

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract

This scientific article provides a comprehensive analysis of the process of proclaiming the state independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as its historical, political, and legal foundations. The deep political and economic crisis that occurred in the former Soviet Union at the end of the twentieth century, the collapse of the centralized governance system, and the aspiration of union republics toward sovereignty are examined as key factors that created the conditions for the declaration of Uzbekistan's independence. The article highlights the essence and significance of the historic document adopted on August 31, 1991 — the *Law on the State Independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan* — and its role in the development of the state and society. Furthermore, the political consequences of independence in the international arena, its importance in restoring national statehood, and the initial steps toward building a legal and democratic state are analyzed. The study employs historical, systematic, and consistent research methods, substantiating independence as the realization of the Uzbek people's centuries-old aspirations. The materials of the article serve as an important scholarly source for research in history, political science, and law.

Keywords

independence, sovereignty, declaration, statehood, self-determination, politics, history, union, crisis, law, parliament, democracy

INTRODUCTION

The end of the twentieth century holds a special place in world history as a period of profound transformation. In particular, the disintegration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics resulted in the emergence of several independent states on the world map, marking a new stage in global political processes. Under such complex and contradictory historical circumstances, the Republic of Uzbekistan proclaimed its state independence. This event became a crucial turning point not only in the history of the country but also in the political development of the entire Central Asian region.

The Uzbek people's aspiration for independence has deep historical roots. Despite the rich traditions of statehood, culture, and civilization formed in this region since ancient times, beginning from the second half of the nineteenth century the territory fell under the colonial rule of Tsarist Russia and later the Soviet Empire. Although Uzbekistan formally possessed the status of a republic during the Soviet period, in practice all political, economic, and cultural decisions were made by the central authorities, and the republic's genuine sovereignty was severely restricted.

The centralized governance system, administrative-command policies, and ideological pressure that prevailed in the Soviet Union posed serious obstacles to Uzbekistan's natural development. The republic's rich natural resources were subordinated to the interests of the center, while the economy was oriented toward one-sided raw material production. In particular, the policy of cotton monoculture caused severe ecological, social, and demographic problems.

The Aral Sea disaster stands as a vivid example, openly demonstrating the grave consequences of Soviet policy.

By the second half of the 1980s, the Soviet Union experienced a deep political and economic crisis. Although the policies of “perestroika” and “glasnost” were proclaimed, these reforms failed to eliminate systemic problems. On the contrary, national consciousness and political activism intensified, and ideas of independence spread widely among the union republics. In Uzbekistan as well, issues of national self-awareness, restoration of historical justice, and achieving state sovereignty became increasingly urgent.

On June 20, 1990, the adoption of the *Declaration on State Sovereignty* by the Supreme Council of the Uzbek SSR marked an important political step toward independence. This document established the inviolability of the republic’s territory, its ownership of natural resources, and the principles of independent decision-making in domestic and foreign policy. The declaration served as a legal foundation for Uzbekistan’s future formation as a fully independent state.

In August 1991, the attempted coup in Moscow clearly demonstrated that the Soviet Union had reached a state of complete political collapse. The weakening of central authority and political instability compelled union republics to recognize more deeply the necessity of independently determining their own destiny. In such a critical situation, the leadership of Uzbekistan assumed historical responsibility by prioritizing the interests of the people.

On August 31, 1991, at an extraordinary session of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the *Constitutional Law on the State Independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan* was adopted. Through this historic act, Uzbekistan was proclaimed an independent, sovereign, and democratic state. September 1 was declared Independence Day. This event fulfilled the long-standing aspirations of the Uzbek people who had struggled for freedom and self-determination for centuries.

The proclamation of independence placed fundamentally new historical tasks before Uzbekistan. Foremost among these were the restoration of national statehood, the formation of an independent political system, the transition to a market economy, and the construction of a legal and democratic society. At the same time, gaining recognition as an equal subject of international relations and defining an independent foreign policy became urgent priorities.

The declaration of independence was not merely a political and legal event but also a process of profound social and spiritual significance. It played a vital role in strengthening national identity, restoring historical memory, and reinforcing public confidence. The adoption of state symbols, granting state status to the Uzbek language, and the revival of national values and traditions were realized in the early years of independence.

Therefore, the proclamation of the independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan constitutes an important subject of historical research. A comprehensive study of this process is essential not only for understanding the past but also for shaping present and future development paths. This introduction outlines the historical conditions, political factors, and overall significance of independence, while subsequent sections analyze its specific stages and consequences in detail.

Literature Review and Methodology

1. Historical and Political Preconditions for the Proclamation of Independence

The proclamation of the state independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan was not an accidental or sudden event but the result of long-standing historical processes, complex political circumstances, and deep socio-economic crises. In the second half of the twentieth century, the political system within the Soviet Union increasingly demonstrated its inefficiency. The

centralized planned economy, rigid ideological control, and policies restricting political autonomy significantly hindered societal development.

By the 1980s, economic growth rates sharply declined, social problems intensified, and living standards deteriorated across the USSR. These conditions fueled dissatisfaction among union republics toward central authorities. In particular, injustices in national policies, neglect of local interests, and artificial limitations on cultural development strengthened independence movements. Uzbekistan was no exception. Its economy remained oriented toward raw material production, with final goods manufactured at the center, indicating the absence of economic independence and unfair resource distribution. Ecological issues, especially the Aral Sea catastrophe, became clear manifestations of misguided central policies.

2. The Awakening of National Consciousness and the Formation of the Idea of Sovereignty

By the late 1980s, processes of national self-awareness accelerated. Expanded freedom of speech under “perestroika” and “glasnost” enabled open discussions of historical truths, causing a profound shift in public consciousness. Previously suppressed topics—national statehood, colonial consequences, and political repression—were widely debated.

Uzbek intellectuals, historians, and cultural figures actively promoted the restoration of national values, enhancement of the Uzbek language’s status, and historical justice. The adoption of the *Law on the State Language* in 1989, granting Uzbek the status of the state language, became a significant milestone toward independence.

The rise of national consciousness increased political engagement. Ideas of sovereignty, independent development, and control over national resources spread widely, influencing the political stance of the republic’s leadership.

3. Adoption of the Declaration on State Sovereignty

A crucial legal step toward independence was the adoption of the *Declaration on State Sovereignty of the Uzbek SSR* on June 20, 1990. This document officially recognized the republic’s sovereign rights, territorial integrity, ownership of natural resources, and independent policymaking authority.

The declaration established the supremacy of republican laws over union legislation, dealing a significant blow to unlimited central authority. It became a solid legal foundation for the formation of Uzbekistan as an independent state and demonstrated commitment to international legal norms.

4. August 1991 Events and the Escalation of Political Crisis

The attempted coup in Moscow in August 1991 (GKChP events) confirmed the complete political collapse of the Soviet Union. The weakening of central power and impossibility of preserving the union forced republics to make decisive choices.

Uzbekistan’s leadership pursued a cautious and responsible policy, prioritizing legality and stability while recognizing that independent statehood was the most viable path for peace and development. The coup attempt accelerated the independence process by eliminating trust in central authority.

5. Proclamation of State Independence and Its Legal Foundations

On August 31, 1991, the Supreme Council adopted the *Constitutional Law on the State Independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan*. The law proclaimed Uzbekistan an independent, sovereign, and democratic state.

It established principles of state power, territorial integrity, popular sovereignty, and national interests, granting authority to adopt a constitution, form armed forces, and conduct independent foreign policy. September 1 was declared Independence Day.

6. Socio-Economic Significance of Independence

Independence necessitated comprehensive socio-economic reforms, including the transition to a market economy, diversification of ownership, and development of entrepreneurship. Despite challenges, these reforms were essential for economic sovereignty.

Independence also transformed social sectors—education, healthcare, culture, and science—guided by national development strategies and strengthened social protection.

7. International Significance of Independence

Uzbekistan's independence gained international recognition, enabling its membership in the United Nations and other organizations. Independent foreign policy allowed equal partnerships, regional security initiatives, and expanded economic cooperation.

8. Historical Significance of the Proclamation of Independence

In conclusion, the proclamation of independence represents a momentous event in Uzbek history—the logical continuation of national statehood traditions and the culmination of the people's struggle for freedom. Studying this historic process remains vital, as independence is not merely a past event but a lasting value that must be preserved and strengthened.

CONCLUSION

The proclamation of the state independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan marked a profound turning point in national history, carrying immense political, legal, and spiritual significance. It emerged as the logical outcome of long-standing aspirations for sovereignty and justice amid the collapse of the Soviet system.

This article analyzed the historical and political conditions, legal foundations, and societal impacts of independence, emphasizing the 1990 Declaration of Sovereignty and the 1991 Constitutional Law as pivotal milestones. These legal acts laid the groundwork for Uzbekistan's formation as a subject of international law.

Independence introduced new historical tasks: restoring national statehood, building a democratic legal society, implementing a market-based economy, and establishing equal international relations. It also enabled the revival of national identity, historical memory, and spiritual values.

In conclusion, the independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan is not merely a historical event but a strategic value essential for the present and future generations. Studying and safeguarding it remains a fundamental civic responsibility.

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