

## First Deputy Director of ISRS Akramjon Nematov: The Samarkand Initiative is a concentrated expression of Mirziyoyev's political “doctrine”



On 15-16 September Samarkand held a very important event - summit of SCO Heads of State. It was different from previous ones due to its extensive program, comprehensive agenda, as well as broad representation of states, international and regional organizations. Leaders and senior representatives of about 20 states and heads of more than 10 international and regional organizations took part in the event.

The unprecedented outcome of the summit was the adoption of 44 documents, including strategic and conceptual ones. They identified comprehensive expansion of mutual trade, infrastructure development, industrial cooperation, acceleration of green and digital transformation, joint combating of infectious diseases, negative climate effects, etc. as the main directions of further deepening of mutually beneficial cooperation.

The developed collective solutions contain the answers to the challenges that the international community is facing today and are designed to meet the demand of the peoples of the world to restore socio-economic and political stability.

Undoubtedly, the Samarkand summit marked the beginning of a historically new phase in the process of further transformation of the system of international relations, based on the joint efforts to address common problems of economic, social, cultural and humanitarian nature on the principles of mutual trust, equality, respect for each other's interests and mutual benefit.

The forum highlighted a variety of initiatives, the implementation of which would undoubtedly facilitate

expansion and deepening of mutually beneficial multifaceted cooperation in the SCO space.

At the same time, the Samarkand Solidarity Initiative for Common Security and Prosperity put forward by President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev can be honestly called a key initiative that has received extensive support by all the members of the Organization and was articulated in the final part of the Summit outcomes - the Samarkand Declaration.

The distinctive feature of this initiative is its focus on addressing the lack of mutual trust, a fundamental problem in international relations today that impedes effective and mutually beneficial cooperation between states on various issues of global and regional agenda.

It is the lack of trust and understanding in relations between states that causes the global complex crisis facing the international community today.

We are witnessing geopolitical confrontation and rivalry, the revival of block thinking stereotypes and the growth of mutual alienation, disregard to the principles and norms of international law, which in turn leads to the destruction of the international security architecture and sustainable development, limiting opportunities to resolve various acute regional and local conflicts through comprehensive and coordinated approaches.

This causes the dysfunction of multilateral institutions, leads to the loss of their ability to serve as critical agents in addressing the pressing problems of our time, generates uncertainty in the international arena, and exacerbates numerous challenges and threats to the sustainable development of states. Among these are the negative consequences of climate change, the scarcity of water and natural resources, the socio-economic consequences of pandemics, the aggravation of problems of energy and food security, which lead to economic imbalances and social upheaval.

It is becoming clear that the growing fracture in the foundations of international cooperation and its fragmentation are not in anyone's interest.

Under these conditions, as President Shavkat Mirziyoyev notes, there is a growing global demand for mutual trust, justice and solidarity. The continuation of an open and constructive dialogue and the restoration of multilateral formats of international cooperation are in demand more than ever.

At the same time, the current realities are such that the contradictions among the leading states in political, security and economic issues are so aggravated that it is unlikely to find a mutually acceptable compromise on them in the foreseeable future. However, in the interests of common security and stability the search for mutually beneficial solutions must not cease, which of course requires maintaining and consistently deepening dialogue.

This is the relevance and exceptional importance of the Samarkand Initiative, the main goal of which is the gradual and at the same time progressive restoration of trust through the involvement of all interested states in a global dialogue among civilizations, the search for coordinated approaches and solutions, the removal of global tensions, uncertainty and unpredictability in order to establish international cooperation.

To achieve these goals, the establishment of inter-civilizational and inter-cultural relations and dialogue unencumbered by ideological agenda and political-economic interests serves as an effective platform. As President Shavkat Mirziyoyev noted, such a dialogue, free from geopolitical rivalry, ideological contradictions and disputes, is in great demand today.

The Samarkand Initiative is called upon to consolidate efforts of the states and peoples of the world to alleviate existing contradictions and disagreements by building cultural-civilizational, international, inter-religious interaction based on equality, cooperation, tolerance, justice, humanism and recognition of the priority of universal values, respect for cultural, national and religious diversity.

In order to work out the algorithms for the practical implementation of this initiative, the leader of

Uzbekistan suggests holding an international Samarkand forum in 2023 with the participation of a wide range of actors, from political leaders, influential representatives of public, business, academic and expert circles, representatives of clergy, cultural figures and artists.

As the main dialogue platform of the Samarkand Initiative, the Samarkand Forum will be deliberately inclusive. It will allow ensuring the comprehensive consideration of interests, confidence-building and mutual understanding at all levels, among diverse social groups, cultures and civilizations in a variety of fields.

At the same time, the work of the forum will be based on a rich Program of Action, which may include a set of measures to seek mutually acceptable solutions to the most pressing international and regional problems, as well as to strengthen the spirit of dialogue, mutual understanding, respect and trust, increase political and diplomatic, economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation. This, in turn, would give a systemic character to the implementation of the Samarkand Initiative, ensure its openness, transparency, inclusiveness and efficiency.

Such an approach undoubtedly meets the need of the states to preserve, multiply and transmit to future generations their centuries-old cultural and civilizational values. This is one of the key factors that will contribute to the support, development and achievement of the goals, the guarantor of the strength and reliability of cooperation on the proposed platform.

In fact, the Samarkand Initiative will be the practical embodiment of the UN Declaration on Dialogue among Civilizations, adopted in 2001 by the UN General Assembly. The Samarkand Initiative will, in fact, be a practical embodiment of the UN Declaration on Dialogue among Civilizations, adopted in 2001 by the UN General Assembly, calling on governments to encourage, endorse and support dialogue among civilizations.

It is important to note that the Samarkand Initiative, while global in nature, is not accidentally put forward within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Since its founding, the SCO has remained committed to the "Shanghai spirit" and its founding principles of non-aligned status, non-targeting of third countries, openness, consensus, trust, mutual benefit, equality, and respect for the diversity of cultures and shared prosperity.

Moreover, as President Shavkat Mirziyoyev notes, the SCO is a unique interstate structure that has managed to unite countries with different cultural and civilizational codes, their own foreign policy guidelines and models of national development. The SCO's formula for success is the promotion of multifaceted cooperation, the absence of ideological dogma in its activities and the commitment to universal values and universally recognized norms.

Strictly adhering to the "Shanghai spirit" and principles of SCO Charter, and effectively cooperating with various states, international and regional organizations in addressing a multitude of pressing problems, SCO has come a long way in this historically short period, becoming an integral part of the modern global order and a pole of attraction.

In the year of its chairmanship, Uzbekistan has managed to preserve and enhance the "Shanghai spirit", as evidenced by the broad representation of states and international organizations at the Samarkand summit, the launch of the SCO expansion process by new members, dialogue partners and observers, including Iran, Belarus, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Maldives, Myanmar and others, who often hold diametrically opposed views.

It is the desire of Uzbekistan to convey to all interested parties the experience of interaction within the framework of the SCO that explains the choice of this platform for the promotion of the Samarkand initiative.

At the same time, the choice of Samarkand as an integral part of the initiative has a deep meaning. As

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev noted, since ancient times this city has been a center of spiritual, economic, cultural and scientific exchange between peoples living in the space from East Asia to North Africa, the Middle East and Europe. This city is a prime example of how for centuries the principles of tolerance and respect for the traditions and values of different peoples have been put into practice.

In the dynamic and proactive diplomacy of President Shavkat Mirziyev, Samarkand has acquired a special dimension, acting as a unique platform for promoting the most important international and diplomatic initiatives of Uzbekistan.

It was in Samarkand that the process of regional cooperation and rapprochement was launched. In particular, the historic conference "Central Asia: One Past and Common Future, Cooperation for Sustainable Development and Mutual Prosperity," organized in 2017 under the auspices of the UN, resulted in the "Samarkand Spirit," through which Central Asia began to transform into a space of good neighborliness and trust, mutually beneficial cooperation and sustainable development.

This process was also supported by the UN. In 2018 the Organization's General Assembly adopted a special resolution on "Strengthening regional and international cooperation to ensure peace, stability and sustainable development in the Central Asian region", recognizing the important role of dialogue among Central Asian countries in ensuring peace, stability and sustainable development in the region, as well as in promoting regional and international cooperation.

In this regard, the Samarkand Initiative is a kind of symbiosis of the "Shanghai Spirit" and the "Samarkand Spirit. If the former is built on the principles of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, respect for the diversity of cultures and joint development, the latter, as noted by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, is the embodiment of constructive dialogue, mutual understanding, good neighborliness and friendship.

And reliance on these principles, which should become the basis and content of the Samarkand initiative, is the key to its successful implementation.

Yet another factor that instills confidence in the success of this initiative is the high level of responsibility that Uzbekistan realizes for the stability, security and sustainable development in the region, as well as the attained political and diplomatic experience in conducting a constructive dialogue and searching for joint solution of common problems.

Thus, in a historically short period of time, Tashkent has managed to establish good-neighborly relations with neighboring countries and jointly solve acute systemic problems related to border, water resources, energy, transport and communications and other issues, as well as consolidate the efforts of international community for socio-economic stabilization of Afghanistan.

Moreover, by pursuing a balanced, open, constructive and pragmatic foreign policy, Uzbekistan has built a balanced relationship with all global players and is engaged in practical interaction with China, Russia, the United States, the EU, South Asia, the Asia-Pacific region and the Arab world.

In essence, Uzbekistan has become a kind of "mediator" of dialogue between various states and international organizations, and has proved itself as a responsible state capable of making an important contribution to establishing constructive cooperation and finding mutually acceptable solutions.

It is important to note that by putting forward this initiative, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev once again demonstrated his commitment to an open, constructive, peace-loving and pragmatic policy. One can even argue that the Samarkand Initiative is a concentrated expression of Mirziyoyev's political "doctrine", which is based on the principles of openness, comprehensive inclusive dialogue, pragmatism, constructive cooperation, respect for equal rights and interests of everyone, as well as the search for reasonable compromises.

And it is clear that this approach is in demand in international relations today. Moreover, the great need to

restore dialogue, mutual understanding and solidarity is felt by the peoples of the world who, with the disorganization of systems of political, economic and financial relations, face uncertainty about their future.

Leaders also spoke about this at the summit. In particular, they emphasized the urgent need to maintain the philosophy of trust-based dialogue in international relations, peaceful and negotiated ways of resolving conflict situations, and to maintain a balance of interests in dealing with various points of concern.

In conclusion, I would like to express confidence that the Samarkand Solidarity Initiative for Common Security and Prosperity, supported by the SCO member states, will help restore and strengthen trust and mutual understanding between states, make a significant contribution to dialogue and cooperation as an important condition for overcoming the challenges and threats the humanity is facing today.

**Source**