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INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC
CONDITIONS: UZBEKISTAN'S EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT.

The study discusses some key issues regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the international relations, the global economy.

According to the author, slackening of economic relation in global economy, the falldown of Gross Domestic Product, has counted against many national economies and for global economy as a whole. In this context, it is also necessary to emphasize that the issue will negatively affect the cultural and humanitarian relations between the countries, which will also affect and slow down the pace of development of international relations after the pandemic. The situation that has developed in the world as a result of a pandemic makes it clear that the emergence of any disease, epidemic, threatens its mass spread among millions of people and not a single country or state is protected from this, and the consequences apply to absolutely all spheres of life of a human being. At present, for many states, along with political and economic problems that need urgent solutions, the construction of hospitals, their equipping and provision of medical personnel, the lack of which is especially acute in the context of the global epidemic, has become especially priority. And, in such conditions, the development of multilateral cooperation is acutely felt, actions together based on the principles of cooperation in solving priority problems.

The following tasks are revealed in the article: study of the situation in the world related to the current spread of the coronavirus, the impact of the pandemic on international relations; measures taken by governments in a pandemic conditions and their effectiveness; Uzbekistan's experience in counteracting the pandemia; strengthening regional cooperation; Uzbekistan's initiatives to combat the pandemia.

The general situation, connected with the spread of the pandemia is examined. The consideration is given to the measures applied by the countries' governments in combating the coronavirus pandemia, as well as their effectiveness. The article presents the experience of Uzbekistan in combating a pandemia, initiatives to combat the crisis, as well as strengthening regional cooperation with neighboring countries at the current stage.

Currently, only the beginning of regional cooperation between Central Asian states is observed. The study of the issues of spread of coronavirus, and its impact on international relations are not well-defined. Since the pandemic has spread throughout the world, there are a lot of questions

for research, not only large-scale, but also local in nature. In the course of the work, the author applied a systematic approach.

Introduction

Today, in the age of global development, it is impossible to consider modern international relations without the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which shocked the whole world, and it is important to be aware of its far-reaching consequences. The pandemic entailed a developing global financial crisis, led the country's budget to unforeseen costs, which are aimed not only at combating the virus directly, but also at the production of medicines, etc., but also at the current logistic problem. International tourism, international transport communication, domestic services, cultural activities, non-food trade were seriously affected. Governments of states affected by the pandemic started making decisions regarding the support of the economy, the reduction of tax and loan repayments were approved. First of all, have reduced the taxes for small and medium business. Banks were obliged not to charge loan taxes temporarily. In turn, this actualizes the study of processes associated with the spread of the pandemic, as well as the degree of its influence on various aspects of society, which is the purpose of this work. On that basis it is reasonable to consider the following tasks: **First**, study of the situation in the world at present connected with the spread of the coronavirus, the affect of the pandemic to the international relations; **second**, measured taken by the governments in conditions of the pandemic and their effectiveness; **third**, experience of Uzbekistan on counteraction against pandemic; **fourth**, strengthening regional cooperation; **fifth**, Initiatives of Uzbekistan in fight with the pandemic.

Currently, only the beginning of regional cooperation between Central Asian states is observed. The study of the issues of spread of coronavirus, and its impact on international relations are not well-defined. Since the pandemic has spread throughout the world, there are a lot of questions for research, not only large-scale, but also local in nature. In the course of the work, the author applied a systematic approach. The monitoring of the situation was performed in such sources as Prezident.uz, (Official web-site of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan), mfa.uz (official site of the Ministry of International affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan), dunyo.info (official site of the News agency «Dunyo» MIA of the Republic of Uzbekistan), jahonnews.uz, the site coronavirus.uz, as well as the internet source of Central Asian governments. Considering the problem as a whole, we have identified several groups on the investigation of this issue. In the first group we attributed research aimed at studying the occurrence of coronavirus.[1] In the second group, we included data from sources related to the spread of a pandemic around the world with statistics.[2] The third group of researchers examines the issues of modern global affairs, as well as the fight against pandemics in the world.[3] The fourth group considers issues of international cooperation, as well as regional cooperation in conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic.[4] Finally, the fifth group examines the issues on state of the world after the pandemic.[5]

Main part

1. Situation connected with the spread of the pandemic. The first cases of pneumonia of unknown origin were discovered at the end of December 2019 in the city Wuhan (China). On December 31, 2019, Chinese authorities informed the World Health Organization (WHO) of an outbreak of an unknown pneumonia. On January 30, WHO recognized the outbreak of the new coronavirus as an emergency. On March 11, 2020, WHO announced that the outbreak became pandemic, and on March 13 that Europe became its center.[6]

Currently, every state is fighting the pandemic on its own territory, but, unfortunately, this plague knows no boundaries.

Formidable challenges, which the states are facing, regardless of the development, force to revise the priorities involuntarily.

First of all, this led the budget of the countries to unforeseen costs, which are aimed not only at the fight with the virus directly, and production of the medicines and etc., but also at the existing logistic problem. **Secondly**, in conditions of the pandemic, governments are forced to take measures to ensure quarantine in the country and strict compliance with it, to prevent infection and intense spread. Indeed, the massed mortality observed in countries, especially in European countries, the USA and Iran, not to mention China itself, where the outbreak of the coronavirus began, led to heavy human losses. **Thirdly**, provision of medical personnel and hospitals, the lack of which is especially acute in the conditions of the global epidemic. And despite the developed economy, and worse, if not developed, the virus continues to grow and affects more and more of the world's population. Naturally, this is a kind of a challenge of nature to humanity, on which we have to take a thought, but the events happening in the world today do not give us time to make a lyrical digression and raise the urgent question of solving problems as quickly and efficiently as possible, implement projects designed to combat the pandemic in a timely manner.

The issue of the country's security has always been the most important one, and the responsibilities its provision have been strategically set exclusively based on the national interests of the government. Here it is important to understand, that the situation at hand in the world as a consequence of the pandemic, allows us to understand clearly, that the occurrence of any disease, epidemics, threatens its mass distribution among millions of people and not a single country, and not one state is protected from this, and the consequences apply to absolutely all spheres of human life. So today we can clearly say that the growing mortality resulting from the coronavirus pandemic is tantamount to war.

The prevailing situation in the world insinuates, that not any government is capable of dealing with this scary pandemic alone. And the principles of unity, cooperation and mutual assistance should become the guide for action against this scary disease.

As known, China, being first to face this disease, showed all countries on its own experience, how to fight with the spread of the virus. In all the provinces with a high number of sickened of the disease, the most severe quarantine was introduced. The fight with the pandemic and introduction of a quarantine in the entire country have strongly affected to the country's economy.

Further, in Japan, demise on the stock market, decrease of the volume of trade, in the tourism sector, destruction of global supply chain, self-isolation of the population, shift of the Olympic games – 2020 negatively reflected the economy of the country. Following the result of February of 2020 47% of Japanese companies recorded reduction of profit, herewith 42% companies had more than 30% of reduction. [7]

Record-breaking rapid spread of coronavirus at the territory of the USA already has serious consequences for the population and the economy; key financial institutions of the USA perform the monitoring of the situation and make adjustments to measures taken on the daily basis. By some estimates, letup of the economy brings to the drop of the GDP of the USA up to 40% in the second quarter. Less drastic estimates make –12,4% for the second quarter, but there is no any doubt that the USA is on the threshold of a serious decline in economic activity. [8]

According to the analysis of Jeffrey Frankel from Harvard University, “the outbreak of the virus combined with the trade policy of the president of the USA Donald Trump can inaugurate the passing of an era, when escalating international trade supported global peace and prosperity”. The threat to global growth is more significant today, given that in the past decade, China’s economy has grown significantly slower than before, and the current forecast of the IMF for China has already reduced to 5.6% for 2020 — which makes the lowest level since 1990, while that another scenario warns of a slowdown in China's GDP growth to 3.5%. “This could make global growth more difficult, - Frankel points out, as the global economy is more dependent on China than ever. [9]

According to the estimates of the agency Bloomberg, banks JPMorgan and Citigroup the recession will be short-lived, however the national economies – even with unprecedented levels of monetary and fiscal stimulus - it will take more than one year to catch up on the missed these months.

According to the research of the American Institute of International Finance, IIF amid the spread of the coronavirus the rate of the joint debt of all countries according to the results of the current year can increase to 342% of the world’s GDP. (In 2019 it grew up to the record 322% (\$255 trillion). This indicator, calculated and quarterly updated by IIF analysts, includes debts of governments, banks, non-financial corporations and households. Now it is 40 percentage points (\$ 87 trillion) higher than the indicator at the beginning of the 2008 financial crisis. As a result of such indicators the development of the poverty is inevitably, and referring to the information from Oxfam (international association of anti-poverty organizations) – the cost impact of the pandemic can lead to immiserization about 500 million more inhabitants of the planet. [10]

As of May 9, 4 044 797 cases of infections were confirmed in 212 countries and territories, 277 089 fatal outcomes, 1 405 050 people recovered, mortality from all registered completed cases of infection is 16%, and from all registered cases - 6.9%. The regions most affected by the pandemic in terms of deaths are the USA, Europe (Italy, Spain, France, Great Britain, Belgium, Germany), Iran.[11]

On March 23, 2020, the IMF head Kristalina Georgieva held a conference call with the ministers of finance of G20, where she announced that the International Monetary Fund expects a recession in the global economy due to coronavirus in 2020, prospects of global growth -negative. The expected recession is as serious as during the global financial crisis of 2008-2009, but recovery is expected in 2021. Countries with the developing economy were stranded due to the coronavirus, has pointed out the head of MFI. Outflow of the capital equaled to 83 billion dollars since the beginning of the crisis, which is an absolute record in history. [12]

The rupture of economic ties in the global economy, the fall in gross domestic product, will negatively affect many national economies and the global economy as a whole. In this context it is necessary to point out, that the issue will negatively affect and on the cultural and humanitarian relations between the countries, which will also affect and slowdown the development rate of the international relations after the pandemic.

Situation on hand in the world due to the pandemic, allows to understand clearly, that the appearance of any disease, pandemic, threatens mass distribution among the millions of the population and not any country and any government is protected from it, and the outcomes relate to absolutely all spheres of human life. At present, for many states, along with political and economic problems requiring urgent solutions, the construction of hospitals, their equipping and provision of medical personnel, the lack of which is

especially acute in the context of the global epidemic, has become especially priority. And, in these conditions, the development of multilateral cooperation, pooling of interests, on the grounds of principle of mutual interaction in the solution of high-priority problems is keenly felt.

Naturally, today's pandemic is a kind of nature's challenge to humanity, which we need to think about, but the events taking place in the world today do not give us time to make lyrical digression and raise the urgent question of solving problems as quickly and efficiently as possible, implement projects designed to combat timely with a pandemic.

2. Action taken and the effectiveness. In the context of the pandemic, the governments have to take measures on provision of quarantine in the country and strictly follow them in order to prevent the infection and deeper spread. Globally, the unprecedented measures are taken to combat the spread of coronavirus infection, including through the introduction of restrictions on the movement of people and business interruption.

The companies working on internet are freed from the value added tax. Money stimulates the creation of new online platforms. From the social insurance fund, enterprises are compensated for salary payments, unemployment insurance payments during downtime. Issued the stabilization loans for enterprises, encouraged the cooperation of large corporations with SMEs. Key small and medium enterprises are supported to control and prevent the spread of the epidemic. Measures are being taken to digitalize services: new technology is implemented, business-practices (noncontact delivery, automated trade), business-models (transfer of the services in the education sphere, trade, entertainment, medicine to online). [13]

As is known, from January 22, 2020 the Wuhan city was closed to quarantine; from January 24— urban districts adjacent to Wuhan. The virus was recorded in all administrative establishments of Provincial-Recognized China.

Starting from the middle of March 2020 most of the EU limited or totally restricted crossing their borders nationwide. External borders of the EU and the Schengen zone became temporarily closed for the foreigners.

On March 13, 2020 the president of the USA Donald Trump restricted entrance to the USA from Schengen zone countries.

Similar measures were taken by many other countries. [14]

3. Uzbekistan's experience on counterattacking pandemic. Outbreak of the coronavirus infection has forced the countries, affected by it to put in place the quarantine. As the experience of China has shown, this is the only right step and a necessary measure to curb the spread of the virus.

This has caused a sharp decline in production and consumption in major economies, disruption of global production chains and trade relations, price decline for the commodities and worsening of conjuncture on global financial markets.

In connection with the coronavirus infection, starting from March 16, 2020 holidays were announced in Uzbekistan for all educational institutions, the transportation communication with other countries stopped, festivities for celebration of Navruz were canceled and public places stopped working. It should be noted that the abovementioned decision were taken by the government on putting in place of a self-isolation and quarantine, upon the first case of a COVID – 19, reported in Uzbekistan.

Being the part of a global economic system, the economy of Uzbekistan, is also affected by these factors, which requires the adoption of effective proactive measures to mitigate their negative impact. In this regard, special attention must

be paid to supporting and ensuring the sustainability of such rapidly developing sectors of the economy of the republic as tourism, transport, pharmaceutical and textile industries. In order to ensure macroeconomic stability, uninterrupted operation of industries and economic sectors, stimulate foreign economic activity, provide effective social support to the population during the period of counteracting the spread of coronavirus infection and other global risks, and prevent a sharp decline in incomes of the country's population, an Anti-Crisis Fund was established under the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Uzbekistan at the initiative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the amount of 10 trillion soums. [15]

The guidelines of usage of the fund amounts of the Anti-crisis fund was determined as follows:

a) funding of the actions on anti-spread of coronavirus infection (including: provision of medical and other institutions with medicines and medical devices, protective drugs and test systems necessary to combat the spread of coronavirus infection;

covering the maintenance costs during the quarantine of people at risk or in contact with infected people, etc.;

allocation of additional funds for financial incentives for medical workers,

б) business support and employment of population;

в) expansion of social support for the population;

г) ensuring sustainable functioning of economic sectors. [16]

In record-breaking time – the quarantine center for 10 thousand places was built within 5 in Urtachirchik district of Tashkent region. Also the first step of construction of two isolation centers for 5 thousand places was completed in the region. The equipping of modular clinics for a thousand places, as well as quarantine points has begun in Surkhandarya, Namangan and Navoi regions. [17]

Uzbekistan's approaches to the fight against coronavirus and the negative impact of a pandemic on the national economy attract the attention of foreign public and experts. For example, the owner of the publication “Diplomatic World” Barbara Dietrich and senior researcher at the European Institute for Asian Studies Alberto Turkstra evaluated the actions of Uzbekistan at the national and regional levels:- «...IN the face of extreme globe-spanning crisis of the public health care, Uzbekistan has taken adequate measure to ensure that the impact of the crisis is limited, short-term and manageable, - European experts считают европейские эксперты. - At the national level, it was especially important for Uzbekistan to protect small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) from the negative consequences of this crisis, since it is they who account for a significant reduction (and in some cases, complete cessation) of economic activity in non-essential areas. Important measures were taken on decrease of the fiscal load on entrepreneurs. For example, business-entities of the tourism industry were exempt from property tax till the end of the current year ». [18]

In this regard, it is necessary to point that the effectiveness of the anti-recessionary measures taken by the states depends largely on the exchange of trustworthy information on the regular basis, as well the experience of participation of the national institutes on human rights in the counteraction to COVID-19.

In the process of the video conference between the Director of the National Center of the Republic of Uzbekistan on human rights Akmal Saidov and the head of the regional department of the High Commission of the UNO on human rights for Central Asia Richard Commanda and UN Resident Coordinator in

Uzbekistan Helena Fraser was discussed the wide range of issues in the sphere of human rights protection in condition of the pandemic COVID-19, particularly were discussed strictly necessary, but at the same time effective, adequate measures for the threat, taken by the management of Uzbekistan on fight with the spread of the coronavirus and lowering inevitable consequences of human rights impact, eminently to the rights of more vulnerable persons. The effectiveness of anti-crisis measures taken by states largely depends on the exchange of reliable information on a regular basis, as well as on the experience of the participation of national human rights institutions in countering COVID-19. [19]

4. Strengthening regional cooperation. Also, in order to prevent the spread of coronavirus infection and effectively counteract the consequences of the pandemic in the region, the Republic of Uzbekistan pays special attention to the issues of cooperation and close coordination of countries.

As the Head of State noted, “close cooperation with foreign countries, primarily with neighboring countries, will be carried out at the level of current requirements, on the basis of the principles of mutual trust and consideration of mutual interests. [20]

Full mutual support is observed, taken in the countries of the region top priority preventive measures and control over the epidemiologic situation.

The head of the country constantly maintains ties with the Presidents of neighboring countries. Concerning the spread of coronavirus epidemic, the leaders of the region exchange ideas on current epidemiological condition in the countries and Central Asian region. In respect thereof, it is necessary to point out that the effectiveness of the crisis response measures taken by the government to a large extent from the exchange of exact information on the regular basis, as well as the experience of participation of national institutions on human rights in counteraction to COVID-19.

At the video conference «Experience of European countries on prevention and fight against Covid-19» organized by the Pakistan Center of global and strategic research, which was attended by the heads of diplomatic missions of Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Russia in Islamabad, representatives of the ministries of defense, ministry of healthcare of Pakistan, leading expert and analytical quarter and the media, an expert on Central Asian countries emphasized that the republic was one of the first in Central Asia to timely generate the \$ 1 billion Anti-Crisis Fund, which is aimed at large-scale measures to combat the spread of coronavirus infection, support for entrepreneurship, employment, including the implementation of infrastructure projects to ensure the sustainable functioning of economic sectors. «Effective anti-recessionary measures of the President of Uzbekistan became effective not only on the state level, but also gained regional nature, since the republic started regular supplies of humanitarian cargo into the neighboring countries, as well as CIS countries. This, therefore, once more demonstrates sincere, peaceable and good neighborly international policy of Uzbekistan», - declared the expert on Central Asian countries M. Khasan Khan. [21]

On March 18, 2020 President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. M. Mirziyoyev had a telephone conversation with the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Zhomart Tokaev. During the conversation, the current epidemiological situation and the unprecedented measures being taken in the countries to prevent the spread of coronavirus infection were discussed in detail. The importance of continued close collaboration and the implementation of coordinated actions in order to effectively combat the pandemic and minimize possible consequences was emphasized.

Presidents of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Kazakhstan also vital questions of bilateral cooperation and regional convocation were

considered. Particularly noted the importance of timely practical implementation of agreements, achieved at the higher level. [22]

There was a telephone conversation between the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.M. Mirziyoyev and the first President of the Republic of Kazakhstan _Elbasi Nursultan Nazarbayev on March 20, 2020. In the course of the conversation was expressed the full support on resolute actions on prevention of the spread of coronavirus infection taken in two countries, as well as the lowering of its negative effect on sustainable social-economic development, and modern dynamics of Uzbek-Kazakh diversified relations. Was pointed out the importance of continuing effective coordination and close collaboration at government level. Also, vital aspects of bilateral cooperation were considered during the conversation, an exchange of views took place on issues of regional cooperation and the international agenda. [23]

On March 18, 2020 the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. M. Mirziyoyev had a telephone conversation with the President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguli Berdimukhamedov. The heads of two countries pointedly addressed the questions of strengthening of Uzbek –Turkmen relations of friendship, good-neighborliness and strategic partnership, as well as the expanding multifaceted cooperation, first of all in trade, economic, energy and transport communications. Took place the exchange of views on actual issues of regional cooperation in Central Asia and international policy. Special attention is given to the importance of effective cooperation on the government level with a view of ensuring effective fight with the spread of coronavirus pandemic and prevention of its negative effect on bilateral connections. Particularly it was noted that at this tough time Turkmenistan is ready to provide all possible assistance and overcome new challenges together. [24]

On April 9, 2020, a telephone conversation took place between the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. M. Mirziyoyev and the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rakhmon. The heads of states exchanges views on the current epidemiological situation in both of the countries and the Central Asian region due to the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. Was emphasized the importance of developing coordinated measures, prompt mutual assistance and continued close contacts between the relevant medical and other services involved in order to effectively combat coronavirus. The necessity of taking leading steps to minimize the negative impact of the pandemic on the dynamics of the development of bilateral relations of good neighborliness and strategic partnership was emphasized. The priority areas are identified trade, economic, investment, financial and transport and communications, as well as ongoing projects in the framework of inter-regional exchanges, including between the capitals - Tashkent and Dushanbe. During the conversation, the Presidents of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan also considered some topical issues of regional cooperation and the international agenda. [25]

On March 26, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan had a telephone conversation with the President of the Islamic Republic Afghanistan Mukhammad Ashraf Gani. The President Asraf Gani expressed special gratitude for the practical assistance of Uzbekistan in countering coronavirus. It was noted that the railway "Hairaton-Mazari-Sharif" built and exploited by Uzbek specialists, for supply of electrical energy, food and industrial production, as well as the unimpeded transit of trade and humanitarian cargo through the territory of our country and other provided support are the important factor in the fight with the pandemic. The heads of the states pointed the importance of further close coordination of actions and taking decisive steps on control over the sanitary and epidemiological situation in two countries. Presidents also considered the actual issues of bilateral cooperation, first of all in trade, economic, energy and transport-communication spheres, and also

exchanged views on the international agenda. An agreement was reached on intensifying efforts to prepare and implement joint infrastructure projects designed to ensure the sustainable development of Afghanistan and increase the welfare of the people of the country. [26]

On April 6, 2020, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan A. Kamilov held a telephone conversation with the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Hanif Atmar. Khanif Atmar expressed deep gratitude to President of Uzbekistan Sh. M. Mirziyoyev for the unequivocal support provided by Uzbekistan to international efforts in a political settlement of the crisis in Afghanistan. He also thanked the Uzbek side for humanitarian aid in the form of medicines in demand and food products. Heads of foreign services also exchanged views on bilateral issues and a number of regional policy issues. [27]

In its turn, the Republic of Uzbekistan provides friendly assistance to neighboring states as well as CIS countries in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

So, on April 1, 2020 by the initiative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the humanitarian support was sent to the neighboring country Kirgizstan for prevention of the spread of coronavirus. The train loaded with 1 000 tons of flour, various food products, respirators, gloves, protective glasses, pyrometers and test-systems, used for the prevention of the spread of the coronavirus infection was sent into the neighboring country from the railway station in Kurgantepa district of Andijan region. Earlier, Uzbekistan sent humanitarian aid twice to China, Iran, Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan to combat coronavirus. In turn, the UAE, China and the United States assisted Uzbekistan in the fight against coronavirus. [28]

On April 9, 2020 by the initiative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan the humanitarian support was sent to Tajikistan. The cargo sent to combat the pandemic contained medical products, primarily necessary to prevent the spread of an invisible disaster, and food products. Protective overalls, glasses, liquid sodium hypochloride, respirators, gloves, pyrometers, flour-based food were sent to Tajikistan.[29] In order to support friendly CIS countries, the Republic of Uzbekistan sent humanitarian aid to Russia, Belarus, and Azerbaijan.

On April 12, 2020 Uzbekistan sent the humanitarian aid to Belarus to support the fight of the country against coronavirus. The Uzbek side handed over disposable overalls, respirators, goggles, latex gloves and masks - a total of 513 thousands protective equipment. Also 500 running meters of gauze, 50 thousand packs of antiseptics and 10 thousand liters of medical alcohols we sent by air ". [30]

According to the Ordinance of the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan on April 14, 2020 года, humanitarian support in the form of medication was sent to Azerbaijan. [31]

Therefore, on April 19, 2020 Azerbaijan sent to Uzbekistan humanitarian aid as personal protection equipment and other medical accessories. Baku sent disposable syringes, shoe covers, bedding, antiseptics, disinfectants, liquid soap, solid soap and medical alcohols. [32]

The first lot of humanitarian assistance by Uzbekistan to Russia was sent on April 18, 2020. The shipment contains medical masks. In total 5 million masks were sent to Russian, as well as the medical gauze.

Deputy Chairman of Russia Alexei Overchuk expressed gratitude to the people and Government of Uzbekistan for support, which is very important for Russia. "The received medical devices will be sent, first of all, to those who are working at the forefront of the fight against the pandemic ... We know that the

people of Uzbekistan themselves are suffering from the coronavirus infection. However, nevertheless, Uzbekistan decided to share the most necessary with Russia, demonstrating mutual assistance, examples of which fill our common history". [33]

Also, Uzbekistan, in accordance with the order of the President, sent to Afghanistan humanitarian assistance of 600 tons containing medical masks, protective overalls, thermal imagers, pyrometers, flour, oil, rice, laundry soap and clothes for children.

As known, over the past few years, considerable efforts have been made by Uzbekistan to build positive mutual relations with various political groups in Afghanistan, efforts to establish peace in Afghanistan, the development of mutual trade, diversification of transport routes for the export of domestic products.

As you know, due to the ongoing conflict at the territory of Afghanistan, healthcare remains extremely poorly developed, which in the conditions of an outbreak of the epidemic can lead to rather serious consequences. If a country is unable to cope with coronavirus, then it can remain closed for a long time, even after the peak of the pandemic in the world. Representatives of the Ministry of Healthcare of Afghanistan said that half of the population of Afghanistan - 16 million people - is at risk of infection. In the worst case scenario, the epidemic in Afghanistan could last until the end of the year.

In addition, Afghanistan depends significantly on foreign trade, food and medical imports. Import of Afghanistan in recent years is at the level of 7-8 billion dollars. In 2018, agricultural and food products accounted for \$ 2.5 billion, which is one third of total imports. Pharmaceutical products were also imported the same year accounting to 90 million USD. Situation with the spread of the coronavirus is starting to reflect on the import of Afghanistan. Extension of a shutdown of the borders for shipment can negatively affect the commodity situation in Afghanistan.

Not less acute problem is that the COVID-19 develops during the period of political instability in connection with the results of president elections, which also affects the dynamics of the inter-Afghan dialogue. MIA of Uzbekistan announced that Uzbekistan welcomes the agreement of the Afghanistan leaders on formation of an inclusive negotiation team. This step should become crucial on the way to peaceful regulations of internal political crisis. The implementation of achieved agreements on cessation of hostilities and blasts are of the utmost importance at this stage, transfer to the national inter-Afghan dialogue with the participation of all parties concerned, including the "Taliban".

Uzbekistan is determined to develop and strengthen relations of friendship and good-neighborly relations with the people of Afghanistan, as well as to support the process of establishing a durable and long-term peace in the country. [34]

Evaluation the actions of Uzbekistan at the regional level, the head of publishing «Diplomatic World» Barbara Dietrich and the chief researcher of the European Institute for Asian Studies Alberto Turkstra, noted: - «At the regional level, Uzbekistan, on one side, is studying the best practices of such countries as Japan, which could successfully and effectively keep the spread of coronavirus at early stages. It is important, that during this crisis, requiring the government so many resources, states were not focused only on internal actions. Here, of course, solidarity with neighbors is needed. In this regard, Uzbekistan is the role model. The president of the country Shavkat Mirziyoyev calls the heads of states of Central Asia to coordinate efforts. Diplomacy and policy of goodwill of Uzbekistan were demonstrated when the republic sent the humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan – the country, the healthcare system of which was severely weakened by decades of conflicts. These actions should be

regarded in the context of relevancy of efforts, taken by Uzbekistan for integration of Afghanistan into the processes of regional cooperation in Central Asia. We also see that Uzbekistan rejects the politicization in conditions of global pandemic of the healthcare. It is life and health that are of paramount importance and are placed above other considerations. [35]

5. Initiatives of Uzbekistan to combat the pandemic. In his speech at the extraordinary summit of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States devoted to the coordination of common efforts in the fight against the spread of coronavirus, which took place on April 10, 2020 in the form of a video conference, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. M. Mirziyoyev noted that the extremely dangerous situation in the world requires taking urgent and effective measures not only at the national level, but also regionally and internationally. The President shared information on the uncompromising struggle against coronavirus in the country, spoke about quarantine measures introduced in accordance with the recommendations and requirements of the World Health Organization (WHO). In order to take effective practical measures to effectively counter the consequences of the spread of coronavirus infection, the President put forward a number of specific proposals, which include:

a) formation of an ongoing simultaneous system of epidemiological monitoring within the frames of Turkic Council; b) building wide mutual exchange of information and experience in the field of prevention, diagnosis, treatment of especially dangerous infections, epidemiological studies and scientific research in this area between the ministries of health of the Turkic Council states; c) creation of a pandemic coordinating group in the Secretariat of the Turkic Council, which should establish close working contacts with national headquarters operating in the participating countries; d) creation of a separate database for operative clarification of the measures implemented by the governments of Turkic council, wide mutual experience exchange and its application; e) in order to ensure uninterrupted supply of the population with necessary food products, medicines, medical products, it is necessary to fully utilize the capabilities of the cargo transportation infrastructure and transport communications; for the prompt resolution of emerging issues and effective coordination in the field of transport and logistics, it is necessary to create a Working Group, which will include the heads of the ministries of transport of the Turkic Council; f) установление партнёрских отношений между ВОЗ и Тюркским советом. [36]

All the suggestions and initiatives of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan were included into the concluding document of the extraordinary summit– Baku declaration. This important document will become the political and legal basis for the implementation of the achieved agreements within the frames of meetings of Heads of Turkic Speaking States. [37]

Conclusion

The pandemic COVID-19 of negative nature became the global event of our era. Its depth and scale are colossal. It is necessary to point out that the crisis of public healthcare, as well as the financial –economic crisis, which with its consequences, by the expectation of the analysts can overcome the global financial crisis of 2008-2009. It is not only about the global healthcare crisis, but also about the inevitable stimulus to qualitative changes in politics, economy, and social environment.

In the current difficult situation, regional mutual assistance, coordination of actions and information exchange are extremely important in overcoming all the negative consequences of the pandemic. It is necessary to monitor global

trends and take them into account when building your own internal and external priorities.

Solidarity of regional efforts in resisting the pandemic requires further strengthening of regional mutually beneficial cooperation, as well as expanding the range of measures on economic cooperation between countries. Strategic planning, mutual support, and a balanced foreign policy can become key factors in quick overcoming the coronavirus pandemic and stabilizing the socio-economic situation in Central Asia.

The prevailing situation in the world makes it clear that no state is able to cope with this terrible pandemic alone. And the principles of unity, cooperation and mutual assistance should become a guide to action against this terrible disease.

Now, more than ever, international cooperation has a vital meaning, without which it will be impossible to prevent the long-term economic consequences of this crisis. Close cooperation with regional partners, with which multifaceted cooperation has been dynamically developing in recent years, is especially important.

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