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AFGHAN FACTOR IN THE FORMATION OF A STABLE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT IN CENTRAL ASIA

МАРКАЗИЙ ОСИЁДА БАРҚАРОР СИЁСИЙ МУҲИТ ШАКЛЛАНИШИДА АФҒОН ОМИЛИ

АФГАНСКИЙ ФАКТОР В ФОРМИРОВАНИИ СТАБИЛЬНОЙ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОЙ СРЕДЫ В ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОЙ АЗИИ

Abstract: This article analyzes the factor of Afghanistan in the processes of ensuring the stability of the political environment in Central Asia and increasing the potential of regional development to a new level, international initiatives of Uzbekistan in this field. Also, consistent development of good-neighborly relations between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan is revealed based on the Strategy of Action for the five priority development directions of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021.

Keywords: Central Asia, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, security, development, stability, good-neighborhood, the Kabul process.

Аннотация. Мазкур мақолада Марказий Осиёда сиёсий муҳитнинг барқарорлигини таъминлаш ҳамда минтақавий тараққиёт салоҳиятини янги даражага кўтариш жараёнларидаги Афғонистон омили, бу борадаги Ўзбекистоннинг халқаро ташаббуслари таҳлил қилинади. Шунингдек, 2017-2021 йилларда Ўзбекистон Республикасини ривожлантиришни бешик устувор йўналиши бўйича Ҳаракатлар стратегияси асосида Ўзбекистон ва Афғонистон ўртасидаги яхши қўшничилик муносабатларининг изчил ривожланиши очиб берилди.

Таянч иборалар: Марказий Осиё, Ўзбекистон, Афғонистон, хавфсизлик, тараққиёт, барқарорлик, яхши қўшничилик, Қобул жараёни.

Аннотация. В статье анализируется афганский фактор в обеспечении стабильности политической среды в Центральной Азии и выводе потенциала регионального развития на новый уровень, а также международные инициативы Узбекистана в этой сфере. Также выявлено последовательное развитие добрососедских отношений между Узбекистаном и Афганистаном на основе Стратегии действий по пяти приоритетным направлениям развития Республики Узбекистан на 2017-2021 годы.

Ключевые слова: Центральная Азия, Узбекистан, Афганистан, безопасность, развитие, стабильность, добрососедство, Кабульский процесс.

During the years of independence, ensuring security in the Central Asian region and resolutely combating any threats to its stability has become one of the most important directions of Uzbekistan's foreign policy.

The security and stability processes in Central Asia have a complex structure that is evolving in the form of serious threats and new development opportunities at the national, regional, and global levels. First of all, this is manifested in the growing scale of threats such as drug trafficking, illegal arms trade, and international organized crime, international terrorism, extremism.

Today, these threats are directly related to the turbulent situation in Afghanistan. The roots of this tension began with the withdrawal of the Soviet military contingent, the emergence of the Taliban, and the seizure of power, following the 2001 terrorist attacks in US cities.

This circumstance is characterized by a complex military-political situation in modern Afghanistan, which is connected, on the one hand, with the lack of effective dialogue with the Taliban, who have sufficient supporters and a strong position, and, on the other hand, with an increase in the possibility of creating various terrorist groups in the country, since production and illegal trafficking drugs continue to rise.

The fact that the majority of the Afghan population remains in a difficult social situation and the ineffectiveness of the international community's efforts to rebuild the country's economic infrastructure has led to the large-scale cultivation and production of drugs by ordinary Afghans.

In turn, this situation can not only be financial support to international terrorism and a serious factor destabilizing the situation in Afghanistan

but also have a significant impact on the formation of an unstable socio-political environment in the adjacent Central Asian region.

In this context, it is becoming increasingly clear that the sustainable socio-economic development of the Central Asian region can be guaranteed only if peace and stability are achieved in Afghanistan.

It is known that from the very first days of independence, Uzbekistan has advocated the gradual reconstruction of this country, tired of war and conflict, advancing the idea that peace in Afghanistan can not be established by military means within the framework of many influential international organizations.

As early as 1993, at the 48th session of the United Nations General Assembly, the First President I. Karimov called on the world community to unite in resolving the Afghan problem. Also, at the 50th session of the UN General Assembly in 1995, the 1996 meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the 2000 Millennium Summit of the UN General Assembly, and the 65th session in 2010, Uzbekistan discussed alternative peaceful ways to resolve this issue. the question of finding was raised. [5]

It was noted that Uzbekistan's international initiatives should seek ways to achieve peace and stability in Afghanistan, first of all, through the cessation of hostilities, the implementation of socially oriented projects with the support of the world community, the solution of the most acute socio-economic problems. This, of course, required the coordination of the efforts of all forces interested in the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan and the achievement of consensus within the country.

In 1995, an international seminar on regional security issues in Central Asia was held in Tashkent through the efforts of Uzbekistan, and in 1999, during the first meeting of the UN-sponsored 6 + 2 Afghanistan Group in Tashkent, the two Afghan warring parties gathered around a table and exchanged views.

The 6 + 2 Contact Group is an initiative of Uzbekistan to establish a dialogue between all internal forces in Afghanistan for peace and stability under the auspices of the United Nations. The group also includes Afghanistan's neighbors (Iran, China, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan), the United States, and Russia.

It should be noted that the 6 + 2 dialogue group was the only international mechanism that

worked in 1997-2001 to resolve the situation in Afghanistan through peaceful negotiations. The Tashkent Declaration on the Basic Principles for the Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict in Afghanistan, adopted by the member states in 1999, served as a real basis for negotiations between the main opposition parties, became an official document of the 54th session of the UN General Assembly and the Security Council.

After a major terrorist attack in New York on September 11, 2001, a long-running counterterrorism operation in Afghanistan by US-led international coalition forces failed to achieve its ultimate goal, which was to achieve peace on the suffering Afghan soil.

This underscored the need for constructive dialogue on the path to peace between the conflicting internal forces in Afghanistan.

At the NATO / Euro-Atlantic Cooperation Council summit in Bucharest in April 2008, Uzbekistan stressed the impossibility of resolving the Afghan problem by military means alone. Also, a proposal was made to re-launch in the format of the "6 + 3" group. [4:313-317]

This initiative has aroused great interest in the world political community. Many countries around the world are coming to practical conclusions, realizing that the Afghan problem cannot be solved by military means alone.

Analyzes show that economic, financial, social, and humanitarian assistance under the auspices of the United Nations can help the Afghan people, regardless of their ethnicity, views, and ideology, to reach an internal compromise. Respect for their traditional, cultural, and religious values is crucial in this process.

It is known that mutually beneficial cooperation of all countries, first of all with neighboring countries, is reflected in the Action Strategy for the five priority areas of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017-2021 as the main goal of our country's foreign policy. Issues such as a well-thought-out, mutually beneficial, and practical foreign policy, transforming the Central Asian region into a zone of stability, sustainable development, and good neighborliness have been identified as priorities. In the recent past, historic steps have been taken in these directions. [9]

Thanks to the initiative, strong political will, and efforts of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, and due to his political will, a significant increase in the level of mutual trust in the Central Asian region has

been achieved. As the Uzbek leader noted, “We will continue the political path aimed at strengthening the peace and security of Uzbekistan, which is based on the idea that the Uzbek people need peace and prosperity.” [6:19]

The role and importance of neighboring Afghanistan in the strategy of the peaceful foreign policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan are incomparable. In 2017, Uzbekistan participated in various international and regional conferences on Afghanistan, including the expanded Moscow meeting (April), the “Admission Process” (June), the Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation on the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (Ashgabat, November), Heart - Istanbul Process” (Baku, November-December) and the International Dialogue Group (Oslo, December). [2]

In his speeches at international forums President Sh. Mirziyoyev put forward proposals to stabilize the situation in Afghanistan and involve the country in the process of strengthening peace and good neighborly relations in Central Asia.

In particular, the Tashkent International Conference held on March 26-27, 2018, created a platform for direct dialogue on the Afghan issue and launched an ongoing process in this regard. [1]

In his speech at the conference, President Sh. Mirziyoyev said that Uzbekistan supports the Afghan government to start direct talks with the Taliban based on “no preconditions and no threat of violence”. He noted that Uzbekistan is ready to create all conditions for the organization of such talks at any stage of the peace process on its territory.

As the Uzbek leader noted, “... the main condition for the peace movement, in our opinion, is the development and implementation of a single comprehensive peace program for Afghanistan, agreed primarily at the regional and global levels.” [8]

Indeed, in the regular dialogue between all conflicting internal forces in Afghanistan without pre-determined conditions and requirements, without varying degrees of pressure, the parties listen to each other, thereby providing an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the situation and elements of consensus.

Such dialogues can serve as a starting point for reconciling the parties on troubled Afghan soil, resolving internal conflicts, and achieving peace and stability.

In our opinion, one of the main ideas of the Tashkent conference was that the active participation of Central Asian states together with other interested countries in the restoration and peace-building and creative work in Afghanistan is a requirement of the time.

In this regard, President Sh. Mirziyoyev noted that “the security of Afghanistan is a guarantee of security of Uzbekistan, stability, and development of the entire vast Central and South Asian region.”

It should be noted that the stable balance in Afghanistan will also have a positive impact on neighboring countries. In this context, it is appropriate to see Afghanistan not as an area of unrest and tension, but as a country whose potential for deepening regional cooperation has not yet been fully realized. The humanitarian sector also plays a key role in efforts to rebuild Afghanistan.

Today, in Afghanistan, where 71 percent of the population is under the age of 30, a very large generation has grown up who have experienced the intensity of the war that has been going on for almost 40 years. [3]

Some experts say this will be one of the biggest obstacles to stability in Afghanistan.

On the other hand, on the contrary, this part of the Afghan people is tired of war and has a strong desire for peace and social well-being. In this sense, it can become a leading force and support for the creative work of the majority of the Afghan people in their country. To this end, it is possible to convey the human nature and enlightenment of Islam to the younger and middle generations, to open modern educational opportunities for them based on the principle of “enlightenment against ignorance.”

In this regard, the initiative of the Uzbek leader to establish a special international fund to support education in Afghanistan is relevant. The reason is that we believe that the idea of “not leaving such a troubled country to future generations” can be widely promoted in the Afghan society only through enlightenment, which will serve to raise the spirit of national unity and mutual understanding among the Afghan public.

In recent years, Uzbekistan’s multifaceted bilateral relations with Afghanistan have become more active. The Republic of Uzbekistan promotes the establishment of peace and stability in the neighboring country, the restoration and development of its economic, transport, and energy infrastructure, and vocational education. For example, the amount of electricity supplied by

Uzbekistan to this country is growing from year to year, the country has completed the construction of a 75-kilometer railway Termez - Hairatan - Mazar-i-Sharif.

The official visit of the President of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani to Uzbekistan on December 4-6, 2017 opened a new page in bilateral relations. Most of the more than 20 documents signed during the visit are of strategic importance not only for Afghanistan and Uzbekistan but also for the whole region.

Of particular note are the agreements reached by Uzbek specialists on the construction of the Mazar-i-Sharif-Herat railway and the new Surkhan-Puli Khumri power transmission line. For example, the Mazar-i-Sharif-Herat railway will increase Afghanistan's transit capacity in the development of regional trade and economic cooperation between the countries of Central and South Asia and the Middle East, making it a unique bridge country. The Durkan-Puli Khumri transmission line will play an important role in meeting the electricity needs of the capital Kabul and the northern regions, improving the lives of the Afghan people, and returning to the path of peaceful development.

In 2018, positive changes are taking place in the social and humanitarian spheres. As a symbol of Uzbekistan's friendly attitude to Afghanistan and its readiness to continue to help the Afghan people, a special education center for Afghan citizens has been established in Termez this year. [10]

Also, in January 2018, 25 buses, 3 tractors, and trailers were presented to the people of Afghanistan on behalf of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Hairatan. [7]

In general, the neighbors of Afghanistan are interested in the establishment of peace and stability in Afghanistan. In this regard, Uzbekistan, located in the "heart" of Central Asia, realizes its responsibility to strengthen peace and stability in the region, based on the principle of "Peace of the neighbor – you are peace."

Uzbekistan's foreign policy is aimed at establishing peace and stability in Afghanistan. Relations between the two countries are aimed at strengthening the spirit of good neighborliness and brotherhood, its further strengthening through active trade and economic ties, consistent implementation of major projects in the transport, infrastructure, and humanitarian spheres.

It should also be noted that Uzbekistan's foreign policy is aimed at promoting the inclusion of

Afghanistan in the process of regional development in Central Asia.

In conclusion, the trend of interstate partnership in the spirit of mutual respect, friendship, and good neighborliness, formed by the efforts of Uzbekistan in the Central Asian region, is an important factor in ensuring the stability and development of the region.

We are convinced that this factor will help stabilize the situation in Afghanistan and the future, it will become not only a historical and civilizational, but also an integral part of Central Asia.

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