

**ENSURING AN ATMOSPHERE OF INTERETHNIC HARMONY – FUNDAMENTAL
BASIS FOR PROTECTING THE NATION AGAINST HOSTILE THREATS**

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Abstract: This article highlights such issues as ensuring national spiritual security, insecurity from threats directed against the nation, as well as the fact that the fight against destructive ideas that contradict national accord and consent is the basis for ensuring peace and tranquility. Ensuring an atmosphere of interethnic harmony is scientifically proven to be the foundation for protecting a nation against threats directed toward it.

Key words: interethnic harmony, tolerance, peace, security, threat, religious extremism, terrorism.

Introduction

In a multi-ethnic society, maintaining harmony and mutual respect among different nationalities is one of the most important conditions for peace and sustainable development. Interethnic harmony strengthens social cohesion and serves as a unifying force that prevents conflicts based on ethnicity, language or religion. When citizens, regardless of their ethnic origin, share a sense of belonging to a common homeland, they jointly resist divisive ideologies and propaganda aimed at destabilizing national unity. Therefore, creating and maintaining an environment of interethnic harmony is not only a moral or social necessity, but also a strategic defense against threats directed at the nation.

Literature Review

To highlight the fact that ensuring an atmosphere of solidarity in interethnic relations is the basis for protection against threats directed against the nation, scientific and fundamental books by the Head of our state Sh. Mirziyoyev, the textbook by S. Otamurodov and the National Encyclopedia of Uzbekistan, and scientific articles by V. Pryakhin and Jamshid Ibrohimov were used.

Materials and Methods

The article uses scientific methods of knowledge such as analysis and synthesis, historicity and logic, retrospective and systematic analysis, comparison and generalization.

Results and Discussion

During the years of independence, a new stage in the development of interethnic relations in our country began. Developing a culture of tolerance and humanity, strengthening interethnic and inter-civil harmony and harmony, and educating the younger generation on this basis, in the spirit of love and loyalty to the Motherland, were identified as one of the most important priorities of state policy in Uzbekistan. All this has found its full expression in life¹.

It is an extremely urgent task to preserve the purity of the thinking of young people, to study the essence of their moods, hopes, aspirations, and to draw appropriate conclusions from them. Today, when religious extremism and terrorism are taking root, it is the most urgent task to attach importance to the education of young people in our society. Today, the activities of the

¹ Sh.M.Mirziyoyev. Milliy taraqqiyot yo'limizni qat'iyat bilan davom ettirib, yangi bosqichga ko'taramiz. 1-tom, T., "O'zbekiston", 2019, 295-bet.

UN Special Units on Security and Counter-Terrorism occupy a leading position among the main international organizations aimed at combating terrorism².

“It is clear to all of us that intense economic competition, information attacks, and terrorist threats are increasingly escalating around the world. Bloody clashes and conflicts continue in various regions, especially in the Middle East. Unfortunately, instead of decreasing, the number of such hotspots of unrest and tension is growing. Taking into account this alarming situation, we must comprehensively strengthen our efforts to consolidate peace and stability in our country and to combat various dangers and threats. This is the demand of our time. First and foremost, we need to further enhance the effectiveness of the system established in this area, and especially, to increase the responsibility of deputy governors and relevant organizations directly involved in religious affairs. In particular, community leaders (mahalla chairmen), prevention inspectors, imams, advisors on religious and moral issues, as well as active members of youth and women’s organizations — all of us must work together in close cooperation”³.

Terrorism is a specific form of political struggle aimed at creating instability in society and spreading fear and panic among broad segments of the population. It is typically employed by clandestine organizations that seek to seize state power by destabilizing the existing order. Since terrorist groups are unable to gain mass public support, they often use religious slogans as a disguise to create the illusion that they act on behalf of the wider population. In particular, the National Encyclopedia of Uzbekistan defines terrorism as follows:

Terrorism (from Latin terror – fear, horror) – violent acts (such as persecution, destruction, hostage-taking, murder, explosions, etc.) committed with the purpose of eliminating or intimidating political opponents, or inciting fear and disorder among the population⁴.

One of the most salient characteristics of terrorism is that its supporters clearly act on the belief that “violence will throw the state into disarray.” Another feature of terrorism is the tendency to attempt to resolve political issues by force — even in societies at peace where no war is taking place and democratic institutions are functioning — after rejecting alternative, nonviolent methods. Such political issues may, in turn, take territorial, ethnic, religious, or other forms.

At present, internationally based terrorist centers, financed from abroad, operate in an organized manner to carry out subversive policies against existing constitutional systems and to commit acts of assassination against political figures. According to international statistics, there are currently more than 600 terrorist organizations worldwide; they display their malign presence in almost every country.

Overall, today Islamic extremism is regarded as one of the principal manifestations of international terrorism. Accordingly, the fight against religious extremism has become an urgent task.

According to L. Bolshov, a researcher at the Institute for Problems of the Development of Atomic Energy in Russia, terrorists could use nuclear materials for their aims in the following three ways:

- detonating nuclear devices;

² O‘zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining BMT Bosh Assambleyasining 72-sessiyasidagi ma‘ruzası. “Xalq so‘zi”, 2017, 20-sentabr.

³ O‘zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidenti Shavkat Mirziyoyevning Oliy Majlisga Murojaatnomasi. “Xalq so‘zi”, 23-dekabr, 2017.

⁴ O‘zbekiston milliy ensklopediyasi. 8-son. Solnoma–To‘ytpa. “O‘zbekiston milliy ensklopediyasi” davlat ilmiy nash-riyoti, T., 2004, 404-bet.

➤ carrying out sabotage at nuclear facilities, nuclear power plants, plants that manufacture nuclear device components, or enterprises that process nuclear waste;

➤ incorporating radioactive isotopes into conventional explosives and detonating them, or dispersing such isotopes as dust, spray, or by other means to contaminate and poison the air⁵.

It should be noted that the spread of radicalization and terrorist ideologies is one of the main threats and challenges to the peace and stability of society. Radicalism represents the final stage leading to terrorism. In particular, the process of radicalization among young people is a source of serious concern. Considering that the majority of crimes related to extremist activity and violence are committed by individuals under the age of 30, and that today's youth — numbering around 2 billion — constitute the largest generation in human history, it is easy to grasp the gravity of the issue. At present, extremism and terrorism continue to pose a threat not only to the international community but also to Central Asian countries, including Uzbekistan.⁶

It is impossible to protect the nation against threats without first ensuring national spiritual security. The effectiveness of any system designed to counter threats to the nation directly depends on the level of national spiritual security. We are witnessing this reality in practice. For example, today, on a global scale, those who aspire to dominate the world are increasingly prioritizing the conquest of people's minds, worldview, and hearts over the use of destructive material weapons⁷.

According to analyses, justifying acts of terrorism or encouraging such actions can be carried out orally or in writing, and disseminated through audio and video materials, photographs, drawings, or symbols. Unfortunately, today the Internet remains one of the primary channels for spreading such information. It is important to note that the roles of individuals involved in disseminating materials aimed at publicly justifying, promoting, or inciting terrorism are not the same. For example, the author of a message calling for terrorism and the person distributing it may be different individuals. In this context, creating a text that promotes terrorism should be considered a separate act from its dissemination. The fact that such a crime is committed publicly is confirmed by the presence of at least two listeners or recipients. In conclusion, differentiating crimes related to terrorism helps ensure effective countermeasures against these criminal acts and contributes to preventing such threats⁸.

Indeed, in our rapidly developing country, ensuring a peaceful and stable life for the population is the sacred duty of each of us. After all, where there is cooperation and friendship, there will be peace and progress. Today, we can confidently say that New Uzbekistan is a sacred land that, as a multiethnic state, has opened the doors of equal opportunities and new possibilities for all citizens, regardless of their language, religion, or beliefs. The extraordinary value of a peaceful and harmonious environment in New Uzbekistan is also recognized by numerous foreign experts and scholars. In particular, on May 17, 2022, at the international forum "Dialogue of Declarations" held in Tashkent, American journalist Greg Mitchell emphasized that the current environment of peace and harmony in Uzbekistan is highly valuable, and we applaud the dynamic reforms being implemented in your country. Uzbekistan is also known as a state that, as a multiethnic country, ensures religious tolerance and interethnic harmony within its territory. In

⁵ V.Pryaxin. Лишних людей на земле нет. Журнал "Международная жизнь", Москва, 2002, № 1, с. 75.

⁶ Mirziyoyev Sh.M. Yangi O'zbekiston strategiyasi. T., "O'zbekiston", 2021, 401-bet.

⁷ Otamurodov S. Globallashuv: millatni asrash mas'uliyati. T., "O'zbekiston", 2018, 251-bet.

⁸ Jamshid Ibrohimov. IIV akademiyasi mustaqil izlanuvchisi. Terrorizm haqida qasddan yolg'on xabar buning uchun javobgarlik aniqmi? "Huquq va burch", 1-son, 2019.

this regard, it is worth noting that freedom of conscience is guaranteed, and conditions have been created for followers of various religions to practice their faith freely and securely. Efforts in Uzbekistan to promote religious education and, most importantly, to ensure that religion serves as a promoter of peace and noble goals are also commendable. Today, the world has become dangerous. We are witnessing various religious conflicts, armed clashes, and interethnic confrontations. In such circumstances, it is more urgent than ever for all of us to unite and, through our actions of solidarity and harmony, protect the world and our free lives from various threats.

Conclusion

In short, many of our fellow citizens express their heartfelt views on the invaluable importance of ensuring security, interethnic harmony, and religious tolerance. It is noteworthy that, along with our compatriots, representatives of other nationalities residing in our country, as well as members of diplomatic corps, are also part of this dialogue. Importantly, leaders of large, multiethnic countries, prominent political and public figures, and diplomats recognize and provide an objective assessment of Uzbekistan's achievements in ensuring security, interethnic harmony, and religious tolerance, as well as in implementing well-considered, mutually beneficial, and practical foreign policy initiatives. They also recommend drawing on the experience of our country.

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