THE IMPACT OF MOSCOW'S POLICY ON POLITICAL PROCESSES IN THE UZBEK SSR

Researcher Sardor Bozorboyevich Nazarov

Abstract. *This article provides a historical and theoretical analysis of the political strategy implemented by the central authorities of the Soviet Union—the Kremlin—and its impact on the political life of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (Uzbek SSR). The study examines such issues as the Sovietization of Uzbekistan, the process of national-territorial delimitation, the dominant position of the Communist Party in the republic's political life, personnel policy, political repression, centralized governance, the cotton monoculture, the "Cotton Affair" and the "Uzbek Affair" campaigns of the 1980s, as well as the rise of political activity during the period of perestroika.*

Keywords: *Uzbek SSR, Kremlin, Soviet Union, Communist Party, political life, centralization, personnel policy, political repression, cotton monoculture, "Cotton Affair," "Uzbek Affair," perestroika, political elite.*

INTRODUCTION. By the late 1970s, the socio-economic and political stagnation of the Soviet system had become increasingly evident. The central authorities began searching for ways to overcome this comprehensive crisis, which led to the initiation of certain changes at the central level. By the mid-1980s, the concept of perestroika had become widely used and referred to a movement aimed at transforming the totalitarian system in the USSR through reforms. The purpose and objectives of the policy of perestroika were to address the accumulated problems in the socio-political, economic, cultural, and ideological spheres through "restructuring," without fundamentally changing the existing system. The reforms that determined the essence of the socio-economic, political, and spiritual development initiated in Soviet society had been gradually maturing over several decades 1.

1 Rajabov Q., Qandov B., Rajabova S. O'zbekiston tarixining muhim sanalari. – Toshkent: O'zbekiston, 2015.

The necessity for these reforms was determined by the profound technological transformations that took place worldwide, particularly in developed countries, during the 1960s and 1970s, as well as by the transition to a qualitatively new stage in the development of human civilization—the post-industrial society. In the USSR, the historical prerequisites for the reforms that shaped the essence of socio-economic, political, and spiritual development during 1985–1991 had been developing over a long period 2. The level of education, professional skills, and executive discipline in Soviet society no longer met the requirements of an advanced industrial society and modern technologies. By this period, the need to modernize all aspects of socialism-including its economic foundations, social life, political system, and spiritual sphere-had become increasingly evident. However, the pathways, forms, and essence of this modernization were not immediately understood. Many aspects had to be identified, corrected, and reconsidered during the historical stage of Soviet society's development that came to be known as perestroika.

The relevance of the topic lies in the fact that studying the influence of Kremlin policy on the political life of the Uzbek SSR provides an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding not only of the Soviet-era system of governance but also of the political processes that ultimately contributed to Uzbekistan's path toward independence 3.

Research Objective. The main objective of this study is to analyze, on the basis of historical stages, the impact of the policies pursued by the central authorities of the USSR on political processes in the Uzbek SSR, to identify the principal mechanisms of political relations between the center and the republic, and to demonstrate the consequences of these policies for the political elite and society.

Main Part. On November 10, 1982, Yuri Andropov, who was elected General Secretary at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), attempted not so much to reform the increasingly stagnant system as to renew it. Following his death, Konstantin Chernenko was elected General

2 O'zbekistonning yangi tarixi. 2-kitob. O'zbekiston sovet mustamlakachiligi davrida. – Toshkent: Sharq, 2000.
3 O'zbekistonning yangi tarixi. 2-kitob. O'zbekiston sovet mustamlakachiligi davrida. – Toshkent: Sharq, 2000.

Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee on February 13, 1984. However, after his brief tenure, the difficult circumstances that had emerged made it an urgent necessity to bring to power forces capable of understanding the situation to some extent and prepared to modernize the economic foundations and spiritual life of Soviet society. Following the death of K. U. Chernenko on March 11, 1985, at an extraordinary Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, the youngest member of the Politburo, 54-year-old Mikhail S. Gorbachev, was elected General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee. The rise of M. S. Gorbachev to power has also been studied by researchers as a separate subject. The election of the relatively young M. S. Gorbachev as General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee in March 1985 signified the arrival of a new generation of leaders in Soviet society4.

After M. S. Gorbachev came to power, a consistent “personnel revolution” was carried out. The aging senior officials of the party and state apparatus who had risen to power during the Brezhnev era were sent into retirement. Approximately 40 percent of the first secretaries of local party committees were replaced. A group of relatively young and energetic leaders gathered around the new Soviet leader. From September 1985, Nikolai I. Ryzhkov served as Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR. The task of developing the ideological foundations of the new political course was entrusted to Alexander N. Yakovlev. The “purge” of the middle- and lower-level nomenklatura can be observed through the example of Moscow. Boris N. Yeltsin, who was elected First Secretary of the Moscow City Party Committee in early 1986, effectively replaced almost the entire party leadership of the capital within approximately one year.

The rise to power of the team headed by M. S. Gorbachev marked a new stage in the history of the USSR, which became known as the period of perestroika (1985–1990). These years represented a contradictory period characterized by attempts to

4 Rajabov Q., Qandov B., Rajabova S. O‘zbekiston tarixining muhim sanalari. – Toshkent: O‘zbekiston, 2015.

understand and resolve the complex set of extremely pressing internal and external problems that had accumulated in Soviet society.

M. Gorbachev's career was characterized by a rapid rise from one position to another, and he did not initially possess a fully independent and clearly formulated political doctrine of his own. When he came to power, there was no clearly established reformist wing within the leadership of the CPSU. However, such a faction quickly emerged. According to the members of the reformist wing, the existing socio-economic system in the USSR was fundamentally stable and possessed considerable potential for development. The principal task, in their view, was to eliminate the obstacles that prevented the full realization of this potential 5.

Like N. S. Khrushchev, during the first years of his tenure as General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, M. Gorbachev was guided by the conviction that the USSR was a great power and hoped that within several years the country would reach the level of developed states in a number of economic indicators 6. This approach led to the proclamation of a policy of accelerating the country's socio-economic development at the April Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee in 1985.

In his speech at the Plenum held on April 23, 1985, M. Gorbachev emphasized: "The main question now is how and at whose expense we can achieve an acceleration of the country's economic development. Having considered this issue in the Politburo, we unanimously concluded that real opportunities existed for this. The task of accelerating growth rates, and accelerating them significantly, can certainly be accomplished; for this purpose, it is necessary to place the intensification of the economy and the acceleration of scientific and technological progress at the center of all our activities, to restructure management and planning, structural and investment policies, to strengthen organization and discipline everywhere, and to fundamentally improve our methods of work".

5 O'zbekistonning yangi tarixi. 2-kitob. O'zbekiston sovet mustamlakachiligi davrida. – Toshkent: Sharq, 2000.
6 Rajabov Q., Qandov B., Rajabova S. O'zbekiston tarixining muhim sanalari. – Toshkent: O'zbekiston, 2015.

Underlying this approach was a new investment policy. It envisaged moving away from “long-delayed construction projects” toward technological reconstruction and the modernization of existing enterprises and production facilities.

At the same time, the rapid development of machine-building, which served as the technological foundation for the entire national economy, was regarded as a task of paramount importance. The accelerated development of machine-building and other sectors based on advanced technologies was expected to enable the Soviet economy to reach world standards by the 1990s. In addition, the program of “acceleration” was intended to activate the “human factor” and mobilize other “hidden reserves” .

According to the initiators of this policy, these innovations were expected to eliminate stagnation within a short period, overcome the Soviet Union’s technological and economic backwardness relative to developed countries, and significantly improve the material well-being of the Soviet population.

A careful look at the words of the country’s principal political figure, who at that time was the party and state leader, reveals that the central authorities intended to preserve their leading role in the USSR, while the union republics were expected to remain subordinate to the requirements of the Center. In other words, the policy of centralization remained in place. However, this policy was now presented and repeatedly promoted through such concepts as “perestroika” and the “acceleration” of development. At the same time, this speech contained an inaccurate assessment of the recent past, which was characterized as a period of “stagnation”.

The policy of perestroika is divided into several stages in historical research.

The first stage of perestroika (1985–1986) was characterized by the implementation of administrative and organizational measures through traditional methods. During this period, the authorities intended to accelerate fundamental economic development by introducing the achievements of scientific and technological progress into production and, on this basis, to activate the “human factor.”

The second stage of perestroika (1987–1989) placed the comprehensive reform of all spheres of society on the political agenda. In essence, this objective was further specified by the Communist ideology in January 1987. At the Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee held in Moscow on January 27–28, 1987, M. S. Gorbachev delivered a report entitled “Perestroika and the Party’s Personnel Policy.” The report focused on the democratization of Soviet society on the basis of glasnost and the implementation of a more effective personnel policy, identifying these as important objectives of political reform 7.

Perestroika created opportunities, to a certain extent, for the expansion of glasnost, democracy, and diversity of opinion. However, it proved impossible to carry out fundamental democratic transformations in the country or to bring the initiated reforms to completion. The worsening economic crisis and growing political instability generated a loss of confidence in the possibility of achieving social justice through political means.

When perestroika began in Soviet society, the crisis in the USSR intensified considerably, affecting virtually every sphere of the country’s life. Under the authoritarian Soviet system, the state monopoly over property and the dominance of the administrative-command system of management became increasingly entrenched. As a result, the rates of production growth, the volume of gross output, and labor productivity declined rapidly, while the alienation of producers from the means of production, the results of their labor, and other aspects of economic activity increased further.

The profound processes of economic disorganization that led to the deterioration of the national economy, together with other factors such as the disregard for the social interests of the population, predetermined the dysfunction of the entire socio-political system. The CPSU’s extensive economic policies, which nevertheless failed to produce the expected results, also contributed significantly to this situation 8.

7 O‘zbekistonning yangi tarixi. 2-kitob. O‘zbekiston sovet mustamlakachiligi davrida. – Toshkent: Sharq, 2000.
8 Rajabov Q., Qandov B., Rajabova S. O‘zbekiston tarixining muhim sanalari. – Toshkent: O‘zbekiston, 2015.

The principal reason why the proclaimed policy of perestroika failed to achieve its objectives was the preservation of the dominant position of the CPSU in the political and social life of the state, as well as the Center's unwillingness to relinquish its control over the union republics. In other words, the central authorities were not prepared to abandon their dominant position or to allow the constituent republics to acquire genuine political and economic autonomy 9.

CONCLUSION. The results of the study demonstrate that Kremlin policy was one of the decisive factors in the formation and development of political life in the Uzbek SSR. Despite the republic's legal status as a union republic, political governance in practice was carried out through the centralized system of the Communist Party.

As a result of Sovietization and political repressions in the 1920s and 1930s, the traditional political and intellectual elite was significantly weakened. It was replaced by a nomenklatura that was loyal to the centralized political system. Although the political system became relatively more stable during the postwar period, the political autonomy of the republic did not expand.

The "Thaw" under Khrushchev and the processes of partial rehabilitation alleviated the most severe forms of repression associated with the Stalinist period, but the monopoly of the Communist Party remained intact. During the 1960s–1980s, the strengthening of the cotton monoculture had a significant impact on political governance as well. The transformation of cotton production targets into political objectives made the republican leadership highly dependent on fulfilling its obligations to the Center.

The "Cotton Case" of the 1980s became one of the most acute manifestations of the contradictions in relations between the Center and the republic. As a result of the campaign, a significant part of the political elite of the Uzbek SSR was subjected to persecution, while deep feelings of distrust and dissatisfaction intensified in the

9 O'zbekistonning yangi tarixi. 2-kitob. O'zbekiston sovet mustamlakachiligi davrida. – Toshkent: Sharq, 2000.

republic's political life. Historical research indicates that this process affected thousands of party and government officials.

During the period of perestroika, the policies of glasnost and democratization contributed to the growth of political activity within Uzbek society. Historical, political, environmental, and national issues that had previously been kept outside public discussion began to be openly debated.

Thus, the influence of Kremlin policy on the political life of the Uzbek SSR can be characterized by three principal features: centralized governance, control over the political elite, and the subordination of the republic's interests to all-Union strategic objectives. At the same time, precisely in the late 1980s, the internal contradictions of this system intensified, becoming one of the factors that accelerated Uzbekistan's movement toward political independence.

In studying the history of the Uzbek SSR, it is important not to limit the analysis of Kremlin policy solely to political repression or centralized governance. Rather, it should be examined comprehensively, taking into account its influence on personnel policy, economic strategy, ideological control, and the formation and development of the republic's political elite.

REFERENCES

1. O‘zbekistonning yangi tarixi. 2-kitob. O‘zbekiston sovet mustamlakachiligi davrida. – Toshkent: Sharq, 2000.
2. Rajabov Q., Qandov B., Rajabova S. O‘zbekiston tarixining muhim sanalari. – Toshkent: O‘zbekiston, 2015.
3. Cucciolla R.M. Legitimation through Self-Victimization: The Uzbek Cotton Affair and its Repression Narrative (1989–1991). Cahiers du monde russe, 2017.
4. Mustafaev J. The “Cotton Affair” and Last Repressive Policy of the Center in Uzbekistan. Central Asian Journal of Social Sciences and History, 2023.

5. Nazarov O.M. “The Cotton Case” – The Last Repressive Policy of the Authoritarian Soviet Regime. Central Asian Journal of Social Sciences and History, 2023.
6. O‘zbekiston tarixi. Oliy ta’lim muassasalari uchun darslik. – Toshkent: Yangi asr avlodi.
7. O‘zbekiston SSR tarixi. – Toshkent: Fan nashriyoti.