

UZBEKISTAN'S POLICY ON MAINTAINING SECURITY IN CENTRAL ASIA

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Abstract

Uzbekistan is making significant strides toward fostering open, friendly, and mutually beneficial cooperation with its neighboring countries. As a key geopolitical player in Central Asia, Uzbekistan serves as a stabilizing force against potential threats to regional peace and security. This article examines and analyzes Uzbekistan's role and influence within the region.

Keywords: Central Asia, UN, CIS, SCO, integration, concept, Afghan problem, delimitation, demarcation.

Introduction

Central Asia is one of the strategically important regions of the world. Rapid changes taking place in this region also affect international political processes. Today, the interests of the leading countries collide here, which shows that unconventional dangers still exist in the region. In such a situation, there is a need to strengthen regional diplomacy and jointly solve current problems between Central Asian countries. In this regard, Uzbekistan managed to create such a cooperative environment in the region through its geopolitical activity and practical efforts. The geopolitics of Uzbekistan, located in the center of Central Asia, is of great importance for the region. The law "On the Concept of Foreign Political Activity of the Republic of Uzbekistan" adopted on September 12, 2012 defines the foreign political directions of Uzbekistan, and Central Asia is noted as the main priority. In this concept, holding political consultations, discussing current issues, and initiatives aimed at ensuring security are defined as important directions of Uzbekistan's foreign policy. [1, 150-165]

The role of Uzbekistan in solving problems with regional countries through political consultations and supporting active dialogue deserves special attention. Today, the relations between the Central Asian countries are developing rapidly and a new atmosphere of geopolitical trust is emerging. This is mainly due to Uzbekistan's diplomatic efforts.

Examples of Uzbekistan's practical actions in geopolitics include:

Consultative meetings of the leaders of the Central Asian countries,

The international conference on "Central Asia: common history and common future, cooperation for sustainable development" was held in Samarkand,

International conference on "Peace process and security cooperation" on Afghanistan in Tashkent.

These initiatives show that Uzbekistan's foreign policy is based on peace and seeks to solve problems together.

The factors that ensure the strategic position of Uzbekistan in the region are as follows: firstly, Uzbekistan is the most populous country in Central Asia with 36 million inhabitants. Secondly,



Uzbekistan is the only country bordering five regional countries. Thirdly, in terms of military potential, Uzbekistan is the leader in the region.

It can be said that since 2017, a new stage has begun in Uzbek diplomacy, and activities in the international arena have expanded significantly. [2, 94-102]

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The policy of openness and close cooperation with neighboring countries led by the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev has opened a new stage in Central Asia. In recent years, President Mirziyoyev made official visits to all Central Asian countries and served to create a positive diplomatic atmosphere in the region. On this basis, on August 11, 2017, Uzbekistan held an international conference on "Central Asia - the main direction of Uzbekistan's foreign policy" in Tashkent, where the most important issues of the region and interstate political approaches were discussed.

On the initiative of President Mirziyoyev, at the international conference held in Samarkand in November 2017, a proposal was made to organize the first consultative meeting of the leaders of the Central Asian countries. After that, in March 2018, the first consultative meeting of the heads of state was held in Kazakhstan. At this meeting, Uzbekistan put forward many proposals for strengthening regional cooperation in security, stability, economic and cultural-humanitarian spheres.

In terms of security in Central Asia, Afghanistan's influence on the region is the most important problem. Afghanistan occupies a central place in the foreign policy of Uzbekistan, and special attention is paid to solving the crisis in this country by political means. In order to ensure regional security, attention is paid to issues such as supporting the principle of "total security" and including Afghanistan in economic processes. [3, 250-255]

Uzbekistan's efforts in Central Asia and the international arena, including efforts to find a solution to the Afghan problem through the "6+2" and "6+3" dialogue groups, confirm the country's role in the development of regional cooperation. The country, in its foreign policy, abandons the means of military and political pressure in the region, and defines stability and development in Central Asia as a priority.

While countries such as Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have chosen close cooperation with Russia as the main direction of geopolitics, Uzbekistan prefers its own independent and private path. However, this position is likely to change due to rapid changes in the political climate of the region and the world. Central Asia is a region surrounded by nuclear powers such as Russia, China, Pakistan, and India, and in the last 25 years, nuclear security issues in the region have been mostly resolved through diplomatic means. Since the first years of independence, Uzbekistan has been a staunch supporter of the policy of abstinence and promoted the "Agreement on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia". This initiative serves not only to prevent terrorism and nuclear threats in the region, but also to create a favorable political environment. [4, 29-32]

Uzbekistan also plays an important role in the field of energy, because today Kabul's electricity supply is completely dependent on Uzbekistan. Regional issues caused by geographical and ethnic factors, as well as old economic systems left over from the Soviet era, are among the main risk factors for Uzbekistan. Traditionally, Uzbekistan calls for a historical solution to the



Afghanistan issue and focuses on the development of bilateral relations with this country. At the same time, it supports peacebuilding and economic recovery initiatives without interfering in internal conflicts. The "Khayraton-Mazari-Sharif" railway, launched in 2011, expands access to the seaports of the region and makes a great contribution to the development of trade. [5]

One of the other important problems of the region is the environmental crisis related to the Aral Sea. Water resources problems, including the construction of dams in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, such as the Rogun and Qambarota hydroelectric dams, pose a threat to Uzbekistan, as these dams reduce the flow of Amudarya and Syrdarya during the cropping season. and can lead to drought.

Based on its national interests, Uzbekistan chooses an independent and equidistant foreign policy and plays an important role in ensuring stability in the region. Western countries, in particular, the EU and the USA, are trying to create a strong cooperation area in Central Asia, and in this direction, they are forced to take into account the strategic importance of Uzbekistan. Strengthening regional integration is proposed as a reasonable way to ensure security in Central Asia, in which Uzbekistan maintains its position as a guarantee and center of stability. In order to prevent a geopolitical vacuum, cooperation and unification of regional states is necessary, because otherwise the possibility of external intervention will increase, which can negatively affect the stability of the entire region. [6]

CONCLUSION

Uzbekistan's long-term experience in combating terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking is recognized as a guarantee of regional security. Thus, the geopolitical efforts of Uzbekistan are in the center of attention of the region and the world community, and Uzbekistan is strengthening its position as an active participant in these processes.

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