

Coverage Of Uzbekistan's Foreign Policy Issues In Domestic And Foreign Scientific Literature

Dilorom Rakhimboeva

International school of finance and technology institute Associate Professor of the Department of Humanities and Natural Sciences, Uzbekistan

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Abstract: This article analyzes the coverage of Uzbekistan's foreign policy in domestic and foreign scholarly literature. The study examines how the conceptual foundations, strategic priorities, institutional mechanisms, and regional-global dimensions of Uzbekistan's foreign policy are interpreted by Uzbek and international scholars. Particular attention is given to the transformation of Uzbekistan's foreign policy since independence, the role of national interests, the principles of openness and pragmatism, and the country's active participation in regional and international cooperation. The article also compares domestic scholarly approaches with foreign research, revealing similarities and differences in the interpretation of Uzbekistan's diplomatic strategy, regional policy, security priorities, and multilateral initiatives. While domestic literature primarily emphasizes state sovereignty, national development, good-neighborliness, and regional stability, foreign research often focuses on geopolitical balance, Central Asian regionalism, great power rivalry, and Uzbekistan's role in international organizations. By systematizing existing research approaches and identifying areas requiring further scholarly inquiry, the article contributes to a deeper academic understanding of Uzbekistan's foreign policy.

Keywords: Uzbekistan, foreign policy, scholarly literature, domestic studies, foreign studies, diplomacy, national interests, regional cooperation, Central Asia, geopolitical strategy, international relations, multilateralism, foreign policy priorities, good-neighborliness, international organizations.

Introduction: Research conducted in prestigious foreign scientific centers and universities on the formation and evolution of independent Uzbekistan's foreign policy between 1991 and 2024 is aimed at conducting an in-depth analysis of the country's role in the international arena, the gradual development of its foreign policy strategies, and its degree of adaptability to geopolitical processes. Analyses published by prestigious scientific institutions such as Cambridge University (UK), University of British Columbia (Canada), German Institute for International and Security Affairs, German Council on Foreign Relations (Germany), Sciences Po (France), and Japan Institute of International Affairs (Japan) note that in the early years, Uzbekistan transitioned from an isolationist approach aimed at ensuring sovereignty and security to an open, multi-vector, and economically oriented foreign policy. In particular, under Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the activity of Uzbekistan in regional diplomacy, the

elevation of neighborhood policy to a qualitatively new level, and the strengthening of partnerships with international institutions have become one of the main topics of scientific research. Also, in the works published by the Center for Central Asian Scientific Research (USA), the Association internationale pour la Pensée Complexe (France), the Asian Institute of Strategy and Leadership (Malaysia) and other analytical centers, Uzbekistan's foreign policy is based on consistent, pragmatic and national interests, and its contribution to regional stability is particularly recognized. These studies confirm the relevance of the dissertation topic and the fact that it is at the center of scientific attention at the international level.

The formation and evolution of the foreign policy of independent Uzbekistan, as an integral part of the process of building a national state, has been manifested through systematic and consistent diplomatic activities based on the norms of

international law since 1991. The foreign policy concept formed during this period is aimed at strengthening the position of the Republic of Uzbekistan as a sovereign state in the international arena, ensuring national interests and contributing to regional and global stability, and the political and practical measures taken in this direction have formed a unique “Uzbek model” in the system of modern international relations. In particular, the qualitatively new stage observed in foreign policy since 2016 under the leadership of Shavkat Mirziyoyev is characterized by openness, constructive dialogue, a desire for regional integration, and a balanced multi-vector approach that has served to radically renew Uzbekistan's international image and increase the effectiveness of diplomatic activities. In this sense, the foreign policy dynamics formed during this period are analyzed as a complex and multifaceted diplomatic system developed in harmony not only with the state's geopolitical interests but also with the criteria of regional security, economic development, and cultural-humanitarian cooperation.

Main Body

The formation and dynamics of the development of independent Uzbekistan's foreign policy are closely linked to the modern system of international relations, globalization processes, and new geopolitical realities emerging against the backdrop of the information and communication revolution, which requires a comprehensive political-theoretical analysis within the context of the country's historical development. The foreign policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan, pursued since 1991, is distinguished by its multifaceted, balanced, and pragmatic nature, based on national interests. Within the framework of this strategic approach, the republic consistently demonstrates its commitment to the principles of security, stability, and development in Central Asia. In this regard, R.Z. Zhumaev analyzes the important stages of the evolution of Uzbekistan's political system and notes that “the desire to take a worthy place in the international arena as a geopolitical expression of the idea of national independence was the primary factor in the formation of the country's foreign policy”. I.Z. Abdullaev, who deeply studied the influence of informatization and globalization factors on foreign policy, interprets this process as “an information strategy that serves to strengthen the sovereignty of a national state in modern communication conditions”. Furthermore, the conceptual approaches put forward by A. Faizullaev -including the communicative nature of diplomacy based on “personal experience,” “symbolic expression,” and “identity construction” – reflect its harmony with the modern theoretical criteria of

Uzbekistan's diplomatic activity today. In this regard, D.B. Sayfullayev analyzes the mechanisms for conducting state foreign policy in the information space and substantiates the priority role of digital diplomacy in “forming the state's image and strengthening international cooperation” through the media and the Internet. These approaches allow for a deep historical and political analysis of the formation, development, and transformation of Uzbekistan's foreign policy within the international communication system.

Although the main directions of independent Uzbekistan's foreign policy and diplomatic activities began to be extensively studied from a scientific perspective between 1991 and 2024, this process began to acquire its deep analytical and complex nature precisely within the context of historical processes. At the same time, the role of digital diplomacy tools in foreign policy is highlighted by Sh.D. Arapov, who emphasizes that “digital communications allow for the effective promotion of state policy in the international information environment”. Regarding the legal foundations of foreign policy, M.U. Tursunova's approach is noteworthy, arguing that “the regulatory framework governing diplomatic activity stems from the need to ensure a balance between international practice and national legislation.” Thus, the foreign policy activities of independent Uzbekistan and the institution of diplomacy have been studied based on various scientific approaches, each of which has highlighted specific aspects of the problem; however, a comprehensive study of this process on a historical-dynamic basis remains a scientific necessity.

After gaining independence, the formation and development of Uzbekistan's foreign policy and diplomatic activities were studied in historiography based on various scientific approaches, and in this process, the state's role in the international arena, strategic principles in foreign relations, and the evolution of diplomatic mechanisms began to be consistently analyzed. In this regard, R.T. Juraev, focusing on the role and essence of Uzbekistan's public diplomacy during the period of independence, writes: “Public diplomacy has served as a powerful tool in shaping Uzbekistan's new image in international relations and promoting its humanitarian and cultural values abroad”. Based on this approach, it can be observed that public diplomacy has become an integral part of the concept of independent foreign policy, as it has formed informal areas of cooperation as an alternative to traditional interstate diplomatic channels. In the study of the historical roots of foreign policy, the scientific works of V.T. Ishkuvatov are of particular importance. Analyzing the history of

diplomatic relations between the Kokand Khanate and the Russian Empire in the 19th–20th centuries, the author advances the scientific conclusion that "historical diplomatic practices in Central Asia constitute the historical and cultural foundation of today's Uzbekistan's foreign policy thinking." This opinion confirms that today's foreign policy has emerged on the basis of periodic consistency, that is, diplomacy is an integral continuation of the history of Uzbek statehood. Thus, the degree of study of the problem was formed based on historical heritage on the one hand, and on the international political realities of the new era on the other, and the national and historical foundations of the Uzbek diplomatic school were scientifically proven.

The formation and development of the foreign policy strategy and diplomatic activity of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as its adaptation to changing global political conditions, is one of the important stages in the history of Uzbek statehood and reflects the foreign policy architecture of an independent state, whose place and role in the system of modern international relations are increasing.

The initial stage of our country's foreign policy – specifically from 1991 to 1999 –was focused on recognizing the sovereignty of the Republic of Uzbekistan as an international legal entity and strengthening its membership in international and regional structures such as the UN, OSCE, CIS, OIC, and Organization of Islamic Cooperation. In this regard, as Z.A. Chomaev noted, "diplomacy plays a central role in the process of official recognition of independence" .

Since the 2000s, the principle of multi-vectorism has become a priority in foreign policy, demonstrating Uzbekistan's desire to develop balanced relations with various powers in the international arena. A distinctive feature of this direction is that state policy, based on the principles of real politics, sought to maintain a balance of interests with global centers of power (the USA, Russia, China, and the European Union). G.A. Khannanova evaluates this process as "the formation of a system of diplomatic maneuvers for the peaceful resolution of regional problems" .

In the period after 2016, under the leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, a fundamental turning point occurred in Uzbekistan's foreign policy. New initiatives, openness, and the priority of a good-neighborly policy have led to a qualitatively new level of external relations. In this process, it is necessary to emphasize that "Central Asia has become a strategic core point of Uzbekistan's foreign policy".

With the strengthening of the "soft power" concept in the international diplomatic arena, Uzbek diplomacy,

alongside traditional diplomacy, has begun to place special emphasis on strengthening its international image through cultural, educational, sports, and social projects. In this regard, according to C.A. Martinenko, "a modern diplomat must be active in information and social spaces in real time" .

The consideration of regulatory and international legal frameworks in diplomatic activities has increased Uzbekistan's prestige on the global stage. In this regard, active initiative was shown in international environmental, security, and migration issues, and the country's initiatives were supported in UN resolutions. N.A. Tsvetkova writes in this regard: "Uzbekistan is emerging as a modern political actor integrated into the international community" .

Uzbekistan's foreign policy in 1991-2024 has undergone a gradual evolutionary path, traversing a complex path from recognizing sovereignty to striving for regional leadership. In this process, diplomacy has become not only official relations but also a multifaceted tool that strengthens culture, security, economic interests, and the international image.

Analyzing scientific research on the topic, we see that significant research has been conducted in academic circles in the USA, Europe, China, Japan, South Korea, and Turkey to study the directions of independent Uzbekistan's foreign policy and the dynamics of diplomatic activity during the 1991-2024 period. In particular, scientists from Harvard and Columbia universities in the USA assessed the Central Asian region as a "test site for post-Soviet geopolitical changes" and explained Uzbekistan's foreign policy through a "multi-vector foreign policy" model . European researchers, especially experts from Cambridge and Sciences Po, analyze Uzbekistan's relations with the UN, the European Union, the SCO, and the CIS, describing it as a "guarantee of regional stability" . Chinese scholars within the framework of the "Center for Central Asian Studies" at Peking University have evaluated Uzbekistan's foreign policy as a "modern form of Silk Road diplomacy" . Japanese scientists, in their research conducted at Waseda University in Tokyo, present Uzbekistan as a "geostrategic bridge between Asia and Europe" . In South Korea, researchers from Seoul National University analyzed Uzbekistan's role in energy, technology, and cultural exchange based on a "strategic partnership" . In Turkey, scholars from Ankara University interpreted Uzbekistan's foreign policy as the "integration axis of the Turkic world" and conducted an in-depth study of its activities within the Organization of Turkic States . All these studies highlight a foreign policy model aimed at harmonizing national interests and global geopolitical balance

within the context of Uzbekistan's historical development. Therefore, since the period of independence, the main vectors of foreign policy - ensuring security, expanding international cooperation, and promoting national interests - have been consistently covered in scientific research.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the coverage of Uzbekistan's foreign policy issues in domestic and foreign scholarly literature indicates the country's growing role in the system of international relations, its geopolitical standing, and its increasing diplomatic activity. Domestic academic research analyzes Uzbekistan's foreign policy primarily from the perspective of strengthening state sovereignty, protecting national interests, ensuring regional stability, developing good-neighborly relations with adjacent countries, and actively participating within international organizations. These approaches particularly acknowledge the integral link between foreign policy and the national development strategy.

In foreign scholarly literature, however, Uzbekistan's foreign policy is more often studied in the context of the geopolitical balance in Central Asia, the interests of major powers, regional integration processes, security matters, and international cooperation mechanisms. The relationships of Uzbekistan with Russia, China, the US, the European Union, Turkey, and neighboring countries have been a particular focus for foreign researchers. This confirms that the country's foreign policy is closely intertwined not only with national but also with regional and global political processes.

An analysis of the existing scholarly literature shows that domestic and foreign approaches to studying Uzbekistan's foreign policy complement one another. While domestic research delves deeper into the internal political, legal, and strategic foundations of foreign policy, foreign research analyzes Uzbekistan's role in the international system, its regional influence, and its geopolitical significance with a broader scope. Therefore, integrating these two scholarly directions allows for a more comprehensive, objective, and systematic study of Uzbekistan's foreign policy.

Overall, a crucial academic task is to further deepen research on Uzbekistan's foreign policy, conceptually systematize the existing literature, and analyze it based on modern theories of international relations. In particular, comparative and theoretical-methodological research into Uzbekistan's renewed foreign policy activism, its initiatives to strengthen regional cooperation in Central Asia, its multi-vector diplomacy, and its participation in international organizations will remain an important direction for

future scholarly inquiry.

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