

A NEW STAGE OF COOPERATION BETWEEN UZBEKISTAN AND TURKEY

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Abstract

Cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkey has developed sharply in recent years and reached a new strategic level. Relations between the two countries are deepening due to Uzbekistan's new policy of reforms and Turkey's interest in strengthening strategic partnership in the region. This cooperation covers the political, economic, cultural and security spheres and strengthens the influence of Central Asia and Turkey in the international arena.

Keywords. Uzbekistan, Turkey, Central Asia, "Turkish model", Commonwealth of Independent States, Turgut Ozal.

In recent years, the cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkey has reached a new level. The reforms implemented in Uzbekistan after 2016 and the open foreign policy not only strengthened the processes of internal development, but also expanded the opportunities for cooperation with neighboring and strategic partner countries. Rapprochement with Turkey has become an integral part of this process. This article analyzes the development of cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkey, its strategic importance and impact on regional security and economy.

In 2017, the state visit of the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to Turkey started a new era of relations between the two countries. Within the framework of this visit, relations between Uzbekistan and Turkey were raised to the level of strategic partnership. In this process, a number of political and economic agreements were signed, which greatly contributed to the activation of relations between the two countries.[1]

Regular high-level dialogues are strengthening the political relations between Uzbekistan and Turkey. The next meeting of the High-level Strategic Cooperation Council held in Tashkent in 2022 was one of the most important steps of this process. At this meeting, issues of further development of strategic partnership between the two countries, implementation of new projects and strengthening of regional security were discussed [2].

Another important direction of relations between Uzbekistan and Turkey is the sphere of education and culture. Turkey pays great attention to opening new universities and improving educational programs in Uzbekistan. Through cooperation programs with prestigious higher educational institutions of Turkey, Uzbek students have the opportunity to receive education in accordance with international standards, as a result of which the human resources potential of Uzbekistan is increasing. In addition, cultural exchanges, preservation of historical heritage, and events organized between the two countries serve to strengthen relations between peoples.



The rich cultural heritage of Uzbekistan is welcomed by Turkish society with interest, and Turkish culture is widely promoted in Uzbekistan.

The strategic cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkey is developing significantly in the fields of security and defense. The geopolitical situation of Central Asia, the existence of the danger of extremism and terrorism in the region encourages Uzbekistan to develop close security relations with Turkey. Turkey cooperates with Uzbekistan in the military-technical field by conducting training programs, providing technical assistance and supplying weapons [3].

Security issues in Afghanistan and Central Asia are also in the common interests of Uzbekistan and Turkey. In particular, the strengthening of cooperation between Turkey and Uzbekistan on security issues will serve to ensure stability in the region.

As a result of geopolitical changes in the world at the beginning of the 90s of the 20th century, a number of independent states were formed in the Central Asian region. Mutual cooperation between independent countries in the socio-economic and cultural spheres, as well as the protection of the national interests of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the international arena, required the establishment of mutually beneficial relations with the developed countries of Europe and Asia. During the years of independence, the organizational and legal foundations of Uzbekistan were created, and mutually beneficial relations were established with prestigious international organizations and various countries of the world in all fields, and a number of positive results were achieved. In particular, mutual cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkey served the interests of both countries. It should be noted that Turkey is a country with its own path of development, located at the junction of Asian and European continents, and located in a convenient economic and geostrategic location. It is also appropriate to acknowledge that "Turkey, a close friend and economic partner for us, was one of the first to recognize the independence of Uzbekistan."

During the years of independence, many studies on the history of international relations were conducted in Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan-Turkey relations have become one of the current topics of attention of historians and politicians. In a short period of time, several major works on international relations were created in Uzbekistan. Among these are the works of A. Alimov, E. Nuriddinov, A. Kyrgyzboyev, Ch. Kocharov, M. Rahimov, Q. Rajabov, Kh. Bekmuratov and other scientists. Among these works, the monograph co-authored by Q.Rajabov and H. Bekmuratov is noteworthy within the scope of the topic. It is notable for the long-term history of Uzbekistan-Turkey cooperation, the establishment of relations between these two countries in the early years of independence, and the analysis of economic and cultural relations. Turkey is also a country that has its own path of development in the world community, and in the last quarter of the 20th century, it launched its foreign political activity based on the principles of democracy and social justice. Turkey skillfully applied its "Turkish model" in the conditions of the market economy and developed a unique development path. As a result, the economic reforms were effective and it became one of the most developed countries in the world.[4]

In 1991, Turkish President Turgut Özal's diplomatic visit to the USSR drew attention not only to Moscow, but also to Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and other union republics[9:134]. These visits showed Turkey's growing interest in the emerging republics in the south of the former Soviet



Union. On December 8, 1991, the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) was established, and Turkey became the first country to recognize the newly independent republics[3:45]. This, in turn, opened a wide opportunity for Central Asian countries to establish contacts with European countries through Turkey [5].

Economic relations between Uzbekistan and Turkey have been expanding dramatically in recent years. In 2020, the volume of trade between Uzbekistan and Turkey exceeded 2 billion US dollars, and this indicator is growing year by year. Both countries aim to increase the trade volume to 5 billion dollars by 2025.

Turkey is one of the major trade partners of Uzbekistan, and trade relations between the two countries are rapidly developing in the fields of industry, agriculture, construction and services. Uzbekistan's partnership with Turkish companies creates the basis for the implementation of many infrastructure projects. For example, Turkish companies are implementing important projects in the fields of road and bridge construction, energy and telecommunications in Uzbekistan [6].

Also, Turkey plays an important role in attracting foreign investments of Uzbekistan. In 2021, Turkish companies began to implement large-scale investment projects in Uzbekistan, including in the fields of textiles, energy, tourism and construction. The total number of Turkish companies in Uzbekistan exceeds 2,000, and their role in the country's economy is increasing. Uzbekistan and Turkey also pay great attention to the development of cultural and scientific relations. Cultural events are regularly held between the two countries, and friendly relations between peoples are being strengthened. Cultural days, scientific conferences and art exhibitions are regularly organized between Uzbekistan and Turkey, which greatly contributes to cultural exchange. In recent years, cooperation in the field of security and defense between Uzbekistan and Turkey has significantly increased. The two countries are expanding cooperation in the fight against terrorism, strengthening the borders and ensuring regional security. In 2022, a number of agreements on military cooperation were signed between the two countries. Among other things, Turkey is helping to train Uzbek military personnel and provide them with modern technologies.

Also, scientific cooperation between the universities and research institutions of the two countries is rapidly developing. Many Uzbek students are studying in Turkish universities, and this process serves to deepen cooperation in the field of science. At the same time, new educational projects are being implemented in Uzbekistan in cooperation with Turkish higher education institutions.

In recent years, the cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkey has reached a new level. The reforms implemented in Uzbekistan after 2016 and the open foreign policy not only strengthened the processes of internal development, but also expanded the opportunities for cooperation with neighboring and strategic partner countries. Rapprochement with Turkey has become an integral part of this process. This article analyzes the development of cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkey, its strategic importance and impact on regional security and economy.



Summary

The new stage of cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkey corresponds to the national interests of both countries and serves to strengthen the strategic balance in the region. Relations in the political, economic, cultural and military spheres will bring not only the two countries, but also the relations between Central Asia and Turkey to a new level. As a result of the strengthening of mutually beneficial cooperation, Uzbekistan and Turkey are becoming closer in the international arena, becoming one of the main players serving the common development and stability.

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