



GLOBAL GEOPOLITICAL SHIFTS AND UZBEKISTAN'S NEUTRAL STANCE

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Abstract: In the face of escalating global geopolitical conflicts and altering power dynamics, Uzbekistan has always maintained a neutral foreign policy. This article examines Uzbekistan's neutrality in the context of key worldwide realignments, including its reasoning, implications, and obstacles. The research examines historical precedents, regional difficulties, and multilateral diplomacy to assess how neutrality works as a strategic asset and balancing act for Uzbekistan in the changing global order.

Keywords: Neutral foreign policy, Uzbekistan, Geopolitical shifts, Strategic neutrality, Central Asia, Non-alignment, Multilateral diplomacy, Regional security, Sovereignty, Global order

Annotatsiya: Global miqyosda geosiyosiy ziddiyatlarning kuchayishi va kuchlar muvozanatining o'zgarishi fonida O'zbekiston doimo neytral tashqi siyosat yuritib kelmoqda. Ushbu maqolada O'zbekistonning neytrallik pozitsiyasi dunyodagi asosiy geosiyosiy qayta joylashuvlar nuqtai nazaridan tahlil qilinadi; xususan, bu pozitsiyaning sabablari, oqibatlari va duch keladigan to'g'riqlari ko'rib chiqiladi. Tadqiqot tarixiy tajribalar, mintaqaviy muammolar va ko'p tomonlama diplomatiya asosida neytrallikning O'zbekiston uchun strategik boylik va muvozanat vositasi sifatidagi rolini baholaydi.

Kalit so'zlar: Neytral tashqi siyosat, O'zbekiston, Geosiyosiy o'zgarishlar, Strategik neytrallik, Markaziy Osiyo, Harbiy ittifoqlarga qo'shilmaslik, Ko'p tomonlama diplomatiya, Mintaqaviy xavfsizlik, Suverenitet, Global tartib

Аннотация: На фоне обострения глобальных геополитических конфликтов и изменений в распределении сил Узбекистан неизменно придерживается нейтральной внешней политики. В данной статье рассматривается нейтралитет Узбекистана в контексте ключевых мировых изменений, включая причины такого выбора, его последствия и вызовы. Исследование опирается на исторические прецеденты, региональные трудности и многостороннюю дипломатию, чтобы оценить, как нейтралитет выступает стратегическим активом и инструментом баланса для Узбекистана в условиях меняющегося мирового порядка.

Ключевые слова: Нейтральная внешняя политика, Узбекистан, Геополитические изменения, Стратегический нейтралитет, Центральная Азия, Неприсоединение, Многосторонняя дипломатия, Региональная безопасность, Суверенитет, Мировой порядок

The twenty-first century has seen a substantial transition in global geopolitical landscapes, characterized by the growth of multipolarity, renewed great power competition, and regional conflict. Amid these trends, Uzbekistan, a strategically positioned Central Asian country, has pursued a neutral and pragmatic foreign policy. This neutrality is not a passive nonalignment,

but rather an active policy of engagement without bias. This article examines how and why Uzbekistan maintains this posture, as well as the strategic benefits and potential concerns.

Since obtaining independence in 1991, Uzbekistan's foreign policy trajectory has changed multiple times. Under President Islam Karimov, the government pursued an isolationist, security-oriented foreign policy. However, under the leadership of Shavkat Mirziyoyev (since 2016), Uzbekistan's foreign policy has grown more open, cooperative, and regionally active. In today's quickly changing world, Uzbekistan boldly presents itself as a major actor on the global scene. The country's foreign policy, revitalized by the election of Shavkat Mirziyoyev as President in 2016, has produced outstanding successes, transforming the republic into a significant center for regional and global diplomacy. New Uzbekistan's foreign policy demonstrates exceptional diversity and dynamism, founded on the ideals of peace, mutually beneficial cooperation, and global openness.

- **Regional Cooperation:** Uzbekistan aggressively promotes connections with all Central Asian countries, working to improve regional security and economic integration.
- **Global Partnerships:** The country is strengthening ties with major world powers comprising the United States, Russia, China, and the European Union, and also with international organizations and financial institutions (UN, SCO, CIS, OTS, BRICS, World Bank, ADB, EBRD, and others), resulting in increased cooperation in a variety of fields.
- **Multivector Diplomacy:** Uzbekistan has a balanced foreign policy, refusing to affiliate with any one country or bloc.
- **Economic diplomacy** focuses on strengthening commercial and financial relationships, attracting foreign investment, and modernizing the economy.
- **Cultural and humanitarian engagements:** Uzbekistan actively engages in international cultural events that foster intercivilizational discourse.

Uzbekistan's foreign policy is founded on the standards and principles stated in the Constitution, as well as legislation such as "On the Fundamental Principles of Foreign Policy Operations of the Republic of Uzbekistan," "On International Settlements of the Republic of Uzbekistan," and "On Defense." It also follows Uzbekistan's Military Doctrine, United Nations principles, and commitments resulting from international treaties and accords signed by the Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan. In 2023, the new edition of the Constitution included significant modifications that defined the key concepts of foreign policy. Notably, it was determined that Uzbekistan prioritizes strengthening and growing positive relations with the world community through cooperation, mutual assistance, and peace with neighboring nations. Article 17 of the Constitution expanded the norms of state foreign policy with the rule of "territorial integrity of states." Article 18 emphasizes the Republic of Uzbekistan's peaceful foreign policy, which aims to strengthen bilateral and multilateral relations with governments and international organizations. Uzbekistan established a new, comprehensive foreign policy doctrine in 2016, led by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev. This ideology lays forth Uzbekistan's perspective and approach to critical global and regional security issues, current challenges and threats, and the establishment of a new world order. The philosophy promotes comprehensive cooperation with industrialized nations based on equality, mutual respect, trust, and concern for each other's interests.

A special emphasis is placed on maintaining constant political interaction with leading countries in Asia, Europe, the Americas, and Africa, as well as recognized international organizations. While working toward economic modernization and regional integration, Uzbekistan has eschewed military alliances and has not taken sides in major global wars such as the Russia-Ukraine war or the US-China strategic competition. This neutrality is founded on the

constitutional principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference. Uzbekistan's position places it at the center of Eurasia, bordering significant countries such as Russia and China and close to conflict zones such as Afghanistan. Its involvement in organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Organization of Turkic States, and collaboration with the European Union and the United States demonstrate a "multi-vector" strategy. Uzbekistan's neutrality allows it to maintain productive relations with all sides while avoiding power blocs. However, this posture puts the country under external pressure from rival countries seeking support or alignment. Thus, neutrality serves as both a strength and a challenge. Uzbekistan's diplomatic flexibility allows it to operate as a reliable mediator or partner in regional cooperation frameworks.

- **Economic Diversification:** Collaborating with various partners lessens reliance on a single economic or political actor.
- **Maintaining a neutral approach** promotes domestic stability by reducing the likelihood of political polarization and outsider involvement.
- **Balancing Act:** Maintaining neutrality needs ongoing diplomatic dexterity, particularly during crises.
- **Security concerns:** Avoiding military alliances may limit responses to transnational threats.
- **Perception Management:** International actors may see neutrality as indecisiveness or lack of commitment.

Conclusion

Uzbekistan's neutral foreign policy represents a smart reaction to complex geopolitical situations. Rather than partnering with power blocs, Uzbekistan sees itself as a bridge builder in Central Asia and beyond. In a world of shifting alliances and competing spheres of influence, neutrality, if carefully maintained, can strengthen Uzbekistan's sovereignty, security, and global stature. However, the success of this strategy will be contingent on adaptive diplomacy, regional cooperation, and internal resilience.

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