

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Good-Neighborhood Policy of Uzbekistan As A Modern Model of Turkic World Diplomacy

Sobirov Javohirkhon Alloyorkhonovich

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Political Science, International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan

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Abstract

This article examines Uzbekistan's good-neighborhood policy as a modern model of diplomacy within the Turkic World. Since 2016, Uzbekistan's foreign policy has undergone a significant transformation based on openness, pragmatism, mutual trust, and regional cooperation. The study analyzes the theoretical and practical foundations of good-neighborhood diplomacy through the perspectives of realism, liberalism, and constructivism, emphasizing its role in strengthening regional stability and interstate solidarity. Special attention is paid to Uzbekistan's initiatives in Central Asia, including the resolution of border issues, development of transport and logistics corridors, expansion of trade and investment cooperation, and active participation in the Organization of Turkic States. The article also highlights the importance of soft power, cultural heritage, interfaith dialogue, and digital diplomacy in shaping Uzbekistan's positive international image. It argues that Uzbekistan's diplomacy has become an effective mechanism for replacing political rivalry with strategic cooperation and for promoting regional integration in the Turkic World. The findings suggest that the Uzbek model of good-neighborhood diplomacy contributes not only to national interests but also to broader peace, security, and sustainable development in Eurasia.

KEY WORDS

Uzbekistan, good-neighborhood policy, good-neighborhood diplomacy, Turkic World, Organization of Turkic States, Central Asia, regional stability, foreign policy, soft power, digital diplomacy.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, the geopolitical and geo-economic significance of Central Asia in the system of international relations has been increasing significantly. Since 2016, Uzbekistan's foreign policy has undergone a profound transformation known as "good-neighborhood diplomacy." This process reflects not only the country's internal reforms but also a new stage of regional openness and pragmatism. The "New Uzbekistan Strategy," initiated by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, aims to transform the country into a strong and respected partner with substantial potential in the global

arena. Uzbekistan's initiatives aimed at ensuring regional peace are today increasingly recognized as a distinctive and successful model of international stability.

Uzbekistan's initiatives directed toward strengthening regional peace and its policy of good-neighborhood diplomacy have become a modern model of stability-oriented policy. Uzbekistan's foreign policy is studied as a successful practical model promoting the idea of stability through dialogue in Central Asia. In this regard, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev stated: "We firmly support strengthening the centuries-old

friendship, good-neighborliness, and broad-based cooperation for the prosperity of our two brotherly peoples.” This statement clearly demonstrates the pragmatic policy aimed at ensuring regional peace through mutual trust, dialogue, and cooperation.

“Good-neighborhood diplomacy” is a foreign policy strategy aimed at ensuring stability, mutual trust, and cooperation between states within the system of international relations. It is based on the principles of peace, sovereign equality, and respect for mutual interests. This approach is closely linked to the principle of “friendly relations,” which occupies a well-established place in international law and is reflected in the United Nations Charter (1945) and the 1970 UN General Assembly Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States.

METHODOLOGY

Good-neighborhood diplomacy can also be interpreted through the perspectives of different schools of international relations theory. According to the realist approach, this policy represents one of the most effective and pragmatic instruments for ensuring state security, prioritizing the balance of interests and stability over military confrontation. From the liberal perspective, it is understood as a means of consolidating peace through economic interdependence, regional integration, and the strengthening of interstate cooperation.

From a constructivist perspective, cooperation within the Turkic World represents a process of shaping a regional solidarity identity based on a common language, culture, and shared historical heritage. In this context, common values serve not only as a platform for cultural dialogue, but also as a foundation for political and economic integration.

In international law, the principle of good-neighborliness is considered one of the fundamental norms governing interstate relations. It includes such principles as respect for the sovereign equality and territorial integrity of states; non-interference in the internal affairs of other states; the preservation of peace and the peaceful settlement of disputes through diplomatic means; consideration of mutual interests; and the strengthening of regional security through the maintenance of territorial stability. These principles are particularly reflected in the United Nations Charter, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Helsinki Final Act (1975), as well as in the activities of regional

structures such as the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, and the Organization of Turkic States.

Uzbekistan’s regional rapprochement is clearly reflected in practical outcomes, particularly in the significant growth of trade turnover. Between 2016 and 2024, trade volume with neighboring countries increased fivefold. Trade diplomacy with Turkey has served as a key catalyst in this process. Of the 22 agreements signed between Uzbekistan and Turkey in 2017, ten were directly related to economic and trade cooperation, marking a “reset” in bilateral relations after many years of stagnation.

The Joint Economic Commission mechanism between the two countries has evolved from a purely technical framework into a strategic platform facilitating investment flows. The Preferential Trade Agreement, signed in 2022, became an important step toward reducing barriers in foreign trade. In addition, within the framework of the Organization of Turkic States, the Turkic Investment Fund, which began operations in 2024, is increasingly recognized as a new institutional mechanism for financing regional economic projects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Uzbekistan’s official accession to the Organization of Turkic States in 2019 marked a strategic turning point in regional diplomacy. The organization’s renaming in 2021 further demonstrated its transformation into a more integrated political institution. Within this framework, Uzbekistan has made significant progress in addressing several key regional issues:

- 1. Border issues:** Long-standing challenges related to border delimitation with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan have been substantially resolved.
- 2. Transport and logistics:** The development of the Trans-Caspian International Transport Corridor and the Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Oman transport route has strengthened regional economic interdependence and connectivity.
- 3. Security:** In order to support peace and stability in Afghanistan, the Termez Dialogue Platform was established as an important mechanism for regional dialogue and security cooperation.

Uzbekistan is shaping a positive image in the international arena through the effective use of soft power instruments. In

this regard, the preservation of cultural heritage and the promotion of religious tolerance have become key priorities. Uzbekistan has emerged as one of the leading states in promoting human dignity and interfaith harmony at the global level.

A notable example of this is the grand mosque complex built by Uzbekistan as a gift to the people of Kazakhstan and the residents of Turkistan. This initiative stands as a vivid symbol of the centuries-old friendship, cultural closeness, good-neighborly relations, and alliance between the two nations.

The Bukhara Declaration, adopted in 2022 in Bukhara and recognized as an official document of the United Nations General Assembly, introduced a contemporary paradigm for peaceful coexistence among representatives of different religions. It has become an important international framework for promoting interfaith dialogue, tolerance, and mutual respect.

In addition, the Orkhun Student Exchange Program, aimed at strengthening cooperation among the youth of the Turkic world, as well as digital initiatives developed within the framework of heritage diplomacy, including the Turkoverse platform, are increasingly being proposed as important instruments for future integration.

In the current era of globalization, digital platforms have become one of the principal arenas through which states pursue their foreign policy objectives. In this regard, the creation of a unified information space among the member states of the Organization of Turkic States, combating disinformation, and developing common media platforms remain pressing issues. Uzbekistan, for its part, has been steadily enhancing its digital diplomacy capacity by significantly expanding the presence and activity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other state institutions across social media platforms.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Uzbekistan's policy of good-neighborhood diplomacy has evolved into a new paradigm that combines the principles of realism and constructivism in strengthening regional security. Across the region, political rivalry is increasingly being replaced by mutual trust and strategic cooperation. This policy contributes not only to Uzbekistan's growing international standing but also enhances the global profile of the entire Turkic world, serving as a model for interstate cooperation and regional solidarity.

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