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## MEDIA IMAGE AS AN IMPORTANT MEANING OF UZBEKISTAN'S IMAGE FORMATION: THEORETICAL AND COGNITIVE ASPECTS

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## Beruniy Alimov

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### MEDIA IMAGE AS AN IMPORTANT MEANING OF UZBEKISTAN'S IMAGE FORMATION: THEORETICAL AND COGNITIVE ASPECTS

#### ANNOTATION

This article analyzes that the media image is an important tool for shaping the image of the country and the theoretical and cognitive aspects of the image.

We perceive an object or event through our senses, see and hear them. We understand and comprehend the new information received. They are then placed in our memory as a definite quality mark, image, or 'piece of symbol'. Therefore, in the modern media space, it is important to understand the content of information about a country, positive or negative information about the image of the region, to understand the realities of what is happening in the region. In the same process, the person who reads the news is the executor of the cognitive activity.

There is a "subject-object relationship" between the subject, that is, the person and the area that is the object of cognitive activity. The main issue is the perception of the person receiving the information in relation to that country. How the country is perceived by the recipient of the information is always important.

The nature of any image is closely related to the information stored in the subconscious. For this reason, the study of image in a cognitive context is required.

The problem of formation and development of the regional image is one of the interdisciplinary studies from the theoretical and methodological point of view. That is, it is not just a problem

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### МЕДИА ИМИЖ ЎЗБЕКИСТОН ИМИЖИ ШАКЛЛАНИШИНИНГ МУҲИМ ВОСИТАСИ СИФАТИДА: НАЗАРИЙ ВА КОГНИТИВ АСПЕКТЛАР

#### АННОТАЦИЯ

Мақолада медиаобраз мамлакат имижини шакллантиришнинг муҳим воситаси эканлиги ва имижнинг назарий-когнитив аспекти таҳлил этилади.

Бирон бир предмет ёки воқеа-ҳодисани айнан сезгиларимиз орқали ҳис этамиз, уларни кўрамиз, эштамиз. Олинган янги маълумотни эса тушунамиз, англаймиз ҳамда идрок этамиз. Шундан сўнг хотирамизга улар аниқ бир сифат белгиси, имиж ёки «рамз парчаси» сифатида жойлашади. Шу боисдан замонавий медиа маконда бирор-бир мамлакат ҳақидаги ахборотлар, худуднинг имижига дахлдор ижобий ёки салбий маълумотлар мазмунини англаш, худудда содир бўлаётган воқеликни атрофлича идрок этиш, тушуниш муҳим ҳисобланади. Айни жараёнда янгиликни ўқиган одам – билиш фаолиятининг ижрочисидир.

Субъект, яъни шахс ҳамда билиш фаолиятининг объекти бўлмиш худуд ўртасида «субъект – объект муносабати» пайдо бўлади. Асосий масала – ахборотни олаётган шахснинг айнан ўша мамлакатга нисбатан шаклланидиган тасаввурidir. Ахборотни қабул қилувчи томонидан мамлакатнинг қандай идрок этилиши ҳар доим муҳим ҳисобланади.

Ҳар қандай имиж табиатан онгостида сақланидиган маълумотлар билан чамбарчас боғлиқ. Шу сабабдан имижни когнитив кон-

facing the science of journalism or mass communications. The issue is multidisciplinary, including sociology, imageology, economics, political science, philosophy, linguistics, especially cognitive linguistics, and can be studied in various aspects.

Cognitiveness is a scientific phenomenon that connects language with thinking, that is, consciousness, and explores in deep theoretical aspects the integral connection of psychological, biological, and neurophysiological aspects with social, cultural, and linguistic phenomena in the formation of a particular imagination. According to scholars, cognitive linguistics in this respect is divided into various sub-branches such as psycholinguistics, anthropolinguistics, ethnolinguistics, sociolinguistics.

In this research, we tried to study the role of journalism in the formation and development of the country's image, the cognitive impact of the language of the media on the consciousness of the public (audience).

**Key words:** country image, cognition, media, media image, journalists, media text, influence on consciousness, information, media space.

текстда ўрганиш талаб этилади.

Худуд имижини шакллантириш ва уни ривожлантириш муаммоси назарий методологик жиҳатдан олиб қараганда фанлараро (interdisciplinary) тадқиқотлар сирасига қиради. Яъни бу фақат журналистика фани ёки оммавий коммуникациялар олдига турган муаммо эмас. Сўз юритилаётган масала кўп тармоқли бўлиб, у жумладан, социология, имижеология, иқтисодиёт, сиёсатшунослик, фалсафа, тилшунослик, хусусан, когнитив тилшунослик каби фан соҳаларининг “чорраҳаси” да вужудга келади ва у турли аспектларда ўрганилиши мумкин.

Когнитивлик илмий ҳодиса бўлиб, у тилни тафаккур, яъни онг билан боғлаб, маълум бир тасаввурнинг ҳосил бўлишидаги психологик, биологик ва нейрофизиологик жиҳатларнинг ижтимоий, маданий ва лисоний ҳодисалар билан узвий алоқасини чуқур назарий аспектларда тадқиқ этади. Олимларнинг эътирофича, когнитив тилшунослик бу жиҳатдан психолингвистика, антрополингвистика, этнолингвистика, социолингвистика каби турли кичик тармоқларга бўлинади.

Тадқиқот доирасида мамлакат имижини шакллантириш ва ривожлантиришда журналистиканинг ўрни, ОАВ тилининг омма (аудитория) онгига когнитив жиҳатдан таъсири ўрганилди.

**Калит сўзлар:** мамлакат имижини, когнитивлик, ОАВ, медиаобраз, журналистлар, медиа-матн, онгостига таъсир, ахборот, медиамакон.

### **The issue of the information about the image of the country and its impact on the consciousness of the recipients**

The word *cognitive* (Latin, English) is derived from the word *cognize*, which means to know, understand, comprehend and think, or *cognition* – to know, understand [[http://arslonov.blogspot.com/2012/01/blog-post\\_12.html](http://arslonov.blogspot.com/2012/01/blog-post_12.html)]. Cognitive activity in its place is a phenomenon associated with the direct perception and perception of reality by man.

*Cognitive* – is a holistic set of all the knowledge and information that can be gained about anything by reading or gaining experience [Shatil, 2013]. The Cambridge Dictionary defines the word *cognitive* as a concept related to thinking and conscious mental processes [<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/cognitive>].

According to Uzbek researcher Z. Aslanov, "intuition prepares the ground for

the formation of a symbol of a piece of reality in thinking" [[http://arslonov.blogspot.com/2012/01/blog-post\\_12.html](http://arslonov.blogspot.com/2012/01/blog-post_12.html)]. That is, we perceive an object or event through our senses, see and hear them. We understand and comprehend the new information received.

They are then placed in our memory as a definite quality mark, image, or 'piece of symbol'. Therefore, in the modern media space, it is important to understand the content of information about a country, positive or negative information about the image of the region, to understand the realities of what is happening in the region. In the same process, the person who reads the news is the executor of the cognitive activity.

There is a "subject-object relationship" between the subject, that is, the person and the area that is the object of cognitive activity. The main issue is the perception of the person receiving the information in relation to that country. How the country is perceived by the recipient of the information is always important.

The nature of any image is closely related to the information stored in the subconscious. For this reason, the study of image in a cognitive context is required. A.A. Tlepbergenova, a researcher from Kazakhstan, writes in her book "The Image of the Country" that "most of our knowledge of the world consists of concepts at the image level" [Tlepbergenova, 2011; 13].

This can be taken as a confirmation of our above opinion. When attention is paid to the etymological basis of cognition, it is not limited to the theory of knowledge in philosophy. Especially in the current globalization era of information, cognition, for example:

- in the field of information and communication technologies – robotics and the formation of artificial intelligence;
- in defense and security – the implementation of new generation cognitive technologies;
- in medicine – in particular, in pharmaceuticals, psychotherapy and neuroimaging;
- in linguistics – the cognitive direction is closely related to the analysis at the lexical-semantic level, according to which language is not only a general cognitive mechanism, but also a system of signs that perform the function of presenting, transmitting and modifying information as a cognitive weapon [[http://arslonov.blogspot.com/2012/01/blog-post\\_12.html](http://arslonov.blogspot.com/2012/01/blog-post_12.html)];
- and more directly in several other areas.

According to the Uzbek scholar Sh. Safarov, the task of cognitive linguistics is to study and preserve knowledge through language, to use and transmit language in practice, in general, to study the language system and its structure as a reflection in the human brain. There is more information about this in the researcher's monograph "Pragmalinguistics" [Safarov, 2008; 318].

According to another Uzbek expert, A. Abduazizov, the center of complex phenomena such as the formation, transmission and conscious storage of speech is

carried out by brain neurons [[http://arslonov.blogspot.com/2012/01/blog-post\\_12.html](http://arslonov.blogspot.com/2012/01/blog-post_12.html)].

In our view, in the next 10-15 years, there will be no front without the introduction of cognitive technologies.

Today, raising the country's image is one of the newest and most promising areas of modern public relations. It has a direct impact on the further political, economic and cultural development of the republic. For this reason, it is important to conduct research in this area, to involve in a comprehensive analysis of image-related tools.

### **Uzbekistan is shaping its new media image**

For over the past years both the scientific community and the political elites have actively been scrutinizing the issues of image of the newly independent states. If we take into account that the public relations interact with public mind at the level of subconsciousness, then it shall be revealed to what extent urgent this problem is.

The world public is well aware of how, for example, England was described to be “the land of conservatism”, Italy – “home to mafia”, Thailand – “tourist heaven”, or the then U.S. President Ronald Reagan was portraying the former Soviet Union to be “the empire of evil” and Iranian President Homenei was calling the United States as the “elder devil”.

Such labeling was practiced yet in the past centuries, i.e. long before the science of PR was established. For instance, it was customary to name Iran to be “the Persian Gulf gendarme” or the Khiva Khanate – “the Algeria of Middle Asia”. Having said that, one could think of the fact that prior to emergence of public relations, as a part of shaping one’s positive image, the partners used to widely engage in the “white” technologies in the international relations in contrast with the image of their opponents.

Certainly, such practices weren’t called as “PR technologies”, however regardless of that how they were named the substance doesn’t change.

In this context, at the moment the task of shaping “the media image” of the newly independent states, i.e. their “image in the mass media” requires to accomplish the comprehensively schemed work. In this it is necessary to expand liaising with public and coordinating the activities of state governance bodies, various public organizations and businesses.

In his book titled “The New Image of Uzbekistan”, well known American political scientist Frederick Starr writes, that Uzbekistan, long considered the center of Central Asia, has the region’s largest population and borders every other regional state including Afghanistan. For the first 25 years of its independence, it adopted a cautious, defensive policy that emphasized sovereignty and treated regional efforts at cooperation with skepticism.

But after taking over as President in autumn 2016, Shavkat Mirziyoyev launched a breathtaking series of reform initiatives. His slogan – “It is high time the government serves the people, not vice versa” – led to large-scale reforms in virtually every sector.

Time will tell whether the reform effort will succeed, but its first positive fruits are already visible, particularly in a new dynamism within Uzbek society, as well as a fresh approach to foreign relations, where a new spirit of regionalism is taking root.

This book is the first systematic effort to analyze Uzbekistan's reforms.

Professor Starr noted that many foreign experts are astonished with the country's intensive development, progress in the social, economic, legal and international spheres, but not everyone truly understands their meaning.

In the book, the professor sought to present the events objectively and avoid assessments. He managed to study hundreds of normative documents, orders and presidential decrees, as well as to collect expert comments from all around the world.

In shaping the image of any chosen state it is necessary to pay a serious attention to shaping and bettering individual images of administrative units of this state, i.e. its domestic territories, regions, provinces and districts. In this context, I deem it necessary to note the opinion enunciated by the scholar based at the Stavropol State University I.V. Bukreyeva.

Dwelling on the coverage of the image of Federal District of Northern Caucasus in the Russian state television channels, she wrote in particular as follows: "the First Channel airs very few information about domestic factors of the region, and particularly, the one related to richness and beauty of the nature of the Northern Caucasus".

Meanwhile, one must usefully exploit such real features in shaping the positive image of this area. Otherwise, constant "blackening" of the media image pertaining to this district will bar the flow of potential investments and flow of tourists. Most importantly, creating the general positive image of a country in many terms is directly related to the image of its domestic territories.

It is an open secret that the Russian television channels are fond of focusing not on the beauty of the Caucasus' nature, the cleanness of its air and diligent local population, but rather on disseminating only negative information about the area – the local turbulences, standoffs and terrorist activities. Given such scenario, the mistrust and alarm on the part of Russia will grow towards this district.

As a result, the flow of foreign investments will decrease and the region will lag behind in its economic and social development. In its turn, it will bring about the problems related to security and serve for radicalization of moods of the local populations.

As it is argued about the regional image, it is also worth noting the views shed on the topic by the researcher at the Omsk State University I.A. Sushnenkova. The analysis of the stories about the Omsk region published in Russian federal and regional newspapers revealed that the domestic capabilities of the area weren't used in full in terms of creating its foreign media image.

For example, the stories told a little about that the region had been a peculiar industrial, sport and cultural hub for the locality. Vice versa, the central mass media mostly focused on disseminating the negative news items on the criminal situation in Omsk and various other troublesome events. I.A. Sushnenkova believes that in shaping the area's image the journalists must fairly assess the reality and should use the correct words and phrases.

Well-known British scholar Shirin Akiner in her recent article "Branding

Uzbekistan” wrote, that “Uzbeks themselves appear to be genuinely pleased by current developments: this is apparent in discussions at international conferences, but also in casual conversations with local people. It is particularly evident among the youth, who are proud of their country and its traditions, but who also feel confident enough to reach out to other cultures and to create a vibrant synthesis of different trends and styles in music, fashion and performance art.

Common epithets to describe Uzbekistan refer to its hospitality, great history, magical scenery, superb handicrafts and other such delights. Yet alongside these enduring characteristics there is another trend emerging – buoyant optimism”.

The peculiar features of building a democratic society in Uzbekistan also remained in the focus of attention of the international community. Indeed, thanks to independence, the Republic of Uzbekistan made its main objective to establish a law-governed democratic state and civil society.

Uzbekistan chose a path of progress deemed to be a peculiar and fitting for itself based on its national and spiritual heritage, as well as the values of building a national statehood, since, a society cannot be called a true democratic one if it doesn't lean on its spiritual values and heritage, if it doesn't manage to harmonize them with universal values and principles.

Uzbekistan has abolished child labor and is working to end any form of forced labor. The International Labor Organization (ILO) experts came to that conclusion. According to the ILO, there is a growing awareness in the society of non-acceptance of forced labor, especially when it comes to children. The ILO says that harvesting is carried out in the context of transparency and dialogue, including in civil society.

The ILO monitors reported in November 2018 that forced labor on most of the cotton fields in Uzbekistan had been abolished. In 2018, 93 percent of those involved in the cotton harvest were volunteers. Students, teachers, doctors and nurses were not involved in the cotton harvest.

On September 20, the US Department of Labor released its 17<sup>th</sup> annual report on the worst forms of child labor. This report evaluates the efforts of governments to strengthen efforts to address the worst forms of child labor. It estimated that different countries around the world have achieved significant, moderate, minimal growth in this area or there has been no growth at all.

According to the report, Uzbekistan was among the first countries to achieve moderate growth as a result of a significant reduction in child labor during the cotton harvest.

The US Department of Labor has released one additional report at the same time – a list of goods produced using child labor or forced labor. The list includes 148 products from 76 countries. In the year of 2019, Uzbek cotton is removed from this list.

The United States commends Uzbekistan for this important achievement. The decision to abolish the colony No. 19 in the Jaslyk village of the Republic of Karakalpakstan is another example of strengthening democratic principles in Uzbekistan.

According to the Department of Public Relations and Media of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, large-scale institutional reforms have been implemented in the country in recent years, ensuring human rights, respecting the rights of detainees and prisoners, irrespective of their religious and political views, and respect for their dignity and worth.

Comprehensive measures have been taken to implement international commitments to create a favorable environment.

At the same time, analysis of criminal-executive practice and direct communication with the public has shown the need to increase the guarantees of prisoners' rights and ensure their social adaptation by making the conditions of detention in the penal system more humane.

This historic decision is aimed at improving the effectiveness of measures aimed at forming law-abiding conduct, respect for individuals and society in places of imprisonment, as well as the objectives set by the State Strategy for Action on the five priority directions of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021, which promotes its positive image in the international arena.

From the theoretical and methodological point of view the problem of formation and development of the regional image is one of the interdisciplinary studies. And today it is not just a problem facing the science of journalism or mass communications. The issue is multidisciplinary, including sociology, imageology, economics, political science, philosophy, linguistics, especially cognitive linguistics, and can be studied in various aspects.

The image of the country is associated with the image, the perception of the region in the minds of people, so in our study, special attention is paid to cognition and its importance. This modern phenomenon is clearly manifested through the possibilities and use of language. Obviously it is the main tool of today's mass communication.

It should be noted that the cognitiveness is a scientific phenomenon that connects language with thinking, that is, consciousness, and explores in deep theoretical aspects the integral connection of psychological, biological, and neurophysiological aspects with social, cultural, and linguistic phenomena in the formation of a particular imagination. According to scholars, cognitive linguistics in this respect is divided into various sub-branches such as psycholinguistics, anthropolinguistics, ethno-linguistics, sociolinguistics. In this research, we tried to study the role of journalism in the formation and development of the country's image, the cognitive impact of the language of the media on the consciousness of the public.

**Among the classic tasks of the press/media are usually the following:**

- a) collection of information,
- b) its processing,
- c) distribution.

Historical work on the theoretical foundations of journalism analyzes issues related to its more important functions. In particular, American researcher Harold Dwight Lasswell (February 13, 1902 – December 18, 1978) divides mass media into 4 main functions [Кошлякова, 2011; 224].



**They are reflected in:**

1. environmental monitoring (collection and dissemination of information);
2. "editing" (sorting and interpretation of information);
3. formation of social opinion;
4. dissemination of culture.

From our initial conclusions, the above points are general and somewhat scattered. The acceptable definition of the functions of the press and the role of these definitions for the image are given in the book "Journalism and Publicism" by M. Khudoikulov, which is discussed in more detail in the other Journalism works.

There are also more relevant ideological functions of the media, which are mainly involved in attracting, directing and educating.

Modern concepts of image emphasize its information and communication nature. Image is formed on the basis of information about any object through communication processes [Gavra, 2013].

In the formation of a new media image of Uzbekistan, it is possible to effectively use the function of media involvement.

Researcher D. Muitov gives a more detailed description of the modern possibilities of modern journalism: "today the media has moved to use the opportunity to directly influence the policy pursued in a country" [Muitov, 2014; 11]. "Of course, at such a time, it will emerge as an important element of politics. On the other hand, the media has the opportunity to develop regional perceptions of different countries, change moods, and spread to a wide range of the population", Muitov said.

As the Uzbek scholar acknowledges, indeed, the information shared through the media serves to develop the audience's perception of a particular foreign country or a particular region or territory that is part of it. At the same time, the focus can dynamically change the mood of the information recipient in the group.

Russian researchers A. Demidov and A. Fedoseev assess the scale of the work carried out by journalists as follows: "This opportunity of the media is very useful in shaping public opinion. From this point of view, it is certain that it will become a toy of geopolitical players. It is felt that various other factors, such as transnational corporations and religious organizations (i.e., the subjects of the movement – B.A.), seek to participate equally in this process" [Demidov, 1995; 229].

It seems that in cases where mass communications deviate from their primary functions, they are often observed in practice. That is, they are not limited to providing objective information.

Russian researchers say such work, "spreading different ideologies, is one of the media's top priorities. And as a result, the disseminated information will begin to fulfill its geopolitical tasks through newspapers and magazines, radio and television, audio and video cassettes and the Internet".

However, it would be neither theoretically nor professionally correct for the media to prioritize geopolitical interests in raising the country's media image, because the main task of journalism is not to participate in various political games, but to disseminate objective information that may be of interest to a local or foreign reader.

Usually, any information provided by the media is directly assimilated by the audience, placed in its consciousness, evokes a holistic view of the current situation, consisting of specific events and facts that change dynamically [Shkondin, 2014].

The unprecedented development of information technology, in particular, the global Internet, has completely expanded the scope of traditional media, which has hitherto formed in the minds of the people. As a result, the existing information space – in our example, the "territory" of national journalism – has changed radically. The volume and speed of information flows from "inside" to "outside" and vice versa from "outside" to "inside" has increased at an unimaginable rate.

The information contained in any media content – words and phrases, graphics, audio or video – enters and settles in the mind of the recipient. The result is a reflection of a particular event, an image of an object, or an image of a particular area in the reader's memory. Significantly, language opportunities play an invaluable role in image-related communication processes, i.e., PR, advertising, and journalism practice. In this regard, as noted by Russian scientist V. Taranov, the image of any region in the imagination of people is formed mainly on the basis of media reports [Taranov, 2010].

Comprehensive study, research and analysis of various articles, commentaries, interviews, etc. in the foreign and national media aimed at shaping the new image of Uzbekistan, its image, as well as socio-political, spiritual-educational and national-psychological aspects is of particular importance. However, it is also important to keep in mind that people are more receptive to negative information with interest and quicker response to positive information. Psychologists have done a lot of research on this.

According to Russian scientists T. Glushkova and O. Zaytseva, it is advisable to use cognitive structures such as stereotypes and frames in creating a media image of the object. To define the definition of a stereotype, it includes a stable, variable, simplified, schematic notion of something, an object, or in our case the image of a country, that is, Uzbekistan.

**Stereotypes** can be negative or positive in practice. Of course, positive stereotypes can be effectively used in raising the image.

**A frame**, on the other hand, is made up of semantic relationships that merge over a specific meaning. It is useful in the regulation of perceptions and knowledge about the object being theoretically modeled [Glushkova, Saytseva, 2012].

In this research, we will try to classify the perceptions formed by the media according to the topics. In the process, it is observed that they form frames that are semantically close to each other. Articles published in the US, British and Russian media are used as research material.

Information on Uzbekistan's tourism potential is published in the New York Times as follows: "If you dreamed of traveling along the Silk Road, now is a good time to do it. More than 25 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Uzbekistan, a former Soviet republic, is finally entering a period of reconstruction. This is where the wonderful places of the historical road are located" [<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019>].

In doing so, the American journalist used the stereotype that Uzbekistan is connected to the ancient Silk Road.

The BBC writes: “Uzbekistan is striving to become a destination for pilgrims from all over the world, the second Mecca. In this most populous country in Central Asia, there are well-preserved mosques and temples in the famous cities of the Silk Road, such as Samarkand and Bukhara” [<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-44685414>].

Apparently, the British correspondent compares the ancient cities of Uzbekistan with Mecca and Medina, the most famous cities in the Muslim world. Cities are framed as places of pilgrimage.

TASS reports that the World Congress for the Preservation of Cultural Monuments of Uzbekistan has been held in St. Petersburg [<http://tass.ru/obschestvo/5277084>].

The Russian journalist draws attention to the fact that the heritage of Uzbek culture is spread all over the world.

There are similar articles on economic reforms in Uzbekistan. An article titled "How Uzbekistan is becoming an open economy" published by the Brookings Institution in Washington states: "Uzbekistan has been implementing a comprehensive program of reforms aimed at a market economy for two years. The government is making three major changes to the country's economy: the transition from a command-and-control economy to a market economy; transition from a public sector-dominated economy to a private sector-oriented economy; and a tendency to co-operation and openness from isolation and solitude.

These reforms are taking place at a time when external disparities and the growing number of unemployed young people and these problems cannot be solved without the creation of jobs due to the development of the private sector” [<https://www.brookings.edu>].

According to Reuters, citing the World Bank, Uzbekistan was among the top 10 countries in the world in 2017 in terms of business facilitation. In particular, the report acknowledges the simplification of processes such as registration of enterprises, obtaining construction permits, protection of investments, connection to the power supply [<https://ru.reuters.com>].

The British journalist is trying to create a media image of Uzbekistan as a liberating country in the field of business.

According to RIA Novosti, now foreign citizens can get the status of the founder of the company, which will be built in Uzbekistan with foreign investment [<https://ria.ru/world/20180802/1525789408.html>].

In addition, such investors will be issued multiple-entry visas for three years in a simplified manner. There are many examples like the one above.

It is clear that the image of one state created by another state has a great impact on the attitude of the world community and the citizens of that state. In particular, the information attack organized by external forces with powerful information technologies poses a great danger.

After all, it can cause a psychological crisis not only in the world community,

but also in the public of a country with poor access to information (underdeveloped techniques and technologies; closed information; the presence of censorship). Therefore, in creating a positive image of the state, there must be a certain structure, rules.

Countries that have always been on the world stage in different ways – sometimes openly, sometimes secretly – are building completely new battlefields from the miracle of the Internet and information. Sadly, journalism, which serves for good, is turning the media into warriors of those battlefields. Many countries have begun preparations for an information war. Countless funds are being mobilized for this purpose.

The information war does not have to break traditional boundaries, and in this war there will be no massacre of people, but the "cooperation" of telecommunications and media systems will suppress the worldview of the general public.

Media image is actually related to appearance, image. But, nevertheless, it is subject to laws that conform to the spiritual orientation of the mass consciousness. In the globalized information space, it is impossible to completely restrict or control the means of psycho-informational influence. Democratic governance, diversity of opinion does not allow it.

The point is that no state or center has the ability to restrict or control such systems except powerful states. "In fact," writes Uzbek publicist J. Melikulov, "behind this is the desire to introduce ideas to the world that are in line with Western values and stereotypes, and thus expand their sphere of influence." The goal is to export consciousness" [Melikulov, 2006].

For this reason, every piece of information disseminated must be repeatedly checked and processed. Local/native language possibilities, wide and safe use of different expressions are also important. Effective use of folk proverbs, sayings, ideograms, passionate words create a sincere mood and psychological atmosphere with the audience.

Special attention is paid to the psychology of information reception by different nationalities and countries with the help of media technologies. As a result, journalistic materials broadcast on the media channels enter people's minds directly.

Of course, this is not a spontaneous process. Conflicts and struggles take place in it. But experts V. Abaturov and Yu. Naumova say, "it is better to stand on the air with a microphone than to stand on the battlefield with a handgun" [Abaturov, 2003].

One of the most important features of modern civilization is that its position, potential, destiny are largely dependent on information. It is no exaggeration to say that the lives, lifestyles and prospects of celebrities, heads of state, as well as peoples and nations, from ordinary people, are being decided in the media. It is obvious that the emergence of young independent states, their strong position in the region and the world community, depends on information in all respects, and once again on the processes taking place in the national and global information space.

It is known that any national journalism, that is, the national press, primarily serves to meet the information needs of the population of the country. At the same time it creates a certain image of the people, society and state. However, any society

that is based on democratic principles and any media space in general cannot accept information that is disseminated for the purpose of open propaganda.

According to H. Dostmuhammad, a Doctor of Philology, “In the current conditions of market relations, information is becoming a commodity.

Only if the product finds a buyer in the market can it compete with the market, otherwise it will inevitably go bankrupt, break, that is, go bankrupt. Whether it's a TV show or a radio show, a newspaper or a magazine, the biggest problem is one: is there a buyer for what is being said” [Dostmuhammad, 2013; 78].

Uzbek scholar says that "violent propaganda, even forced subscriptions, no longer work." In this sense, the process of propaganda aimed at raising the positive image of Uzbekistan can not be carried out without disregarding the laws of the market. Only when we learn to prepare reliable, objective and balanced and, most importantly, timely information that meets the needs of the foreign reader, our “products” will be competitive in the global media market.

When talking about the cognitive features of the image of the country in the modern media environment, it is impossible to ignore the importance of socio-psychological mood in society and its impact on it.

#### **For this reason:**

- It is recommended to develop plans to further increase the confidence of foreigners in Uzbekistan with the help of a positive psychological background. At the same time, it is necessary to establish a system of selection of media texts that provide the most important and detailed information about the achievements of the Uzbek society and their regular transmission through the media;

- The media image, which is a product of modern journalism, theoretically arises in exactly the same way as the concept of imagemaking as mediaimage. In this case, the use of lingvocognitive modeling techniques can give the expected effect;

- It is recommended to study the process of image modeling in new aspects, not only in the country, but also in the regions, provinces and districts.

#### **The problem of objectivity in the similarities and differences in the creation of the image of Uzbekistan in the media space of Western countries and Russia**

Foreign news media’s coverage of Uzbekistan can shape positive or negative images in the hearts and minds of foreigners and Uzbeks, simultaneously. When foreign media’s reportage on Uzbekistan spreads favorable stories and photos towards Uzbekistan, it may form optimistic images in the minds of foreigners and Uzbek nationals with regard to this country and encourage them to take pride in this country.

However, when foreign media’s reportage on this country spreads unfavorable and negative coverage of this country, it may form pessimistic images in the minds of foreigners and Uzbek nationals with regard to this country. It may even lead Uzbeks to lose pride in this country and to view this country with disrespect.

Considering that powerful Western news media can have a strong influence over people’s imagery of a certain country, negative coverage can especially become a matter of profound concern for a national leader and its own people.

In addition, when countries like Uzbekistan make efforts to carry out reforms, negative coverage of this country can be especially damaging. What is more worrisome to countries like Uzbekistan is that there may not be effective tools to handle negative coverage conducted by these powerful Western global news media.

This is especially because these media are operated by the powerful media empires based on the principles of 'freedom of the press.' However, to Uzbeks' eyes, this kind of coverage appears to have been based on some political intentions, motivated by commercial purposes, or caused by simple lack of understanding of Uzbek society.

Notwithstanding these outer factors that Uzbeks cannot handle, it is worthwhile to attempt an analysis of coverage of Uzbekistan by these foreign media. This analysis of the negative coverage by the Western news media over a long term could be the first steps in starting to devise ways of dealing with this nationally vital issue.

For over several decades, the world media space has been controlled by the globe's largest Western media companies. Because of this, information on the globe has been disseminated to the world public in the shape and substance handled by owners of the Western media giants.

In this regard, information provided by these news media may be one-sided. Michael Snyder of Economic Collapse says that "the mainstream media do not want you to look at 'the man behind the curtain', They just want you to stay plugged into the "programming" that they are feeding you without asking any questions. Such circumstances may do harm not only to country's external image, but also its domestic one. Negative news could nurture in citizens' minds a mood of uncertainty in the future.

In comparison with the potency of Western media giants, local news media in Uzbekistan are deemed too weak to counterbalance the negative coverage of the former. In addition, one can ask a logical question such as "To what extent can the globe's largest news disseminators observe the principle of fairness in their reportage?" What interests do these international media giants serve?

At a time when the news, information and communication technologies can turn into an instrument of influencing the hearts and minds of people, it is vitally important to secure favorable coverage by these news media.

It is also right that the positive image of a country can nurture in its citizens the spirit of patriotism and national pride. It mobilizes the population to actively participate in addressing various important problems, particularly, the issues of reform and modernization, as would be required by Uzbeks. Negative coverage by foreign news media on the reforms being pursued by Uzbekistan may also affect Uzbeks' minds negatively.

At first glance, media coverage of Uzbekistan in Western countries, as well as in the US media, seems to be similar in content to most articles published in Russia. In fact, such cases do not disappear. However, if they are studied systematically, we can see that the existing difference is significant. There are many examples of this.

The November 15, 2018 issue of Stratfor, one of America's leading analytical

media outlet, published an article entitled “The U.S. Zeroes in on Russia’s Borderlands”. “The United States will likely intensify its efforts to combat terrorism and drug trafficking in eastern Central Asia, particularly in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, which border Afghanistan”, it said. But at the same time, Russia and China are also conducting their own counterterrorism operations. This could exacerbate competition between Moscow and Beijing, on the one hand, and Washington, on the other” [<https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/us-zeroes-russias-borderlands>].

“In addition, Washington seeks to improve cooperation on the economic front with all Central Asian countries, Kazakhstan and especially Uzbekistan. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev is slowly taking his country out of the shadows. This provides an opportunity for external forces to cooperate with the Uzbek government in the economic as well as security spheres. Naturally, this situation has caught the attention of Russia and the United States.

Concerned about the growing economic ties between Moscow and Uzbekistan, US officials have openly expressed a desire to compete with Russia on economic and investment agreements”, the article said.

BBC Uzbek Service reports that at the Embassy of Uzbekistan in London well-known British journalist Jeremy Head was awarded with the Golden Pen International Award for his article “Uzbekistan’s super fast Silk Road” published in the Financial Times in November 2018 [<https://www.bbc.com/uzbek/uzbekistan-48557799>].

A BBC article was published under the headline: “British journalist about Uzbekistan: there is an opera house, there are no barriers to drinking wine, the Internet speed is good.” It was noted that J.Head returned from Uzbekistan with a world impression and what he wrote in the Financial Times was just a drop in the ocean. No brochure of British tour operators can deliver that beauty.

“Uzbekistan has a great opportunity to introduce to the world the legendary and beautiful cities of the Silk Road, such as Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva, and great work is already being done on this road. I think it is unlikely that a British tourist will see these things anywhere else in the world. You can see Islamic architecture in Iran, but no brochure of British tour operators can deliver that beauty. Really unique. The British need to be aware of this opportunity as soon as possible”, the British journalist told the BBC Uzbek Service.

The most common similarities in the coverage of Uzbekistan in the Western and Russian media can be seen in the materials related to the tourism industry. On December 23, 2019, the official website of CNN published an article entitled “Why Uzbekistan is considered the best tourist destination in 2020”, It was authored by journalists Neil Kohzad and Jay Croft.

According to American journalists, “President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev has carried out huge reforms to make the country an attractive place for tourists. The introduction of a 30-day visa-free regime for visitors from 90 countries, a simplified electronic visa system for citizens of 77 countries, including the United States, has significantly increased the flow of tourists into the country.

According to them, according to the US Department of Commerce, the number

of foreign visitors to Uzbekistan increased from 1.9 million in 2014 to 5.4 million in 2018" [<https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/uzbekistan-travel-destination-2020-trnd>].

According to CNN experts, the largest source of travel guides, Lonely Planet, has noticed these positive "shifts" in Uzbekistan in the field of tourism. That is why they called Uzbekistan the most prominent place to visit in Central Asia in 2020. The authors of the article also reported that The Economist recognized Uzbekistan as the "country of the year" due to significant improvements in the political and economic spheres. These changes, according to CNN correspondents, have made Uzbekistan more attractive for foreigners to visit the country.

"The most attractive aspect of Uzbekistan is its ancient history, which has been preserved for thousands of years, as well as its national cuisine," wrote American correspondents. According to them, in recent years, social networks have given a "new color" to Uzbekistan and its main attractions.

Travelers from Western countries began to actively share their impressions on the Internet using the hashtags #VisitUzbekistan, #VisitTashkent, #VisitSamarkand and #TravelCentralAsia, and they became popular on social networks. "Tourist bloggers, who cover tourist markets, from adventure and cultural trips to unusual places, visited cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva," the article reads.

Russia's RIA Novosti news agency reported on August 2, 2018 that entry visas for foreign tourists and investors to Uzbekistan have been somewhat liberalized under a new presidential decree. It is also noted that there are concessions on the registration of joint ventures [<https://ria.ru/world/20180802/1525789408.html>].

The article, published by Tutu.ru, is entitled "Most Russian tourists want to celebrate the New Year in Uzbekistan." It was noted that among Russians, Uzbekistan is the most popular country to meet 2019. In 2017, Uzbekistan took the seventh place in this ranking, for the first time among the leaders of Germany, the Czech Republic and Moldova.

In 2018, Uzbekistan rose six places, leaving behind the Germans, Czechs and Moldovans. As a result, sales of New Year's tickets to Europe in Russia decreased by 20%, while in the direction of Uzbekistan this figure has doubled compared to 2017, but the interest of tourists has not decreased. Experts say that the majority of Russian tourists have shown great interest in Uzbekistan due to its hospitality, enjoyment of national cuisine and skiing in the Chimgan Mountains.

An article published in the October 14, 2018 issue of Nezavisimaya Gazeta reads, "Moscow, Tashkent and others. Russia and Uzbekistan are looking for a new form of cooperation. "Tashkent has begun to address security issues related to its neighbors, and Afghanistan in particular.

"Although it takes into account major external players, it is acting with its own interests in mind" [[http://www.ng.ru/dipkurer/2018-10-14/11\\_7331\\_moscow.html](http://www.ng.ru/dipkurer/2018-10-14/11_7331_moscow.html)].

"Tashkent's growing prestige in the regional and international arena calls on other countries to fight for exclusive partnerships with it. The current real situation requires the search for a new format in Russian-Uzbek relations. Only in this way it



will be possible in the near future to reach a new level of mutual understanding and existing ties."

This article was authored by Igor Pankratenko, the Deputy Director General of the Center for Strategic Assessment and Forecasting in Moscow, Doctor of Political Sciences.

In our opinion, the developing cooperation between the two countries, especially joint programs in the field of higher education, also has a positive impact on the country's image. The number of foreign higher educational institutions operating in Uzbekistan is growing every year.

It is obvious that the article published in the Russian media tried to take a deeper look at the current state of Uzbekistan's foreign policy, Russia's role in it and the basis of bilateral relations. Such analytical materials, it is worth noting, are relatively rare in the Western press.

Professor Frederick Starr, the founder and chairman of the Central Asia and Caucasus Institute at the American Council on Foreign Relations, called his next book "The New Face of Uzbekistan". Special attention was paid to this work in the article "Frederick Starr: the stronger Uzbekistan, the stronger the region", published in the newspaper "People's Word" on May 14, 2018.

Well-known expert, Professor F. Starr is a leading expert on Central Asia, Russia and the CIS. He is well aware of the socio-political processes in Uzbekistan and is highly respected in the scientific and political circles of the United States. The author of more than 20 books on the politics and history of the countries of the Eurasian region.

In particular, popular scientific articles and pamphlets about our scientists who lived and worked in the Middle Ages are very popular among the Western public.

F. Starr has visited Uzbekistan many times. In particular, in May 2014 he participated in the international conference "Historical heritage of medieval scholars and thinkers of the Middle East, its role and importance in the development of modern civilization" and he also participated in the December 2016 presidential election as an observer.

In November 2017, he was one of the moderators of the UN-sponsored international conference "Central Asia: Common History and Common Future, Cooperation for Sustainable Development and Progress" in Samarkand. At the prestigious event, the expert noted that Uzbekistan is becoming a unifying center of Central Asia at the initiative of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev. F. Starr has an impartial approach to all the processes taking place in our country.

At the heart of his conceptual views is the integration of the idea that Uzbekistan is the geostrategic center and "heart" of the Central Asian region. The expert has been a strong supporter of the comprehensive development and strengthening of cooperation between the United States and Uzbekistan. This is confirmed by the fact that his next book is dedicated to the new history of our country.

Commenting on the new image of Uzbekistan, which was presented on the eve of the first official visit of our President to the United States, the author says: – "2017

was a period of rapid development in Uzbekistan in all areas, rich in various events”.

“Many people abroad are amazed by the huge positive changes in the socio-economic, legal and international spheres. But not everyone abroad fully understands the essence of these reforms. So we decided to collect the materials that reflected all the events 6-7 months ago and seal them in history. We did not evaluate these changes in the book, but only described them objectively. In this process, we had to study hundreds of legal documents, decrees and resolutions of the President. Obviously, this was not easy. It is in this process that we have established close cooperation with our colleagues in Tashkent”, says F.Starr. “They provided us with all the information in full. Then we asked the world's leading experts to provide an objective analysis of Uzbekistan's parliamentary activities, international relations, economic, social and legal reforms. We then summarized these analytical materials. As a result, a comprehensive book has been created in Uzbekistan, which reflects the innovations in the field of lawmaking. It will actually take years to accurately and objectively assess the results of the reforms”.

The information in the book allows everyone in the world to have an idea about the reforms being implemented in Uzbekistan.

It should be noted that Uzbekistan is a relatively young country as a sovereign state. But its history of statehood dates back four thousand years. In my opinion, today we are witnessing two important aspects in Uzbekistan.

**First of all**, the country is taking new steps as a sovereign state, a large economy. Accelerated reforms will inevitably lead to significant results. However, this cannot be achieved alone, and great success can be achieved in cooperation with the region.

Therefore, it should be acknowledged that the diplomacy of Uzbekistan, especially President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, has found common ground with all neighboring countries.

**The second important aspect** is that Uzbekistan is reviving regional development, which is part of a series of historical developments, i.e. common history, culture, science and education.

This process is not in one country or another, but together, that is, every country in the region, including Afghanistan, plays an important role in this.

These two factors are inextricably linked. Therefore, the stronger Uzbekistan is, the stronger the region will be. These efforts were not directed against anyone, but for a noble cause for all.

Thanks to Shavkat Mirziyoyev, it is especially noteworthy that young people in Uzbekistan with deep knowledge and skills are actively involved in the reform process in the country, both in government and in other areas, – said the American expert.

“In general, in recent years, your country has undergone evolutionary changes. Updates in Uzbekistan, without exaggeration, excite each of us. We believe that in the near future the country will become one of the developed countries”, the American expert concluded.

Evaluating the changes in the country, the US-based global television network

CNBC wrote on its official website: “Uzbekistan says that it is on the path of major reforms. But some economists are skeptical [<http://kommersant.uz/globalnaya-teleset-cnbc-dala-otsenku-ekonomicheskim-reformam-uzbekistana/>].

Uzbekistan is the fourth largest gold deposit in the world. It is also a country rich in copper and uranium. The energy sector also has great potential here. But oil and gas reserves are not widely used. Uzbekistan, which is rich in natural resources, is currently trying to attract foreign investment.

At the same time, special attention is paid to issues such as diversification of agricultural production, development of mineral fertilizers and oil exports.

The article, published on the TV channel's website, quotes A. Demerays, the director of global forecasting at the Economist Intelligence Unit, as saying: “Uzbekistan faces a number of challenges, despite its high macroeconomic performance. In particular, not all plans envisaged in the development strategy are fully implemented in practice. Moreover, the transition to a market economy is not going smoothly.

It is still clear that government support is needed in many areas to ensure economic growth”. The network currently covers about 386 million people in North America, Europe, Asia and Africa. Has its own regular audience in millions of apartment around the globe.

Dilshoda Rakhmatova, a correspondent for Russia's Sputnik international news agency in Uzbekistan, wrote an article “How to shape Uzbekistan's image?” “Of course, we can't always say warm things about migrant workers leaving the country today,” she said. The fact that the industry is not organized, that citizens go out and work in a chaotic manner, does not always lead to good things in the countries where they go. The main part of labor migrants is in the country's remote villages with high unemployment” [Rakhmatova, 2019].

According to her, “in this area, the state should take control and initiative, organize outreach. Somehow the first steps are being taken in this direction. At the same time, the population does not feel that the interests of migrant workers are protected abroad, given that the majority of migrants are active in social networks, organizations working in the field of labor migration should widely promote their activities in these sectors.

It should also be noted that, first of all, it is necessary to restore the height of the nation.

The nation's self-confidence has declined somewhat. It is useful to study the experience of the Russians in this regard. They were primarily focused on boosting the nation's self-confidence. It requires skillful use of the glorious past, great ancestors, present achievements and a bright future [Rakhmatova, 2019]”.

The correspondent of the international news agency Sputnik in Uzbekistan notes the need to pay special attention to security in order to improve the country's image. “Security must be taken as another integral part of the country's image. Amir Temur once said, “I have built a state in which no one can touch a basket of gold, even if it crosses its borders”.

This is exactly what should be reflected in the image of Uzbekistan today. This

is an important situation for attracting tourists and investment, and this is the main condition,” said the Russian journalist.

Admittedly, while some foreign experts do not pay enough attention to the direct role of the media in shaping the image of the country, they do not deny the influence of the media on people's minds, that is, the cognitive aspect of the issue.

Charles O. Kaufman, an associate professor of journalism at the University of Texas at San Marcos and author of several textbooks on PR, says: “We know that raising the country’s image is not the main goal of journalism. But in any situation, the media can affect people’s minds. This is the truth” [Research interview at the University of Texas, San Marcos, 2019].

The dean of the same faculty, Professor B.Judy Oskam said “Of course, in the United States, journalists don’t deal with the image of a region or organization”. I remember very well. When I used to work as a TV reporter, the editor-in-chief used to tell me to cover an event as objectively as possible. My reaction to the incident did not interest him at all.

Later I worked in PR. In this case, the demand was completely different. That is, I was required to evaluate or react to each event. I do not agree with US President Trump's claim that CNN reporters are tarnishing America's image with fake news. In fact, this is a task for politicians, not journalists”.

An analysis of the problem of dissent in the US, British and Russian media on the reforms in Uzbekistan, as well as the author's (B.A.) direct observations in more than 20 countries around the world, show that Western media comprehensive critical materials, weather-changing reports by Russian and CIS correspondents are in general, and mostly positive articles in Asian newspapers. Such trends in foreign media still remain virtually unchanged.

The overall outcome of the long-term personal observation and evaluation of foreign news media’s coverage of Uzbekistan revealed that news media in the West – the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States – seemed to be offering largely one-sided critical and negative stories of Uzbekistan. In comparison, news media in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) – Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan – seemed to flip-flop in portraying Uzbekistan, sometimes negatively and sometimes positively.

However, news media in Asian countries – Japan, China, South Korea, India, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt – largely published favorable articles.

Generally speaking, news stories about Uzbekistan were regularly published in the periodicals of the CIS states and countries of the East. In particular, news media in Russia, Kazakhstan, China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, India, Turkey, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates ran stories of Uzbekistan quite regularly (once or twice a month).

But Uzbekistan was not regularly covered by the news media of the Western countries such as the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom. In reality, although more than twenty years have passed since the independence of the country of Uzbekistan in 1991 and the inception of reforms by this government, national efforts

to improve its overseas image portrayed by the Western media have not yet been launched.

Negative coverage of Uzbekistan by the Western media may be attributable to this kind of lack of efforts at the government level.

Why did the Western media not cover this country profusely? Paucity of Uzbek coverage by the Western media may be in part attributable to scarcity of information provided by the foreign countries to these foreign media, or to lack of foreign media's interest in Uzbekistan.

Part of the reasons may also be that public information efforts by Uzbekistan government ministries and agencies, state bodies and companies, and Uzbekistan embassies overseas haven't been effective in dealing with foreign media. In order to have more positive coverage by the foreign media, these state organizations should have acted together in a concerted manner just as they were in an orchestra.

However, it should also be underscored that Uzbekistan's socio-political life, specifically, elections and the processes related to them are sometimes particularly well covered by foreign news media. For instance, the world's news media paid a large attention to the presidential elections held on March 29, 2015.

This could be thanks to the publicity efforts made by the Information Agency "Jahon" at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which gave a number of press conferences to publicize the presidential election. However, one-time efforts like this will not be sufficient. In the following part of this article, results of analysis into coverage on Uzbekistan by news media of respective foreign countries are exhibited.

Russian media largely reflected the current political relations between Moscow and Tashkent. Throughout the years it has been changing "like weather".

That means sometimes Russian media spread positive stories about Uzbekistan, and sometimes it spread negative information. For example, we can see the following positive stories. News portal "Infoshos.ru" in its December 25, 2009 issue, wrote that "Uzbekistan is enjoying the fruits of democracy – the right of voting." [Sinitsina, 2009].

Correspondent of Infoshos said that he got a chance to see the Parliamentary elections in Uzbekistan "with his own eyes" and, accordingly, "here even a letter of election law, it is clear, cannot be broken". Another Russian media, Information Agency "Regnum," in its December 29, 2014 issue, said that, "Uzbekistan will direct 3.05 billion USD for a number of projects to mitigate the environmental damage caused by the shrinking of Aral Sea.

Projects will be financed by loans from international financial institutions in the amount of \$ 2.15 billion and own funds of the Uzbek side [<http://regnum.ru/news/society/1881422.html>].

Some stories were simply neutral. For example, Komsomolskaya Pravda wrote that "On September 29, 2015, in Tashkent, an unknown man threw Molotov cocktails to the US embassy. In the incident, fortunately, nobody was hurt. One of the devices exploded, but no one was hurt. Security measures were strengthened, according to

employees of the embassy.

The embassy is now working normally. The police found out the reasons of what happened. This is not the first attack on the US embassy in Uzbekistan. In the year of 2004, for example, a bomb exploded in front of the embassy. Several people were killed and local extremists claimed responsibility.”

None of Uzbek official media reported on this topic. But one of most popular Internet newspapers in Tashkent, “12news.uz” distributed an article, which said that “the incident with "Molotov cocktails" could somehow be linked to the conflict between the employees of this embassy [<http://www.12news.uz/news>]”.

The presidential election in Uzbekistan held in March, 2015 was also actively covered in the Chinese print media. In particular, Jinmin Jibao (人民日報), one of the respected newspapers in this country and the official organ of the communist party, placed a story with the headline “Islam Karimov won more than 90 percent of the votes in the presidential election.”

According to this newspaper, 90,39 percent of voters cast their ballots in favor of Islam Karimov – the candidate from the Movement of Entrepreneurs and Businessmen – Uzbekistan Liberal-Democratic Party. Jinmin Jibao also underscored that the representatives of 43 countries and nearly 300 experts from five international organizations came to Uzbekistan to monitor the presidential election as observers. Among them were representatives of national parliaments and heads of election bodies, public organizations and mass media, scholars and political scientists.

The official “Xinhua (新華)” news agency, published a story under the headline “Xi Jinping Congratulated Islam Karimov on Election to the Post of Uzbekistan President.” The story said that on March 30 of this year the Chairman of the People’s Republic of China Xi Jinping sent a congratulatory letter to Islam Karimov on his being elected to the post of President.

In dealing with other topics, the researcher’s observations showed that the “Jinmin Jibao” newspaper and “Xinhua” news agency actively covered Uzbekistan’s domestic life and its foreign relationships. Both media outlets ran a number of news stories on the course of economic reforms in Uzbekistan, the successes achieved along the road as much as the plans for the future.

The Chinese reporters presented information on Uzbekistan in a positive tone. Such news articles mainly conveyed broad facts with confirmative information. For example, stories of this newspaper offered very detailed information about a certain event, the persons participating in it, the venue and goals for holding such an event and others.

In recent years, the “Jinmin Jibao” newspaper ran more than 100 stories on Uzbekistan per year and “Xinhua” news agency about 80 stories. It is expected that the amount of news stories on Uzbekistan provided by the news agency will be on the rise, considering that the “Xinhua” has set a goal to turn itself into the largest one in the world.

Discussing Chinese journalists’ active service in Uzbekistan, it seems necessary to dwell on Li Chuyfa’s many years of activity. He served as a correspondent of the

economic newspaper “Jingji Shibao (經濟時報).” He mainly wrote news articles on the courses of economic and social reforms in Uzbekistan. Besides, Li Chuyfa has actively covered the multifaceted cooperation ties ever developing between Uzbekistan and China.

In 2012, Li Chuyfa was awarded the National Prize “Oltin qalam” (Uzbek words meaning “Golden pen”) in the category of “the best news story on Uzbekistan written by foreign journalists”. He was awarded by Journalists’ Union of Uzbekistan for improving media image of this country.

The “TRT” television, the news agency of “Cihan” and “Anadolu” of Turkey respectively were evaluated to have informed their audiences on various aspects of Uzbekistan’s life by disseminating varied information on relevant topics. Most of the news aired and printed by the Turkish media outlets can be said to be fair and true. There was no negative coverage of Uzbekistan.

These news outlets paid a special attention to the information distributed by official sources, resulting in positive coverage as a result. The materials spread seem to be spreading positive information about this country.

Atif Ala, correspondent of the “Cihan” News Agency, who served for more than fifteen years in Tashkent, wrote on average around 500 stories a year. Mr. Ala participated in the immediate coverage of important political and cultural events.

In particular, this correspondent not only produced news texts but also ran exclusive photos and videos on the processes of presidential elections of this country, celebrations of Navruz [An ancient New Year’s celebration held on March 21] and Independence Day celebrations (September 1, starting from 1991) [Ala, 2011].

For many years the “TRT” television channel has been airing from Tashkent live coverage of Uzbekistan’s national holiday festivities in cooperation with Uzbekistan National Television and Radio Company. Bakhtiyor Abdukarimov, special correspondent of the Turkish “Anadolu” News Agency, is ranked among the most successful journalists, who showed excellence in his foreign journalism service.

He dispatched nearly 1,000 news stories per year. In 2012, Mr. Abdukarimov was awarded the National Prize “Oltin qalam” (“Golden pen”) in the category of “the best articles on Uzbekistan published in the foreign mass media” [<http://www.aa.com.tr>].

On the eve of presidential elections on March 29, 2015, the “Tükiyenin sesi (The Voice of Turkey)” international radio broadcasted an air show on the topic of socio-political and socio-economic reforms in Uzbekistan, and their outcomes. The experts from the Center for International Strategy and Security Research of Turkey participated in the show.

It is worth mentioning that the shows produced by the “Tükiyenin sesi” international radio, which is a part of the “TRT” State Television and Radio Company, were also aired to a number of foreign countries beyond Turkey. During the broadcasting program, experts scrutinized the topic of parliamentary elections conducted in December 2014 in Uzbekistan.

They emphasized that the elections were held in pursuance with standards of democracy, transparency and fairness.

As was shown above, analysis of foreign news media's coverage of Uzbekistan could be categorized into three groups: critical, flip-flopping (or, whimsical), and positive. The above was a summation of analysis by the researcher over a period of the past 29 years (in 20 country) based on personal observation.

The news media's titles and selected articles are representative cases worthy of noting in this paper. To summarize the long-term analysis, it could be described as the following. The news media in the West (the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States) mostly provided one-sidedly critical stories.

The media in the Commonwealth of Independent States (Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan) have covered Uzbekistan in a whimsical manner. The newspapers in major Asian countries (Japan, China and Turkey) largely ran positive stories on Uzbekistan.

However, generally speaking, foreign news media did not sufficiently cover Uzbekistan's efforts to reform itself and negative coverage by the Western media is serious.

It is anticipated that overall pattern of coverage by overseas media will continue the current situation in the foreseeable future. Considering that the coverage by local media on Uzbekistan is largely positive, it needs to be pointed out that vast differences exist in coverages between overseas news media and local news media.

Indeed, the foreign reporters operating in Uzbekistan or neighboring countries, who cover Uzbekistan, play a significant role in shaping the national image on the international scene.

In this vein, it is a worthy enterprise to sharpen the methods and rules to shape better overseas images of Uzbekistan in the global public sphere, largely shaped by foreign media.

This will be an urgent task for the Uzbekistan government. However, it seems that the Uzbekistan government does not pay sufficient attention to this urgent issue of improving this country's overseas imagery. This could be a cause of dissatisfaction for Uzbek people. Indeed, the gaps in coverage between foreign and local media should be addressed in a timely and effective manner.

In order to do this, the Uzbekistan government needs to consider ways of expanding the scope of work with foreign correspondents in Tashkent and that of the foreign embassies operating overseas. In fact, many governments on the earth are already actively engaged in improving their national image under the name of "public diplomacy."

Therefore Uzbek media experts need to pay more attention to both theoretical and practical aspects of improving their country's overseas image.

**Improving the image of the country and the introduction of mechanisms to a positive effect**

The term "die realpolitik" was first coined by German writer Gustav Ditzel in his book "Fundamentals of Real Politics in the State of Germany" (1853) and later became popular because of his compatriot, the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche.

Because when Chancellor F. Nietzsche talks about the activities of Otto von



Bismarck, it is his "real policy" that is often mentioned [dic.academic.ru].

It should be noted that such an approach is free from redundant ideas and is aimed at serving the objective interests of the state at the present time. As the term became more widely used in the speeches of German Chancellor Helmut Kohl in the 1980s and 1990s, it became popular in the language of the country's politicians. G. Cole at that time united the GFR and the GDR on a "die realpolitik" basis.

The announcement of 2020 as the "Year of Science, Enlightenment and the Development of the Digital Economy" has undoubtedly opened the door to a wide range of opportunities to implement the results of scientific research in our country in real life [<http://uza.uz/oz/politics/2020-yil-ilm-marifat-va-ra-amli-i-tisodiyetni-rivozhlantirish-24-01-2020>].

In this sense, the creation of mechanisms that directly influence the image of Uzbekistan in the world information space, bringing the media image formed during the years of independence to a qualitatively new level, as well as the introduction of appropriate comprehensive measures in this regard is a requirement of the time.

"A number of measures should be taken to effectively strengthen the positive image of Uzbekistan in the international arena and ensure the stability of this process," the Presidential Decree "On the concept of strengthening the positive image of Uzbekistan in the international arena." The document notes that an integrated system of formation and promotion of Uzbekistan's international image at the state and public levels is important.

One of the most important tasks in this area is to increase the effectiveness of the country's unique image, including its rich cultural, historical, spiritual and intellectual heritage, centuries-old statehood, recognized contribution to the development of world civilization, high level of interethnic and interreligious tolerance, social harmony, natural resources, developed transport and communication infrastructure, readiness for equal cooperation regardless of ideological worldview.

In order to form a comprehensive and systematic state policy to promote and strengthen the positive image of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the world, the main objectives of the policy of strengthening the positive image of Uzbekistan in the international arena are:

- strengthening the holistic and positive perception of Uzbekistan as a consistently developing, modern democratic state governed by the rule of law by governmental and non-governmental structures, international organizations and financial institutions;
- continuation of large-scale reforms and changes in the political, socio-economic and cultural spheres, strengthening the country's attractiveness for investors and business partners, strengthening the competitiveness of the national economy in the world, creating the most favorable conditions for important economic projects in Uzbekistan;
- promotion of exports of local goods and services in regional and global markets through the formation and strengthening of an attractive national brand of Uzbekistan in the international arena;
- strengthening the national sovereignty, stability and security by supporting

the international initiatives of the Republic of Uzbekistan and expanding its positive perception in the world community.

According to the resolution, coordination and control over the quality and timeliness of implementation of the Concept and Road Map will be carried out by the Agency for Information and Mass Communications under the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Uzbekistan;

Funding for the implementation of the Concept and Road Map is provided from the state budget of the Republic of Uzbekistan and extra-budgetary sources not prohibited by law;

The heads of relevant ministries and agencies are personally responsible for the quality and timeliness of implementation of the measures set out in the Concept and Road Map and the provision of information on a quarterly basis to the Agency for Information and Mass Communications under the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Inclusion of Uzbekistan in the list of leading business, cultural and tourism centers of Asia.

It should be noted that before the adoption of this Concept, a number of meetings, roundtables and conferences with the participation of international and national experts were held in Tashkent.

In particular, at a roundtable on "Current issues of strengthening the international image of the Republic of Uzbekistan" (July 26, 2019) at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, local and foreign experts shared their views on the topic.

Dilshoda Rakhmatova, a correspondent for Russia's Sputnik international news agency in Uzbekistan, said: "The media has the power to shape, influence and govern public opinion. The media can also affect the image of politicians and the image of the state" she said. At the same time, she said, "the press, full of applause, shows the hypocrisy of the regime. This is well known in the world".

The role of the media in implementing the mechanisms of raising the image of a country or region in real life is invaluable.

In this sense, on October 14, 2019, Robin Lerner, President and CEO of the Texas International Education Consortium, told visiting journalists from Central Asia: "Texas is not just about oil and gas. It is primarily a modern state where renewable energy sources are developing. Media representatives like you should know this and see it with their own eyes".

On October 31, 2019, Graham Watson-Ringo, Editor-in-Chief of the Rivard Report news site, said in an interview for this study: "Our site also includes a wide range of articles prepared by locals. These materials are provided under the heading "Where I live". Readers are happy to write excitedly about the neighborhood where they live. We just edit the texts a bit and send a photographer to take a nice picture of them. You know, it was the media materials in this column that led to the immigration of a U.S. citizen living in another city to San Antonio. *They said they were inspired by our articles and decided to live in our city*".

Hence, mass media communications play a very important role in increasing interest in a country or any region. At present, serious attention is paid to the issue of qualitatively changing the image of the country, the implementation of mechanisms to positively affect it.

As the new Uzbekistan seeks to increase its prestige in the international arena, along with the introduction of consistent reforms, the international agencies that determine the national rating are appreciating the changes.

Eldor Tulyakov, executive director of the Center for Development Strategy, told UZA, emphasizing the importance of raising our prestige in the international arena from the very first days of his activity, Shavkat Mirziyoyev has put forward a number of ideas in this regard and identified all the necessary organizational and legal measures.

From the very beginning of his term in office, the President declared the policy of openness a priority. As a result, Uzbekistan is opening up to the world community” [<http://uza.uz/oz/society/zbekiston-khal-aro-maydondagi-imizhini-musta-kamlamoda-24-07-2019>].

"Uzbekistan is strengthening its image in the international arena," he said. Policy is being pursued. This is evidenced by the fact that today Uzbekistan has established trade and economic relations with more than 166 countries. In general, the diversification of foreign policy plays an important role in raising the international image of Uzbekistan.

In the process of qualitatively changing the image of the country in the world media space, along with the media, cooperation in other leading areas, including foreign policy, diplomatic relations, international organizations, also plays an important role. A good example of this is the article entitled "UN Resolution - a historic achievement of Uzbek diplomacy” [[http://www.uza.uz/oz/society/bmt-rezolyutsiyasi-zbek-diplomatiyasining-tarixiy-yutu-i-18-07-2018?sphrase\\_id=5042709](http://www.uza.uz/oz/society/bmt-rezolyutsiyasi-zbek-diplomatiyasining-tarixiy-yutu-i-18-07-2018?sphrase_id=5042709)].

It was noted that on June 22, 2018, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution "Strengthening regional and international cooperation to ensure peace, stability and sustainable development in the Central Asian region." This draft document, developed by Uzbekistan in cooperation with Central Asian countries, was unanimously supported by all UN member states. This resolution is a practical result of the initiative put forward by the President of Uzbekistan at the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly in September 2017 in New York.

The article also quotes the First Deputy Chairman of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sadiq Safaev as saying: "Uzbekistan is taking firm, concrete steps to develop mutually beneficial relations with all Central Asian states. I think that the fact that our country has begun to pursue a new policy in the region is a timely and effective step towards resolving the issues that have accumulated here. In this regard, the intensification of cooperation between the Central Asian states through this resolution will pave the way for a radical change in the political environment in the region, the establishment of constructive cooperation and the strengthening of good neighborly relations”.

The development of the concept of a single information policy in Uzbekistan is of great historical significance [<http://uza.uz/oz/society/zbekistonda-yagona-akhborot-siyasati-kontseptsiyasi-tasdi-la-11-02-2020>].

The concept envisages a number of measures.

Including:

- formation of mechanisms for the development of a single state information policy that determines the national interests in the field of information;
- identification of measures aimed at improving the level and quality of cooperation between the press services of public and economic administration bodies, state enterprises and organizations with the public and the media;
- development of the Uzbek language segment of the global Internet information network and increase media literacy of the population;
- training of journalists and understanding of their rights and responsibilities, quality integration of the republic into the global information space.

This concept will be an important step in the process of qualitatively changing the image of Uzbekistan, the introduction of mechanisms to positively affect it.

The issues of qualitatively changing the image of the country, the introduction of mechanisms for its positive impact, considered in the above chapter, are important due to their urgency and role in the development of the republic. This implies the need for a conceptual approach to all work to be done in this regard.

In this study, the concept of media image is an important tool in shaping the image of Uzbekistan:

the cognitive aspects of the country's image in the modern media environment will continue to be important,

special attention was paid to the theoretical and scientific value of the relevant views and their practical place.

## CONCLUSION

– The media image, which is a product of modern journalism, theoretically arises in exactly the same way as the concept of imagemaking as mediaimage. In our opinion, the use of lingvocognitive modeling methodology in this case can give the expected effect;

– It is recommended to study the process of image modeling in new aspects, not only in the country, but also in the regions, provinces and districts;

– In the modern media environment, the symbol of a region or country, in the process of perceiving the reality affecting its image, appears "subject-object relationship" based on the contradiction between the performer of cognitive activity, ie the subject and the object of this activity. This allows the image to be viewed from a cognitive aspect;

– At first glance, the image of Uzbekistan in the Western and Russian media seems indistinguishable. However, if they are studied systematically, one can witness that the existing difference is significant. Such (comprehensive) conclusions serve as an important basis for managing the image of Uzbekistan in the media space of these countries, and, if necessary, to take prompt action in this regard.

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