

**IMPROVING UZBEKISTAN'S IMAGE IN THE WORLD AS A FACTOR OF STATE
DEVELOPMENT STABILITY**

Bekdash Berdiyev

Assistant professor of International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan

Abstract: The article examines the essence of the concept of "image". The characteristics of the country's image and its main subsystems and elements are given. The role of image in the development of the country and certain types of police activity is analyzed.

Key words: Image, prestige, reforms, civil society, activity of political institutions, information, reforms, image of the country, integration, political changes.

Introduction

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's speeches at various international events firmly assert that the large-scale and dynamic democratic reforms in Uzbekistan are irreversible and are based on ensuring and protecting human rights, freedoms, and legitimate interests. According to assessments by various foreign experts and observers, such statements serve as powerful positive signals for the global community, especially for Uzbekistan's foreign partners and investors who trust our country.

All of this means that Uzbekistan's reputation and image are continuously growing on a global scale. So, what influenced the fundamental change in Uzbekistan's international image?

Methods

The article uses such methods as systemic, behavioral, historical and sociological methods.

Results and Discussion

Firstly, it is the political will and firm determination of our country's leadership, which aims at freedom of speech and media, religion and beliefs, gender equality, and interethnic harmony. As you may know, in October 2020, Uzbekistan was elected for the first time in history as a member of the UN Human Rights Council, which consists of 47 states responsible for promoting and protecting human rights worldwide.

Secondly, the foreign policy course approved by Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev is carefully calibrated from pragmatic and strategic perspectives. This has strengthened our country's reputation as a reliable and stable partner deserving trust from all partners and investors, as well as an active player in foreign affairs.

The main result of this course has been a significant improvement in the political situation in Central Asia, the formation of genuine good neighborliness in the region, and joint efforts by Uzbekistan and neighboring states to address vital regional issues, including water, border, and climate change problems."

It is known that today Uzbekistan has expanded and continues to expand multifaceted and mutually beneficial relations with leading countries such as Russia, China, the United States, the European Union, European states, Turkey, South Korea, Japan, India, Pakistan, as well as many countries in the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

Thirdly, it is evident that multilateral diplomacy has significantly intensified. International conferences initiated by the country's leadership have received high praise from the global community. These include forums, conferences, symposia, and other historically significant events dedicated to the formation of international transport corridors, the resolution of Afghanistan's issues, and the strengthening of connectivity between Central and South Asia. The successful World Conference on Youth Engagement in Global Actions was also held. All these major forums have created a political platform for developing a new, effective model of regional

and international cooperation in political, economic, investment, transport-logistics, energy, technological, and cultural-humanitarian spheres.

In Tashkent, another important international conference was held, deeply discussing relevant issues facing the global community, including the recovery of the world economy and the study of best practices in poverty reduction after the coronavirus pandemic.

Fourthly, the vital and timely initiatives of Uzbekistan's President, aimed at consolidating the efforts of our region's states and the world in addressing common challenges, have led to a sharp increase in Uzbekistan's image, activity, and role in international organizations."

It is worth noting that Uzbekistan has already implemented the initiative to create the United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Human Security in the Aral Sea region. Additionally, based on President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's proposals, several important resolutions were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, focusing on strengthening regional and international cooperation in Central Asia. These resolutions cover areas such as education, religious tolerance, sustainable tourism, and sustainable development. Furthermore, Uzbekistan chaired the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in 2020 and successfully hosted a summit, putting forth more than a dozen initiatives. Among the significant events in the country's life, Uzbekistan's membership in the Turkic Council, progress in WTO accession negotiations, and obtaining observer status in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) stand out. Additionally, Uzbekistan is concluding negotiations on an Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the European Union and has been granted beneficiary status in the Generalized System of Preferences Plus (GSP+). Lastly, economic diplomacy has gained importance, with noticeable efforts to attract foreign investments and advanced technologies into Uzbekistan's economy, yielding significant results in socio-economic matters. Overall, these factors have contributed to shaping a new image and enhancing Uzbekistan's positive reputation as a country open to comprehensive cooperation. The concept of the "New Uzbekistan" has firmly established itself on the international stage, emphasizing regional collaboration in the new Uzbekistan and Central Asia. From the outset of his presidency, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev prioritized improving the political situation in our region, aiming to constructively address regional issues that previously hindered stronger relations with neighboring countries.

By establishing trustful relations and open dialogue with neighboring states at the highest level, we have reached necessary agreements to address bilateral and regional issues based on good neighborliness, mutual trust, consideration of shared interests, and reasonable compromises. Uzbekistan's relations with all Central Asian countries have been elevated to the level of strategic partnership. As the President noted, a term called the 'Central Asian spirit' has emerged in the world's political lexicon, accurately reflecting the positive political atmosphere of cooperation and mutual understanding in our region. Regular consultative summits of the heads of Central Asian states have been held in Astana, Tashkent, and Avaza. Central Asian economic forums are being conducted, and trade-economic ties, industrial cooperation, and cultural-humanitarian interaction are developing rapidly. When discussing key regional cooperation issues, it is essential to highlight further solutions regarding border matters, joint and rational use of water-energy resources, development and improvement of transportation and communication systems, regional security, and continued work on environmental issues. These directions stem from the regional strategy of Uzbekistan's President, which includes the following aspects: First, the implementation of all agreements reached at the highest level during bilateral contacts and within the framework of consultative summits of Central Asian state leaders. Second, enhancing the model of regional economic cooperation, increasing the effectiveness of collaboration in trade, investments, industrial cooperation, transportation, transit, energy, and innovation.

Thirdly, joint efforts to address modern challenges and threats facing our region include dealing with the pandemic and overcoming its consequences, solving environmental problems, preventing transnational threats of extremism and terrorism, and strengthening interethnic harmony and friendly relations among the peoples of Central Asia.

Logical Steps Towards Strategic Cooperation

It is worth noting that preventive diplomacy methods have repeatedly proven their usefulness in the past and continue to demonstrate their viability, including in approaches to the new situation in Afghanistan. And this is not limited to bilateral diplomacy alone. At the international multilateral level, a comprehensive system of politico-diplomatic mechanisms has been established and continues to evolve, aimed at preventing various types of challenges and threats to national and regional security.

For example, in Central Asia, there exists a balanced system of dialogue mechanisms between the region's countries and major partners in the "5+1" format. Such platforms operate in relations with Russia, the United States, the European Union, China, India, the Republic of Korea, and Japan. Additionally, in the region, alongside the CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization), organizations like the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) and SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) are active, discussing relevant issues, including those related to regional security and the Afghan problem.

Uzbekistan's recent participation in the CSTO summit and the SCO+CSTO meeting in Dushanbe as an honorary guest and SCO member, where the situation in Afghanistan was discussed, is an integral part of our balanced and pragmatic diplomacy."

Uzbekistan's proactive and open policy has indeed fostered strategic partnerships with all Central Asian states and global powers. The active cooperation in counterterrorism and extremism, as well as advancements in military-technical collaboration, contribute to regional stability and address security challenges effectively.

The recent Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit held in Tajikistan on September 17th marked an important milestone. With Uzbekistan assuming the chairmanship of this authoritative organization, the country shoulders a unique responsibility while aiming to achieve specific goals. The SCO has become a significant player in global politics, securing a prominent position among influential international structures. The principles of the "Shanghai Spirit" underpin regional partnerships, and member states are enhancing their joint potential to address new challenges and threats while expanding economic and cultural-humanitarian cooperation.

In 2022, under Uzbekistan's leadership, the SCO hosted over 80 internationally significant events. The development of a specialized roadmap and conceptual framework for our chairmanship reflects our country's pragmatic approach, drawing from past experiences in 2004, 2010, and 2016.

Without a doubt, all events within the framework of Uzbekistan's chairmanship in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) will be conducted at the highest level. It is important to note that Uzbekistan actively promotes practical initiatives within international structures, including the SCO, aimed at achieving mutually beneficial cooperation among partner states while also implementing significant domestic reforms. These initiatives include sustainable economic progress, increased foreign investment inflows, exports of national goods and services, modernization of transportation infrastructure, and improvements in the legal framework for protecting compatriots abroad.

In short, the upcoming SCO summit in Uzbekistan presents an excellent opportunity to advance the country's interests, strengthen the organization's role and significance, and fully realize its potential.

Uzbekistan's image has been rapidly improving. Three years ago, an international conference titled 'Uzbekistan: Swift Reforms in Five Years' was held in Tashkent. The conference reviewed the fundamental transformations carried out in our country during previous years. It was organized at a high level and brought together representatives from foreign diplomatic missions, international organizations, prominent foreign scholars, and experts. The event was successful due to the efforts of the organizers and the open dialogue among participants.

One of the conference sessions focused on ensuring security, religious tolerance, and interethnic harmony, as well as pursuing a balanced and constructive foreign policy.

CONCLUSION

It can be said that all these interconnected directions are covered by the comprehensive reform program implemented in our country – a priority for the nation's development. Participants engaged in lively and candid discussions about the progress of reforms aimed at positioning Uzbekistan among developed democratic states.

The radical reforms initiated in Uzbekistan have played an invaluable role in transitioning the country toward a new, modern path of development and modernization, enhancing the effectiveness of both domestic and foreign policies.

This perspective has also found resonance in the views of foreign experts and diplomats. During the discussions, our international colleagues expressed the opinion that, thanks to President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's open and constructive foreign policy, Uzbekistan's role and position in international relations have significantly strengthened. One of the key outcomes has been the transformation of Uzbekistan's image – a perception of the country as one where democratic society, a strong and competitive economy, innovative institutions, and infrastructure are taking shape.

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