



Cooperation Of Political Parties As A Mechanism Of Public Diplomacy

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Journal Website:
<http://usajournalshub.com/index.php/tajssei>

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ABSTRACT

Recently the role of inter-party relations among other institutions of public diplomacy has been growing. In this article, these issues are considered in the case of bilateral relations and participation in the activities of international structures implemented by the UzLiDeP - the leading political party of Uzbekistan.

KEYWORDS

Public diplomacy, party diplomacy, political party, bilateral relations, international organizations, UzLiDeP

INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Uzbekistan pursues an open, mutually beneficial and constructive foreign policy, based on the national interests of the country. The modern foreign policy course of the Republic is being built by considering the dynamically changing situation in the world and the region, as well as large-scale internal transformations in the country. The main objectives of foreign policy activities of the

Republic of Uzbekistan are to consolidate the independence and sovereignty of the state, to strengthen its place and role in the international arena, to create a zone of security and stability all around the country, as well as active promotion foreign economic interests of the country.

The large-scale transformations carried out in Uzbekistan have also affected foreign policy.

Changes in the foreign policy course of the country demonstrate a comprehensive approach of the leadership of Uzbekistan to solving existing problems. Here we can also highlight the institution of citizen diplomacy, which plays an important role in promoting national interests and strengthening international relations (1).

Political parties are becoming more and more active participants in these processes, which, using the mechanisms of popular diplomacy, contribute to the development of international relations of our country. But these issues remain out of the researchers' attention.

Consideration of issues related to the development of inter-party ties, as the most important component of public diplomacy in case of the Movement of Entrepreneurs and Business People - the Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (hereinafter referred to as "UzLiDeP") both within the framework of various international structures, and through the development of bilateral ties.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research was prepared on the basis of analysis of materials from open sources, as well as materials from the UzLiDeP archive. The work used institutional, systemic, sociological methods, as well as the method of generalization of practice and observation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Consideration of this issue in case of the activities of UzLiDeP shows the Party's willingness to establish and develop mutually beneficial inter-party relations, both within the framework of various international structures and in a bilateral format.

Thus, we can highlight the cooperation with foreign parties in the framework of the constantly held the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP).

ICAPP is an international association of political parties in Asia and Oceania. It was established on August 17, 2000 in Manila, Philippines. The supreme body is ICAPP Standing Committee.

The stated aim of the organization: to promote exchanges and cooperation between political parties from different countries of the region and with different ideologies; increasing mutual understanding and trust between Asian countries; promoting the development of regional cooperation in Asia; creating conditions for sustainable peace and shared prosperity in the region.

ICAPP holds conferences and seminars on an ongoing basis to address key challenges in the region, such as: state subsidies to major political parties as a means of preventing political corruption; poverty alleviation; environmental protection; human capital development, etc. UzLiDeP considers ICAPP as a kind of "expert platform" for international cooperation with foreign parties.

Another important platform for cooperation is the Forum of Political Parties of the SCO member states. In May 2018, the UzLiDeP delegation took part in the Forum "Shanghai Spirit and Community with a Common Future for Humanity: Contribution of Political Parties", held in Shenzhen (PRC).

The forum was attended by about 200 Chinese and foreign representatives of over 30 political parties from 18 countries, including SCO member states, observers and dialogue partners.

The purpose of the forum was to exchange views on improving the role of political parties

in strengthening cooperation in the SCO region, ensuring coordination of activities and making concerted efforts within the Organization aimed at creating a community with a common future.

UzLiDeP also pays attention to the development of cooperation between youth organizations. Thus, the "Youth Wing" of UzLiDeP and the Asia-Pacific University of Technology and Innovation (Kuala Lumpur) held a conference in the "video bridge" format with students and young professionals. This enabled dialogue between the "Youth Wing" of the Party, students and young professionals working in Malaysia.

An important place in the development of inter-party relations belongs to trust-based relations on a bilateral basis.

Representatives of the Party take part in the most important political forums of the leading political parties of South Korea, Turkey and others. Representatives of the Party were received at the office of the Nur Otan Party (Kazakhstan).

Relations between UzLiDeP and the United Russia Party are developing actively in a positive direction. It should be noted that in recent years, one of the most important trends in Uzbekistan's foreign policy has been the development and strengthening of ties with Russia on the basis of the Strategic Partnership Agreement of June 16, 2004, and the Agreement on Allied Relations of November 14, 2005 (2).

Recent years have been marked by the high dynamics and intensity of Uzbek-Russian contacts at various levels on key issues of bilateral and multilateral agenda. A close intergovernmental dialogue has been

established. Its nature is indicated by the establishment of the Joint Commission at the level of heads of government, the first meeting of which was held in Urgench (Uzbekistan) in May 2019. Inter-parliamentary relations are also being maintained.

A number of major Russian companies are among the largest investment partners of Uzbekistan, including PJSC "LUKOIL", PJSC "Gazprom", PJSC "VimpelCom", and others (3).

In this regard, as another step towards further expansion of relations between the countries in the political sphere was the establishment of inter-party cooperation between the UzLiDeP and the "United Russia" Party.

As a Party that represents interests of entrepreneurs and businessmen at the political arena of Uzbekistan, it should be noted that the UzLiDeP electorate is highly interested in a corresponding level of trade and economic cooperation with Russia. This is evidenced by the sociological data, in particular, the Republican Center for public opinion "Ijtimoiy Fikr". The survey has shown that the majority of Uzbek entrepreneurs (84.5 %) support the policy pursued in Uzbekistan that is aimed at developing small business and private entrepreneurship, building long-term Uzbek-Russian relations, increasing trade with Russia, expanding interregional trade and economic ties. According to 56,4% of survey participants, it is necessary to eliminate administrative barriers, improve support measures and develop direct communication channels between entrepreneurs and investors (4).

Today, direct contacts between business community of two countries are activated, new joint ventures are established and prospective investment projects are implemented.

Political parties are also actively involved in these processes. For instance, business forums in “online” format “Uzbekistan and Russia - prospects of mutually beneficial cooperation of regions”, organized by the Executive Committee of the Political Council of the UzLiDeP together with the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Administration of St. Petersburg with the support of the City Council of the "United Russia" Party. These business forums have allowed establishing a direct link between business structures of St. Petersburg and suppliers of agricultural products, as well as textile and light industry products from a number of regions of Uzbekistan.

The Parties could significantly expand the format and number of such events, which in practice will help to activate trade, economic and investment cooperation between the regions, establish direct business contacts of entrepreneurs. Today this format is in demand and will serve to further strengthen cooperation.

Filling the inter-party space with concrete content will contribute to the establishment of practical cooperation in the field of party construction.

In this regard, in September 2019, after intensive inter-party consultations on a number of promising areas of mutually beneficial partnership, as well as other issues of mutual interest, an Agreement on interaction and cooperation was signed between UzLiDeP and “United Russia”. This document is based on the principles of mutual respect, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, reliable and mutually beneficial partnership (5).

Thus, in a framework of the Agreement, activities have been intensified to conduct joint consultations, exchange experience in the field of party construction, organize meetings of experts, etc. Particular attention is expected to be paid to a significant expansion of inter-party ties and contacts at the regional level, including between representatives of the business community. In general, this inter-party document is a practical embodiment of the intention of both parties to promote the expansion and deepening of interaction and cooperation between Uzbekistan and Russia, considering inter-party ties as their important component.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be noted that party diplomacy has a huge potential, the use of which, along with other instruments of public diplomacy can make a valuable contribution to the development of relations between the countries.

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