HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

THE ROLE OF SCIENCE AND CULTURE IN UZBEKISTAN–U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY: THE CASE OF ALISHER NAVOI'S LEGACY

Otabek Kudratovich Almardonov
Associate Professor, Department of Contemporary History of Uzbekistan, Faculty of History, National University of Uzbekistan;
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in History.
E-mail: alexkhanfrank@gmail.com
doi:https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24035140

Abstract: This article analyzes the role of scientific, cultural, and educational cooperation in the development of public diplomacy between Uzbekistan and the United States. It highlights how the literary and philosophical heritage of Alisher Navoi serves as a symbolic cultural bridge between the two nations. The growing interest in Navoi's works in the U.S. is presented as an example of cultural dialogue and soft power implementation in practice.
Keywords: public diplomacy, cultural exchange, Alisher Navoi, USA, Uzbekistan, soft power, academic cooperation

Introduction. Public diplomacy is a multifaceted form of diplomacy that, unlike traditional interstate diplomatic relations, is conducted through citizens, social institutions, non-governmental organizations, and social networks. It contributes to the formation of an environment of mutual trust and cooperation between countries on the basis of socio-cultural, educational, scholarly, and intellectual exchanges. As emphasized in Joseph S. Nye's theory of soft power, public diplomacy has strategic significance as an instrument through which culture, values, and intellectual influence contribute to interaction among peoples.

In the twenty-first century, globalization, digital communication, and cultural diversity have further increased the significance of public diplomacy within the international relations system. In particular, the United States has employed public diplomacy as an important component of its foreign policy in the international arena. For Uzbekistan, this area has increasingly emerged as an instrument for strengthening spiritual and cultural affinity among peoples within the framework of new foreign policy concepts, including the idea of the "Third Renaissance."

Public diplomacy relations between Uzbekistan and the United States have intensified in recent decades, encompassing a broad range of initiatives in such fields as education, science, culture, tourism, and literature. Cultural diplomacy and educational exchange occupy a particularly important place within this process. In particular, the literary and philosophical legacy of Alisher Navoi has emerged as an important symbolic instrument for developing cultural dialogue between the two peoples on the basis of universal human values.

This article provides a scholarly analysis of the contemporary state of public diplomacy relations between Uzbekistan and the United States, the role of science and culture within these relations, and the significance of Alisher Navoi's legacy as an international cultural bridge. It also examines, through specific examples, the interest in Navoi's works in the United States and the ways in which his legacy is perceived as an instrument of soft power. The purpose of the article is to identify the mechanisms

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

for strengthening friendly relations and mutual understanding between peoples by examining the role of Navoi's legacy in Uzbekistan's contemporary cultural diplomacy.

Literature Review. The concept of public diplomacy began to take theoretical shape in the second half of the twentieth century, particularly within the practice of U.S. foreign policy. In Joseph S. Nye's theory of soft power, public diplomacy is presented as an effective foreign-policy instrument based on attraction and cultural influence. In his work Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics (2004), Nye argues that states can exert influence in the international arena not only through military and economic power, but also through cultural and normative appeal [1].

Nicholas J. Cull defines public diplomacy as a set of diplomatic activities conducted through advocacy, cultural exchange, and the engagement of citizens acting as informal representatives of their countries. In his work Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past (2009), he emphasizes that states should strengthen mutual relations not only through official channels, but also through informal and human-centred forms of interaction [2].

Although such approaches are widely applied internationally, their implementation within specific national contexts requires separate scholarly examination. In Uzbekistan, the number of academic studies devoted to public diplomacy has increased in recent years. Particularly noteworthy are the observations of Academician A. Asqarov on the historical development of public diplomacy in Uzbekistan. The scholar traces its roots to archaeological evidence discovered during excavations at the Bronze Age settlements of Sopollitepa and Jarqo'ton [3]. In particular, the population of the Sopollitepa settlement in southern Uzbekistan maintained direct and close relations with neighbouring peoples as early as the Bronze Age.

The views of Orientalist scholar M. Is'hoqov on the significance of the Great Silk Road in the development of public diplomacy further substantiate the deep historical roots of people-to-people relations in Central Asia [4]. As he notes: "It is appropriate to study the historical significance of public diplomacy from periods preceding the formation of the Great Silk Road. The reason is that, although the Great Silk Road is widely known to have taken shape in the second–first centuries BCE, relations among peoples date back to the ancient Stone Age."

In the United States, scholarly interest in Alisher Navoi has a long-standing tradition. Robert Devereux's translation of Muhakamat al-Lughatayn in the 1960s, D. Daly's collection Twenty-One Ghazals by Alisher Navoi, and English-language editions of Lison ut-Tayr prepared by translators such as G. Dick and D. Rodhiver represented important stages in introducing Navoi to a broader international academic and reading audience. Through the articles and public presentations of American scholar Barry Hoberman and Professor S. R. Husayni, Navoi's works have also been assessed as sources that promote universal human values and contribute to international dialogue.

In addition, events devoted to Navoi's legacy and organized within the frameworks of the United Nations, UNESCO, The Washington Diplomat, and other international organizations and media platforms have become notable manifestations of cultural diplomacy at the international level.

The existing literature addresses both the theoretical and practical dimensions of public diplomacy at the international and national levels. However, the role of Alisher Navoi's legacy in public diplomacy, particularly in the context of Uzbekistan–United States relations, has not yet been examined comprehensively. The present article is aimed precisely at addressing this scholarly gap.

Research Methodology. The study employs comparative analysis, historical-theoretical analysis, content analysis, as well as targeted observation and inferential methods. The practical manifestations

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

of public diplomacy are examined through examples of the reception and use of Alisher Navoi's works in the United States. The study also draws upon official sources, scholarly publications, and mass media materials.

Таҳлил ва натижалар. Analysis and Results. Public diplomacy is a form of diplomacy that develops through direct interaction between peoples, in addition to traditional diplomatic relations between states. This form of diplomacy is distinguished by its focus on relations among societies, citizens, and various voluntary organizations, alongside official state institutions and political actors.

Public diplomacy encompasses diplomatic engagement conducted through culture, education, science, tourism, the arts, and other spheres of interaction among citizens.

The purpose of public diplomacy is to improve relations between states, strengthen mutual trust through cultural, educational, and social exchanges, and promote friendship and cooperation.

Public diplomacy relations between Uzbekistan and the United States have strengthened over time.

Cooperation between Uzbekistan and the United States, which is regarded as one of the major centres of contemporary public diplomacy, has developed across various spheres of society.

In recent decades, cultural diplomacy has become an important component of the foreign policies of many states, including Uzbekistan. The use of a country's cultural potential in foreign policy serves as an effective instrument for shaping a positive national image, enhancing its international standing, and facilitating the resolution of both domestic and foreign-policy issues. For this reason, Uzbekistan has increasingly supported the active use of cultural diplomacy in its foreign policy [5].

Today, cultural exchanges between the United States and Uzbekistan are developing actively through one of the most influential spheres of public diplomacy. Numerous universities and organizations in the United States seek to study and accurately present the history and culture of Uzbekistan.

As a symbol of Uzbek literature and culture, Alisher Navoi serves as an important symbolic and cultural bridge in people-to-people diplomacy between Uzbekistan and the United States. His works, ideas, and intellectual legacy contribute to deepening cultural understanding between the two peoples.

The creative legacy of the great poet and thinker is founded upon universal values such as humanism, devotion to the homeland, justice, and benevolence. These ideas of Navoi continue to attract international attention, while his legacy serves as an important factor in strengthening friendship and solidarity among peoples. Within public diplomacy, such values contribute to creating an environment conducive to peace and cooperation among nations.

Navoi's ideas concerning the strengthening of peace and friendship among different peoples and the joint construction of a brighter future for humanity have acquired particular relevance in today's complex and challenging world. Public diplomacy plays an important role in promoting precisely such universal values and in mitigating tensions and disagreements between countries and nations.

The humanistic ideas and universal values embodied in Alisher Navoi's works have also attracted attention within academic circles in the United States. For example, in 2021, The Washington Diplomat published an article on an event held at the Embassy of Uzbekistan in the United States to commemorate the 580th anniversary of Alisher Navoi's birth [6]. The event addressed Navoi's place in world literature and the humanistic principles reflected in his creative legacy.

The first work by the renowned Uzbek poet and thinker Alisher Navoi to be translated into English in the United States was Muhakamat al-Lughatayn. The first part of this translation, prepared

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

by the distinguished scholar Robert Devereux, was published in 1964 in Volume 54, Issue 4 of the American journal The Muslim World. A year later, the second part of the translation appeared in Volume 55, Issue 1 of the same journal. In 1966, the work was published in book form in Leiden [7].

Western scholarly interest in Alisher Navoi's literary heritage continues to this day. Universities in the United States, including Harvard University, UCLA, and Indiana University, contribute to increasing interest in the Uzbek language and culture through the study of Navoi's works within Oriental and Central Asian studies. Cooperation between scholars working in these fields in the United States and their counterparts in Uzbekistan may also be regarded as a form of public diplomacy.

American scholar of Islamic studies Barry Hoberman, in his article "Chaucer of the Turks," published in Saudi Aramco World, recognized Navoi as one of the prominent figures of the Eastern Renaissance [8]. Another American literary scholar, writer, and poet, Dennis Daly, translated and published Twenty-One Ghazals by Alisher Navoiy in December 2016. This relatively concise collection was the author's fifth book and attracted considerable interest among international readers. The book remains available through Amazon and other online platforms [9]. In one of his interviews, translator D. Daly stated that his interest in Alisher Navoi's works emerged as a result of his visit to Uzbekistan in 2001. "The people of Uzbekistan are extremely fortunate, because your cultural heritage is so rich that it could, in the truest sense of the word, inspire the envy of the West. Alisher Navoi constitutes a major part of this heritage and of this literary tradition."

"In 2001, I met my daughter in Tashkent and travelled around the country with her. At that time, she was working as a Peace Corps volunteer, teaching English to Uzbek children in Gurlan. We travelled from Tashkent to Samarkand, Bukhara, Nukus, and Muynak, as well as to a number of smaller districts and villages. I had read extensively about Navoi and was familiar with accounts of his life, creative legacy, and the historical period in which he lived. In 2001, my daughter found several prose translations into English of ghazals by Alisher Navoi. Their quality could not be described as particularly high. Nevertheless, even through their content, one could perceive Navoi's greatness. My daughter's knowledge of Uzbek and Russian enabled me to produce literary English versions of several of Navoi's ghazals. As a poet, I paid particular attention to preserving their poetic quality and, where necessary, employed techniques characteristic of English verse. I do not claim that my translations are superior to all others. However, relatively few translators or scholars possess poetic skill. Even if my translations are not the finest, my principal aim was to introduce Navoi's poetry to American readers as quickly as possible. I am convinced that translations closer to the original are still to come. ... Many of Alisher Navoi's works can serve as a cultural bond between Central Asians and Americans, as well as between Central Asia and the wider English-speaking world."

D. Daly also noted that only a limited number of countries possess ancient cities comparable to Samarkand and Bukhara, and that the Uzbek people have the potential to achieve a flourishing of literature, architecture, and Eastern philosophy on a scale surpassing even the remarkable Renaissance of the Timurid era.

Indeed, the translated volume reached a remarkably wide audience, extending to almost every state in the United States. It represented a distinctive development and was received very warmly by readers across the country.

Another important work by Alisher Navoi, the epic poem Lison ut-Tayr, was first published in Tashkent in 2003 in an English translation prepared by American translator Gary Dick and Nosir Qambarov. Three years later, American translator Dwayne Rodhiver and Shavkat Azimov produced a

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

second English translation of Lison ut-Tayr. Published in 2006 by AuthorHouse in the state of Indiana, the book was subsequently added to the collection of the Library of Congress of the United States in 2007 [10].

In New Uzbekistan, within the process of the "Third Renaissance," Navoi's works are regarded as a source of inspiration, intellectual strength, and creative energy. This, in turn, requires the preservation and broader promotion of the nation's spiritual and cultural heritage through the mechanisms of public diplomacy. Cultural exchange and spiritual solidarity constitute important factors in making friendship among peoples deeper and more sustainable.

On 8 February 2018, the Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature named after Alisher Navoi, in cooperation with the "Uzbekistan–USA" Friendship Society and the UNESCO Office in Uzbekistan, organized a republican scientific and practical international conference entitled "Alisher Navoi and the Twenty-First Century."

The conference was attended by representatives of the foreign diplomatic corps, heads of national cultural centres, linguists and literary scholars, as well as representatives of the wider public. During the event, it was emphasized that scholarly interest in Navoi's works continues to grow, that his literary heritage is of universal significance, and that the worldwide respect accorded to Navoi derives from the enduring relevance of the ideas he advanced [11].

In 2025, Navoi Region, which was declared the "Year of Alisher Navoi," hosted for the first time the Fourth International Symposium "Alisher Navoi and the Eastern Renaissance," held on the eve of the 584th anniversary of the poet's birth.

This academic forum was significant not only for literary scholars and researchers, but also for specialists in the field of public diplomacy. The ideas expressed at the symposium clearly demonstrated how elevated intellectual and cultural values can serve as a call for strengthening friendship, cooperation, and peace among peoples.

In his congratulatory message to the participants of the conference, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev expressed profound gratitude to representatives of the international scholarly community who have been actively cooperating with Uzbek researchers in the study of Navoi's creative legacy [12].

Indeed, representatives from more than 20 countries, including the United States, China, Iran, Belgium, Pakistan, Türkiye, and Azerbaijan, participated in the symposium. This demonstrated not only the global significance of Navoi's heritage, but also Uzbekistan's cultural standing in the international arena.

Prominent scholars, including Professor Said Reza Huseini from the United States, Belgian expert Derya Soysal, and Professor Vahit Türk from Türkiye, expressed their views on Navoi's place in the Turkic world, history, literature, and spiritual and intellectual philosophy. Derya Soysal described Navoi as a symbol uniting Turkic peoples, while Professor Vahit Türk drew attention to the fact that one of the most frequently occurring words in Navoi's ghazals is "ko'ngil" ("heart" or "inner soul"). In Navoi's works, this concept signifies the inner world of the human being, spiritual elevation, and moral purification. His works foster empathy and mutual understanding among different peoples [13]. This creates considerable opportunities for encouraging dialogue among multi-ethnic and multicultural societies and for strengthening public diplomacy. The growing level of mutual understanding and interaction among peoples through international cooperation in science and culture demonstrates the effectiveness of such efforts.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

Said Reza Huseini, who participated in the symposium, has contributed to the study and promotion of Navoi's works within academic circles in the United States.

Historian and professor Said Reza Huseini, based in the United States, has commented on the place of Navoi's legacy in world culture and history, emphasizing the importance of his works in promoting universal human values.

Regular exchanges among scholars, researchers, and specialists constitute a contemporary instrument of public diplomacy. Such exchanges contribute not only to the advancement of scholarly knowledge, but also to strengthening cultural understanding and friendship.

Overall, the significance of conferences devoted to Alisher Navoi's creative legacy from the perspective of public diplomacy can be analyzed through the following table.

Aspect	Explanation
1. International significance	Participation of representatives from 20 countries, reflecting broad international interest in the symposium.
2. Recognition at the state level	The personal participation of President Mirziyoyev and his statement on the "Third Renaissance."
3. Navoi's universal humanistic ideas	The ideas of humanism, peace, and cultural dialogue as a foundation for public diplomacy.
4. Reflections involving representatives of the United States and Europe	Important bridges for scholarly exchange and cultural rapprochement.

Conclusion and Recommendations. The international recognition and study of Alisher Navoi's legacy constitute an important instrument of Uzbekistan's cultural **soft power**, contributing to the deepening of mutual understanding and respect between the peoples of Uzbekistan and the United States. Based on the analysis presented above, the following conclusions may be drawn.

First, public diplomacy has emerged as a significant format of contemporary international relations, operating not only through official state channels but also through citizens, scholars, intellectuals, and cultural figures.

Second, public diplomacy relations between Uzbekistan and the United States continue to expand, particularly in the fields of culture and education, science, literature, and academic cooperation. Within this process, Alisher Navoi's literary and philosophical legacy occupies a distinctive place as a symbolic embodiment of cultural dialogue between the two peoples.

Third, the translation of Alisher Navoi's works into English and the interest they have generated among academic circles and the wider public in the United States contribute to strengthening Uzbekistan's soft-power potential.

Fourth, academic and cultural exchanges, including conferences, publications, and events devoted to Navoi, serve as important instruments in shaping Uzbekistan's international image.

Fifth, the promotion of universal human values through Alisher Navoi's legacy demonstrates the potential of public diplomacy to contribute to international peace, intercultural understanding, and social harmony.

Recommendations:

1. Comprehensive programmes for promoting Alisher Navoi's legacy abroad should be developed through cooperation between governmental and non-governmental organizations. Such programmes should encompass translation projects, scholarly cooperation, and cultural exchange.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

2. It is recommended to establish specialized translation centres responsible for preparing complete and high-quality literary translations of Alisher Navoi's works and facilitating their publication through publishing houses in the United States and Europe.

3. The establishment of joint research projects and academic centres between universities in Uzbekistan and the United States devoted to the study of Alisher Navoi's legacy would contribute to strengthening scholarly dialogue within the framework of public diplomacy.

4. The digitization of Navoi's literary heritage and its dissemination through digital platforms, including YouTube, Coursera, Khan Academy, and JSTOR, could significantly expand its global cultural reach and accessibility.

5. The establishment of a permanent monitoring and analytical centre focusing on the history and prospects of Uzbekistan–United States public diplomacy would facilitate the identification of strategic priorities and promote more systematic bilateral cooperation.

6. Forms of public diplomacy based on the personal experiences and activities of cultural and professional actors including travellers, volunteer teachers, translators, and other specialists should also be supported and encouraged.

References

1. Nye, J. S. (2004). Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics. New York: PublicAffairs.
2. Snow, N., & Taylor, P. M. (Eds.). (2009). Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy. London: Routledge.
3. Cull, N. J. (2009). Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past. Los Angeles: USC Center on Public Diplomacy.
4. Current Archives of the National Television and Radio Company of Uzbekistan. Speech by A. Asqarov at the roundtable entitled "The Role of Public Diplomacy in the Development of Cultural and Humanitarian Relations," broadcast on the O'zbekiston tarixi television channel. Tashkent, 10 February 2020.
5. Current Archives of the National Television and Radio Company of Uzbekistan. Speech by M. Is'hoqov at the roundtable entitled "The Role of Public Diplomacy in the Development of Cultural and Humanitarian Relations," broadcast on the O'zbekiston tarixi television channel. Tashkent, 10 February 2020.
6. "What Is the Strength of the Cultural Diplomacy of New Uzbekistan?" Available at: https://www.alliance-press.kg/ru/articles/view/2932
7. "Events Marking the 580th Anniversary of Alisher Navoi's Birth Covered by U.S. Mass Media." Available at: https://yuz.uz/uz/news/alisher-navoiy-tavalludining-580-yilligi-munosabati-bilan-otkazilgan-tadbirlar-aqsh-ommaviy-axborot-vositalarida
8. Saidov, A. (2018). Uzbekistan among the 'Newsmaker' States: Impressions from President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's First Official Visit to the United States. Tashkent: O'zbekiston Publishing and Printing Creative House, p. 115.
9. "Alisher Navoi's Ghazals in America." Available at: https://tsuull.uz PDF material by Qosimboy Mamurov.
10. Saidov, A. (2018). Uzbekistan among the 'Newsmaker' States: Impressions from President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's First Official Visit to the United States. Tashkent: O'zbekiston Publishing and Printing Creative House, p. 57.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

11. Saidov, A. (2018). Uzbekistan among the 'Newsmaker' States: Impressions from President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's First Official Visit to the United States. Tashkent: O'zbekiston Publishing and Printing Creative House, p. 40.
12. Sirojiddinov, Sh. "Uzbekistan–United States: Towards Strengthening Cultural and Educational Relations." Available at: https://uza.uz/oz/posts/o-zbekiston-aqsh-madaniy-ma-rifiy-munosabatlarni-mustahkamla-18-05-2018
13. "Address to the Participants of the Fourth International Symposium 'Alisher Navoi and the Eastern Renaissance'." Available at: https://president.uz/uz/lists/view/7866
14. "International Symposium Takes Place in Navoiy, Uzbekistan, Dedicated to Alisher Navoiy." EU Reporter, 11 February 2025. Available at: https://www.eureporter.co/lifestyle/culture/2025/02/11/international-symposium-takes-place-navoiy-uzbekistan-dedicated-to-alisher-navoiy