

Strengthening National Defense and Foreign Policy in Uzbekistan's Strategic Agenda

Sotvoldiyev Jakhongir Sultonali ugli*

Faculty of History and Law, Student of the Group 5-1SIYOS-24, Political Science, Bukhara State University, Uzbekistan.
Corresponding Author Email: jaxongirsotvoldiyev227@gmail.com*



DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46431/MEJAST.2025.8209>

Copyright © 2025 Sotvoldiyev Jakhongir Sultonali ugli. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Article Received: 17 April 2025

Article Accepted: 22 June 2025

Article Published: 28 June 2025

ABSTRACT

This article examines the development of Uzbekistan's international security strategy within an increasingly interconnected global framework. It underscores the interdependence of national, regional, and global stability, stressing Uzbekistan's firm dedication to peaceful resolution of conflicts, arms control, and cooperative international relations. Grounded in state doctrines and presidential policies, the study delves into the guiding principles of the nation's foreign policy emphasizing sovereignty, neutrality, mutual benefit, and diplomatic engagement. The paper also analyzes critical reforms such as the formation of the National Guard and the Defense Industry Committee. Uzbekistan's active participation in international alliances like the SCO reflects its aim to reinforce collective security while preserving its independent foreign policy course amid complex global dynamics.

Keywords: Stability; Peace; Innovation; Security; Law; Foreign Policy; Sovereignty; Citizens; Reforms.

1. Introduction

“Security” is a concept that harmonizes the interests of the individual, society, and the state, expressing a set of factors of stability, peace, creativity, and innovation [1]. Today, the security problem has transcended national borders and has become global. Today, the security problem has transcended national borders and has become global. Just as ensuring the security of a single state is closely linked to ensuring the peace and security of the entire world or region, it is natural that unrest in a state or the presence of other factors that threaten its security poses a threat to regional security, and a threat to global security. International security law is a set of norms that regulate the relations of states in the field of ensuring global peace and security, including preventive activities. Eliminating the causes of hostility between states and preventing international tension is the most reliable means of ensuring international security. Modern international law is entirely aimed at this goal. At the same time, a number of specific measures have been developed in this direction in international relations.

1.1. Study Objectives

- to analyze the evolving concept of national and international security in Uzbekistan's political and legal framework.
- to explore the foundational principles guiding Uzbekistan's foreign policy, such as sovereignty, neutrality, mutual benefit, and peaceful conflict resolution.
- to evaluate Uzbekistan's participation in international organizations, especially the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and its implications for regional and global security.
- to assess the role of presidential decrees, national doctrines, and legal frameworks in shaping Uzbekistan's foreign and defense policy.
- to investigate how Uzbekistan maintains an independent foreign policy while engaging in strategic partnerships with major global powers.

2. Methods

The article uses scientific methods of cognition such as analysis and synthesis, retrospective, comparative analysis, generalization, as well as dialectical and synergetic approaches. The theoretical foundation of the research is based on the ideas related to the topic and the conceptual tasks put forward in the works of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev. In addition, the works and monographs of leading scholars in our country who have studied this field have also served as important theoretical and methodological sources for the research.

3. Results and Discussion

Such international legal measures usually fall into several groups:

- 1) creating a collective security system;
- 2) restricting and controlling weapons;
- 3) trust and control measures.

At the current stage of taking measures to ensure international security in international practice, the following urgent issues are being emphasized:

1. Arms race and disarmament process.
2. Verify compliance with arms control and disarmament agreements.
3. Implementation of measures aimed at strengthening confidence.
4. Establish guaranteed security measures [2].

The Address of our President paid special attention to the issue of ensuring and guaranteeing national security. Naturally, other socio-economic, political, and legal issues cannot be resolved without ensuring stability and security. That is why our President does not ignore this topical topic at almost every event.

The Presidential Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the Strategy of Actions for the Further Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan” of February 7, 2017, sets the tasks of ensuring religious tolerance and resolving the following issues as priority areas in the field of foreign policy:

- ✓ protecting the constitutional system, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the Republic of Uzbekistan; ensuring information security and improving the information protection system, organizing timely and appropriate actions against threats in the information sphere;
- ✓ strengthening peace and harmony among citizens, nations and religions;
- ✓ Strengthening the state’s defense capability and enhancing the combat power and potential of the Armed Forces of Uzbekistan;
- ✓ prevention of environmental problems that harm the environment, public health, and gene pool;
- ✓ Improving the system for preventing and eliminating emergencies [3].

As for priorities in the field of thoughtful, mutually beneficial, and practical foreign policy:

- ✓ Strengthening the independence and sovereignty of the state, increasing the country's place and role as an equal subject of international relations, joining the ranks of developed democratic states, and creating an environment of security, stability, and good neighborliness around Uzbekistan;
- ✓ Strengthening the international prestige of the Republic of Uzbekistan, providing the world community with objective information about the reforms being carried out in the country;
- ✓ Improving the regulatory and legal framework of the foreign policy and foreign economic activities of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the contractual and legal framework of international cooperation;
- ✓ Resolving issues of demilitarization and demarcation of the state border.

The newly adopted Defense Doctrine plays an important role in increasing the effectiveness of the reforms being carried out in our national army, which is a reliable pillar of our country's security. This doctrine expresses the principle of openness in Uzbekistan's foreign policy, the development of friendly and practical relations with close neighbors. It clearly defines the strong protection of the independence and sovereignty of our state as a priority task.

Taking into account the specific geostrategic location of our country, as well as the emerging military-political situation in the region, the tasks and structures of the Armed Forces formations have been revised. A National Guard has been established, and comprehensive measures are being implemented to provide the army with new weapons and modern military equipment. A State Committee for the Defense Industry was established. The activities of the Armed Forces Academy have been fundamentally reorganized based on the ongoing systemic changes in the field of military personnel training. Significant work is being done to provide social protection for military personnel, their families, and veterans. Speaking of which, it is worth noting that in 2017, 56 multi-storey houses were built for military personnel, and this work will continue on a larger scale next year.

As another innovation in the strategy of actions, further strengthening the defense capabilities of our state and increasing the combat power and potential of our army are also among our most important tasks. It was determined that it is necessary to adopt a state program for the formation and development of the Defense Industrial Complex to provide the Armed Forces with modern weapons and military equipment.

Security depends on internal and external factors. Therefore, the main principle of Uzbekistan's foreign policy is to resolve any conflict through peaceful, political negotiations, and firmly rejects methods such as the use of force or the threat of force. National security largely depends on the socio-political situation in the region [4].

At the thirteenth plenary session of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On the Defense Doctrine of the Republic of Uzbekistan" was approved by senators. Depending on the changes in the scale of threats to national security in the military sphere, the conditions of the military-political situation, the nature of current military conflicts, and the tasks and directions of developing the military structure of our country, certain provisions of the Defense Doctrine may be clarified and supplemented in accordance with the procedure established by law. In this regard, the priority areas of state activity in the field of ensuring military security are determined by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan - Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. The defense doctrine is open-ended, which is consistent with foreign

experience in adopting similar conceptual documents. The document strengthens and develops the openness of Uzbekistan's foreign policy, the priority of developing practical relations with close neighbors, and also ensures the transparency of our country's defense policy, creating organizational and legal conditions for effective military-political relations and cooperation with other foreign countries in the field of security and defense [5].

Uzbekistan is one of the initiators of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which was established to ensure regional and international security, and believes that international security will be collectively reliable and guaranteed.

One of the most important documents of the SCO - the Convention on Combating Terrorism, Extremism and Separatism - is adopted At the 2002 SCO summit, its Charter was adopted and the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure, based in Tashkent, was created. The SCO Secretariat is located in Shanghai. By the 2000s, the organization's activities had expanded significantly, and now its agenda includes issues of cooperation between member states in the economic, cultural, transport, energy, and security sectors.

Uzbekistan is also striving to take its place in the international system. The foreign policy of our state has gone through several stages since the first years of independence.

At the initial stage, the tasks of adapting to the international system, learning to conduct independent politics, and introducing the country and people to the world were of great importance for the newly independent state. In 1994, the law "On the Principles of Foreign Policy of Uzbekistan" was adopted. It reflects the principles put forward in the work of the First President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, entitled "Uzbekistan: The Path of Renewal and Development". They consist of:

- ✓ ensuring the priority of their national interests, taking into account mutual interests, and not falling into the spheres of influence of any great powers;
- ✓ Ensuring the primacy of universal values in relations between people and states, the republic strives to strengthen peace and security on the international stage and resolve conflicts peacefully;
- ✓ equality and mutual benefit, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states;
- ✓ ensuring the principle of openness in foreign policy, regardless of ideological views;
- ✓ the primacy of international law over national law; Establishing bilateral and multilateral foreign relations based on full trust, deepening cooperation within international organizations.

As Uzbekistan entered international politics, its activity and initiative in international issues increased. For example, the Republic of Uzbekistan has become a member of more than 100 international organizations. Among these are the UN, SCO, CIS, OSCE, Organization of the Islamic Conference, and others.

Relations with major powers are of particular importance in Uzbekistan's foreign policy. On March 12, 2002, a declaration was signed between Uzbekistan and the United States on the "Fundamentals of Strategic Partnership and Cooperation". Two years later, in June 2004, the leaders of Uzbekistan and Russia signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement. Uzbekistan has also raised its relations with China, Japan, and the European Union to the level of strategic cooperation [6].

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the foreign policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan is being formed and developed in a complex international environment [7]. The new world order that is taking shape after the end of the Cold War is having a serious impact on the countries of Central Asia, and especially Uzbekistan.

In particular, Uzbekistan is not immune to the geopolitical struggle that is escalating in the region. At the beginning of the 21st century, our state is undergoing an important test of adapting to the new world order and the international system in general, while pursuing an independent policy.

5. Future Suggestions

1. Develop an Integrated Cybersecurity Strategy. Uzbekistan should prioritize the development of a comprehensive national cybersecurity framework to counter growing cyber threats and ensure the protection of critical infrastructure, state information systems, and digital sovereignty.

2. Expand Regional Defense Cooperation Mechanisms. Deepening collaboration with Central Asian neighbors and regional blocs like the SCO through joint military exercises, intelligence sharing, and coordinated border security measures would enhance collective security and trust.

3. Enhance Diplomatic Training and Capacity Building. Establishing specialized diplomatic academies or expanding international relations departments in universities could improve the quality and strategic vision of future diplomats, strengthening Uzbekistan's global diplomatic presence.

4. Promote Public Engagement in Security Policy. Raising public awareness about national security priorities through educational programs and civic forums would help build a culture of security and responsibility among citizens.

Declarations

Source of Funding

This study did not receive any grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Competing Interests Statement

The author declares no competing financial, professional, or personal interests.

Consent for publication

The author declares that he/she consented to the publication of this study.

Authors' contributions

Author's independent contribution.

Informed Consent

Not applicable.

References

- [1] Mamadaliyev, O., Tojiboyev, T., & Kholyigitov, A. (2007). The idea of national independence and national security. Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Page 82.
- [2] Lukashuk, I.I., & Saidov, A.K. (2007). Fundamentals of the theory of modern international law. Publishing House of the National Society of Philosophers of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Page 311.
- [3] Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan (2017). On the Strategy of Actions for the Further Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Kahlq Suzi, February 7.
- [4] Majidov, I.U., et al. (2019). Scientific and popular guide dedicated to the study and promotion of the Address of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the Supreme Assembly among the general public. Ma'naviyat, Tashkent, Page 238.
- [5] Qosimov, R.S., et al. (2018). Scientific and popular guide dedicated to the promotion of the Address of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.M. Mirziyoyev to the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan among the general public. Ma'naviyat, Tashkent, Page 169.
- [6] Defense Doctrine Approved by Senators. <http://www.uza.uz/oz/politics/mudofaa-doktrinasi-senatorlar-tomonidan-ma-ullan-21-12-2017>.
- [7] Sobirovich, T.B. (2021). National Principles of Democracy in Uzbekistan. Mediterranean Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences, 5(3): 131–135.