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## HISTORY AND PROSPECTS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN UZBEKISTAN AND SINGAPORE

**Abstract:** *In the article are researched historical processes of cooperation between two countries: Uzbekistan and Singapore. Based on primary source author defined the stage's development of two-sided interrelationship. At the end of article, based on researched, which were made by author, are given conclusions.*

**Key words:** *Uzbekistan, Singapore, State visit, cooperation, diplomacy, delegation, stages.*

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### Introduction

For each state that has embarked on its own path of development, one of the most important tasks is to establish friendly diplomatic relations with one or another state. Having embarked on a sovereign path of development, the Republic of Uzbekistan, from the first days of independence, began to create its own foreign policy concept, which subsequently played an important role in establishing communication with the outside world.

Thus, according to official sources, the main principles of Uzbekistan's foreign policy are:

- openness to cooperation regardless of ideology, commitment to universal values, preservation of peace and security;
- respect for the sovereignty of other States and recognition of the inviolability of borders;
- non-interference in the internal Affairs of other States;
- peaceful settlement of disputes;
- non-use of force or threat of force;
- respect for human rights and freedoms;
- the advantage of generally recognized norms of international law over domestic laws and legal norms;
- conclusion of unions, joining and leaving the Commonwealth in order to ensure the highest interests of the state, the people, its welfare and security;
- non-alignment to aggressive military blocs and unions;
- equality and mutual interest in inter-state relations, supremacy of national interests of the state;

• development of external relations on the basis of bilateral and multilateral agreements: in case of rapprochement with one state not to move away from another [1].

Since 1991, many developed countries have officially begun to recognize the state independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In a relatively short period of time, Uzbekistan's sovereignty has been recognized in more than 165 countries. The recognition of state sovereignty, in our view, is the first step towards the establishment of diplomatic relations. The Republic of Singapore officially recognized the independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan in April 1992.

### Methods and materials

In the study of the issue the author used the methods of historicism, comparative analysis, as well as the principles of objectivity. It is important to emphasize that at the present time, in the post-Soviet space, works on the issues of bilateral relations between Singapore and Uzbekistan practically do not exist. The author of the article mainly used data from the official websites of public institutions.

1992 is a historic date for the Republic of Uzbekistan, as from that moment the country began to actively establish diplomatic relations with countries such as Russia, Turkey, the United States, including the countries of Asia and South-East Asia.

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In particular, it should be noted that on April 8, 1997, diplomatic relations were established between Uzbekistan and Singapore.

Currently, Singapore is one of the priorities in the foreign policy of many countries.

The main principles of Singapore's foreign policy, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs noted in his report on July 17, 2017, are:

- having a dynamic and successful economy, a stable political system and a unified society;
- not to be dependent, a vassal state, the presence of a modern armed army that can protect the country and ensure its status as an independent and non-vassal state;
- development of broad relations based on mutual respect for the sovereignty of each other and the equality of national States regardless of their size;
- promoting and promoting a global order governed by the rule of law, international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes;
- work honestly and openly with all parties[2].

After the establishment of diplomatic relations between Uzbekistan and Singapore, the parties began to develop bilateral relations.

It should be noted that one of the first documents of intergovernmental status adopted by Uzbekistan in order to strengthen relations was the Agreement on the promotion and protection of investment, which was signed in 2003 [3]. This agreement, in our opinion, was an important step in strengthening relations, as well as in attracting investment in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Based on our analysis, it should be emphasized that the period from 1997 to 2007 is a period of calm. In this decade, which can be described as a period of creating conditions for the further development of bilateral relations, no effective measures have been taken between the two States to develop bilateral relations. Since 2007, the development of relations between the two States has moved to a new stage.

In this way, 2007 is a turning point in the history of relations between the two States. In 2007, the first official visit of the first President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov took place, which marked the beginning of a new stage of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

During the visit of the first President, issues of bilateral relations, regional and international problems were comprehensively discussed. The parties agreed to develop relations on the basis of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in each other's internal Affairs. As noted in the Joint statement adopted following the talks, the views of Uzbekistan and Singapore are similar in the fight against international terrorism, drug trafficking and transnational organized crime [4].

During the official visit of the first President Islam Karimov to Singapore, agreements were signed,

which contributed to the strengthening of relations between the two countries.

In particular, one of them is the agreement on the main directions of economic and humanitarian cooperation adopted in 2007 [3].

The visit of the first President to Singapore was positive. Thus, in the course of negotiations to stimulate partnerships of business people, it was agreed to start a consultative process on the conclusion of an agreement on the avoidance of double taxation [5].

It is important to emphasize that since the establishment of diplomatic relations (1997), there have been no representatives on the ground from the diplomatic sides, which in our opinion are key figures in the development of bilateral relations. To solve this problem, on the initiative of the First President of Uzbekistan, it was decided to open the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Singapore. Thus, it can be stated that the opening of the diplomatic mission of Uzbekistan in Singapore is one of the most important steps in strengthening friendly relations.

It is relevant to note that this decision was noted positively by the Singapore side. In particular, the Prime Minister of the city-state Li Xian Long noted that the opening of the Embassy is an important step towards the development of bilateral relations [4].

In that way, since 2007, the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan has been operating in Singapore, which in turn, in combination, oversees cooperation with Australia.

Essentially must be emphasized that the residence of the Embassy of Singapore in Uzbekistan is currently located in the territory of the Republic of Singapore. Since 2011, the Ambassador of Singapore to Uzbekistan is Zulkifli bin Baharudin, and since 2018, the Ambassador extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of our country to Singapore is Kahramon Shakirov.

One of the most important results of the state visit of the first President of Uzbekistan to Singapore, in our opinion, is the opening of the Singapore Institute of management Development in Tashkent, which is an important step in the humanitarian development of the two countries.

Thus, in 2008 in Tashkent, according to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated September 5, 2007, №. PP-691 [6], was opened a branch of the Singapore Institute of management Development (CIMR).

It should be noted that the main goal of CIMR is to create professional development opportunities for Uzbek citizens, which is provided in cooperation with recognized universities of the United Kingdom; academic programs in the fields of entrepreneurship and management, business and marketing, banking and Finance, information technology in business, international hotel business management [7].

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In 2009, the relationship between Uzbekistan and Singapore reached a new level. From that moment until today, regular visits are carried out at the state level.

In such way, on April 6, 2009, the delegation of Singapore headed by the Speaker of Parliament visited Uzbekistan.

Over the visit to Uzbekistan, the delegation of Singapore met with the Speaker of the Legislative chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, during which it was emphasized that the agreements reached by the heads of the two States are an important legal basis for the development of bilateral cooperation between Uzbekistan and Singapore in all spheres, including in the field of inter-parliamentary relations. The speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Singapore also held talks with the Chairman of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan. During the conversation, it was noted that inter-parliamentary cooperation plays an important role in strengthening the legal framework of bilateral relations. The parties discussed the issues of further intensification of relations in this direction [8].

Since 2010, active inter-Ministerial political consultations between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the two States have been initiated.

Thus, in December 2010, the first round of political consultations was held in Singapore, where important spheres of political events taking place both in the territory of Uzbekistan and Singapore were touched upon.

On April 3, 2012, the 2nd round of consultations between the foreign ministries of Uzbekistan and Singapore was held in Tashkent with the participation of former foreign Minister M. Zulkifli [9]. Within the framework of political consultations, an Agreement was signed between the Republics of Uzbekistan and Singapore on mutual exemption from visa requirements for holders of diplomatic passports, Memorandums of understanding between the Academy of state and public construction under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan and The College of public service of Singapore, as well as between the Environmental movement of Uzbekistan and the environmental Council of Singapore for cooperation in the field of environmental protection [9]. In our view, the main purpose of the inter-Ministerial political consultations is to discuss, as well as the possibility of providing solutions to the most important problems in the public life of Singapore and Uzbekistan.

Accordingly, it can be argued that the development of diplomatic relations between the two countries created favorable conditions for the strengthening and further development of bilateral relations, both in political and socio-economic aspects.

In particular, in September 2011 between the corporations "Idorama" (Singapore) and "Kokand textile mill" (Uzbekistan) was implemented a project of 40 million us dollars, in which it was planned to process 10 thousand tons of cotton fiber and production of 7.2 thousand tons of compact yarn per year. At the end of 2012 under the agreement, which was signed with the government of the Republic of Uzbekistan [10], "Idorama" additionally invested \$ 31 million in the textile production of "Kokand textile plant" to increase processing capacity to 20 thousand cotton fibers per year. As a result, the company's investments in this production reached 75 million us dollars. Thus, the Corporation "Idorame" owns 76 % of the shares of the JV (Joint venture), the National Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan foreign trade (foreign Economic activity) – 24 %.

On October 24-27, 2013, a Singapore delegation headed by the second Minister of foreign Affairs and the second Minister of environment and water resources of Singapore visited Uzbekistan. During the visit, a meeting was held with the Deputy Prime Minister, the Chairman of the women's Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the leadership of the Ministry of foreign Affairs, and a lecture was held for students of the University of World Economy and Diplomacy.

Within the meeting, the two sides discussed the state and prospects of Uzbek-Singapore relations in various fields, as well as proposals for the institutionalization of relations. It is important to emphasize that the two sides exchanged views on certain international and regional issues. The meeting noted with satisfaction the constructive nature of cooperation between the two countries within the UN and other leading international political and financial institutions. The parties paid special attention to promising areas of trade and economic cooperation. Currently, there are 32 enterprises in Uzbekistan with the participation of Singapore capital, working in such industries as light industry, energy, electronics, food [11].

The result of the diplomatic negotiations was the confirmation of mutual interest in the further development of bilateral trade, investment cooperation and implementation of joint projects with the use of advanced technologies. In addition, it was emphasized that Uzbekistan and Singapore attach great importance to the further development of cooperation in the cultural and humanitarian sphere, including through the establishment of working relations between educational institutions and scientific institutions.

In consequence of our small research we can state that since 1997 - 2013, the relations between Uzbekistan and Singapore can be divided into two stages:

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1. From 1997 to 2007, this can be characterized as a period of slow development of relations between Singapore and Uzbekistan;

2. From 2007 to 2013, the period of development, this can be called as a stage of mutually beneficial cooperation for the two countries.

Starting from 2017, in our opinion, a new stage of cooperation has begun. 2017 is the anniversary date of the relationship. In this regard, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev noted that over the past period, significant results have been achieved in establishing long-term and multifaceted cooperation – political dialogue is developing, including within the framework of international organizations, trade, economic and investment, cultural and humanitarian ties [12].

Since 2017, the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Singapore has been actively promoting the attraction of tourists from Singapore.

In particular, on May 27, 2017 in one of the largest shopping and entertainment complexes of Singapore, Our Tampines Hub, the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan organized a national stand, which was widely presented products of folk art and applied art. In addition, information and photo materials, brochures with an overview of the development of the tourism industry in Uzbekistan, as well as videos on the historical monuments of Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Termez and Tashkent were also prepared [13].

It is important to emphasize that Singapore is interested in the development of the tourism industry with Uzbekistan. Thus, in one of the largest shopping centers of Singapore TanglinMall called "Uzbekistan – the pearl of the silk road" was held an exhibition-presentation dedicated to the tourism potential of Uzbekistan. It is organized by the diplomatic mission of our country in Singapore together with the travel company «Aveson Travel».

The opening ceremony was attended by representatives of the National Airline "Uzbekistan Airways", travel company "Uzbekistan Holidays", and guests of the event were representatives of the diplomatic corps accredited in Singapore, major international organizations and financial institutions. During the presentation, the audience was provided with information about the development of the tourism industry in Uzbekistan, an overview of the

current state of tourism infrastructure, photos and videos, clearly demonstrating the beauty and uniqueness of historical and architectural monuments of Uzbekistan [14].

A significant step in the development of the tourism industry of the two countries is the opening of the Uzbek-Singapore Center for tourism development, the ceremony of which was held on February 28, 2019. The opening ceremony was attended by Ambassador of Singapore to Uzbekistan Zulkifli Baharudin, representatives of the Ministry of foreign Affairs, Ministry of trade and industry, Committee on foreign trade, National University of Singapore, National Association of travel agencies, representatives of scientific, academic and business circles of the country.

It should be highlighted that the opening of this Center is of a state nature, which we can see by the presence of many state institutions.

Also, in his statement, Ambassador 3. Baharudin emphasized that Uzbekistan has a significant tourist potential and is under-studied market for both tourists and businessmen of Singapore. According to him, the establishment of this tourism Center will provide additional opportunities to obtain objective and complete information about the development of tourism in Uzbekistan [15].

Likewise, it can be argued that since 2017 Singapore has been developing relations with Uzbekistan in the tourism industry. In addition, it should be emphasized that according to statistics, the number of tourists from Singapore began to increase in 2018. Thus, in 2017, Uzbekistan was visited by 6 tourists, and in 2018 – 1502 [16].

## Conclusion

So way, it is safe to say that since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Uzbekistan and Singapore, all opportunities in the development of bilateral relations have been realized. But the 10-year period from 1997-2007 is very quiet, because, in our opinion, the parties have not taken measures to develop relations.

After analyzing the available sources, we identified several historical stages in the diplomatic relations between Uzbekistan and Singapore, where each period was characterized objectively.

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