

Research Article

The Peace Process In Afghanistan And The Role Of Uzbekistan

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Abstract

The Purpose Of This Article Was To Consider The Policy And Main Approaches Of The Republic Of Uzbekistan To The Settlement Of The Afghan Problem, The Possibility Of Using The Potential Of Tashkent To Stabilize The Socio-Political And Economic Situation In Afghanistan, Taking Into Account The Long-Term Plans Of Global (Un, Usa, Nato, Russia, China) And Regional (Pakistan, India, Iran, Central Asian Countries) Players. Attention Was Drawn To The Study Of The Positive Consequences Of The Republic Of Uzbekistan's Updated Policy, Carried Out In The Afghan Direction In Recent Years. The Possibility Of Implementing Measures To Resolve The Afghan Problem In The Uzbekistan-India And Uzbekistan-Pakistan Tandem With An Emphasis On The Complex Relationship Between New Delhi And Islamabad Were Also Explored. The Analysis Demonstrated, In General, A Particular Contrast And Sometimes Sharply Differing Approaches Of Countries Interested In Resolving The Crisis In Afghanistan, Which Made It Difficult For Uzbekistan To Take More Effective Measures To Establish An Everyday Life For Afghans And Achieve National Reconciliation In The Ira (Islamic Republic Of Afghanistan). This Circumstance Determined The Persistence Of Risks In The Republic Of Uzbekistan's Long-Term Policy Not Only In Afghanistan But In General In The Region Of Central And South Asia.

Keywords: Usa, Central Asia, Pakistan, India, Uzbekistan, Settlement Of The Afghan Crisis, Security, National Interests, Strategic Partnership, Peace Process.

Introduction

Since The First Years Of Independence, The States Of Central Asia Bordering With Afghanistan, Including Uzbekistan, Faced The Potential Threat Of Spreading The Inter-Afghan Conflict's Negative Impact On Their Territories. The Republic Of Uzbekistan, Since The Early 1990s, Made A Lot Of Efforts To Mainstream The Afghan Problem In World Politics And Took Several Serious Measures To Ensure Peace In Afghanistan, Addressing The World Community To Resolve The Inside Afghan Crisis (1).

The Military-Political Situation That Had Developed By The Beginning Of The 90s Of The Twentieth Century In Afghanistan And Tajikistan Determined The Republic Of Uzbekistan's Strategy Concerning The Internal Political Processes In The Ira Began To Form Precisely In That Historical Period. Uzbekistan's Position On The Afghan Crisis, Voiced During The 48th And 50th Sessions Of The Un General Assembly In 1993 And 1995, Had Not Undergone Noticeable Changes During 20 Years. The Main Pivot Of The Afghan Policy Of Uzbekistan's Leadership All These Years Had Been The Conviction Of The Need For A Politico-Diplomatic Solution To The Exacerbated Military-Political Situation In Afghanistan (2).

Besides, Special Attention Was Paid To Building A Solid Vertical Of Authority, Rebuilding The Economy, And Creating Conditions For The Observance Of All National And Religious Minorities' Rights In Afghanistan. This Activity Was Carried Out In Two Directions. On The One Hand, Tashkent Participated In Resolving The Afghan Crisis At The Political And Diplomatic Level. Among The Measures That Had Been Taken A Proposal To Impose An Arms Embargo On Afghanistan (1995), The Initiative To Establish A Contact Group "6 + 2" (1997) And Demilitarization Of The Country (2001), Called To Resume The Activities Of The Contact Group (Transformation

Of The Contact Group "6 + 2" Into "6 + 3", 2008), Provided Its Territory For The Transportation Of Goods To The International Coalition. On The Other Hand, Uzbekistan Tried To Pursue Its Economic Policy In Afghanistan And Its Northern Regions (3). Given The Complex Realities Of International Relations Associated With Conflicts Of Interest Between Major Powers, The Ineffectiveness Of International Organizations' Activities, Uzbekistani Policy's Direction Was Of The Greatest Importance For The Republic. Thanks To A Pragmatic Economic Strategy, It Was Possible To Create And Strengthen Uzbekistan's Position In The North Of The Ira To Stabilize The Uzbek-Afghan Border Situation.

Support For The Initiative Of Uzbekistan In May 1997 At An Extraordinary Meeting Of The Heads Of State Of The Eco (Economic Cooperation Organization) Member Stated On The Establishment Under The Auspices Of The Un Of The Contact Group "Neighbors And Friends" Of Afghanistan, Known As The "6 + 2" Group, Which Included Six Countries, Directly Bordering On Afghanistan - Iran, China, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, As Well As The United States And Russia, Is Of High Political Significance For Tashkent As A Concrete Result Of The Policy Of The Republic Of Uzbekistan On The Peaceful Settlement Of The Inside Afghan Conflict. The "Tashkent Declaration On The Fundamental Principles Of The Peaceful Resolution Of The Conflict In Afghanistan" Of July 20, 1999 (4), Adopted By The Participants Following The Work Of This Group In July 1999, Received The Status Of An Official Un Document, Thereby, As A Result Of The Implementation Of Uzbekistan's Initiative To The Afghan, The Settlement Involved Russia, China, And The United States - Permanent Members Of The Un Security Council. Thus, At That Time, A Real Opportunity Was Created To Resolve The Afghan Crisis By Political Means (5). First Of All, This Format's Purpose Was To The Settlement Of The Afghan Conflict Through The Reconciliation Of The Northern Alliance And The Taliban Movement - The Main Opposing Military-Political Groups Of The Ira. The Tashkent Meeting Participants Reached A Critical International Consensus On Understanding The Ineffectiveness Of Forceful Methods Of Resolving The Afghan Conflict. It Was Also Noted That A Further Deterioration Of The Situation Would Be Prevented Only By Joint Energetic Efforts Of The Entire World Community (6).

The Election Of Shavkat Mirziyoyev In December 2016 As The President Of Uzbekistan Determined The Formation And Implementation Of A Qualitatively Updated Policy In Tashkent In Afghanistan, Which Fully Contoured Into The New Foreign Policy Strategy Of The Head Of State - The Course Of Transforming Central Asia Into A "Zone Of Stability And Sustainable Development." At The Same Time, Uzbekistan Stopped Perceiving The Ira Exclusively As A Source Of The Threat, Preferring To Look At Afghanistan From The Point Of View Of Its Real Potential, Which Made It Possible To Actively Involve This Country In Various Economic Projects Of The Region While Simultaneously Moving The Ira Towards Peace And Harmony (7).

Materials And Methods

The Afghan Factor's Primary Analysis In Official Tashkent Politics Was A Multidisciplinary Approach That Combined Historical-Chronological, Structural-Systemic, And Geopolitical Analysis. Methodologically, The Author Mainly Used Political Science Tools, Relying On Historicism, Some Analytical Methods.

Previously Published Works On This Issue Did Not Fully Reflect Modern Realities And Recent Trends Directly Related To The Developed Topic. The Analysis Carried Out Confirmed The Preservation Of Diverse And Mismatching Approaches Of The Countries Involved In Settlement Of The Afghan Conflict To The Whole Range Of Problems, The Resolution Of Which Would Significantly Bring The Onset Of Peace And Stability In Afghanistan And Would Help To Eliminate The Remaining Risks For The States Of South And Central Asia, Including And The Republic Of Uzbekistan. The History Of The Emergence And Development Of The Inside Afghan Conflict Showed That The World Community, Represented By Large Global And Regional States, Made Efforts To Resolve Afghanistan's Crisis And Surroundings. However, Such Attempts Ended, As A Rule, Unsuccessfully, Which Was Understandable, Along With Other Factors, The Desire Of Each Subject Of International Relations To Solve, First Of All, Their Problems At The Expense Of Afghanistan, Including Such A Component As Considerations Of The Internal Political Situation In A Particular Foreign Country. One Of The Most Important Diplomatic Initiatives In Recent Years Was The "Istanbul Process," Also Known As The "Heart Of Asia," Which Many Experts Saw As An Opportunity To Reach A Consensus On Regional Security Cooperation And Afghanistan's Stability. Despite Holding Nine Annual Meetings, The Process Had Been Undermined By Growing Tensions Between Crucial Regional Stakeholders (8). By Mid-2018, The Trump Administration,

Following Its "Exit Strategy" From Afghanistan, Began A Negotiation Process With The Taliban Representatives. Washington's Attempts To Peacefully Resolve The Inside Afghan Conflict Had Been Carried Out Since The Early 2010s In Various Regional Formats. A Significant Factor In The Latest Stage, Which Began In July 2018, Was Direct Negotiations - Only Between Two Direct Participants - The United States And The Taliban. In August 2019, In Doha, The Parties Reached An Agreement, The Main Points Of Which Were: A Timetable For The Phased Withdrawal Of American Troops From The Ira, Position On The Ceasefire, And Commitments In The Field Of Countering Terrorism, Thereby Recording The Preliminary Results Of Nine Rounds Of These Negotiations (9).

Later, In February 2020, The United States And The Taliban Signed A Peace Agreement In Doha That Provided For The Withdrawal Of American Troops From Afghanistan And The Start Of An Inside-Afghan Dialogue. The Signing Ceremony Was Attended By Ministers And Representatives Of Almost 30 Countries And International Organizations, Including Uzbek Foreign Minister A. Kamilov, Which Was Clear Evidence Of Recognizing The Republic Of Uzbekistan's Role In The Afghan Settlement.

Results

Experts Associated The Achievement Of A Peace Agreement With The Purposeful Activities Carried Out In Recent Years By Tashkent To Involve States Interested In An Inside Afghan Settlement And Its Translation Into An Experimental Plane. The Uzbek Government Believed Its Efforts Helped Bring The Global Focus Back To Afghanistan After Overwhelming Attention Had Been Focused On The Middle East Conflict. To Implement The Goals Set In This Regard, The Uzbek Side Tried To Attract And Other Countries, Especially Those With Direct Access To Geographic And Political Aspects. In Particular, The Authoritative Socio-Political Publication "The Diplomat" (Japan) On August 18, 2020, On Its Website Posted An Analytical Article "The Role Of Uzbekistan In Afghan Reconciliation," In Which The Author J. Durso Is An Expert On Foreign Policy And National Security Stressed That The Election Of Sh. Mirziyoyev, As President Of Uzbekistan, Changed The Nature Of The Region's Views On Afghanistan And Led To The Recognition Of The Ira As Part Of Central Asia. As He Concluded, The "Tashkent Declaration Of 2018" Supported The Inside Afghan Negotiations, Officially Securing The Interest Of All Central Asian States In The Inside Afghan Negotiation Process" (10). Uzbekistan's Foreign Policy Steps In The Afghan Settlement, Which Had Been Undertaken Over Twenty Years, Became Noticeable, Especially In The Last Stages Of Afghanistan's Peace Process. However, Various International Actors Also Tried To Contribute To Peace Country. Before The Signing Of The Peace Treaty In Doha In February 2020, Uzbek Negotiation Activities Was Suitable For The Format When Mediation Was Used In International Politics To Resolve Crises In Neighboring Countries. Uzbekistan's Purposeful Policy On The Afghan Track Ensured The Achievement Of The Desired Results, Allowing It To Win The Parties' Trust Thanks To Its Peace-Loving Position. Tashkent Contributed To This Process By Establishing A Dialogue With The Conflicting Parties Individually, Offered To Use Its Territory For Negotiations, Maintaining Close Cooperation With Third Parties, And Holding International Meetings (11).

Discussion

Following The Renewed Policy Of Uzbekistan In Afghanistan, Tashkent Focused On Building Bilateral Contacts With Kabul, Taking Into Account The Miscalculations In Attempts In The 1990s And Subsequent Years To Indicate Its Interest In Resolving The Situation In The Neighboring State, Which Practically Nullified The Initiatives Of The Uzbek Side At That Time On The Entire Range Of Issues Of Determining The Afghan Crisis. Taking This Into Account, One Of The Main Goals Was To Restore Pragmatic Contacts With Countries That Has Specific Opportunities To Influence The Leading Players In The Afghan Field. Simultaneously, A Clear Emphasis Was Placed On Accelerating The Implementation Of Transport And Logistics Projects, Expanding Educational Programs For Young Afghans, Which Led To The Formation Of Trends In The Performance Of Bolder And More Ambitious Projects.

It Was Noteworthy That A Characteristic Feature Of Tashkent's Foreign Policy In Recent Years In The Afghan Direction Was The Desire To Support The Critical Principles Of Uzbekistan In Resolving The Afghan Crisis - The Impossibility Of A Military Solution To The Problem, An Emphasis On Peace Negotiations Between All Conflicting Parties, The Implementation Of Economic Projects That Were Beneficial To Both Countries. Pursuing Its Policy In The Ira, Uzbekistan At The Same Time Reported That It Was Impossible To Achieve Lasting Peace And Stability In Afghanistan Without Taking Into Account The Interests And Positions Of The Leading

Players In The Conflict, Including The Concerns Of The Country's Neighbors. Harun Mir, An Analyst At The Center For Political Studies In Afghanistan, Believed That "Because Of Past Failed Attempts, It Is Necessary To Bring Afghanistan's Neighbors And Regional Powers Back To A Dialogue Similar To The Group Of "Six Plus Two" On Afghanistan. Besides, India Was To Be Added To This Group, After Which The Group Would Be Called "Six Plus Three." Moreover, The Afghan Expert Believed That Uzbekistan Was Perhaps The Most Desirable Country To Lead The Regional Dialogue On Afghanistan Since Tashkent Enjoyed All Stakeholders' Trust And Respect, Including The Afghan Government And The Taliban (12).

Representatives Of The European Expert Community Adhered To A Similar Opinion, Giving Uzbekistan Preference As The Most Competent Moderator, Capable Of Successfully Implementing The Proposed Political And Diplomatic Activities For Afghanistan's Pacification. Professor Of The Center For Advanced Studies In Security, Strategic And Integration Studies Cassis At The University Of Bonn F. Pfluger, Former State Secretary Of The Ministry Of Defense Of The Federal Republic Of Germany, Believed That "Uzbekistan Should Play An Active Role In The Overall Diplomatic Peace Process Around Afghanistan. This Country Mustn't Isolate Itself From This Process. It Would Be Necessary For The Eu, The Usa, China, The Russian Federation That The State, So Close To Afghanistan, Does Not Limit Itself To Looking Only Within Its Borders And Play Its Role In The Implementation Of Regional Infrastructure Projects "(13).

Tashkent Successfully Fulfilled This "Role," Initiatives, Proposals, And Whose Concrete Actions Corresponded To The States' Official Aspirations To Resolve The Inside Afghan Conflict. Along With This, The Uzbek Side Was Tried To Implement Economic Projects With Neighboring States Or Located Close To Afghanistan.

In This Regard, Since The Beginning Of 2020, India And Uzbekistan Had Begun To Unite Their Efforts To Intensify The Negotiation Process On An Afghan Settlement. Joint Indo-Central Asian Peace Efforts And Social Harmony In Afghanistan Met The Aspirations And Hopes Of The Afghan People And The Times' Spirit. India, Which Had Not Only Good-Neighborly Relations With The Ira But Also Significant Experience In Resolving Conflicts And Crises On A Local And Regional Scale, Had The Untapped Potential To Enhance Its Role In The Peacekeeping Process But Was Also Building Up Bilateral Cooperation In An Experimental Plane, Using For This Purpose Both Sides Trusting And Strong Ties With Official Kabul (14).

Islamabad Also Supported Tashkent's Efforts For Peacekeeping Activities In The Ira, Which Also Affected Pakistan's Interests. The Declaration Adopted At The End Of The International Conference On Afghanistan (March 2018), According To Pakistani Experts, "Revolutionized Uzbekistan's Sincere Efforts To Establish Peace And Harmony In Afghanistan." Attention Was Also Drawn To The Fact That Tashkent Held Several Rounds Of Negotiations With The Main Stakeholders And Leaders Of The Critical Internal Political Forces Of Afghanistan And Representatives Of The Taliban To Understand Their Position Better And Find A Compromise (15).

Conclusion

A Brief Analysis Of The Role Of The Republic Of Uzbekistan In The Inside Afghan Settlement Indicated That To Achieve More Specifically, Countries Interested In Peacekeeping In Afghanistan, The Goals Required A Long, Detailed, And Competent Negotiation Process With That Part Of The Anti-Government Military-Political Groupings, Which Were Generally Considered Taliban. A More Flexible And Rational Policy, According To Tashkent, Should Be Carried Out By The Afghan Government, Which Was Aware Of The Need To Implement Its Development Model Based On The National Mentality, Historical Tradition, And The Complex Ethnopolitical And Confessional Structure Of Modern Afghan Society. This Presupposed The Continuation Of A Purposeful, Well-Organized Negotiation Process Between Representatives Of Various Groups - The Central Authorities, Opposition, Tribes, Taliban. Along With This, The World Community, Represented By Global And Regional States, Especially The Neighboring Countries Of Afghanistan, Should Take An Active Part In Restoring Its Economy And Connecting The Transport And Logistics Structures Of The Ira With All Neighboring Countries. The Activities Proposed In This Direction Should Be Focused On Creating And Implementing Large International Projects, Similar To The Agreements Between Uzbekistan, Afghanistan. Pakistan On The Construction Of A Trans-Afghan Transport Corridor Reached In February 2021. Such Work, Along With Broad Political And Diplomatic Efforts, Would Create Conditions For The Ira's Withdrawal From The State Of Endless War.

Practical Experience Gained By The Republic Of Uzbekistan In Maintaining Full-Scale Tied With The Afghan Government, Attracting To The Negotiation Process Of Representatives Of The Taliban Movement Created Encouraging Prerequisites For The Transfer Of Contacts Between These Leading Players The Inside Afghan Scene To More Trusting Relations Aimed At Concrete Results. Simultaneously, In Implementing Foreign Policy Steps In The Afghan Direction, Uzbekistan Would Have To Face Several External And Internal Risks That Would Minimize Tashkent's Policy's Effectiveness. Given The Presence Of Many Actors In The Ira Who Would Try To Play Their Card And The Complexity And Unpredictability Of The Course Of The Afghan Crisis Itself, It Would Be Challenging For Tashkent To Transform The Global Dimension Of The Afghan Conflict Resolution Process. Therefore It Was Necessary To Focus On Its Regional Format.

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