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**FORMATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL IMAGE: A COMPARATIVE  
ANALYSIS OF THE EXPERIENCE OF GERMANY AND UZBEKISTAN**

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**Abstract**

The subject of the research is the formation of a correct and positive image of the country abroad. The authors consider in detail the experience of Germany and Uzbekistan in building an international image, comparing the strategies of these countries. At the same time, the components of the strategies are analyzed, in particular, the application of the concept of "soft power", which makes the increase in the country's influence in the world dependent on the attractiveness of the country. The authors pay special attention to the extent to which countries manage to achieve their goals in the process of forming an international political image, and what restrictions may arise in this case. During the study, a systematic approach was used, as well as such methods of scientific knowledge as analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, comparison, and historical method. In conclusion, the authors come to the conclusion that in the formation of the international image, Germany relies on economic development. At the same time, Uzbekistan is positioning itself as a strong state, including by converting "hard" power into "soft" power. To enhance the international image, both countries use the institutions of "soft power". At the same time, it is noted that the achievement of foreign policy goals through the formation of the image is hindered by the fears of EU neighbors for Germany, the lack of elaboration of a strategy for shaping the image abroad and domestic problems for Uzbekistan.

**Keywords:** soft power, hard power, image of the country, economic miracle, great power, world politics, Germany, Uzbekistan, international relations, domestic policy

The modern world is undergoing significant transformations that change the logic of the behavior of states in the international arena. First, after the end of the bipolar era, the likelihood of interstate military conflicts decreased, and methods of non-military influence on other countries and their populations began to be developed. So, in 1990, the concept of "soft power" appeared. Naya, which makes the increase in the country's influence in the world dependent on the attractiveness of the country. And, Despite the fact that since the beginning of the XXI century, the growth of global military spending, as well as forceful methods of conflict resolution,<sup>1</sup> has resumed after a significant reduction in the 1990s (from \$ 1400 billion in 1990 to \$ 1000 billion in the late 1990s), the value of "soft power" is not decreasing today. On the contrary, countries are trying

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<sup>1</sup> Bogaturov A.D. Leadership and decentralization in the international system // International processes. 2006. №4. – S. 5-15.

to use the resource of attractiveness to improve their international status in the face of intensified competition "for a place in the world hierarchy."

Secondly, the development of the information society, the permeability of state borders, the rapid spread of the Internet and other information technologies radically change the traditional nature of international relations, translating them into virtual space. At the same time, the first trend is largely determined by the second, since interaction with the population of foreign states within the framework of "soft power" takes place on the basis of intensive use of information and communication technologies. A number of researchers note that today the so-called era of post-truth has come, when they appeal to emotions using any means, including false information. Modern politics is moving into the world of images and images, and the objectivity of political reality is beginning to give way to the policy of influencing emotions and personal beliefs. Under these conditions, the formation of a correct, and most importantly, positive international image becomes an integral task of the state.

For Uzbekistan, the formation of a positive image is extremely important. Today, our country has begun to occupy a special place in the system of modern international relations. In this regard, it is imperative for us to study the experience of Germany, which has already transformed its economic potential into a political one, has become the leader of the European Union and a real exemplary country for all countries of the world. And Uzbekistan, of course, is far from being like Germany, but the country must also move forward. To maintain and strengthen their status, countries are not only following the path of increasing resources, but also paying increasing importance to their own international image.

It is known that Germany uses a wide network of "soft power" institutions in the field of culture, education, language to increase its attractiveness and improve its image. The country can distinguish the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the Pedagogical Exchange Service (Pädagogischer Austauschdienst), political foundations, etc. But, unfortunately, Uzbekistan cannot yet boast in such areas.

According to the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026, for an objective perception of Uzbekistan in the world, the country has the following goals, such as "Improving the efficiency of bringing information aimed at improving the image of our country to the audience of the world community. Taking measures to develop and support the activities of the Dunyo News Agency. Further acceleration of cooperation with the world's leading news agencies. Preparation and implementation of a set of measures to promote the image of Uzbekistan on the world stage, effective continuation of the dissemination of objective information about the progress of reforms in our country, the processes of democratic renewal of society<sup>2</sup>. In this regard, it is advisable to note the action of the Dunyo news agency, which is available to viewers in many countries of the world.

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<sup>2</sup> Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, dated 28.01.2022 No. UP-60 "On the development strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026". <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/5841077>

However, with the exception of the use of soft power institutions, the strategies of Germany and Uzbekistan to form their international image are different. For Germany, which immediately after the end of World War II entered the "club of democracies" (West Germany), the international political environment was favorable. The Nazi past did not become a significant obstacle to the formation of the country's image in the post-war years, which was due to a number of reasons. First, as a result of the denazification policy pursued in the country at the suggestion of the victorious powers, the main Nazi criminals were brought to justice. Secondly, Germany is not trying to silence the dark pages of history, but pursues a policy of "overcoming the past" ("Vergangenheitsbewältigung" or "Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit").

At the heart of this policy is the rejection of the silence of the crimes of the Third Reich, as well as the recognition of the genocide of the Jews. In practice, this is reflected in the fact that Germany has been paying compensation to Holocaust victims to this day. By 2015, Germany had paid €71 billion to victims of Nazi crimes.<sup>3</sup> In addition, there are numerous museums covering the tragic events of the war period, for example, the Jewish Museum in Berlin. A symbolic gesture of admission of guilt was made by the German Chancellor in 1963-1987.

Willy Brandt, when in 1970 in Warsaw he knelt in front of the monument to the victims of Nazism<sup>4</sup>. After that, there was a long discussion about whether the politician did it spontaneously or whether it was a pre-negotiated and well-thought-out action. However, one way or another, this gesture had a beneficial effect on the international image of Germany.

Another component of building the country's image was the emphasis on domestic economic development. Only in the period from 1950 to 1963, industrial production almost doubled, unemployment was significantly reduced. This period went down in history as the "economic miracle" of Germany.<sup>5</sup> Today, according to the World Bank, Germany is the fourth largest economy in the world in terms of purchasing power parity, and among European countries it is the undisputed leader<sup>6</sup>.

The trademark "Made in Germany" has now become a symbol of high quality. So, in 2017, the German company Dalia Research presented a study of national brands (Made-In-Country-Index). According to the data obtained, the brand "Made in Germany" took the first line of the rating, receiving the maximum possible 100 points [20]. All this has

<sup>3</sup> Käppner J. Sum of Shame//Süddeutsche Zeitung.-17.03.2015.-Access mode: – <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/reparationendeutschlands-fuer-zweiten-weltkrieg-summe-der-schande-1.2395520>

<sup>4</sup> Sontheimer M. Kniefall vor der Geschichte//SPIEGEL ONLINE.-03.12.2010.- Access mode: – <http://www.spiegel.de/einestages/willybrandt-in-warschau-a-946886.html>

<sup>5</sup> The 1950s: In the Land of the Economic Miracle//German Society for Quality.- Access mode: – <http://www.qualitaetsleitbild.de/60-jahredgq/die-1950er/>

<sup>6</sup> GDP, PPP (current international \$)// The World Bank, International Comparison Program database. – [Electronic resource] URL:[https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.PP.CD?locations=DE&year\\_high\\_desc=true](https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.PP.CD?locations=DE&year_high_desc=true)

a positive effect on the international image of Germany, makes the country attractive for trade, investment and creates a climate of trust.

Despite the successful functioning of the German institutions of "soft power", one of the goals of which is to overcome the negative consequences of the historical past, it is not possible to finally get rid of the image of the once aggressive country. Some countries, criticizing the growing influence of Germany in Europe, cite historical analogies for political purposes. Thus, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan compared Germany's policy towards Turkey with Nazism<sup>7</sup>. Moreover, modern Germany under the leadership of Angela Merkel has repeatedly been credited with the name "Fourth Reich", drawing an analogy with the "Third Reich" of Adolf Hitler. At the same time, it is argued that instead of military methods, modern Germany uses trade and financial mechanisms<sup>8</sup>.

After the referendum in the UK on leaving the European Union, it was Germany, together with France, that published the document "A Strong Europe in an Insecure World", the main idea of which is the need to strengthen the integration efforts of countries, including in the field of security<sup>9</sup>. This document was criticized by a number of EU countries, which accused Berlin and Paris of trying to transform the European Union into a "superstate" in which they would take a leading position.

Unlike Germany, Uzbekistan is forced to build its strategy for the formation of an international political image in not very favorable conditions with the outside world. This, to serve the period in which Uzbekistan lived for about 25 years under the rule of the dictatorship of Islam Karimov, is accepted by the outside world as a totalitarian and contradictory system of democracy. Therefore, many of Uzbekistan's initiatives in the world and transformations in the country were viewed by Western countries through the prism of negativity. Other issues related to human rights and political reforms in Uzbekistan have also contributed to this. It was these issues that formed the image of Uzbekistan in the world until 2016. And after the turbulent transformations that took place after 2016 and continues to this day, there is a need to achieve an objective perception of the country in the world. But in recent years, Uzbekistan has shown the world its achievements and loyalty to democratic change and openness.

However, its strategy for image formation is somewhat different from the German approach. Modern Uzbekistan positions itself as a developing country with a great history. However, the intensification of Uzbekistan's participation in the international arena in recent years, the desire for world-regulating activities and the ability to "act globally" make it possible to characterize Uzbekistan as a strong and fast-growing country in Central Asia. To form its international image, Uzbekistan already uses not

<sup>7</sup> Adorno T. Which means: Reappraisal of the past//signals.-Access mode: –[Electronic resource] URL: <https://signale.cornell.edu/text/was-bedeutet-aufarbeitung-der-vergangenheit>

<sup>8</sup> Blome N., Böll S., Kuntz K. Das Vierte Reich// SPIEGEL ONLINE.– 21.03.2015.– [Electronic resource] URL: <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-132701110.html>

<sup>9</sup> Ayralt J, Steimeier F. A strong Europe in an uncertain world// Auswärtiges Amt.– 27.06.2016.– [Electronic resource] URL: <http://www.sven-giegold.de/wpcontent/uploads/2016/06/Starkes-Europa-in-unsicherer-Welt.pdf>

only the tools of "soft power", but also peace-loving and preventive diplomacy (as an example, we can show the Afghan vector in foreign policy). In this regard, it not only became the first large-scale modern initiative for the peaceful settlement of the Afghan issue, drawing the attention of the international community to the same issue. In other words, these initiatives of Uzbekistan actually demonstrate the conversion of a kind of "soft power", increasing the international image of the country.

It should be noted that such a policy can have a positive effect, which is clearly seen in the example of relations between Uzbekistan and the West. The increase in military power among the countries of Central Asia and the country's activity in preventive diplomacy for the countries surrounding Afghanistan by Western countries are perceived as an important positive effect. In this regard, the image of Uzbekistan is also increasing, because Western states began to treat any "soft" actions of the country in a friendly manner, believing that this is a product of "external and internal political reforms of Uzbekistan." In addition, the positive results of the use of "soft power", i.e. holding a number of international events at a high level, contribute to improving the international image of the country in the long term.

At the same time, relying on Germany's successful experience in implementing a strategy to form a positive international political image, it is necessary to make a few more critical remarks regarding the image policy of Uzbekistan. First, according to some experts, the country's image tends to lose its attractiveness if it is not continuously confirmed by <sup>10</sup>facts . Otherwise, all the activity on the formation of the image will be reduced to propaganda and "skillful demagoguery". Secondly, when forming an international image, we must not forget that there must be real achievements in domestic politics. In other words, the unresolved problems of a domestic nature have a negative impact on the external image of the country. In this context, it should be emphasized that, according to the National Brands Index, Uzbekistan is still far from Germany and cannot take a higher position due to the fact that it receives low marks on the parameters of state power and investment attractiveness of the country. As well as possible on this occasion expressed J. Nye in his work "Soft Power. Means to achieve success in world politics": "Even perfect advertising is not able to sell a product that is unpopular."<sup>11</sup>

Thus, the formation of the international image of Germany and Uzbekistan takes place in different conditions of the international political environment. Germany is focusing on economic development, while Uzbekistan is trying to position itself as the best friend of the countries of the West and the East. Germany uses a wide network of soft power institutions to enhance its international image, and Uzbekistan is also trying to study the experiences of these same countries. The fears of its EU neighbors continue to serve as an obstacle to achieving Germany's foreign policy goals through the formation of a

<sup>10</sup> Gadzhiev K. S. Image as an instrument of cultural hegemony // World economy and international relations. 2007. №12. – P.3-14.

<sup>11</sup> Nye J.S. Soft Power. The Means to Success in World Politics. – P.110.

positive image abroad, and the problem of insufficient elaboration of a strategy to form an attractive international image, in particular, reliance on short-term activities, as well as domestic problems, is relevant for Uzbekistan.

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