of the Institute".

Describing the current level of Uzbek-Russian economic cooperation, we should necessarily emphasize the mutual interest of Tashkent and Moscow in the development of bilateral trade and economic relations. Thus, for Tashkent, Moscow is an important and the largest market on the territory of CIS; for Russia, Uzbekistan with a population of more than 32 million people (almost half of the population of Central Asia) is the largest market in the Central Asian region. From this it becomes obvious that the development of trade and economic cooperation between the two countries is a mutually beneficial and long-term aim. Simultaneously, Uzbekistan has taken the comprehensive measures to liberalize the national economy. "These measures, helping to remove a lot of serious obstacles that previously prevented Russian partners from fully operating and to predict economic trends in the Uzbek market, have already contributed to the expansion and deepening of Uzbek-Russian ties".⁷

Certainly, Uzbekistan is in favor of removing all bureaucratic and other barriers so that to cooperate with foreign partners, including Russia, and seeks for new ways of coordination in areas of mutual interest.

From this point of view, a very promising area of mutual cooperation between Uzbekistan and Russia is the sphere of development of the digital economy since both countries are almost simultaneously embarking on the implementation of programs for the introduction of information technologies in important realms of their industry. Thus, in 2018, Russia approved the government program "Digital economy" and developed three-year action plans.

⁶ From Sh.M. Mirziyoyev's speech at bilateral meeting with V. Putin // 9 of June 2018, China. <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/57707>

⁷ From the speech of the Minister of industry and trade of the Russian Federation D. Manturov at the Uzbek-Russian business forum // 3 October of 2017. Tashkent, <http://www.aloqada.com/ru/news/2017/10/03/uzbekistan-i-nbsp-rossiya-skooperinuyutsya-v-nbsp-promyshlennosti>

In turn, Uzbekistan, which begins a new stage of digitalization, announced 2018 as the Year of support of active entrepreneurship, innovative ideas and technologies. By adopting a State Program for the Year of Support of Active Entrepreneurship, Innovative Ideas and Technologies, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan has made decisions on improving the sphere of information and communication technologies.

It should be noted that our country has already made some progress in this field: an Innovative center with unprecedented tax benefits and preferences has been created in Uzbekistan: e-government services have been actively developing. In 2017 over 1,5 million citizens' appeals were received through the virtual reception of the President of Uzbekistan. In addition, tax reporting and customs clearance have been completely digitized. So, created electronic system of registration via the Internet has reduced the time of launching a business in 30 minutes⁸.

Uzbekistan and Russia can achieve all goals in this realm through the creation of a joint platform for the development of the digital economy, technology parks, improvement of postal services, arranging training courses for experts of public relations and IT-specialists. In reality this can be achieved as Uzbekistan and Russia already have a solid basis for cooperation in the field of personnel training. Uzbek youth strongly longs for getting education in Russian universities.

The number of students from Uzbekistan getting higher education in Russia composes more than 21 thousand people (8.6% of the total number of foreign students in Russia). It is no coincidence that by the number of applicants Uzbekistan today occupies the 1st rank among the CIS countries.⁹ Branches of leading Russian universities in Tashkent, including branches of Moscow State University named after M.V.Lomonosov, Gubkin Russian State University of Oil and Gas, Plekhanov Russian University of Economics are also popular among Uzbek students. The number of students in these higher educational institutions already exceeds 2 thousand Uzbek citizens.

Supporting our youth's desire for being educated in Russian, this year Tashkent and Moscow agreed to open new branches of the National research technological University "Moscow Institute of Steel and Alloys", Bauman Moscow State Technical University, I.M.Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University, Moscow University of Architecture, Russian University of Technology.

The close partnership between Uzbekistan and Russia is one of the most illustrative examples of coordination of efforts in fields of national, regional and international security. The expert on Central Asia of the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies (RISS) I.Ippolitov assures that "Uzbekistan, as the largest and "core country" in Central Asia, is a kind of "keystone in the arch". In this regard, the stable political system and public peace in Uzbekistan are extremely important not only for maintaining balance of power in the region, but also for ensuring Russia's vital interests".¹⁰

Today, Tashkent and Moscow actively cooperate in a wide range of areas including maintaining peace and stability; tackling terrorism and extremism; nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction; combating drug trafficking and etc. As the experts of the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies mention, "Uzbekistan is the most protected state in the region in relation to the drug threat and therefore the country is considered to be a natural partner of Russia and a regional leader in the fight against this threat".¹¹

It is not surprising why the topic of the increasing cooperation in the field of security was one of the key issues on the agenda of Sh.Mirziyoyev and V.Putin's talks on April 4,

⁸ From the speech of Uzbek Prime Minister A.Aripov at the forum "Digital agenda in the era of globalization" / 4 April of 2018. Almaty. <https://ru.sputniknews-uz.com/politics/20180204/7420594/Aripov-uzbekistan-vstupil-v-etap-tsifrovoy-ekonomiki.html>

⁹ Uzbekistan and Russia: the contours of a strategic partnership" // 10. August of 2017. <http://www.ut.uz/ru/politika/uzbekistan-i-rossiya-kontury-strategicheskogo-sotrudnichestva/>

¹⁰ Uzbekistan will cover Russia from the South" // 2016. 6 Dec. <http://svpressa.ru/politic/article/162016/>

¹¹ Kukol S. "Experience of Uzbekistan in the fight against drug trafficking in Central Asia" / Problems of national strategy, RISS, No. 1 of 2018.

2017. Following the agreements of the leaders of the two countries, during the visit of the Russian interior Minister V.Kolokoltsev to Uzbekistan, a Protocol on cooperation between Uzbek and Russian Ministries of Internal Affairs was signed for 2017-2018. According to V.Kolokoltsev, this document is characterized as the one that meets the modern realities of the fight against the most dangerous types of international crime and provides further development of Russian-Uzbek contacts through law enforcement agencies, which allows transferring the interaction of the two states in this direction to a new practical level".¹²

Consistent cooperation between Tashkent and Moscow in the field of maintaining peace and stability makes it possible to develop comprehensive preventive measures to address common threats. Thus, in October 2017, twelve years later, in the Russian-Uzbek history, the second special tactical exercises of the defense ministries troops of Uzbekistan and Russia took place at the mining and field training ground "Forish" of the South-Western special military district of Uzbekistan. These anti-terrorist exercises were aimed at developing joint actions to prevent and destroy militant groups in mountainous areas, strengthening practical skills and exchange experience. According to the Russian experts, "due to the fact that the Uzbek and Russian defense ministries have formed a joint cooperation plan, focused at maintaining stability in the Central Asian region, bilateral cooperation between the two states in the security field has been improved"¹³.

There is no doubt that at the present time Uzbek-Russian relations go upward, confirming the fact that the characteristics inherent in the relations between the two states – "Strategic partnership and Alliance" – is an objective and natural reality.

On the whole, assessing the importance of Uzbek-Russian cooperation, it is difficult to overestimate its degree of influence on the situation in Central Asian region. From this point of view, it seems that given the combination of many diverse aspects, the trajectory of the further evolution of relations between Uzbekistan and Russia will be a key factor in ensuring regional security and long-term development of the whole region.

¹² From the statement of V. Kolokoltsev during the meeting with sh. Mirziyoyev // 2018. April 23. Tashkent. <https://www.uzdaily.uz/articles-id-32664.htm>

¹³ Materials of the International round table «Foreign Policy and Economy of Uzbekistan in the Framework of the Action Strategy for 2017-2021» / International relations: interdisciplinary scientific and theoretical journal of University of World Economy and Diplomacy. - № 4 (70) of 2017. - p. 30

ONE WAY, MANY PARTNERS



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Annotation

The article discusses the main vectors of mutually beneficial cooperation between Uzbekistan and China in the framework of the implementation of the initiative "One Belt, One Road"; parallels between some features of the development strategies of the two countries are drawn. The author analyzes the long-term prospects of cooperation between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the context of the results of the International Conference "One Belt, One Road" held in Tashkent on May 14, 2018.

The International Forum "One Belt, One Road" (OBOR), held in Beijing on May 14, 2017, opened a new stage in the development of the most ambitious economic project in the history of China. At the same time, the impact of this program, according to the experts, will not be limited to the economy, but will lead to a certain transformation of China's foreign policy.

Currently, the promotion of the concept of "OBOR" is the main priority of the Chinese leadership. This huge strategic plan of China envisages the participation of 68 countries covering 30% of global GDP, which indicates the significant potential and scale of this project.

Although "OBOR" is a relatively recent initiative, today it has received broad international support. Over the past five years, "OBOR" has gone from launch to a phase of action, as a result, over 100 countries and international organizations have responded positively to the initiative. 69 countries have signed a cooperation agreement with PRC. In addition, during this period, the total volume of China's foreign trade with "OBOR" member countries exceeded 4 trillion dollars; the investments amounted to 60 billion dollars, and 75 zones of foreign economic and trade cooperation¹ were deployed.

According to experts, a significant increase in the "circle of friends" of the PRC on "OBOR" demonstrates an increase in the confidence in China as a responsible and authoritative global partner, strengthens its more active role in the international political and economic processes, contributing to the growth of Beijing's authority.

At present, the international situation is undergoing complex and profound changes; the world economy is slowly recovering from the global crisis of the beginning of the century. Under these conditions, the Chinese initiative promotes to the realization of the huge trade, economic, investment, transport and logistics potential of the participating countries, which can drastically change the modern appearance of the entire space of Asia.

In addition, the successful implementation of the project will give new impetus to the further expansion of economic cooperation between the "OBOR" member states, namely: a) in



¹ BRI offers new opportunities for shared prosperity: China. Daily Times (Pakistan), MAY 18, 2018. <https://dailytimes.com.pk/241440/bri-offers-new-opportunities-for-shared-prosperity-china/>

creating more favorable conditions for trade and attracting investments; b) in the development of transport and communication infrastructure; c) in establishing close cooperation in agriculture, tourism, education and culture; d) in the effective use of the economic opportunities of developed countries, providing their assistance to developing countries.

Vectors of bilateral and multilateral cooperation

Since the ancient times, the Great Silk Road ran through the territory of modern Uzbekistan, where numerous trade routes converged, and there was an intense exchange between different cultures. Ancient Chinese literature often mentioned such cities as Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva, which made a worthy contribution to the development of world civilization.

Relations between the Chinese and Uzbek peoples are inextricably linked with the history of the Great Silk Road. National values and traditions of the two nations had a great influence on the development of world civilization, and trade relations served to widely spread the unique discoveries of that era throughout the world.

It is difficult to overestimate the enormous, irreplaceable role of the Great Silk Road as the international transport artery of antiquity, which connected such countries and regions as China, India, Central Asia, the Middle and Near East and the Mediterranean. It not only ensured the development of trade relations, but also contributed to the exchange of information between ancient states and regions, the spread of new types of products and crops, the mutual enrichment of the cultures of nations for thousands of years, and thus acted as an important means of intercivilizational dialogue. The Great Silk Road also served as a conductor for the rapid spread of new technologies and innovations (the production of silk, porcelain, gunpowder, paper, and much more).

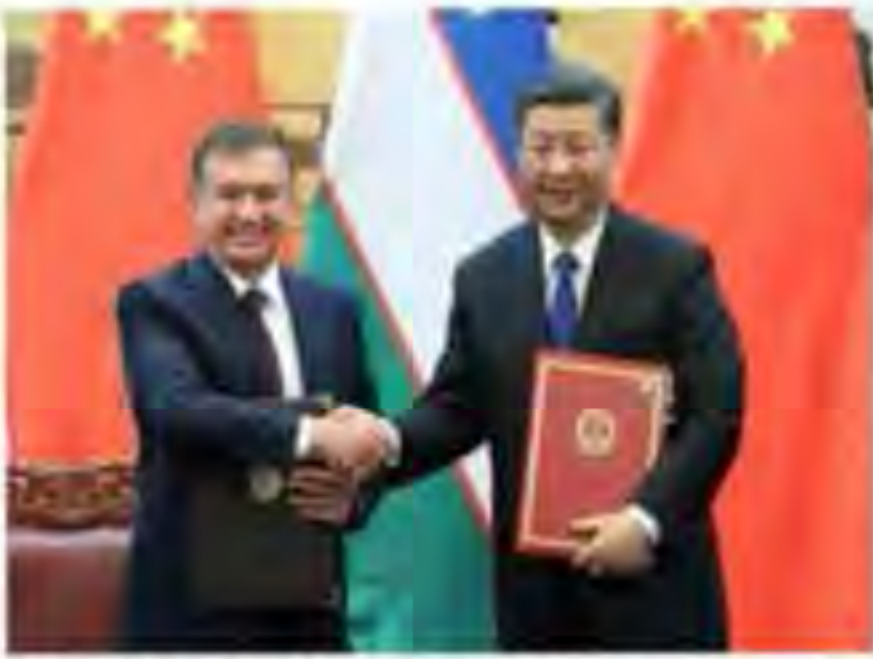
In this regard, the revival of the modern Silk Road provides for the resumption of transport infrastructure, continental trade routes and cultural exchange between Asian countries. Herein, as in ancient times, China plays a key role. Chairman of PRC Xi Jinping in September 2013 during his visit to Kazakhstan for the first time put forward the initiative of joint construction of the "Economic Belt of the Silk Road". In October of the same year in Indonesia, he presented the idea of the "The 21st Century Maritime Silk Road". Together they formed the initiative "One Belt, One Road".

Special attention should be paid to the new policy of Uzbekistan to improve relations with neighboring countries in Central Asia. This creates favorable conditions not only for strengthening security in the region, but also for the implementation of multilateral projects within the framework of the SCO and the "One Belt, One Road" Initiative.
Yu Xinghui, Secretary of the Party Committee of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences.

On the basis of the long-term national interests, the Leadership of the Republic of Uzbekistan was among the first to declare its support and readiness to take an active part in the construction of the "Economic Belt of the Silk Road", and to further deepen comprehensive ties with China.

Uzbekistan and China provide mutual political support in the international arena on the promotion of the vital interests of the two countries. In particular, the first state visit of President Sh. Mirziyoyev to the PRC on May 11-15, 2017 gave new dynamics to interstate relations. During the visit, a solid package of documents was signed: over 100 contracts for the implementation of projects totaling 23 billion dollars. Based on these agreements, the Road Map for the quality and timely implementation of the agreements reached between two countries was adopted.

It should be noted that the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev took part in the international Forum "One Belt, One Road" in Beijing on May 14-15, 2017 and made a speech in which he voiced the position of Uzbekistan on the further improvement and development of this project. The head of Uzbekistan welcomed the proposal of the Chairman of the PRC to hold meetings of the Forum on a regular basis and expressed readiness to host one of the forums in Uzbekistan, highlighting the theme of the event to the Central Asian region.



At the SCO summit in Qingdao in June 2018, President Sh. Mirziyoyev also noted that Uzbekistan is calculating on the implementation of large projects in the field of transport, energy, trade, investment and high technologies in Central Asia, rich in natural, industrial and human resources.²

In this regard, "One Belt, One Road" opens up the possibility for member countries to fully utilize their potential, expand comprehensive cooperation, stimulate trade and investment, and also provide the most favorable conditions for further development. In this context, the main priority in cooperation for Uzbekistan should be the development of conjuncture, industry, the active involvement of the country in the implementation of innovative projects in the region.

The favorable geographical location of Uzbekistan makes it possible to become a hub for the intersection of strategically important transport and transit routes of cargo traffic between Europe, Asia and the Middle East. Uzbekistan is the shortest transit route for the transportation of goods from China to the countries of the Persian Gulf and Europe. So, the distance by road from Kashgar through Kyrgyzstan to Tashkent and further through Turkmenistan to Iran with access to the ports of the Persian Gulf (Bandar Abbas) is about 4325 km, and the journey time is 2-3 days.

The quickest solution is the coordination and implementation of the strategic project for the construction of the "China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway", which will enable the transportation of goods from China to the countries of Eastern Europe and the Middle East by the shortest route. According to the preliminary parameters of the project, the shortening of the route will be about 900 km, and the delivery time will be reduced by 7-8 days.

The strategic importance of this project is indicated by the fact that the leaders of the SCO countries paid special attention to the early start of building the "China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway" at the Qingdao Shanghai Organization Summit in June 2018. In particular, the President of the Kyrgyz Republic S. Jeenbekov emphasized that "Kyrgyzstan is interested in the speedy launch of a railway construction project that will significantly increase the transit and export potential of the SCO countries." According to him, "China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway will increase the export potential of the SCO countries".

In this context, it should be noted that in March 2017, with the participation of Uzbekistan, railway and road bridges Turkmenabad-Farab across Amu Darya were opened, thanks to which the volume of freight traffic in this area has already increased 2.5 times. It gives chances for access to the transport route in the European direction "Baku-Tbilisi-Kars" using the opportunities of the new international trade ports on the coast of the Caspian Sea "Alat" (Azerbaijan) and "Turkmenbashi" (Turkmenistan).

The important agreements on the formation of the Trans-Afghan transport corridor along the "Mazar-i-Sharif-Herat" route were reached during the visit of the President of Afghanistan A. Ghani to Uzbekistan in December 2017. It will ensure access to the seaports of Iran and Pakistan by the countries of Central Asia. According to the preliminary data, the launch of a new railway will contribute to an increase in IRA's foreign trade turnover by 50%.

The implementation of these projects significantly increases the geo-economic attractiveness of Central Asia, as a link, an important transit and communication hub between the East and the West. New shortest paths will be opened for connecting the countries of the Asia-Pacific region, first of all China, on the one hand, and the states of Europe, the CIS and the Middle East, on the other hand. Of course, this will give a powerful impetus to the development of all countries of the Central Asian region, turning it into a major factor in strengthening long-term stability and security in the SCO space, which is the "core" of the "OBOR" initiative.

² Speech of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.M. Mirziyoyev at the International Forum "One Belt, One Road" in Beijing, May 14-15, 2017

As a result, Central Asia will become the region at crossroads of trans-regional transport routes in Eurasia.

International Conference "OBOR"

On May 14, 2018, an international conference devoted to the joint implementation of the "One Belt, One Road" initiative was held with the participation of representatives of academia and the media of Uzbekistan and China. During the event, the sides exchanged views on the topical issues of bilateral cooperation, promising areas of mutually beneficial partnership within the framework of "OBOR". In addition, the sides discussed issues of active involvement of representatives of the scientific and expert community to promote the project of China.

Chinese experts confirmed that Beijing considers Uzbekistan to be a key partner in Central Asia and intends to increase close cooperation with it in all areas of mutual interest. The high level of political trust and mutual understanding, stable growth of economic cooperation between the two countries indicate the firm intention of Tashkent and Beijing to develop constructive relations in the long term.

According to Ambassador of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of Uzbekistan Jiang Yan, in recent years, mutually beneficial cooperation between China and Uzbekistan has been developing dynamically and is reaching a qualitatively new level. Uzbekistan is an important node in the ancient Silk Road and one of the first countries to support the initiative and participate in it. In this regard, Beijing considers Tashkent to be one of the most important partners in the "OBOR" framework.

In turn, Zhao Long, an expert at the Center for the Study of Russia and Central Asian countries of the Shanghai Academy of International Studies, noted that the strategic partnership of Uzbekistan and China creates favorable conditions for the implementation of the "One Belt, One Road" project. It is important for the further expansion of economic cooperation, creation of facilities for trade and investment, development of transport and communication infrastructure, strengthening cooperation in agriculture, tourism, education and culture.³

"The Great Silk Road was an important tool not only for the development of trade, but also for the cultural convergence of regions," said Thomas Chan, director of the "One Belt, One Road" Research Institute at Chukhai College (Hong Kong). "Within the framework of the project we plan to strengthen cooperation with Uzbekistan in the fields of education and tourism." Against this background, the active interaction between Tashkent and Beijing within the framework of this initiative provides the parties with an opportunity to uncover the untapped potential for cooperation. In particular, at present, with the participation of Chinese companies, large joint projects are being implemented in Uzbekistan, such as the SIZ "Dzhizak", the gas pipeline "China-Uzbekistan", the railway tunnel "Angren-Pap", etc. were built. Chinese companies like Huawei and ZTE are actively involved in the field of information and communication technologies, Pansheng is actively involved in the production of building materials and high-tech products.

An important place in bilateral relations is given to trade, economic and investment interaction. It is gratifying to note that steady growth has been observed in bilateral trade. In 2017, this figure reached 5 billion dollars, and the countries set a goal to increase trade turnover by 2020 to 10 billion dollars. In Uzbekistan more than 700 Chinese enterprises operate, and over the past years, Chinese investors have invested 7.8 billion dollars in Uzbekistan's economy.

During the conference, it was stated that Uzbekistan is ready to discuss specific proposals of the Chinese side on the implementation of the development of transport infrastructure. Specifically, the construction of the railway "China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan" was of particular interest, the implementation of which will allow to complete the formation of a unified railway system throughout the republic, which will be the most important link in the China-Central Asia-Europe international transit corridor. In this context, Chinese experts noted that due to its strategic location in the center of the region, with a politically stable climate and a dynamically

³ Speech of Zhao Long, an expert of the Center for the Study of Russia and Central Asian countries of the Shanghai Academy of International Studies, at the international conference "Uzbekistan and China: prospects for the joint implementation of the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, May 14, 2018, Tashkent.

developing economy, Uzbekistan should become the transport and logistics center of Central Asia. In turn, the PRC is ready to act as a unifying bridge between Central and East Asia.

Consonance development strategies of the two countries

Today, Uzbekistan is implementing step by step its own Development Strategy for 2017 – 2021, and we notice the consonance of a whole range of its economic goals with the priorities of implementing the Chinese initiative to the “OBOR”.

During the conference, it was noted that the Chinese side highly appreciates the efforts of Uzbekistan to carry out reforms in all sectors of the national economy. From the point of view of the PRC experts, the “Action Strategy on Five Priority Directions of the Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021”, adopted by the Government of Uzbekistan, plays a special role in this process.

Uzbekistan is one of the most convenient countries for doing business. According to this indicator, it ranks 11th in the world. Over the past 15 months, conditions for international trade have been significantly improved. Cyril Muller, Vice-President of the World Bank.

According to the Chinese experts, the adoption of the “Action Strategy” was a “big strategic decision” by the Leadership of Uzbekistan. A similar plan exists in China, the priority areas of which identify key tasks such as “reducing poverty in the country and improving the economic well-being of the people.” In this regard, Uzbekistan and China have common interests associated primarily with improving the lives of their people. The implementation of the plans specified in this Strategy will lead the country to a new, higher stage of development, through which Uzbekistan will be transformed into a developed, open and profitable partner, including for China. Yu Xinghue, Secretary of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, said: “We have great prospects for looking at the future of successful implementation of reforms in Uzbekistan. The ongoing positive changes are a clear example of this.”

We also noticed that the World Bank announced the “Doing Business-2018” ranking. In terms of business liberalization, Uzbekistan ranked 74th among 190 countries and entered the top ten countries with the fastest development in the world. In this way, according to the data of 2016, Uzbekistan took the 141st place, and in 2017 the 87th place. This indicates a very impressive dynamics over the past two years.”⁴

The discussions also noted that the new “openness” policy of Uzbekistan provides a chance for both countries to take advantage of mutual opportunities. Beijing has a huge technological potential that is not inferior to European counterparts. At the same time, Tashkent has serious potential opportunities, it is a high-quality, educated, relatively cheap labor and a favorable investment climate.

The participants of the event noted that the implementation of the “Action Strategy” will be a powerful impetus for the progressive development of not only Uzbekistan, but will also serve peace, stability and prosperity of the entire Central Asian region. The current course of the President further strengthens the country's position not only in Central Asia, but also in the international arena as a promising and reliable partner. This dynamic opens up broad opportunities for bringing Uzbek-Chinese relations to a qualitatively new level.

The cumulative investment in the framework of the “One belt, One Road” is estimated at huge amounts: from 2 to 3.5 trillion dollars. Over the past five years, Chinese investment in the countries that joined the initiative amounted to about 60 billion dollars. In the coming years, Beijing plans to triple this amount, which opens up great prospects for all participants of the project, including Uzbekistan.

According to the Chinese experts, the main task of “OBOR” is to redirect the flow of exports of goods and capital to those countries which in recent years China began to actively develop trade and economic cooperation with, primarily in the countries of Central Asia.

Uzbekistan remains interested in further strengthening and expanding multi-faceted economic cooperation with China, especially in the non-raw-materials and technological sectors, and attracting Chinese investment in priority manufacturing sectors of the economy.

⁴ Speech of the Party Secretary of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences Yu Xinghue at the international conference “Uzbekistan and China: prospects for the joint implementation of the “One Belt, One Road” initiative. May 14, 2018, Tashkent.

For the Republic of Uzbekistan the further development of the Jizzakh special industrial zone created in 2013 and transformed in 2018 Syrdarya SIZ, in which Chinese investors were provided with favorable conditions and preferences, is particularly important. The cooperation within this free-industrial zone opens prerequisites for further deepening bilateral relations, gives dynamism to trade and economic relations between Uzbekistan and China, and also creates conditions for joint access to the markets of third countries.

Today "Pen Sheng Industrial Park" is one of the successfully implemented projects in Uzbekistan with the direct participation of Chinese private business.

Along with this, according to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, four free economic zones were created, "Urgut", "Gijduvan", "Kokand" and "Khazarasp", which provide tremendous opportunities for foreign investors, including Chinese business representatives. During the term of operation, special tax, customs and foreign exchange regimes are operated in the territories of FEZ's, it is also planned to create logistic centers and customs posts.

With the growing demand for energy and consumer goods in China, it is in the strategic interest of both countries to attract investment in the creation of modern plants for the deep processing of mineral and agricultural resources, as well as the integrated use of the production and resource potential of Samarkand, Bukhara, Fergana and Khorezm regions.

Furthermore, the use of the financial and investment potential of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) can be of great benefit to Uzbekistan. In particular, the priority directions of investment activities of the AIIB are for projects in the field of energy resources, transport, rural infrastructure and logistics.

On the whole, the measures taken by the Leadership of Uzbekistan do not only create favorable conditions for business development, for foreign investors, including China, but also open up new opportunities for the country to acquire a more significant role in regional processes, especially against the background of the growing strategic importance of Central Asia as a "hub" in Eurasia. The intensification of cooperation between Uzbekistan and China meets the strategic interests of both countries, who are seeking to diversify and expand their own economic opportunities.

RISING THE U.S.-UZBEKISTAN RELATIONSHIP TO THE NEXT LEVEL: MIRZIYOYEV'S HISTORIC VISIT



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Annotation

The official visit of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, to the United States of America in May 2018 has been characterized as historic. Indeed, the Uzbek leader's meetings at the White House, Congress, with key departments, major corporations and international financial institutions indicate that this visit brought significant results.

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's visit to Washington was historic, being the first official visit of an Uzbek president since 2002. Mirziyoyev's reception, and the breadth and width of agreements signed, constitute an acknowledgement of the reform process in Uzbekistan, as well as of the country's newfound regional role and in particular its constructive approach to resolving the problem of Afghanistan. Washington's engagement in these efforts will further improve the prospects of success in Uzbekistan's domestic reforms and regional initiatives.

President Mirziyoyev received a warm welcome in Washington, being accompanied with the highest level of Diplomatic protocol and being accorded significant time by U.S. President Donald Trump. Following the negotiations conducted in Washington DC, the two Presidents issued a Joint Declaration, "The United States and Uzbekistan: Launching a New Era of Strategic Partnership." A package of documents was signed during the visit, including protocols to enlarge bilateral trade relations and cooperation in higher education and academic research, agricultural industry and energy. A memorandum of understanding was signed to establish cooperation in Uzbekistan's bid to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) and to organize a Central Asian Trade Forum in 2018 in Tashkent. Another Memorandum was signed between Uzbekistan's National Bank of Foreign Economic Activity and the U.S. Export-Import Bank to finance cooperative projects. Corporations of the two countries signed more than 20 large contracts estimated to be worth \$4.8 billion. In the sphere of security, the U.S. and Uzbekistan agreed on a five-year plan in defense and military affairs targeted at consolidation of peace and stabilization in the region.

At the World Bank headquarters, World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim praised Uzbekistan's reform process, and loan of agreements for \$940 million was signed, with the purpose of financing project in energy efficiency, horticulture, and emergency medical services. The total World Bank engagement up to 2020 includes 27 significant projects, with a total worth exceeding \$4 billion. In addition, an agreement on consulting services was signed with International Financial Corporation (IFC), focused on improving public-private partnerships to attract private investors to Uzbekistan.

IMPLICATIONS: The visit's significance stems only in part from the impressive array of agreements concluded. On a deeper level, it constitutes the U.S. acknowledgment of immense progress being done in Uzbekistan in the past two years; consolidates Uzbekistan's reputation as a country with a consistent and constructive foreign policy; and shows the value of Uzbekistan's approach to regional affairs, particularly Afghanistan.

Since coming to power, the new Uzbek president has launched wide-scale reforms in almost all spheres of life, focused on improving governance, raising the international status of

the country, and providing a positive business and investment climate. This has added impetus to the heartening signs of positive political dynamics and a newfound drive for regional cooperation in Central Asia. Uzbekistan's far-reaching program to reform and modernize the state – what one American scholar called “Extreme Makeover: Central Asia Edition”- is at the heart of this region-wide process.



Even so, any internal reforms can be self-defeating in the event of serious external impediments. Therefore, a friendly relationship with all of the world's leading powers including Russia, China and the U.S. is crucial for Uzbekistan's prospects of success. Even though close ties with Moscow and Beijing are a given as a result of geographical proximity, Washington remains a global leader that Tashkent seeks to engage, and a natural ally to any country undergoing fundamental reforms. This explains the significance of the strong support the U.S. expressed for Mirziyoyev's reform program, of the U.S.

recognition of Uzbekistan's increasingly important role as an economic leader, and of American assistance in achieving WTO membership. The implementation of the agreements signed in Washington will create a solid foundation for the development of new opportunities to improve Uzbek-American cooperation in trade, investment and economic activity. As the holder of significant advantages in innovation and high technology, the U.S. can play an important role in the modernization of the Uzbek economy, raising the country's human resources, and enhancing its scientific and technical potential.

Similarly, the commercial contracts and agreements signed during the visit also send a clear signal to business circles in other countries regarding the long-term stability of the Uzbek market. The engagement of key U.S. corporation further increases the interest of business entities elsewhere in Uzbekistan's growing economy.

Another important product of the visit was a recognition of Uzbekistan's improving international reputation as a country with consistent and constructive foreign policy. Uzbekistan has always stood out for the pragmatism and results-oriented nature of its foreign policy, based on Foreign Policy Concept that emphasizes respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; non-interference in internal affairs; the peaceful settlement of disagreements; and a commitment to universally accepted international norms and principles. On this basis, Uzbekistan is effectively establishing relations based on mutual respect across the globe and with leading international and regional organizations. In the meantime, Tashkent develops relations with all major powers, seeking to keep a balance between the interests of foreign powers, and to maintain a platform for constructive engagement in Central Asia.

Thus, President Mirziyoyev has established positive relations with a number of global leaders. In 2017, he visited Moscow, Beijing, Ankara and Seoul; at this point, Tashkent is turning its attention to European states, with forthcoming visits being planned. Tashkent's growing profile in the international organizations is worth mentioning. Mirziyoyev participated in the summit of the United Nations General Assembly, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), bringing a new “proactive” approach.

In this regard, the United States is a crucial strategic partner for Uzbekistan, given its pivotal role in the international security. The main directions of the U.S.-Uzbekistan cooperation were reflected in the Declaration of Strategic Partnership and Cooperation signed on March 12, 2002,

and reinvigorated during Mirziyoyev's visit. Successful Uzbek-American cooperation can play a significant role in stabilizing the situation in Central and South Asia.

In this connection, Tashkent's active regional policy in Central Asia and Afghanistan is of particular significance. Uzbekistan has renewed close contacts with all countries of Central Asia and Afghanistan, with a vision to transform the region into a zone of sustainable and stable growth and to generate trustful and good neighborly relations within this area. Indeed, as RUSI scholar Raffaello Pantucci has noted, there were more activities of a regional nature in 2017 than in the past two decades. Tashkent's decision to host a conference on Afghanistan and seek a major role in the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan generated novel opportunities. In addition, Tashkent is taking a greater interest in efforts to manage other regional problems, ranging from the Aral Sea to the rational use of water resources and transboundary rivers, and maintaining a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

Mirziyoyev's visit is an indication that this proactive approach makes Uzbekistan an attractive partner for the United States, especially one that can play an important role in the international coalition's strategy to build peace in Afghanistan.

Importantly, Beijing's reaction has been equally positive. Chinese experts support the view that cooperation between Uzbekistan and the United States on Afghanistan will contribute to the development of transit potential and further integration of the countries in the region.

CONCLUSIONS: An important result of the Uzbek leader's official visit to the United States is Washington's support for Tashkent's initiatives concerning Afghanistan. If President Mirziyoyev's proposals are implemented, including mechanisms of consultations among the heads of Central Asian states, and the economic, social and cultural integration of Afghanistan into this region, this would undoubtedly facilitate efforts to overcome the Afghan crisis and create conditions for Central and South Asian development over time.

Today, new leaders are in charge both in Uzbekistan and the U.S., and are taking a fresh attitude to world and regional affairs. This provides promising prospects for the further deepening of relations between the two sides, based on their common aspiration to maintain peace and stability, and to improve mutually beneficial and long term relationships.

These mutual interests formed the agenda of highest level of Uzbek-American negotiations, whose success indicate a positive bilateral understanding. This inspires confidence that Washington and Tashkent will implement these agreements promptly and efficiently, benefiting both their own citizens and all states in the region.

COOPERATION OF UZBEKISTAN WITHIN THE CIS

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Annotation

The article considers topical issues of implementing multilateral and bilateral relations of Uzbekistan with the CIS countries. The author sees the prospects for optimal cooperation in the context of interaction provided by well-established institutional and legal mechanisms, accelerating innovation and integration processes within the CIS, due to the common goals of the Commonwealth participants, interests, fields of activity, mutual respect for the sovereignty of all member states.

Arising as a response to the historic challenge of 1991, the Commonwealth of Independent States has gone through the thorny path of translating its intentions over the past 27 years, and today faces fundamentally different possibilities. The nature of the planned future of the CIS clearly shows that cooperation within the framework of the unification should acquire a new breath with more intensive dynamics.

From the moment of the formation of the CIS, the Republic of Uzbekistan was among those states that advocated "deepening economic integration, maintaining economic ties on a new basis" without politicizing the integration process, without artificially forcing and putting pressure on each other, having developed their position: economic integration while maintaining political independence and state sovereignty. Thus, the policy of Uzbekistan is formed primarily under the influence of pragmatic considerations, and this makes it possible to obtain today the maximum possible benefit from the membership in the CIS.

More recently, in the press, it was often possible to meet the externally inspired reasoning that "cooperation within the CIS gives absolutely nothing", and the organization "dies and the search for alternative ways of rapprochement is necessary". However, as the experience of the 27-year existence of the association shows, the Commonwealth of Independent States is the most optimal form of the development of multilateral cooperation in the interests of those countries that it unites. The interaction ensured by well-established institutional and legal mechanisms, as well as the common objectives, interests and fields of activity of the participants of the Commonwealth, while respecting the sovereignty of the participating States, make it possible to talk about the strategic prospects of the CIS.

The authoritative expert circles adhere to the understanding that the CIS has stood the test of time and has confirmed its relevance as an important element in the system of regional and international relations in the post-Soviet space. The specificity of multilateral relations of the post-Soviet states on the CIS site lies in their multi-aspectuality, and the scale of the issues connected with them goes far beyond the framework of bilateral relations.

At the same time, when it comes to the current state of relations of the CIS members and their immediate prospects in the XXI century, experts point out two circumstances: a deep historical connection that determines the existence of common interests, and a mutual interest in expanding the possibilities of good neighborly relations. It is no coincidence that at the meeting of CIS leaders on October 10-11, 2017, Sh. Mirziyoyev made it clear that a large role in the fate of the Commonwealth now and in the future belongs to the adaptation of the CIS mechanism to modern realities, taking into account the interests of all partners.

Today Uzbekistan is actively involved in industry cooperation, implementation of projects in the trade and economic field, anti-terrorism activities, as well as in a fairly intensively functioning system of consultations at various levels.



The basis of multilateral and bilateral relations of Uzbekistan with the Commonwealth states are not only territorial proximity, deep historical roots, cultural and spiritual ties, common destinies of the peoples inhabiting them, but also mutual economic conjugacy of the CIS countries, which remain one of the most important economic partners of our state. They account for 40% of the total foreign trade of the republic. Since the beginning of 2018, the volume of trade between Uzbekistan and the Commonwealth states has increased by 70%. In this regard, the decision of our country to resume its participation in the CIS Economic Council and readiness to join the activities of a number of branch bodies of the organization contributes significantly to the effectiveness of its work.

Meanwhile, it is important to note that Uzbekistan's interest in preserving and deepening economic ties, including at the regional level, is due not only to the historically established intertwining of the economies of the CIS countries, but also to fierce competition in the world market, dictating the need to protect the national producer. World practice shows that only under the condition of joint adaptation to geo-economic realities, coordinated participation in solving global economic problems, the CIS states will be able to provide an effective response to the challenges of globalization.

Favorable prospects for mutual support and coordination of activities of the Commonwealth states in the economic sphere are due to the presence of the potentially capacious CIS market. This allows not only to preserve traditional economically sound production relations, but also to productively develop them.

A free trade regime operates in the Commonwealth space, based on a system of bilateral trade agreements. At the same time, the early formation of a full-fledged free trade zone in the Commonwealth without any exceptions and limitations will allow not only to ensure fair competition in the national markets, but also expand economic cooperation within the framework of the CIS provisions.

It seems that the achievement of this task can be facilitated by the intensification of the format of cooperation in expanding the industrial cooperation of the participating states. First of all, it is the development of production-technological and investment ties. The mechanism of cooperation at the CIS site makes it possible to concentrate investment, technical, structural

and financial policies on the most important areas. Successful implementation of such cooperation would help increase production, expand markets, and would also be an effective mechanism for solving many social issues.

To achieve these goals, in 2017 Uzbekistan launched an initiative on the need to develop an efficient transport system in the post-Soviet space. Taking into account the key role of the transport complex in the development of the economies of the CIS countries, it is necessary to conduct a coordinated transport and logistics policy, to develop a unified approach to the principles of development of interstate transit infrastructure. This will not only expand the conditions for the movement of goods, but also give additional impetus to the formation of a common economic space of the Commonwealth.

In turn, the task of accelerating the development of innovative cooperation among the CIS countries, including through the development of common scientific and technical priorities, dictates the need for joint programs in the field of training highly qualified personnel, high-tech projects, and conducting joint research.

The CIS for Uzbekistan is the most important institution for practical cooperation in priority areas, and the Commonwealth member countries are our natural partners, neighbors and friends. We are united by multifaceted cultural ties. Therefore, among the important aspects are considered the prospects in the tourism sector, the potential of which is not yet fully involved. This necessitates the targeted implementation of the Strategy for the Development of Cooperation between the CIS Member States in the Field of Tourism and the development of a plan of concrete actions.

In general, given the multifaceted nature of historical ties and common goals for all member countries, the intensification of cooperation within the framework of the Commonwealth is an absolute priority for Uzbekistan. So, speaking at a meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of State in Dushanbe in September 2018, President of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev noted that against the background of the dynamic changes taking place in the world, strengthening global challenges and threats, the CIS confirms its relevance, speaking an important platform for strengthening multidimensional cooperation. As Sh. Mirziyoyev stressed, over the past year Uzbekistan has joined more than 10 sectoral cooperation bodies in the fields of economy, energy, science and innovation, and the fight against crime.

In the conditions when the prospective strategic goals set by the country do not naturally contradict the similar trends among our partners in the CIS, it is necessary to timely adjust the content of the long-term economic projects implemented at the site.

UZBEKISTAN – SOUTH KOREA: NEW LONG-TERM PROSPECTS OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP



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Annotation

The article reveals new long-term prospects for development of economic and strategic partnership between Uzbekistan and South Korea. The author analyzes the results of the state visit of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the Republic of Korea that took place on November 22-25, 2017 in the context of Uzbekistan President's active regional and international politics.

The first state visit of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev to the Republic of Korea on November 22-25, 2017 became an important event in the history of bilateral relations, marking new areas of multifaceted interaction and expanding the strategic partnership between the two countries¹.

According to the foreign analysts, the visit and negotiations between the two leaders contribute to a significant expansion of practical cooperation between South Korea and Uzbekistan, which is a key and friendly partner of the Republic of Korea in the Central Asian region.

Korean editions emphasize that "President Sh. Mirziyoyev became the second foreign leader to visit South Korea after the election of Moon Jae-in as the president of the country. The first to visit Seoul was the US President Donald Trump".² Moreover, as noted by the experts of the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies, the heads of state have established personal ties characterized by mutual respect and trust. This will give sustainability to the further deepening of the strategic partnership between the two countries³.

Indeed, today, Uzbekistan and South Korea have accumulated considerable experience in political interaction, which has served as a solid basis for giving the multi-faceted Uzbek-Korean cooperation a long-term, strategic nature. This level of partnership is reflected in the mutual support of the parties in the framework of international organizations, proximity or similarity of the positions of Uzbekistan and South Korea on topical issues of regional and international security. In particular, as the initiator and party to the Treaty on the Establishment of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, Tashkent firmly and consistently supports the non-nuclear status of the Korean Peninsula promoted by Seoul.

Therefore, in Tashkent, as well as throughout the world, they welcomed the historic meeting of the leaders of South and North Korea held in April 2018.

In the message to President Moon Jae-in on the occasion of the successful inter-Korean summit, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev noted that the outcome of the past meeting of the leaders of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea represented breakthroughs on the path to the stability, prosperity and unification of the Korean Peninsula⁴.

¹ «Uzbekistan president to make state visit to Korea», «WorldAffairs Journal.org», November 17, 2017, <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/content/uzbek-president-make-state-visit-south-korea>.

² «Uzbekistan president arrives for state visit», South Korea online edition «The Korea Times», November 22, 2017, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2017/11/120_239699.html

³ «South Korea begins to master Central Asia», Russian Institute for Strategic Studies, November 24, 2017, <https://riss.ru/smi/45674/>

⁴ Message from the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the President of the Republic of Korea Moon Jae-in on the occasion of the successful holding of the inter-Korean summit in Panmunjom, May 28 2018, <http://www.press-service.uz/ru/lists/view/1676>.

The fruitful results of this meeting were made possible by resolute and active efforts of South Korean leader Moon Jae-in to implement a peace-loving course aimed at improving relations between the Republic of Korea and the DPRK, ensuring global security and stability and strengthening confidence in the region.



The high level of political agreement between Tashkent and Seoul creates the most favorable conditions for further strengthening and expanding of economic cooperation. According to the international observers, the state visit of Sh. Mirziyoyev to the Republic of Korea was a “breakthrough”, taking into account the agreements reached in the economic and investment spheres by \$ 8.9 billion⁵.

The policy of liberalization conducted in Uzbekistan today in the financial, monetary, trade, economic and investment spheres significantly increases the strategic attractiveness of the Uzbek market for South Korean companies. In our country, we are greatly interested in further enhancing South Korea’s participation in the implementation of joint investment, transport and communications and other projects, development of knowledge-intensive segments of the economy and increase of the export potential of Uzbekistan.

Today, between the two countries, a whole series of joint strategically important large projects in various sectors of the economy have been successfully completed and are being implemented. These are automotive, transport infrastructure, the oil and gas sector, information and communication technologies, mining, and others. South Korea is one of the leading trade, economic and investment partners of Uzbekistan. Mutual trade in 2017 exceeded \$ 1.3 billion, with an increase of 27%. The volume of attracted investments is \$ 7 billion⁶.

Uzbekistan’s share in South Korea’s trade with all countries of Central Asia is almost 50%.

The experts from the Korean edition of “The Korea Times” stress that more than 460 South Korean companies are operating in Uzbekistan. Korean investors take particular interest to such

⁵ «Why South Korea has won the battle for Uzbekistan», Russian online edition «Sputnik», November 28 2017., <https://ru.sputniknews-uz.com/analytics/20171128/6932585/uzbekistan-koreya-bitva.html>.

⁶ National Information Agency of Uzbekistan, «Uzbekistan – South Korea: new stage of strategic partnership, November 23 2017 r., <http://uza.uz/ru/politics/uzbekistan-yuzhnaya-koreya-novyy-etap-otnosheniy-strategiche-23-11-2017>.

sectors as the services, construction of infrastructure and production facilities, healthcare⁷. Therefore, during his stay in Seoul, the Uzbek leader firstly met with representatives of large companies and business circles of the two countries. According to Korean experts, new opportunities and great privileges granted to South Korean businessmen to work in Uzbekistan open up large-scale prospects for expanding the practical content of bilateral partnership⁸. In this vein, the agreements reached on the participation of such Korean giants as Hyundai, Evergreen Holdings, Youngone Corporation and Hwachon Plant-Gemco in the Uzbek market will not only help to increase investment in Uzbekistan, rise its production potential, but also to improve the business image of our country all over the world.

The chairman of the Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry Park Yong-man expressed his opinion on this at the above-mentioned Uzbek-Korean business forum: "the New northern economic policy of the Korean government will be a key factor in cooperation between the two countries"⁹. This initiative of President Moon Jae-in, aimed at the formation of mutually beneficial cooperation between South Korea and the northern countries of Asia, is very relevant and timely.

The new strategy of South Korea will provide additional opportunities for the countries of Central Asia in developing bilateral cooperation with both the Republic of Korea and other project participants. According to the experts, the initiative can be an important practical component of the Forum "Central Asia - Republic of Korea".

Korean observers believe that the Republic of Uzbekistan not only acts as a "strategic point" of the Central Asian region, but also creates strong political ties between the countries of the region¹⁰. According to the experts, an active regional policy pursued by Sh. Mirziyoyev will give the Republic of Korea access to an even wider presence in the markets of Central Asia.

In turn, Korean companies can play an important role in the integration of Central Asian countries into global trade chains. Uzbekistan with a huge economic potential and a population of more than 32 million people has a geographical advantage, offering South Korea the shortest way to access European markets¹¹.

Professor of the University of Hanyang Gu Ho Eom notes that the balanced foreign policy of Uzbekistan demonstrates the type of diplomacy that Korea has sought. The two countries consider very important relations with powerful neighboring states, seek friendly partners with matching interests, and they are making efforts to expand base of support in the international arena¹².

An important role in the deepening of the Uzbek-Korean relations is played by the cultural and humanitarian factors. 29 Korean national cultural centers in Tashkent and in all the regions of the country carry out their fruitful activities, publications in the Korean language are published.

⁷ «Uzbekistan president arrives for state visit», South Korea online edition «The Korea Times», November 22, 2017, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2017/11/120_239699.html.

⁸ «South Korea, Uzbekistan vow to forge strategic partnership», South Korea news business portal «Business Korea», November 24, 2017, <http://www.businesskorea.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=19919>.

⁹ «South Korea, Uzbekistan vow to forge strategic partnership», South Korea news business portal «Business Korea», November 24, 2017, <http://www.businesskorea.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=19919>.

¹⁰ «Uzbekistan president arrives for state visit», South Korea online edition «The Korea Times», November 22, 2017, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2017/11/120_239699.html.

¹¹ «Uzbek President Mirziyoyev Lands in South Korea, Reaffirming a Strong Partnership», Japan online edition «The diplomat», November 22, 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/11/uzbek-president-mirziyoyev-lands-in-south-korea-reaffirming-a-strong-partnership/>.

¹² Gu Ho Eom, professor of Hanyang University, report: «Strategy for development and deepening of strategic partnership Republic of Korea – Republic of Uzbekistan» at the scientific conference on topic «20 years of mutual cooperation between Uzbekistan and South Korea» held by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea, Korean University Inha and the ISRS under the president of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, October 16 2012.

Currently, the two countries are actively developing cooperation in the field of education. In the capital, a branch of one of the leading South Korean universities Inha was opened. Korean is one of the most popular languages among the youth of Uzbekistan. It is studied in 28 secondary schools and academic lyceums, as well as 12 universities of the country, including leading ones, such as Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies, University of World Economy and Diplomacy, Uzbek State University of World Languages, Samarkand State University.



Today, more than 200 thousand citizens of Korean nationality live in our country. Uzbekistan ranks the 1st among the CIS states and the 4th in the world in terms of the number of the Korean community. From the first years of independence, the Koreans living in Uzbekistan make their full contribution to the development of our country, actively participate in all spheres of life of society and the state without exception. As Nam Gwan-pyo, deputy chief of the National Security Office of the Republic of Korea, emphasized, many Koreans living in Uzbekistan have achieved great success in this country, some of them have high positions, including ministers, legislators and public figures¹³.

According to the estimates of the professor of the University of Hanyang Gu Ho Eom, the people of Uzbekistan are very friendly to Korea, which creates great prospects for the development of the current strategic partnership to the level of an ally state¹⁴.

On the whole, a high level of multidimensional cooperation between the two countries, characterized by openness and mutual trust, clearly shows that the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Korea are long-term, reliable and time-tested strategic partners, the relations between which have become fully mature, systemic and mutually beneficial. The consistent and growing development of the economic component of the Uzbek-South Korean relations allows us to look with optimism at the effective implementation in the future of the rich potential of multi-faceted and comprehensive cooperation in the interests of the two states.

¹³ «Uzbekistan president arrives for state visit» South Korea online edition «The Korea Times», November 22, 2017. http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2017/11/120_239699.html.

¹⁴ Gu Ho Eom, professor of Hanyang University, report: «Strategy for development and deepening of strategic partnership Republic of Korea – Republic of Uzbekistan» at the scientific conference on topic «20 years of mutual cooperation between Uzbekistan and South Korea» held by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea, Korean University Inha and the ISRS under the president of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, October 16 2012.

ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION: NEW INITIATIVES - NEW DYNAMICS



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Annotation

The article analyzes the intensification of cooperation between Uzbekistan and the Organization of Islamic cooperation (OIC). The author gives her insights into the initiatives declared by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev at the First OIC Summit on Science and Technology. As well as this, she researches long-term prospects and provides her own forecasts on Uzbekistan's interaction with OIC member states in such fields as economy, science, technology and culture.

The relevance of a dialogue among cultures and civilizations has been increasing because of globalization. The OIC has significant impacts on strengthening tolerance, culture of mutual respect and harmony not only in the Islamic world, but also among the representatives of different religions and nations.



As a member of the OIC, Uzbekistan pays special attention to enhancement of cooperation with OIC structures in all key issues of mutual interest. During 2016-2017—Uzbekistan officially run the functions of the chairman of Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC. This not only demonstrated the role of our state in the Islamic world and international arena, but also strengthened the image of Uzbekistan as an active, responsible performer of the international law, who conducts the peaceful, reasonable and balanced foreign policy and made an important contribution to solving current vital problems and challenges.

On 18-19 October 2016 the 43rd session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers «Education and enlightenment - the path to peace and creation» took place in Tashkent. As a result, the Ministers signed Tashkent Declaration which calls the OIC member states to intensify joint efforts in ensuring the unity of the Muslim community, maintaining peace and security. During the session, Sh.Mirziyoyev announced initiatives to establish Imam Al Bukhari International Research Center in Samarkand and a special department of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) under the Tashkent Islamic University, which received full support from all participants of the session.

At the first OIC Summit on Science & Technology on «Science, technology, innovation and modernization in the Islamic world», held in September 2017 in Astana, the President Sh.Mirziyoyev gave speech on new initiatives related to cooperation in the development of the «smart agriculture» concept. Nowadays one of the most urgent global problems is a challenge related to supporting the growing world population with affordable, natural and high-quality food.

FAO anticipates that in coming 30 years more than 70% of food will be needed to feed the world population. Reducing the amount of fertile land, climate change, the high cost of energy will seriously impede the production of sufficient food.

In such conditions, the concept of «smart agriculture» will increase productivity and reduce costs. Development and implementation of the concept will contribute to advances in agriculture of the OIC members. It will help to integrate different areas of science in order to solve specific problems and to reduce the cost of the labor and resources by most mechanized processes. As well as, the concept will significantly increase the agricultural productivity and production efficiency of the OIC members.

Secondly, one of the six high-performance computer centers (HPCC) of the OIC Standing Committee for Cooperation in the fields of science and technology will be installed in Uzbekistan. In today's world, supercomputers are vital in solving problems by analyzing extensive data in a short period because conventional computers consume a lot of time or unable to do it at all.

Uzbekistan has relevant research institutions, specialized universities, as well as sufficient technical base, technological capabilities and human resources for the effective development of the HPCC. In this regard, the creation and development of the HPCC is needed for many areas of life. This will provide new opportunities for conducting research, meeting users' needs for increasing the speed to process data of high-tech medicine, energy and agro-industrial development.

Thirdly, the cooperation for science development and project implementation in the field of «green energy» was offered. Most OIC members such as Azerbaijan, Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Qatar, the UAE, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Turkey have made attempts to introduce non-traditional energy sources into their development programs. Particularly, the UAE has been implementing a project worth about \$ 4 billion, which considers the largest solar power plant construction in the world. According to Dubai's plans, the share of solar energy in the Emirate's electricity generation should reach 25% by 2020 and 75% by 2050.

Advantages of «smart agriculture»:

- water saving;
- reducing the need for fertilizers, pesticides and energy;
- reduction of negative environmental impacts of agriculture;
- improvement of product quality, its nutrients and taste.

Central Asia's climate and geographical conditions provide an opportunity for an extensive use of alternative energy sources. The Central Asian Republics in addition to hydropower potential, own a very high potential of solar energy. In order to use it effectively, in 2013 Uzbekistan established an International Solar Energy Institute (ISEI), which develops and designs technologies for the solar energy generation and transmission.

Last year Uzbekistan adopted a «Program of measures for further development of renewable energy, improving energy efficiency in economic and social spheres for 2017-2021», considering implementation of 810 projects which worth \$ 5.3 billion.

Undoubtedly, the development of alternative energy in Uzbekistan and other OIC member states will contribute not only to preserve natural energy resources, but also to solve social issues.

Fourthly, an International Islamic Center for Young Scientists was suggested to create. In the medieval times such outstanding scientists as Imam al Bukhari, Al Hakim At-Termizi (also known as Muhammad ibn Isa at-Tirmidhi), Burhanuddin Marginani (Burhan al-Din al-Marghinani) made a huge contribution to the development of Islamic civilization. Bukhara occupied a central place in the development and spread of the Islamic religion in Central Asia. Moreover, various currents of Sufism such as yassaviya, kubraviya and nakshbandiya were formed and developed in the region. In the beginning of 2018 at the Ninth Conference of the Ministers of Culture of OIC Member States Bukhara was acknowledged as the capital of Islamic culture for 2020. This fact reaffirms a crucial role of Bukhara and its scientists in the development of Islamic civilization.

To restore and study the religious and spiritual heritage of our great scholars, the President of Uzbekistan signed a decree «On measures to further improve the system of preservation, research and promotion of ancient manuscripts» in May of 2017. The document aimed at increasing the status of the Institute of Oriental studies named after Abu Rayhan Beruni of the



Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan and its manuscript fund, which consists of more than 25.6 thousand manuscript volumes. The Foundation is recognized as one of the world's richest repositories of Oriental manuscripts and is included in the UNESCO world cultural heritage list. A collection of «Treasury of Oriental manuscripts» has been published in three languages related to the fund.

Uzbekistan creates conditions and opportunities for young scientists not only of our country, but also for foreign scholars in order to conduct in-depth research on Islamic studies, which will help to make a true interpretation of the Islam and improve the effectiveness of countering radicalism, extremism and terrorism.

In particular, the Center of Islamic civilization within the complex of Hazrati Imam is being built, a motto of which is «Education is the antidote to ignorance». The center will consist of an academy, a library, an archive and a manuscript fund. All of them will be replenished with ancient manuscripts stored in the country and abroad (lithographic books, historical documents, antiquities relating to scientific and religious schools founded by scholars and religious spokesmen who were born in the territory of modern Uzbekistan) as well as research works about Islam religion. This center should be our face in the sphere of propaganda of true Islam.

Fifthly, holding in Uzbekistan international Olympiad of young mathematicians, dedicated to the memory of mediaeval Uzbek greatest mathematician Al-Khwarizmi (783-850). It is known that Khorezmi was originally from Khiva (current city of Khorezm province). His works, especially a brief book on the calculus «Kitab al-Jabr wal-Muqabala», were of great importance in the development of mathematics. Currently, the youth of Uzbekistan shows excellent results at the international competitions in mathematics. In particular, last year in Bulgaria Ubay Yakhyaev a 11-year-old prodigy from Uzbekistan was awarded a gold medal of the international Olympiad «Mathematics without borders – 2017».



On 28-30 October 2018, in accordance with the decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated August 26, 2018, the first international math Olympiad dedicated to the memory of Al-Khorezm took place in Urgench. About 230 students from 56 universities of more than 20 countries attended it. As a result, Beijing University (China) took the first place in the team competition in terms of the number of medals won, the second place was occupied by the national University of Uzbekistan, at the third rank was Tartu University (Estonia). Representatives of 30 world universities received medals of various degrees.

The next second international math Olympiad dedicated to the memory of Al-Khwarizmi will be held in the third week of October of 2020. Undoubtedly, the organization of such events will enhance the potential of the youth and the state image not only of our country but also of other OIC member states.

Additionally, Sh.Mirziyoyev proposed to arrange integrated cooperation of science and education and industry, to establish a special OIC award for scientific advances in the Islamic world as well as to host the next OIC summit on science and technology for 2020 in Uzbekistan.

To implement Sh.Mirziyoyev's initiatives, announced at the First OIC summit on science and technology, the delegation of OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH), headed by the General coordinator of the Standing Committee Sh.Khan paid a visit to Uzbekistan in March of 2018. During the visit a «Road map» on cooperation between Uzbekistan and COMSTEC for the period 2018-2020 was signed. The «Road map» implies cooperation on 1) installation of a super-modern telescope in Samarkand; preservation, cataloguing and studying manuscripts stored in Uzbekistan; 2) development of joint scientific and innovative projects on alternative energy sources and information



technologies; organization of the international Olympiad among young mathematicians of the OIC member States, dedicated to the popularization of the rich heritage of al-Khorezm, of the joint international scientific conference on environmental problems of the Aral sea as well as on the scientific heritage of the Uzbek statesman and outstanding astronomer M.Ulugbek; 3) organizing the 2nd OIC summit on science and technology for 2020 in Uzbekistan and many other. There is no doubt that negotiations

will give an additional impetus to strengthen the partnership between Uzbekistan and the OIC participants in the areas of mutual interest.

Overall, the initiatives made by the President of Uzbekistan bring new dynamics to OIC activities, increasing the role and authority of the organization in the international arena. Uzbekistan remains as a firm supporter of strengthening interethnic and interreligious peace and harmony, the humanistic ideals, tolerance, and enlightened Islam. These enduring values are crucial in the international cooperation development of Uzbekistan as a country, which historically was at the crossroads of world civilizations and became the Eastern Renaissance cradle.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION



Development of international cooperation is one of the priorities of the Institute for Strategic and Regional studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

In 2017-2018, foreign partners of the ISRS reached a qualitatively new level which is characterized by an increased development. One of the key areas of the international activities of the ISRS is the research interaction with the leading "think tanks" and analytical structures research institutions of foreign countries.

The cooperation between ISRS and foreign partners is steadily increasing. The Institute has established and maintains stable relations with a number of international organizations, foundations, leading foreign research and analytical centers; maintains regular contacts with representatives of official, governmental and diplomatic circles of foreign states.

International contacts are actively used in organizing and conducting scientific and practical conferences, seminars and round tables with the participation of leading experts of the expert-analytical and academic communities.

In 2017-2018, representatives of the ISRS took part in more than 60 international events organized jointly with partner centers and institutions both at home and abroad.

The practical result of the successful development of international contacts of the Institute is the establishment and expansion of cooperation based on Agreements and Memorandums, including a number of promising areas of bilateral cooperation of mutual interest. In particular, more than 150 negotiations were held, 24 memorandums of cooperation with foreign "think tanks" were signed.



Since 2017 the ISRS has been regularly conducting talks with the heads of foreign diplomatic missions, foreign government delegations, heads and experts of leading research centers from more than 35 countries, including Australia, Afghanistan, great Britain, Hungary, Israel, India, Indonesia, Iran, China, the Republic of Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Russia, the USA, Turkey, Greece, France, Japan, Malaysia, Switzerland, Germany, Central Asian States etc., also it has been organizing a significant number of meetings with representatives of international organizations and associations, such as the OSCE, the UN, the EU, WHO, IMF, WB, the UNESCO, NATO, OIC, etc.

In particular, since 2017 the Institute has organized meetings with: L. Bristow the Director of the Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia; the heads of research groups on Eastern Europe, Afghanistan, South and Central Asia, the Foreign Office of the UK; Head of the Department of European policy of the British defense Department S. Iow; K. Matsumoto the Adviser to the Secretariat for the National Security Council of Japan; R. Pantucci, M. Chalmers experts of the Royal College of Defense Studies; S. Yusuf the Deputy Head of the Department for Turks Abroad and Related Communities under the Government of Turkey; N. Brule the Head of the Swiss Foreign Ministry; a delegation of the U.S. Senate Committee and I. Berman,

J. Herbst, B. Todda experts from American "think tanks"; the Heads and experts of "think tanks" of China Yu Xinhua, T. Chan, Xu Jian, Jiang Feng, Wang Lingwen; the heads of "think tanks" of Germany M. Dornfeldt and W. Albacom; the heads of the Foundations Ebert and Adenauer Foundation in Uzbekistan, Kiefer and T. Kunze; representatives of the UN, OSCE, world Bank, EU, THIKA P. Draganov, H. Fraser, L. Zannier, J. McGregor, A. by Ananim, S. Slavova, E. Stiprais, A. I. Caglar; ambassadors of Australia, Britain, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, Korea, China, Oman, Pakistan, Russia, USA, Turkey, etc.

In 2017-2018, the representatives of the ISRS participated in the work of more than 60 international conferences, seminars, "round tables" and briefings in Tashkent, Astana, Almaty, Berlin, Brussels, Islamabad, London, Moscow, Beijing, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Vienna, Kuala Lumpur, Washington, Budapest, Istanbul, Bishkek, Tehran, Dushanbe with the participation of heads of foreign diplomatic missions, representatives of ministries and departments, parliaments, business circles, leading experts of foreign countries and international organizations (more than 1,500 thousand people).



Thirteenth international conference on cooperation between Central Asia and the Shanghai cooperation organization (September 11-13, 2017. Shanghai, People's Republic of China). The organizer is the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences.



International conference "Central Asia: one past and a common future, cooperation for sustainable development and mutual prosperity" (10-11 November 2017, Samarkand, Republic of Uzbekistan). The organizer is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan.



Round table "Uzbekistan in the process of transformation. Reform policy: expectations and prospects" (23 November 2017, Berlin, Federal Republic of Germany). Organizer - Konrad Adenauer Foundation.



The Seminar on "National security Policy - view from Pakistan" (18 December 2017, Islamabad, Islamic Republic of Pakistan). The organizer is the Center for Global and Strategic Studies.



The International seminar "Formation of a peaceful and prosperous Northern economic community" (18-21 March 2018, Seoul, South Korea).

The organizers are the Committee on Northern economic cooperation under the President of the Republic of Korea, the Korean Institute of international economic policy, the Ministry of strategy and Finance, the Ministry of trade, industry and energy, the Ministry of unification of the Republic of Korea and the Korean international trade Association.



SCO think tanks forum (24-25 April 2018, Beijing, People's Republic of China).
Organizer: Office of the Councilors of the State Council of the PRC



Thirty-second Asia-Pacific regional round table on the theme "Division: people, technology, power and security" (8 May 2018, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia).

The organizer is the Institute for Strategic and International Studies.



The fourth international conference on modern public administration on "Governance in the information age" (14-15 May 2018, Hangzhou, People's Republic of China).

The organizer is The Chinese Academy of Modern International Relations



International conference on the role of youth in preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism (11-12 June 2018, Tashkent - Samarkand, Republic of Uzbekistan).

The organizers are the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

OUR INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

ISRS collaborates and develops cooperation with a number of international organizations, foundations, leading foreign research and analytical institutions:

- Shanghai Academy of international studies
- Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences
- Shanghai International Studies University
- Institute of Central Asian studies at the University of Shengxi
- China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations
- One belt, one road research Institute of Chu Hai College (Hong Kong)
- Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (KISI)
- Institute of World Economics and Politics (IWEP) at the Foundation of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan
- National Institute for Strategic Studies of the Kyrgyz Republic (NISS KR)
- Centre of Strategic Researches under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan
- Institute of Strategy and Sustainable Development of the Ministry of Finance and Economy of Turkmenistan
- Russian Institute for Strategic Studies
- Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences
- Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations
- Center for International Studies of the Belarusian State University
- The Center for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SAM)
- Center for strategic studies of the Ministry of foreign Affairs of Afghanistan
- Indian Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses
- Indian Institute of military research
- Vivekananda International Foundation (India)
- Institute of Policy Studies (Pakistan)
- Center for Global & Strategic Studies, Islamabad
- Royal United Services Institute (UK)
- European Union Institute for Security Studies (France)
- France Institute for International and Strategic Relations
- Corvinus Center for Central Asia Research (Hungary)
- Friedrich Ebert and Konrad Adenauer Foundations (Germany)
- Berlin-based European Institute for Caucasian and Caspian Studies
- Institute of European, Russian and Eurasian Studies (Canada)
- Centre for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies (CERES) (Canada)
- George C. Marshall Center - European Center for Security Studies
- Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) (USA)
- Near East and South Asia For Strategic Studies (USA)
- Central Asia Caucasus Institute - American Foreign Policy Council
- Elliott School of International Affairs | The George Washington University
- Center for Strategic Research of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey (SAM)
- Marmara Group Strategic and Social Research Foundation (Turkey)
- Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) (Malaysia)
- Asian Strategy & Leadership Institute (ASLI) (Malasia)
- S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (Singapore)
- Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security (IFANS) under The Korean MFA
- Insitute of Political Studies in Asia-Pacific (Korea)
- Jeju Peace Institute (Korea)



Within the framework of effective work on further expansion of international relations through consistent building of a systematic dialogue with leading foreign expert and policy-forming circles of the IMI, bilateral Memorandums and Agreements on mutual understanding and cooperation with leading "think tanks" of foreign countries have been signed:

- Shanghai International Studies University
- China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations
- Chu Hai College of Higher Education
- Institute of World Economy and Politics under the Fund of the First President of Kazakhstan
- National Institute for Strategic Studies of the Kyrgyz Republic (NISS KR)
- Centre of Strategic Researches under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan
- Institute of Strategy and Sustainable Development of the Ministry of Finance and Economy of Turkmenistan
- Russian Institute for Strategic Studies
- Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations
- Vivekananda International Foundation (India)
- Center for Global & Strategic Studies, Islamabad
- Royal United Services Institute (UK)
- Center for Strategic Research of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey (SAM)
- Marmara Group Strategic and Social Research Foundation (Turkey)
- Corvinus Center for Central Asia Research (Hungary)
- Centre for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies (CERES) (Canada)
- Jeju Peace Institute (Korea)
- Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security (IFANS) under The Korean MFA
- Friedrich Ebert and Konrad Adenauer Foundations (Germany)
- Berlin-based European Institute for Caucasian and Caspian Studies
- Central Asia Caucasus Institute - American Foreign Policy Council
- Elliott School of International Affairs | The George Washington University
- Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) (Malaysia)



Workshop on "Topical issues of countering violent extremism and terrorism: the experience of Uzbekistan and the UK"
 (7 March 2017, Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan)



The twelfth Meeting of the expert Forum Shanghai Cooperation Organization
 (11-12 May 2017, Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan)



Uzbek-Chinese bilateral round table
"One belt, one road: New opportunities for Uzbekistan"
 (23 June 2017, Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan)



Round table on "Priority directions of domestic and foreign policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the framework of implementation of the Strategy of action in 2017-2021."
 (27 September 2017, Jeju city, Republic of Korea)



International conference
"Uzbekistan-Kazakhstan: 25 years of establishment of diplomatic relations"
(31 October 2017, Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan)



Uzbek-Hong Kong Bilateral workshop on
"Current development of Uzbekistan"
(10 January 2018, Hong Kong, Hong Kong)



Round table "Uzbekistan-USA: current state and prospects of bilateral relations"
(26 February 2018, Boston, United States of America)



Round table "Cooperation between the Republic of
Uzbekistan and the European Union: a vision into the future"
(14 March 2018, Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan)



**International conference " Actual problems of security of the Central Asian region and strategies for their solution-approaches of Russia and Uzbekistan"
(3 April 2018, Moscow, Russian Federation)**



**International conference "Uzbekistan and China: prospects for joint implementation of the initiative "One belt, one road"
(14 May 2018, Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan)**



**Round table on the adoption of the UN General Assembly resolution
"Strengthening regional and international cooperation to ensure peace, stability and sustainable development in the Central Asian region"
(12 July 2018 Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan)**

OUR INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS



Zarema Sheukenova
Director

Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies under the president of the Republic of Kazakhstan was founded in 1993, and is a state research institution. The main task of the institute is the scientific and analytical support for the activities of the head of state and the Presidential Administration of Kazakhstan.

The Institute conducts fundamental research on the strategic problems of domestic and foreign policy, the socio-economic development of Kazakhstan, and prepares forecast-analytical materials for the country's leadership. The Institute regularly conducts expert discussions and meetings, conferences, round tables and international forums on the main areas of its activities.

KAZISS cooperates with foreign research and analytical structures, carries out international and regional research projects on topical issues of our time.



Yerzhan Saitymbaev
Director

The Institute of World Economy and Politics under the Foundation of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan established in 2003, and is a scientific institution for the study of the problems of the world economy, international relations, geopolitics, security, integration and Eurasia studies. Institute also studies the activities of the First President of Kazakhstan and its contribution to the creation and strengthening of the republic as an independent state in the development of international cooperation and the promotion of peace and stability.

Areas of research: global problems of our time and their impact on Kazakhstan and other transit states; analysis and forecasting of world economic dynamics and socio-political processes; studying problems of international, regional and national security; research of political, economic, social and legal problems of the Republic of Kazakhstan, its position in the world community; economic, political and social processes in the states of Central Asia, Russia, China, the USA, the EU, Japan and other countries; international political studies.



Ruvanshbek Shadybekov
Director

The National Institute for Strategic Studies of the Kyrgyz Republic was established by the Decree of the Provisional Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in July 2010. The Institute's charter was approved on June 3, 2011. The mission of the NISS is to introduce and develop a system of high-quality scientific and analytical consulting for higher authorities assisting the development of scientific, detailed and important government decisions.

NISS plays a key role in the implementation of a reasoned political decision for the development of which the scientific and expert communities are involved. Thus, the NISS of the Kyrgyz Republic contributes not only to the modernization of the decision-making mechanism, but also to the development of the country's intellectual resource, raising the prestige of science and expertise, and bringing the standards of scientific work to international ones. The Institute is the only such institution under the highest authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic and conducts its activities under the direct supervision of the Prime Minister of the country.



Khudoberdi Kholikenazov
Director

The Center for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan was established in 2003 and is a state information and analytical organization reporting directly to the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. The Center has a Scientific Council, a Scientific and Methodological Council, and a Scientific and Publishing Council. The structure of the Academic Council includes leading scientists and specialists of the Center, as well as leading scientists and specialists of the Academy of Sciences, universities, other ministries and departments of Tajikistan.

The Center interacts with state authorities, international organizations, various foundations and public associations, has numerous scientific contacts in the republic and abroad. The center is engaged in studying and analyzing the problems of political, economic and social development of Tajikistan, forecasting the country's prospects in a market economy, making recommendations for solving problems of a political and socio-economic nature, as well as analyzing the situation in Central Asia.



Dzumukhammad Ashyiev, Director

The Institute for Strategic and Sustainable Development under the Ministry of Finance and Economy of Turkmenistan was founded in 2007. The main tasks of the institute are to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the processes occurring in individual sectors and in the economy in general, preparing the scientific basis for developing national programs. Moreover, Institute defines the main directions of social and economic reforms, works on medium-term and long-term planning and forecasting, identifies the priority areas for development of individual branches of the economy.

Among the research conducted by the institute, an important place is occupied by macroeconomic analysis, forecasting of the development of the country's economy, analysis and development strategies for the development of industries, agriculture, transport and communications, development of the construction complex, the social sphere, investment and innovation activities.



Mikhail Frolov
Director

Russian Institute for Strategic Studies was founded in 1992, is a major research and analytical center of the country. Established by the President of the Russian Federation, the main task of the Institute is to provide information support for the Presidential Administration of the Russian Federation, the State Duma, the Security Council, the Government Office, ministries and departments.

RIS provides expert assessments, recommendations, prepares international and analytical materials for the above structures. Deals with issues of national security, relations with other countries, analysis and forecast of political and socio-economic processes at the global and regional levels. Among the researchers and experts of RIS are 11 doctors and 45 candidates of science. The Institute organizes internships for undergraduate and graduate students in Russian and foreign universities.



Alexander Dykin
President

National Research Institute of World Economy and International Relations named after Primakov is a Federal State Budgetary Institution under the Russian Academy of Sciences founded in 1996. The Institute conducts the research and analyzes the main trends in the development of international politics and economics, and develops a reliable analytical framework for political decision-making. The Institute interacts with federal and regional authorities of Russia, the media, state and private companies, other Russian and foreign research centers.

The main areas of research: global development and national interests of Russia; the evolution of the system of international relations, the risks and guarantees of international security; comprehensive studies of the economic, political and social development of the leading countries and regions of the world; major trends and new qualitative characteristics of world economic development, Russia's role in global economy.

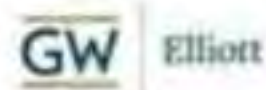


Valery Antonov



Director

The Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences was founded in 1930, and is a research institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences and a leading world-class research center, covering a wide range of research areas in Oriental studies. Conducts a comprehensive study and analysis of the situation in Asia and North Africa, including Central Asia. The composition of the scientific divisions of the Institute reflects the direction of scientific research and their geographical binding. Most research centers and departments of the Institute of Oriental Studies are engaged in research in certain countries and regions (for example, the Arab Studies Center, the Center for Japanese Studies, the Center for the Study of Southeast Asia, Australia and Oceania). A number of scientific divisions set as its tasks the development of the most urgent problems of the countries of the East (in particular, the Center for Energy and Transport Research, etc.). The Institute has a Scientific Archive, a Scientific Publishing Department and other units that provide the research process.



Reshmi Bragoti
Dean

The Elliott School of Advanced International Studies, George Washington University, founded in 1898, is one of the world's leading schools of international relations. The school is located in the center of Washington. The School's mission is to train international leaders, conduct research and analyze current global issues.

Main areas of research:
- international politics;
- European, Russian and Eurasian studies;
- international economic policy;
- public diplomacy and global communication;
- security questions; regional studies (Middle East, Asia).

More than 2,100 students conduct a comprehensive liberal arts curriculum with a focus on international affairs or a regional focus on Asia, the Middle East or Latin America and the hemisphere.



Chairman

The Institute of Central Asia and the Caucasus at the Council of American Foreign Policy was founded in 1997 and is a leading research and development center that conducts fundamental and applied research in Central Asia and the Caucasus region. The main objectives and activities of the Institute:

- research and analysis of the socio-political situation in the states of Central Asia and the Caucasus;
- intellectual support of political and economic reforms through the formation of a positive perception of the liberal democratic values of the West in the states of Central Asia and the Caucasus;
- promoting the formation of the foundations of civil society in the countries of the region;
- creation of an information database and their distribution. The Institute has its structures in all countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus, as well as in the United States, the Russian Federation, Great Britain, Germany, China, Israel, Iran, Poland and Ukraine.



Edward Schatz
Professor

The Center for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies at the University of Toronto of Canada was founded in 2000 at the School of Global Politics, Munk School of Applied Arts and Sciences.

The center is one of the leading research and academic institutions in North America. Specializes in the study of political processes in the European Union, the countries of the former Soviet Union, and Central and Eastern Europe. There are more than 15 departments in various fields of study.

Since 2006, the Center has been organizing conferences, seminars and lectures on Central Asian issues as part of its Central Asia program. Students and scholars from Central Asian countries are invited to participate in the program for research and participation in events. The main partners of the Center are the European Commission, the German Academic Exchange Service and other research and academic institutions of the EU, Ukraine and Russia.



Emmanuel Dupuy
President

IPSE was founded in 1988, is an independent non-state scientific and analytical institution. The activities of the Institute are aimed mainly at studying a wide range of issues related to the EU development and security prospects, including institutional development of the system of ensuring foreign policy strategy and internal and external security, the role of the leading member states in the decision-making process within the Union, the relationship of the European Union with other world powers, in particular with the United States, Russia, China, etc. Basic forms and methods of the institute: theoretical, applied, scientific and analytical studies of strategic issues, the provision of consultancy services, the organization of forums, conferences, round tables, experts public and public debates on current EU security issues.



Raffaello Pentucci
Director

Royal United Services Institute, founded in 1831, is an independent think tank dealing with defense and security issues. The Institute brings to the forefront topical issues of domestic and foreign policy, which contributes to enhancing the authority of the organization, as a "think tank" for the study of defense issues. The Institute's research demanded by the government, parliament and other key stakeholders.

RUSI works in four areas: research, events, publications, expert assistance. The materials are based on an objective analysis of trends and events occurring in the world. The Institute regularly holds events and talks with the participation of leading experts, influential politicians and researchers on topical issues of defense and security. The institute provides corporate and private participants with exclusive access to the UK's main defense and security forum through a wide range of events, publications and research.



Henriette Kiefer
Regional Director

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung was founded in 1925 and implements the practical implementation of the fundamental ideas and values of social democracy: freedom, justice, solidarity.

Being a non-profit organization, the Foundation conducts its activities on the principles of independence. The Foundation promotes the development of a free society that is based on the principles of solidarity and provides all its citizens with the opportunity to participate in its political, economic, social and cultural life, regardless of their origin, gender or religious beliefs; active and strong democracy, sustainable economic growth and decent work for all citizens; a socially oriented state with a developed education and health care system, which at the same time seeks to overcome poverty and protects its citizens from the ordeals and difficulties they face in life; a state that is responsible for peace and social progress in Europe and in the world at large.



Matthias Dornfeldt
Chairman

The Research Center "European Institute for Caucasian and Caspian Studies" was founded in 2012 in Berlin, and has the status of a non-governmental organization. The center is engaged in analyzing and studying the situation in the region of the South Caucasus and the Caspian region. In the framework of scientific and analytical activities, special emphasis is placed on conducting fundamental research and political analysis, including economic, social and political aspects in the countries of the South Caucasus, the Caspian region and their influence on Europe and Germany. Center's activities are financed from private sources.

The main areas of research are:
- comparative analysis of regional development models;
- analysis of modern and transformational processes;
- analysis of the effectiveness of public administration and e-government.



Miklos Rosta
Executive director

The Center for Central Asian Studies is a research division of the leading university in Hungary - Corvina University. The Center is implementing a project to develop a joint strategy aimed at deepening trade, economic and investment cooperation of the EU countries, especially those of the Visegrad Group with the states of Central Asia. To this end, Centre conducts research in the following areas: analysis of the experience of political and economic transformation in Central Asia, the possibility of developing trade and economic relations and investments in the region; studies on the implementation of the Chinese initiative for OBOR in Central Asia. Moreover, it participates in the development of an updated EU strategy for Central Asia; regional cooperation in Central Asia with a focus on the legal and institutional framework for modern trans boundary water and energy resources management.



Thomas Kurze
Director of the
Foundation in
Central Asia

Konrad Adenauer Stiftung founded in 1964, is a political foundation, actively working throughout Germany and has two major educational and methodological centers and 21 educational centers. The Foundation supports the process of uniting Europe, promotes international understanding and interaction in the field of politics.

The organization provides financial support to gifted young people from the states that are part of the OS, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, as well as from developing countries who want to get a full fledged education in German universities.

Scope of activity: democracy and rule of law; orderly political dialogue between the state and society; social market economy; freedom of the media; equality of women and their support; environmental protection; active dialogue between different cultures.



Ji Zhiye
President

The China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations was founded in 1965, one of the well-known "think tanks" of China.

The Academy deals with the study of global and regional problems, strategies in the sphere of politics, economics and security, the study of countries and regions, a comprehensive study of the problems of the development of international relations in the modern world.

It occupies the 6th place in the top ten "think tanks" of the country, 5th place in the rating of 25 leading analytical centers in Asia and is included in the rating of 75 leading brain centers in the world. The research work of the Academy is focused on studying the issues of global strategic development of political, economic activities, the security sphere, China's international relations, as well as problems of regional development.



Chen Duxiao
President

The Shanghai Academy of International Studies, founded in 1960, is a leading research institution in China, and one of the top ten think tanks in the country. Academy is under the direct subordination of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC. The main task is to study world politics, economics, security and international relations between the PRC and other countries of the world. Academy also maintains a close relationship and cooperates with domestic and foreign research organizations through joint scientific conferences.

The Academy includes 6 institutes: Institute for International Strategic Studies; Institute of Global Management Issues; Institute of World Economy; Institute for Foreign Policy Studies; Institute of Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau; Institute of analysis and data processing.



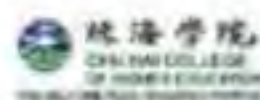
Lifuk Ustap
Chairman

The Center for Strategic Studies under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, founded in 1995, is a research and development center established as an advisory body on the country's foreign policy. The Center conducts research on international relations, regional studies and international conflicts, organizes scientific events on Turkish foreign policy issues in cooperation with Turkish and foreign expert communities, as well as representatives of various universities and government organizations. The center consults departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other state institutions, and participates in the creation of similar regional think tanks. The CSS acts as a forum for discussion and exchange of views with local and foreign experts specializing in international relations and foreign policy. To this end, the center organizes seminars, conferences and round tables on these issues. In addition, the center conducts training programs for young diplomats.



Jiang Feng
Chairman

Shanghai University of Foreign Languages was founded in 1949 and is the leading center of research in China. Main specialization - the study of foreign languages and international education. A number of research institutes operates under the University, including the Center for Central Asian Studies, which conducts research on foreign policy, economics, diplomacy, law, society, and culture. Research focuses on politics and diplomacy in Central Asia, cooperation between the countries of the region and China, the SCO, the economic development of Central Asia, the interests of the major powers in the region. The activity of the institute is aimed at carrying out multilateral studies on various aspects of the implementation of the "One Belt, One Road" strategy. At the moment, 11 well-known scientific journals are being edited and published in SHUFL, seven of which are included in the database of journals and a collection of Chinese citation index in the social sciences.



Thomas Chan
Director

Xi Jinping's "One Belt, One Road" initiative has become China's grand strategy for national revival in the economy, politics, and culture. It focuses on the spirit of the Silk Road, which means peace, development and multipolarity in global governance. Thus, the Chinese strategy includes geostrategic problems at the global, regional and national levels. Research Institute "One Belt, One Road" founded in 2013 is the Hong Kong think tank. In order to study and analyze the further development and modernization of the Chinese economy, the activities of the institute are aimed at conducting multilateral research on various aspects of the implementation of the "One Belt, One Road" strategy. Scientific staff is preparing information and analytical materials for the Hong Kong government. The Central Asian area is an important area of research institute. The institute has projects with Kazakhstan and Tajikistan.



Kim In-chul
President

The Institute of International Relations and National Security founded in 1976, under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, and is a leading think tank of the country. Institute conducts research political processes in the Korean Peninsula, the APR, North and South America, Europe and Eurasia, the Middle East and Africa. The analytical materials of the Institute is demanded the government of the country. The institute includes 10 departments and centers in various areas of research. Institute embodies the government's medium-term and long-term foreign policy initiatives, analyzes foreign policy problems, and conducts active intellectual exchanges with national and foreign think tanks. Activities in this area include: regular bilateral and multilateral meetings with leading institutions in the USA, Japan, China, Russia, etc.; creates research networks with other think tanks; develops of medium-term and long-term foreign policy visions through participation in academic exchanges, public diplomacy, research and their publication.



Kim Bong Hyun
President

The Jeju Peace Institute was founded in 2006 and is one of the leading analytical centers of the Republic of Korea in the field of international politics, regional security and diplomacy. The main tasks of IMI include a comprehensive study of regional cooperation, ensuring security on the Korean Peninsula and in East Asia, and promoting regional economic integration. The main areas of research: problems of ensuring peace and security on the Korean Peninsula; foreign policy of East Asian countries; issues of development of economic cooperation in East Asia; promotion of "soft power" as an important element of the North Korean policy of South Korea. The Institute regularly holds international conferences, seminars, negotiations with the participation of leading foreign experts, politicians and researchers on topical issues of regional security. Annually organizes joint conferences with the German F. Naumann Foundation in the indicated areas.



Tan Sri Rastam
Mohd Isa
Chairman,
Chief Executive

The Institute of Strategic and International Studies of Malaysia, founded in 1983, is an independent non-profit research organization for the study and analysis of economic issues, foreign policy, security, public administration, social policy, technology, innovation and the environment. The Institute actively participates in the international contact "Second Track Diplomacy", exchanges and experiences at the national and international levels, promotes regional integration and international cooperation at the forums: Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) and the Network East Asian think tank (NEAT). Also Institute is one of the founders of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region (CSCAP) and heads the Secretariat of the Council. As a leading analytical center, Malaysia plays a significant role in shaping the country's foreign and domestic policy. The Institute took part in the development of the concept of "Vision 2020" and was a consultant to the initiative of the "Master Plan for Economic".



Tan Sri Michael Yeoh
Chief Executive
Officer

Founded in 1993, the Asian Institute of Strategy and Leadership is the leading independent think tank of Malaysia, which seeks to develop leadership and strategic thinking in Asia. The key tasks of the institute are to develop regional economic cooperation, reforms in the field of education and the development of human capital, national unity and national integration. The Institute holds various international events with the participation of leading foreign experts in order to exchange views, ideas and proposals on topical foreign policy issues with a further approach to the practical implementation of key recommendations. The main partners of the organization are the Chinese Council for the Promotion of International Trade, the Confederation of Indian Industry, the Russia-ASEAN Cooperation Fund, the Japan Institute of Economic and Social Problems, the Chinese Institute of Development, etc.



Ramendra Kumar
Singh
Director

Indian Institute of Military Studies founded in 1870, is an "autonomous" think tank on defense and foreign policy strategy. Activities of the IIM is funded independently. The main task of the IIM is "promoting interests and knowledge in the field of science, art of national security, defense strategy and international relations". The institute implements research projects on the development of national security issues and the development and improvement of the defense strategy. The institute holds seminars, conferences, training courses on national security and defense strategy, publishes quarterly journals and scientific reports on the problems under study, cooperates with other similar organizations. In particular, the Institute has established a strategic dialogue with numerous countries of the world, including Japan, China, Egypt, Great Britain, the United States, Russia, Bangladesh, Singapore and others.



Director

The Vivekananda International Foundation, founded in 2009, is India's leading think tank for studying and analyzing regional and international issues, social, economic and political trends in India and abroad. The Foundation provides information and analytical materials to the Government of India, including the Parliament and the judicial authorities of the country. The organization cooperates with various Indian and foreign research institutes and academic institutions. The purpose of the Foundation is to create an expert platform for the development of constructive ideas and proposals for the formation of an influential, safe and successful India, which plays a significant role in global processes.



Jayant Prasad
Director General

The Institute of Defense Studies and Analysis of India, founded in 1965, is an independent organization with a specialization in research and policy analysis in all aspects of defense and security. The mission is to promote national and international security by generating and disseminating knowledge on defense and security issues. The main task is to provide an objective assessment of issues related to national and international security. Over the past fifty years, the Institute has played a crucial role in shaping India's foreign and security policy, including with regard to nuclear weapons, military spending, and traditional and non-traditional threats to India. Since its foundation, the Institute has been acting as a forum for exchanging views on topical issues of national and international security, annually organizes national and international events on important aspects of international relations.



Syed Khalid Amir
Jaffery, President

The Center for Global and Strategic Studies founded in 2016, is a research and analytical organization established by the government of Pakistan. The main task of the Center is the information and analytical support of the government: the provision of expert assessments, recommendations, information and analytical materials, in particular, - explores methods of combating terrorism; - deals with issues of ensuring national security, studying the relations of Pakistan with other countries; - analyzes and forecasts trends of political and socio-economic processes at the global and regional levels; - considers ways to resolve crisis situations in politics, energy, education, health, justice and the environment, with an emphasis on Pakistan's expanding cooperation with the rest of the world.