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Some aspects of political modernization in modern Uzbekistan

Abstract. The article analyzes the work of Sh. Mirziyoyev during his tenure as president. The author also tries to analyze the foreign and domestic policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan when the new President of the country was coming. In a short period of time, Sh. Mirziyoyev carried out a colossal work. A new stage of development a new stage of political, economic, and social reforms began for Uzbekistan. The head of state managed to bring foreign policy to a completely different level. Within the framework of the Strategy of action on five priority directions of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017-2021, the new President outlined the main priority of Uzbekistan's foreign policy - Central Asia. Sh. Mirziyoyev voiced his intentions to create a belt of good neighborliness and mutually beneficial cooperation in the Central Asian region. But implementing a multi-vector and balanced foreign policy, he managed to establish cooperation not only with neighboring republics but also with the leaders of world powers. The leader of the Republic of Uzbekistan shows his openness, readiness for dialogue, and strengthening of mutual trust and cooperation with all countries.

Keywords: Sh. Mirziyoyev, multi-directional nature, reforms, foreign policy, Strategy, Central Asia, Republic of Uzbekistan.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32523/2616-6887/2022-139-2-33-41>

Received: 02.08.2021 / Accepted: 26.01.2022

Introduction

In 2016, in Uzbekistan, due to the sudden death of the first President, a transit of power took place. On December 4, 2016, early elections were held in the country, in which Shavkat Mirziyoyev won the largest number of votes. Immediately after coming to power, the new president began to take steps to transform and improve both domestic and foreign policy. The leader of the country has embarked on a phase of new political, social, and economic reforms. Cooperation with the countries of Central Asia, which is the main priority of Uzbekistan's foreign policy, has developed dynamically in accordance with the Strategy of action on five priority directions of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan from 2017 to 2021. Tashkent shows its readiness for dialogue, mutually beneficial cooperation, and strategic partnership.

Research methods

In writing this article, the author used such methods as comparative analysis, historical method, and prediction method.

Discussion

In September 2016, the first President of the Republic of Uzbekistan I. Karimov died. In December 2016, Sh. Mirziyoyev won the early elections with the largest number of votes. Immediately after the election of the president, the new head of state outlined new priorities in both foreign and domestic policy, some of which seemed completely impossible even under his predecessor. Sh. Mirziyoyev announced a course for rapprochement and establishment of good-neighborly relations with neighboring states, began a new stage of social, economic, and political reforms. A period of change has begun for Uzbekistan. In February 2017, the head of state approved the Strategy of action on five priority directions of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017-2021. According to the new Strategy, the President set the task of improving the system of state and social construction, reforming the legal and administrative systems, ensuring security and interethnic harmony, liberalizing the economy, and starting to develop the social sphere, and developing multi-vector foreign policy. This priority course is maintained at the present time. Every year, starting in 2017, the President approves a new state program for the modernization and implementation of the Strategy. So, 2017 was the Year of Dialogue with the People and Human Interests, 2018 was held under the name of the Year of Support for Active Entrepreneurship, Innovative Ideas and Technologies, 2019 was the Year of Active Investments and Social Development, and 2020 was called the Year of Development science, education and the digital economy ", and 2021 is being implemented under the slogan" The Year of Supporting Youth and Strengthening the Health of the Population. "

Shavkat Mirziyoyev began to act actively from the first days. At the legislative level, forced labor was prohibited. Since 2017, efforts against corruption in higher educational institutions have been carried out, and the salaries of teachers have been increased. On April 20, 2017, the Resolutions "On Measures for the Further Development of the Higher Education System" and "The Program for the Comprehensive Development of the Higher Education System for the Period 2017-2021" were signed. To organize training abroad and attract foreign scientists, the El-Yurt Umidi Foundation was established. Such steps are undoubtedly a new advance in the field of education. This testifies to the improvement of the higher education system and the revision of the content of personnel training. The creation of the Fund will greatly increase the availability of higher education in the country.

Immediately after the elections, Sh. Mirziyoyev signed a decree "On measures to radically increase the efficiency of the internal affairs bodies", which will make the State transparent in the work of the internal affairs agencies and will bring the police face to face with the people and remove the invisible barrier between them, the judicial and legal system has been reformed and the penal system liberalized. In 2017, a program of economic reforms was approved, which was supposed to bring the country's economy to a qualitatively new level until 2021. The key areas were the textile industry, the production of industrial building materials, the fruit and vegetable sector, pharmaceuticals, and tourism. In 2019, radical tax reform was carried out. But according to some experts, it is a failure. Also from January 1, 2019, the Customs and Tariff Policy was liberalized, providing for the reduction of import customs duties and excise duties. Despite the skepticism of

some experts, it is nevertheless necessary to note the positive changes in the economy of Uzbekistan. The share of investment in GDP doubled between 2017 and 2020. The Uzbek media have gained freedom of speech. Today they are allowed to write about a real picture that is taking place in the country, whereas under I. Karimov, it was forbidden. Also, the attitude toward labor migrants was changed, they began to speak openly about their problems and their contribution to the country's economy. One of the main changes in the sphere of political freedom was the gradual release from Uzbek prisons of human rights defenders and journalists, as well as those who were in opposition to the previous regime. [1] It is necessary to note the creation of mechanisms for direct communication between the President and the citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan when each citizen could contact the President and receive an answer to his request. Now, an integral system of presidential receptions has been formed in each city and district center. In total, there are about 200 reception offices throughout the country.

Republic of Uzbekistan and Central Asia

The President is currently pursuing an active and pragmatic policy based on the national interest of the country. According to the Strategy of Action on Five Priority Directions of Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017-2021 Central Asia is the main priority of Uzbekistan's foreign policy. From the first days, the leader of the country began to establish ties with the neighboring republics. The delimitation of borders has been successfully carried out, and the disputed issues relating to borders have virtually disappeared, which can truly be seen as evidence of the wise policy of Sh. Mirziyoyev. Also «statistics of summits, visits of delegations, business, and cultural forums, telephone calls of presidents to each other, inter-State agreements, as well as regional projects indicate: that the share of Central Asia is higher than that of other regions and countries in the international relations of Uzbekistan»[2]. The President of Uzbekistan has significantly improved relations with Kyrgyzstan. A strategic partnership agreement has been signed between States and issues relating to certain disputed borders have been resolved.

Uzbekistan is also strengthening its cooperation with the Republic of Kazakhstan. In March 2017, the President of Uzbekistan made an official visit to Astana, where the heads of state signed a joint declaration on further deepening strategic partnership and strengthening good neighborliness between the countries. Several other important documents were also signed during the meeting. In April 2019, an official meeting of the two Heads of State was held in Tashkent, where further plans for strengthening and developing friendly relations of good-neighborly policy, cooperation in the fields of tourism, transport, trade, and much more were discussed. Some 10 different bilateral instruments have also been signed to further develop mutually beneficial links between countries.

Positive trends in the development of relations can be seen between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The stumbling block was the construction of a major Rogun hydroelectric power plant, disagreements over border delimitation, etc. The new President tried to smooth out these problems, and some of them were even resolved. In March 2018, the state visit of the President of Uzbekistan to the capital of Tajikistan took place. This event can be called "historical" for the two brotherly peoples. In a short period of time Sh. Mirziyoyev managed to find «a common language» with the neighboring state, to cancel the visa regime, to resume aviation, railway and bus connections between cities of neighboring states, managed to reach an agreement on the area of Farkhad hydroelectric power station 2, the supply of gas to Tajikistan and electricity to Uzbekistan has been resumed. It was also decided to coordinate the fight against extremism and terrorism, as the proximity of States to Afghanistan requires increased attention to the issue of security [3]

Relations between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan have also reached a new level of strategic partnership. It is noteworthy that in March 2017, Sh. Mirziyoyev made his first visit as President of Turkmenistan. In 2018, the President of Turkmenistan paid a return visit to Uzbekistan. In August of the same year, President Sh. Mirziyoyev visited Turkmenistan to participate in a meeting of the Council of Heads of State-Founders of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea. In November 2019, at the invitation of Sh. Mirziyoyev, the President of Turkmenistan paid an official visit. The Presidents considered topical issues in bilateral relations and discussed prospects for their expansion.[4] Since then, there have been some 15 meetings of heads of State, during which more than 50 documents have been signed, the purpose of which is mutually beneficial cooperation.

Regional cooperation has recently been strengthened. The regular Consultative Meetings of the Heads of State of Central Asia are further proof of this. It is a kind of dialogue platform where heads of State can discuss, in a constructive and open manner, topical issues of cooperation and propose solutions to common problems. The first consultative meeting was held in Astana in 2018. In November 2019, a second meeting was held in Tashkent, during which the heads of State adopted a development program for the region. The third consultative meeting of Heads of State was scheduled to take place in Kyrgyzstan in 2020. However, due to the tense situation around the world due to COVID-19, the meeting had to be postponed. It was not until August 2021 that the Presidents of the countries met at the third consultative meeting, but not in Kyrgyzstan as planned, but in Turkmenistan. During the meetings, such issues as the increase in the flow of tourists, the economic integration of the region, the increase in trade between States, terrorism, and drug trafficking were discussed, the situation in Afghanistan deserves special attention since Uzbekistan has common borders with Afghanistan. It is essential to ensure peace, security, and stability in the region. The high level of regional consolidation achieved and the readiness of Central Asian countries to assume responsibility for region-wide issues is also evidenced by the adoption of a special UN resolution in June 2018 Strengthening regional and international cooperation for peace, stability, and sustainable development "Strengthening regional and international cooperation to ensure peace, stability, and sustainable development in the Central Asian region." [5]

Another important event in the history of Central Asia, which took place from July 15-16, 2021, should be noted. At the initiative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, an international conference entitled «Central and South Asia: regional interconnectedness was held in Tashkent. Challenges and opportunities». Despite the difficult epidemiological situation, the conference was attended by some 600 participants, including 44 high-level national representatives, delegations from international and regional organizations, international experts, representatives of scientific centers, etc. This event can really be called the «historic breakthrough in the rapprochement of the countries of Central and South Asia». The President of Uzbekistan is steadily continuing his foreign policy, set after winning the 2016 elections, thereby strengthening his authority in the international arena and bringing the country to a whole new level. The conference discussed both regional, international and global issues. The welcome speech by the President of Uzbekistan, in which he provided reform ideas and wide-ranging initiatives, was highly appreciated by the participants and appreciated by international experts. The participants agreed on the need to exploit the full potential of the regions by taking advantage of existing transport and transit opportunities, creating a single market and investment space. Participants also noted the importance of implementing the concept of interregional integration. The conference gave a new impetus to the development of bilateral and interregional cooperation between Central and South Asia, since all states strive to strengthen peace and good neighborliness, and Sh. Mirziyoyev, thanks to his position on the foreign policy course and views on regional and international problems and threats, enlisted the support of the international community.

It should also be noted that cooperation in the cultural and humanitarian sphere, science, and education is actively developing between Uzbekistan and the states of Central Asia. There are trends of growth in the economy, and trade turnover is increasing every year. Between 2016 and 2019, Uzbekistan's trade with Central Asian countries more than doubled, from \$2.5 billion to \$5.2 billion. With Kazakhstan, however, this growth increased by a factor of 1.8, Kyrgyzstan by a factor of 5, Turkmenistan by a factor of 2.7, and Tajikistan by a factor of 2.4. [6]

Cooperation between Uzbekistan and the world Powers: Russian Federation, United States of America, and China

Having entered the legitimate rights of the President of the country after the elections, Sh. Mirziyoyev has started a multi-vector foreign policy, finding a balance between world powers. Russia is the second-largest investor and an important partner for Uzbekistan. The main areas of cooperation with the Russian Federation remain trade and economic, military, political, cultural and humanitarian spheres. According to the data of the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade of Uzbekistan, according to the results of 2019, the foreign trade turnover of the country amounted to \$42.2 billion. of which 6.6 billion (15.7%) are in Russia.[7] Russia is interested in deepening not only bilateral cooperation with Uzbekistan but also its active involvement in the development of Eurasian integration. Throughout 2020, dialogues were held on the economic feasibility of the participation of the university in the EAEU. There were both supporters and opponents of integration inside the country. Ultimately, Uzbekistan received observer status in the EAEU.

Cooperation between Uzbekistan and Russia is also developing in the field of security. During the official visit of the President of Uzbekistan to Moscow in April 2017, a package of intergovernmental agreements and investment projects was signed, and a joint plan of interaction was formed to strengthen stability in the entire Central Asian region.

Cooperation in the field of entrepreneurship development is being actively pursued. Almost 2 thousand enterprises with the use of Russian capital have been opened in Uzbekistan.

In addition, relations between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Russian Federation are developing in the field of education and science. The exchange of students, teachers, and scientists between the two countries is carried out annually. Representatives of Uzbekistan and Russia regularly publish joint scientific works and take part in conferences, competitions, seminars, and various competitions organized by both states. There are branches of universities in Uzbekistan such as Lomonosov Moscow State University and the Plekhanov Russian University of Economics. Negotiations are underway to open other Russian universities in the heart of Central Asia.

Relations between Uzbekistan and the United States moved to a new level with the arrival of Sh. Mirziyoyev. In September 2017, the President officially visited the United States to take part in the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly. Also, meetings were held with the President of the United States and the leadership of large companies. As a result, agreements worth \$ 2.6 billion were signed between Uzbekistan and the United States. [8]

"In May 2018, the President of Uzbekistan was invited to the United States. The meeting of the two leaders ended with the signing of cooperation documents that will help develop foreign trade, a "Road Map" for the development of e-commerce in Uzbekistan and expanding access of Uzbek entrepreneurs to global trading platforms was discussed. A five-year Military Cooperation Plan was also signed, as relations between States are also based on combating terrorism and solving problems in Afghanistan. Cooperation with the United States is developing in the field of science and technology, as well as in the field of economic modernization.

In February 2020, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visited Uzbekistan. In Tashkent, he participated in the C5+1 meeting, which was attended by the heads of the five Central Asian countries and the United States. Pompeo also held talks with the President of the Republic Sh. Mirziyoyev. It was stated that relations between the two States were at the peak of their development. In this connection, he notes that after the visit of the President of Uzbekistan to the United States, and after Pompeo's visit to Uzbekistan, a wave of articles and official statements in the Russian media and analytical circles about the alleged looming turn of Tashkent towards the West and its distance from Russia, about the strengthening of United States influence in the region, etc. This has always been observed throughout the period of independence, which reflects the geopolitical dimension (or attribution of the geopolitical dimension) to major foreign policy moves not only of Uzbekistan but also of other States of the region. » [3]

Results

In analyzing the priorities of Uzbekistan's foreign policy, one cannot but mention China. Chinese geopolitics in the 21st century is increasingly manifested on a global scale, especially in connection with the new initiative of Xi Jinping «One Belt, One Way» (OBOW). OBOW includes not only infrastructure projects, construction of roads, hubs, pipelines, etc., but also issues of culture, education, tourism, and other components of the «soft power» of China. Even I. Karimov, being at his post, officially supported the Chinese initiative. The current president has confirmed this support. China is the main source of financing for reforms in Uzbekistan. China is Uzbekistan's largest trading partner and investor. Only for 2017-2018 more than \$ 40 billion in contracts were concluded. There is also cooperation in the military sphere. China sent military equipment to Uzbekistan free of charge. There are two Confucius Institutes in the country. Thousands of Uzbeks students' study at universities in China. Currently, the issue of construction of the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan-China railway is being resolved, which will become an important transport hub for the transcontinental communication "Western China-Western Europe". The automotive component of this assembly has already been built. [3]

Conclusion

Summing up, it can be noted that Sh. Mirziyoyev has developed an excellent strategy and copes with it perfectly. The President fulfilled all the points outlined after his arrival in domestic politics. Thanks to his diplomatic style, the Head of Uzbekistan easily established mutually beneficial cooperation not only with world powers but also with neighboring states, relations with which under the first president were strained to the limit. In keeping with all the interests of the State, the Uzbek leader has begun fruitful cooperation in virtually all spheres, maintaining a balance with global and regional actors and taking the Republic of Uzbekistan to an entirely new level in the international arena. Thanks to the competent policy of Sh. Mirziyoyev, the leaders of the world powers began to perceive the state differently, confirming the importance of Uzbekistan's role in solving regional problems in Central Asia.

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Қазіргі Өзбекстанның саяси модернизациясының кейбір аспектілері

Аңдатпа. Мақалада Ш.Мирзиеевтің президент болып тұрған кезіндегі жұмысы талданады. Автор елдің жаңа президентінің келуімен Өзбекстан Республикасының сыртқы және ішкі саясатын талдауға тырысады. Ш.Мирзиеев қысқа мерзімде орасан зор жұмыстарды атқарды. Жаңа үкіметтің келуімен Өзбекстан үшін дамудың жаңа кезеңі, саяси, экономикалық және әлеуметтік реформалардың жаңа кезеңі басталды. Мемлекет басшысы сыртқы саясатты мүлде басқа деңгейге көтере алды. 2017-2021 жылдарға арналған бес басым бағыт бойынша Әрекет стратегиясы аясында жаңа президент Өзбекстанның сыртқы саясатының негізгі басымдығы - Орталық Азияны белгіледі. Ш.Мирзиеев Орталық Азия аймағында тату көршілік пен өзара тиімді ынтымақтастық белдеуін құру ниетін білдірді. Бірақ көпвекторлы және теңдестірілген сыртқы саясатты жүзеге асыра отырып, ол көршілес республикалармен ғана емес, әлемдік державалардың басшыларымен де ынтымақтастық орната алды. Өзбекстан Республикасының көшбасшысы өзінің ашықтығын, диалогқа дайындығын, барлық елдермен өзара сенім мен ынтымақтастықты нығайтатынын көрсетеді.

Тўйин сөздер: Ш.Мирзиёев, көпвекторлы, реформалар, сыртқы саясат, Стратегия, Орталық Азия, Өзбекстан Республикасы.

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Некоторые аспекты политической модернизации современного Узбекистана

Аннотация. В статье проводится анализ работы Ш.Мирзиёева за период пребывания его на посту президента. Также автор пытается произвести анализ внешней и внутренней политики Республики Узбекистан с приходом нового Президента страны. За короткий промежуток времени Ш.Мирзиёевым была проведена колоссальная работа. С приходом новой власти для Узбекистана начался новый этап развития, новый этап политических, экономических и социальных реформ. Главе государства удалось вывести внешнюю политику на совершенно иной уровень. В рамках Стратегии действий по пяти приоритетным направлениям на 2017-2021 гг. новый Президент обозначил главный приоритет внешней политики Узбекистана – Центральная Азия. Ш.Мирзиёев озвучил намерения о создании пояса добрососедства и взаимовыгодного сотрудничества в регионе Центральной Азии. Но осуществляя многовекторную и сбалансированную внешнюю политику, ему удалось наладить сотрудничество не только с соседскими республиками, но и с лидерами мировых держав. Лидер Республики Узбекистан показывает свою открытость, готовность к диалогу, укреплению взаимного доверия и сотрудничеству со всеми странами.

Ключевые слова: Ш.Мирзиёев, многовекторность, реформы, внешняя политика, Стратегия, Центральная Азия, Республика Узбекистан.

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