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THE PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY OF UZBEKISTAN AS AN INSTRUMENT OF REPRESENTING NATIONAL INTEREST

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on parliamentary diplomacy, its scholarly explanation, its forms and the ways how it can be exercised. As well as in this article the author brings information about the revitalized interparliamentary relations of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, its role in representing national interest and legal base for Oliy Majlis to carry out foreign policy of Uzbekistan.

KEYWORDS

National interest, parliament, parliamentary diplomacy, foreign policy, international relations.

INTRODUCTION

“National interest” is a dynamic and multifaceted concept that plays a key role in foreign policy of a certain state. A Prominent American political scientist and one of the founding fathers of realism theory Hans Morgenthau in his best seller book "Politics Among Nations" defines the concept of “national interest” of a state by the following important elements such as survival, power, security, welfare, honor, and prestige. Over the past decades scholars of international relations argued whether national interest is protected

by the means of power or cooperation. Kenneth Waltz, for instance, points out that an independent state pursues its national interests in a rational and self-interested manner, seeking to maximize its power and security, while representatives of liberal school theory Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye remarks that cooperation is viable and even need among nations to represent one’s national interest.

As the process of globalization increases, states are becoming more interdependent and struggle for power is decreasing due to the economic sanctions. Thus, developing countries seek more friendly and soft way to reach their future goals with “Digital diplomacy”, “Cultural diplomacy”, “Economic Diplomacy”, “Public diplomacy” and so on. I consider “Parliamentary diplomacy” as a part of “Public diplomacy” where all resources are used to communicate with and attract the publics of other countries, rather than merely other governments . In other words, members of parliaments, directly selected by the people of a certain state, interacts with their foreign counterparts in order to reach their goals.

The reasons for the activation of the institutions of interparliamentary cooperation as the most characteristic type of interaction in international relations are: the increasing importance of parliamentary diplomacy; orientation in interstate relations to the principle of "soft power"; the desire of international organizations to include parliamentary structures in their orbit in order to demonstrate their multilateral development.

The phenomenon “Parliamentary diplomacy” is not widely studied yet. Several scholars provide different approaches to this term. Frans W. Weisglas and Gonnée de Boerb, for example, explain “Parliamentary diplomacy” as the full range of international activities undertaken by parliamentarians in order to increase mutual understanding between countries, to assist each other in improving the control of governments and the representation of a people and to increase the democratic legitimacy of inter-governmental institutions .

“Parliamentary diplomacy” can also be interpreted as a tool for promoting democratic governance, institutions and values, working with parliaments and

parliamentarians to articulate and respond to the needs and aspirations of the people. It works for peace, democracy, human rights, gender equality, youth empowerment, climate action and sustainable development through political dialogue, cooperation and parliamentary action .

Some western scholars define “Parliamentary diplomacy” as the means by which two or more parliaments conduct an ongoing dialogue with regard to key international issues .

“Parliamentary diplomacy” unlike other international and regional organizations, that has legal and political nature, has a stable characteristic and serves for carrying out certain tasks assigned to the State and its institutions .

In my opinion “Parliamentary diplomacy” is a process where parliaments, its bodies, committees and commissions assist in implementation of the State's foreign policy through the legislation and fulfillment of international obligations, represent state's national interest in international arenas and enhance relations with parliaments of other states.

“Parliamentary diplomacy” plays an increasingly important role in the modern world as a tool for representing and protecting national interests. It complements the traditional diplomacy carried out by the executive authorities and has a number of unique features:

Strengthening inter-parliamentary ties:

Parliamentarians from different countries can establish personal contacts, share experiences and establish trust relationships. This helps to create an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual understanding, which makes it easier to solve common problems.

Control over the activities of the executive branch:

Parliamentarians can exercise control over the Government's activities in the field of foreign policy. They may require a report on the implementation of foreign policy strategies and their compliance with national interests.

Support for international initiatives:

Parliamentarians can ratify international treaties and agreements, thereby ensuring their legal legitimacy. They can also allocate the necessary resources to implement these agreements at the national level.

Raising public awareness:

Parliamentarians can inform the public about important international policy issues and mobilize support for foreign policy initiatives. This contributes to the growth of civic participation in the decision-making process.

There are several forms of parliamentary action to represent a state's national interest with its foreign counterparts. For instance, meetings and negotiations that give opportunities to parliamentarians from different countries to meet at various international forums, such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) or the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), where MPs can share information and experiences on various issues such as legislation, human rights or economic cooperation. Another form is considered to be joint meetings where parliamentary commissions or groups may hold joint meetings to discuss topical issues. The other form is diplomatic missions. In this form of parliamentary action parliamentary delegations can visit other countries to study their experiences and establish contacts.

We can see the use of parliamentary diplomacy in the following examples:

Promoting peaceful conflict resolution: Parliamentarians can play the role of mediators in negotiations between the parties to the conflict .

Combating climate change: Parliamentarians can lobby for the adoption of laws to combat climate change and promote international cooperation in this area .

Promoting democracy and human rights: Parliamentarians can put pressure on governments of countries where human rights are violated and demand democratic reforms .

Parliamentary diplomacy is an important tool for representing and protecting national interests in the modern world. It allows involving a wider range of people in the decision-making process, strengthening inter-parliamentary ties and increasing the effectiveness of international cooperation.

The Concept of parliamentary diplomacy of the Republic of Uzbekistan

After Sh. Mirziyoyev, the incumbent president of the Republic of Uzbekistan, won presidential elections in 2016, he signed Decree "On the Strategy of actions for the further development of the Republic of Uzbekistan", where state's main core national interests were defined as further strengthening of the country's place and role as a full-fledged subject of international relations, joining the ranks of developed democratic states, strengthening the international image of the Republic of Uzbekistan, bringing objective information about the reforms carried out in the country to the world community and improvement of the regulatory and legal framework of the foreign policy and foreign economic activity of the Republic of

Uzbekistan, as well as the contractual and legal basis of international cooperation .

Realizing the importance of parliament in the implementation of an effective foreign policy and in representing national interest, Uzbekistan resumed its membership in the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 2017 . Established the positions of First deputy head of the two chambers of Parliament, who is responsible for foreign relations of Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan. In 25th September in 2020 with the Joint resolution of Councils of two chambers of Oliy Majlis, “The concept of parliamentary diplomacy of the Republic of Uzbekistan” was approved.

According to the Concept “Parliamentary diplomacy of the Republic of Uzbekistan” is an instrument of international activity of the Oliy Majlis, used to further promote the interests of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the world stage, increase its international prestige, develop bilateral and multilateral relations with foreign countries, exchange experience with parliaments of other states, international parliamentary organizations and international organizations .

Priority areas of parliamentary diplomacy of the Republic of Uzbekistan have been identified as:

the development of interparliamentary cooperation with parliaments of other states;

active participation of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the activities of international interparliamentary organizations;

strengthening and expanding interparliamentary cooperation in the study of the legislative process of foreign countries;

improving the system of interaction with scientific, expert and information-analytical services of parliaments of other states;

informing the international community about the ongoing reforms in the country;

promotion of initiatives of the Republic of Uzbekistan on international platforms;

strengthening the international image of the Republic of Uzbekistan;

improving the legal framework for protecting the rights and interests of citizens and legal entities of the Republic of Uzbekistan abroad, as well as supporting compatriots;

assistance in ensuring international and regional security .

The main objectives of the parliamentary diplomacy of the Republic of Uzbekistan are as follows:

improvement of the legal framework of foreign policy and foreign economic activity of the Republic of Uzbekistan, interaction in the main areas of international cooperation;

the use of parliamentary cooperation methods in promoting and protecting the national interests of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the international arena, further strengthening the country's place and role as a full-fledged subject of international relations;

active participation in the implementation of a system of measures to create a positive image and authority of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the world community;

implementation of measures to use the resource of parliamentary diplomacy in order to create a security belt around the Republic of Uzbekistan, good-

neighborliness and stability, strengthening trust and mutual understanding with the states of Central Asia;

contributing to the implementation of the foreign policy initiatives of the Republic of Uzbekistan to strengthen security, peace and stability in the region;

promotion of international cooperation in political, economic, social, cultural, humanitarian, human rights and other spheres of state and social development.

The main tasks to achieve the strategic goals of the parliamentary diplomacy of the Republic of Uzbekistan are:

the creation of an effective legal mechanism to protect the rights and interests of citizens and legal entities of the Republic of Uzbekistan;

formation of the most favorable foreign policy conditions for the effective implementation of democratic reforms and dynamic processes of economic modernization in the country;

further development of interparliamentary cooperation with parliaments of other states and international parliamentary organizations;

intensification of the participation of the Oliy Majlis in the activities of the Interparliamentary Union, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and other international parliamentary organizations;

expansion of interparliamentary cooperation in the field of studying the experience of parliamentary activity in other states;

interaction with international and foreign scientific and expert and information and analytical structures;

informing the parliaments of other states and the international community about the ongoing reforms in the country, socio-economic, political and legal development, and foreign policy initiatives of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Parliamentary diplomacy of the Republic of Uzbekistan is implemented by the Oliy Majlis through a systematic approach based on the following measures and mechanisms:

- legislative support of foreign policy and foreign economic activity of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

- ratification, accession and denunciation of international treaties of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

- parliamentary control over the implementation of the legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the field of foreign policy and foreign economic activity, the implementation of programs and plans for the development of international relations, including by listening to diplomatic and other representatives of the Republic of Uzbekistan in foreign countries.

- monitoring of international obligations, including the approval of national action plans (roadmaps) in the field of human rights protection.

- appointment and release, upon the proposal of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, of diplomatic and other representatives of the Republic of Uzbekistan in foreign countries.

- interaction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Ministry of Investments and Foreign Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan, diplomatic and other representations of the Republic of Uzbekistan in foreign countries.

- the adoption of annual programs on cooperation with foreign countries and the implementation of parliamentary control over their implementation.

- creation and improvement of the effectiveness of interparliamentary groups, commissions of committees, working groups and other entities for cooperation with parliaments of other states and international parliamentary organizations.

-the use of public diplomacy tools, including the broad involvement of civil society institutions in the process of inter-parliamentary dialogue.

- establishing close cooperation with parliaments of other states, interparliamentary groups and international parliamentary organizations, including the Interparliamentary Union, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-speaking Countries, the European Parliament.

- expanding ties with the UN charter and treaty bodies, international organizations and institutions.

- annual development and implementation, together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, of plans for international conferences, meetings and forums dedicated to deepening democratic reforms, ensuring human rights and freedoms, improving the judicial and legal system, attracting foreign investment and other issues.

- the use of preventive diplomacy methods to ensure regional and international security;

- promotion of foreign policy initiatives aimed at ensuring the national interests of the Republic of Uzbekistan and promoting the creation of a belt of

security, good-neighborliness and stability around the Republic of Uzbekistan;

- active use of information technologies and the Electronic Parliament system in interparliamentary diplomacy;

- organization of visits by official parliamentary delegations, participation in international forums in order to promote the national interests of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the world stage.

To my mind this conception is an instrument of international activity of Uzbek parliament, that is used to further promote the interests of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the world stage in order fulfil the objectives indicted in the Strategy of actions for the further development of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The legal basis of parliamentary diplomacy of the Republic of Uzbekistan

The legal basis of parliamentary diplomacy of the Republic of Uzbekistan consists of following legislation acts:

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Articles 93, 94, 95, 103);

Constitutional Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the Legislative chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan” (Articles 8, 14, 24-1);

Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the regulations of the Legislative chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan” (Articles 28, 34, 34-1, 34-2);

Constitutional Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan” (Articles 8, 9, 14);

Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the regulations of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan” (Articles 22, 27, 32-9, 33, 33-1, 33-2);

Regulation “On cooperation of the chambers of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan with the parliaments of foreign countries’ and international parliamentary organizations”, approved by Joint resolution of Councils of two chambers of Oliy Majlis and other documents.

The revival of parliamentary diplomacy in Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan's participation in regional and international processes has been increasing significantly in recent years. Uzbekistan is pursuing a more active and pragmatic foreign policy compared to previous periods. This policy has been recognized by the international community for its progressive nature and peacefulness.

If interparliamentary groups of Oliy Majlis for cooperation with the parliaments of 28 countries operated during 2015-2019, then in 2020 there were 43 of them, and by 2023 there were already 57 (56 countries and

1 parliament of the European Union).

In particular, 21 interparliamentary structures have been established with the lower chambers of parliaments of foreign countries of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Among them are 19 interparliamentary cooperation groups and the Council of Interparliamentary Cooperation between the Mazhilis of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Interparliamentary Commission for Interaction with the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation.

In cooperation with the Legislative Chamber and the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, a total of 36 interparliamentary structures have been established, including interparliamentary groups for interaction with parliaments of 35 foreign countries, the delegation of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Committee for Parliamentary Cooperation with the Parliament of the European Union "Uzbekistan-European Union". 26 of these interparliamentary structures are headed by deputies of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis and 10 are members of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis .

Now Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan is a member of six prestigious interparliamentary bodies like The Interparliamentary Union, the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. And the cooperation tends to increase due to the democratic conditions in Uzbekistan.

CONCLUSION

It is important to note that parliament plays a crucial role in a state’s foreign policy, influences it and develops and adopts laws. For instance, the two chambers of Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan have authority to determine the main directions of domestic and foreign policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan and adopt strategic state programs, ratify and denounce international treaties. The Senate on the proposal of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, has right to appoint and dismiss heads of diplomatic and other representative offices of the Republic of Uzbekistan in foreign countries and international organizations and so on.

It is the Institute of parliamentary diplomacy that helps to represent the national interest of Uzbekistan in the

international arena. Moreover, it strengthens the image of Uzbekistan, develops regional cooperation. It is an important mechanism for the implementation of the goals and objectives of foreign policy, the development of mutual harmony and trust between countries, the formation of a positive image of the country and the establishment of legislative creativity, parliamentary control and inter-parliamentary cooperation.

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