

Summary

This diploma thesis deals with the creation of Uzbekistan's foreign policy. It attempts to answer three main research questions: What were the chief goals of Tashkent's foreign policy? What were the factors that influenced the creation of Uzbekistan's foreign policy? Which factors and causes played the decisive role in the case of Uzbekistan's most significant foreign policy turnovers in 2001, 2005 and 2012? It claims the principal aims of Uzbekistan's foreign policy were threefold. Firstly, it was the preservation of Uzbekistan's independence. Secondly, it was the strengthening and securing of Karimov's regime. Finally, it was the attempt to become the regional leader in Central Asia.

Subsequently, the study maintains that the foreign policy formulation was altered by four processes or challenges which the regime in Tashkent had to cope with. These were namely the challenge of geopolitical position, establishing of a viable political system, transforming the command economy, and the threat of radical or political Islam. Uzbekistan's pendulum diplomacy between the US and Russia is a new term coined for the purposes of this study. I argue that Tashkent was prone to change abruptly its strategic partner in order to secure its three strategic imperatives. Hence, there occurred three turnovers of Uzbekistan's foreign policy in 2001 on the US, in 2005 on Russia and in 2012 on the US again. Both in 2001 and 2012 Russia threatened Uzbekistan's chances on becoming a regional leader and in the long term possibly its independence. On the other hand, the US in 2005 threatened predominantly the foundations of Karimov's regime with its thrust for democratization and liberalization. This study also emphasizes that Uzbekistan plays the role of the holder of balance. In other words, it does not have enough power to dominate the region but it is strong enough to hinder other states to do so. Uzbekistan could be also designated as geopolitical pivot ergo state which is not able to exert its power successfully behind its borders but whose control significantly strengthens the geostrategic players. Simply to control Central Asia without Uzbekistan is impossible. This will prove to be the case more considerably in the future. Russia plans to create the Eurasian Union in 2015 and Uzbekistan will definitely represent one of its key components. Analogically, the United States are leaving Afghanistan by the end of 2014 and they plan to use Uzbekistan as the anchor for their Central Asian policy. This development leaves significant space for Karimov's regime to manoeuvre in the form of the pendulum diplomacy.