

Tony Blair's Visit to Uzbekistan: Launching a New Phase of Geopolitical Conflict in Central Asia

(Translated)

[Al-Rayah Newspaper - Issue 607 - 08/07/2026](#)

By: Islam Abu Khalil – Uzbekistan

States do not act within the political arena based on emotion, but instead on interests. In international relations, the concept of “shared interests” takes precedence over that of a “friendly state.” Consequently, it would be a mistake to view Tony Blair’s visit to Tashkent as merely a routine, ceremonial meeting.

The questions must be framed differently: Why now? Why Uzbekistan specifically? Why Tony Blair in particular? Without finding answers to these questions, it is impossible to grasp the true substance of this meeting.

Why has Central Asia once again become a focal point for the international order?

In the recent past, Central Asia was viewed as a region of merely regional significance. Today, the situation has changed.

The war in Ukraine has reshaped Russia’s influence and capabilities in the region. Meanwhile, China continues to expand its influence through economic corridors and massive investments. For their part, the United States and Europe do not wish to see Russian and Chinese influence in the region evolve into absolute hegemony.

Central Asia is no longer merely a geographical area home to five states; it has transformed into a geopolitical hub of immense strategic importance—encompassing transport corridors linking Europe and Asia, energy sources, and raw material reserves, alongside critical security dimensions.

Amidst these circumstances, every major power aspires to cement its presence in the region.

So, why Britain specifically?

Many view Britain merely as a European state, yet history tells a different story. Britain is a state that has, over centuries, mastered the art of influence and control—not merely through military might, but through diplomacy, economics, education, and advisory expertise. Even today, it does not govern many countries directly; instead, it exerts influence through advisors, consultancy firms, investments, and administrative and governance reforms. Crucially, however, Britain must still be viewed as a colonialist power.

Tony Blair stands as one of the most prominent figures embodying this approach. To assume that every piece of advice he offers will inevitably benefit Uzbekistan is nothing short of naive. One must bear in mind a fundamental rule of international politics: senior statesmen rarely pursue policies that run counter to the long-term strategic interests of their states. Consequently, any foreign advice must be evaluated alongside its potential consequences.

From a geopolitical perspective, what kind of advice might Tony Blair offer Mirziyoyev?

As the full details of the official meeting were not disclosed, we do not know precisely what was discussed. However, given the current international scenario, we can analyze the likely trends and areas of focus.

Central Asia is currently emerging as one of the world’s most critical arenas for geopolitical rivalry, with multiple powers simultaneously seeking to expand their influence in the region:

Russia: Seeks to maintain its traditional influence in the security and economic spheres.

China: Expands its influence through trade, transportation, and infrastructure development.

The United States and Britain: Attempt to curb this expansion and establish a counter-balance to Russian and Chinese influence. Tony Blair does not conduct his tours as a political leader, but instead as an international political advisor. The institute he leads provides counsel to numerous states on state governance, economic reforms, and improving the investment climate. Consequently, it is crucial to view this meeting as part of British efforts to bolster its influence in Central Asia.

Uzbekistan seeks to maintain balanced relations simultaneously with Russia, China, the United States, Europe, and regional neighbors. Under these circumstances, foreign experts are likely to recommend adopting the following approaches:

- Maintaining a multidimensional balance in foreign policy.
- Attracting greater Western investment and technology on a larger scale.
- Aligning state governance and public administration with international standards.
- Accelerating reforms in the digital economy and artificial intelligence sectors.
- Advocating for the prioritization of directing natural resources toward Britain specifically, rather than China.

Such advice may also serve Uzbekistan's own interests. For instance, it could be argued that Uzbekistan's decision not to support Russia in its war against Ukraine was made based on British counsel.

However, it is natural for these stances to also align with the objectives of Britain and other Western states seeking to expand their influence in the region. In international politics, these two factors can coexist.

Where does independence begin?

Independence is not achieved merely through the existence of a flag, a national anthem, and borders. If a state's strategic decisions, development model, and administrative philosophy are consistently formulated by foreign centers, this raises serious questions regarding true independence.

While one can certainly draw upon foreign experiences, adopting them blindly is an entirely different matter. No state can achieve genuine independence unless it is capable of defining its own interests and charting its domestic and foreign policies through its own independent will.

Upon what source must Muslim society base itself, according to Islamic political thought?

For Muslims, the primary source of development and progress is, first and foremost, the Book of Allah (swt) and the Sunnah of His Messenger (saw). In Islamic political thought, the fundamental criterion is not individuals, but rather the source and the ruling itself. Allah (swt) said in His Noble Book, ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنْكُمْ ۖ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾ **“O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are in fact allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to them among you—then indeed, he is one of them. Indeed, Allah guides not the wrongdoing people”** [TMQ Surah Al-Ma'idah: 51].