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### **MODERN FORMS OF THREATS AFFECTING THE NATIONAL SECURITY OF CENTRAL ASIAN STATES**

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#### **Annotation**

This research explores the modern forms of threats affecting the national security of Central Asian states. It analyzes political, economic, social, and transnational security challenges, including terrorism, drug trafficking, extremism, and regional conflicts. The study emphasizes the significance of coordinated policies, regional cooperation, and strategic security measures to ensure stability and sustainable development in Central Asia. By examining contemporary security risks, the research provides insights into both internal and external factors influencing national security and proposes practical recommendations for policymakers and regional stakeholders.

**Keywords:** Central Asia, national security, modern threats, terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking, regional stability, security policy, transnational challenges.

Ensuring national security is a crucial factor for the present and future development of every nation and for the very existence of every state. In independent Uzbekistan, the system for ensuring national security was established by the First President, Islam Karimov, who, during the initial years of building the new state, implemented urgent and indispensable security measures. These included preventing emerging internal and external threats. Ensuring sustainable stability is key to opening the path for comprehensive national



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development. This, in turn, allowed for the implementation of consistent policies to establish the conceptual foundations of national security. Based on the principles advanced by Islam Karimov, the law “On National Security” was adopted, the National Security Concept was prepared, and a security policy encompassing all aspects of national interests was developed. The Concept, prepared under the initiative and guidance of Islam Karimov, defined the objectives, principles, and approaches of policies aimed at protecting the independence, territorial integrity, constitutional structure, and national interests of our country from internal and external threats. Indeed, ensuring national security is one of the main prerequisites for the purposeful development of a democratic and law-based state [1].

Timely understanding, identifying, and preventing threats to national security, as well as creating the necessary forces and tools for this purpose, are essential tasks of the national security system. Sharp tensions in national and religious relations, and the spread of ethnic and religious extremism, are among the main factors threatening national security. Preventing such situations requires fostering a national psychology based on patriotism and interethnic harmony, strengthening national unity, establishing proper relations between different nations and religious currents, and preventing the exploitation of existing sectarianism [2].

Divisions for political purposes and various religious views are important factors in ensuring national security, and these factors are central to state policy. This is not accidental, as national, religious, racial, cultural, and other differences must be protected while integrating ethnic and cultural diversity with national unity. Multicultural security, which combines the protection of these differences with national cohesion, is among the key elements of national security. The more people a state unites, the stronger it becomes, as each individual contributes to global culture and civilization. In this context, multiculturalism in Uzbekistan is



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rooted in ancient traditions and is directly linked to the formation and development of our nation, in which ethnic diversity plays a significant role. Historically, representatives of different religions and ethnicities in this geographical region have lived in conditions of friendship and good neighborliness, which laid the foundation for today's multicultural environment [3].

The state of Uzbekistan creates equal opportunities for all citizens to receive education and acquire professional skills, while also providing necessary support to protect and enrich their national cultural values. Uzbekistan lives in friendly neighborly relations with representatives of other nations. Bonds of friendship and family ties unite and connect them closely. Representatives of all nations have contributed to the achievements in all spheres of life in the country, including active participation in civil society institutions and high levels of government administration.

In Uzbekistan, conditions are created for each ethnic group to preserve and enrich its unique cultural values and freely use its mother tongue. Religious tolerance, one of the key directions of national security, is one of Uzbekistan's major achievements. The state pays special attention and care to protecting and developing an environment of religious tolerance by implementing policies aligned with the national interests of society. This strategic direction, successfully continued under President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, ensures that alongside Islam, Christianity and Judaism have coexisted in Uzbekistan for centuries. All religions and ethnic groups have lived together in peace, harmony, friendship, and mutual understanding for generations. Uzbekistan is a multi-confessional and multi-ethnic country, which is one of its greatest treasures. All steps toward successful development and sustainable stability are supported by religious and ethnic tolerance and the values of multiculturalism [4].



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Public stability is a fundamental condition for protecting national security, and Uzbekistan's successful state policies in all sectors are fully ensured on the basis of national unity and solidarity. Every citizen has a duty to value this unity and solidarity, which constitute our national wealth, and to protect it from threats. Our multiethnic people, who spent much of their long history under colonial rule and whose wealth was plundered by foreign powers, have become the guardians of their independent state.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, 35 years later, the prospects for Central Asian integration have become increasingly apparent. Political and economic liberalization in Uzbekistan, along with intensified economic reforms in other parts of Central Asia and policies aimed at ensuring widespread economic prosperity, have gained growing importance. The prospects for regional cooperation in Uzbekistan are becoming increasingly evident. Central Asia is one of the most important and complex regions in the world from a security standpoint. In particular, the geopolitical projects and geoeconomic interests of major powers such as Russia, the United States, and China toward the region must always be taken into account. For Central Asia, the concept of security means stability. Stability is the region's ability to protect itself from various external and negative influences [5].

At the same time, global complex changes also significantly affect the Central Asian region, which necessitates a systematic approach to resolving the wide-ranging issues of ensuring national security in these states. Today, Central Asia, due to its geopolitical and geoeconomic factors, is considered one of the key regions of the geopolitical landscape. Events and processes in this part of Asia not only affect the region's states but also neighboring countries and broader regions. The security environment in the region is shaped by a combination of internal and external factors, including the geopolitical situation and processes of



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geopolitical transformation. Studying threats to national security in Central Asia carries significant geopolitical and geostrategic importance.

The ideological and political aspects of ensuring security and stability in Central Asia involve state defense, socio-economic development, strengthening international cooperation, and other related measures. They also include coordinated efforts to counter and prevent terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking, and other forms of criminal and hostile activities. In addressing these challenges, the states' approaches are determined by their internal situation, legal regulations, and policies aimed at maintaining national security and preserving state independence. For this purpose, national security agencies have been established, and their activities and relationships are organized to maintain stability and security.

In recent years, transformations in Uzbekistan's regional policy have played a special role in adopting a new approach to the political situation in Central Asia and in developing broad cooperation with neighboring countries. Uzbekistan pursues a peaceful foreign policy, and active participation in preventing military conflicts is considered one of its priority tasks, as established by law. In conclusion, ensuring national security is one of the main prerequisites for the purposeful development of a democratic and law-based state. The people-centered and fair policies implemented under the leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev contribute to ensuring security and stability in Central Asia.

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