



THE SIGNIFICANCE AND PROSPECTS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN UZBEKISTAN AND TURKEY

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Abstract

In this article, the history of international relations between the Uzbek and Turkish nations, as well as the economic achievements attained through their cooperation, are analyzed. The author divides the period of Uzbek-Turkish cooperation into three stages for detailed examination

Keywords: Independence, cooperation, agreement, embassy, economic opportunities, joint enterprise, politics, science and technology, tourism, education.

1. Introduction

Thanks to the national independence gained on August 31, 1991, our country began to pursue an independent foreign policy. Independence enabled our republic to reestablish and strengthen relations with countries that have shared historical ties spanning several centuries. In particular, the Uzbek and Turkish peoples, considered brotherly nations, share many common features such as traditions, values, language, and cultural heritage.

Situated along the Great Silk Road, our country has for centuries developed economic, political, and cultural relations with foreign states and maintained active diplomatic ties. The relationship between nations with similar languages,



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religions, cultures, customs, and worldviews is naturally built on a solid foundation. In this regard, the cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkey holds historical significance.

It is well known that Turkey was the first country in the world, among nearly 200 member states of the United Nations, to recognize the state independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Today, over the years of cooperation, the scope of joint activities between the two nations has been expanding steadily. At present, Uzbekistan is regarded as one of Turkey's main and most reliable partners in Central Asia. The country's vast market, increasingly liberalized economy, favorable investment climate, and growing opportunities in the tourism sector continue to attract the attention of Turkish business circles.

2. Methods

The article is presented based on generally accepted methods such as historicism, comparative-logical analysis, consistency, and objectivity. Relations between Uzbekistan and Turkey have been the focus of numerous scientific studies, articles, and monographs. The relationship between the two countries has primarily attracted the attention of politicians and historians. The existing literature on the subject can be divided into two groups for analysis:

1. Research works published by local scholars.
2. Studies conducted by foreign authors.

It should be noted that the cooperative relations between Uzbekistan and Turkey have been studied within the fields of history, economics, and political science, and these research works were widely used in the preparation of this article. In particular, many historians have explored the relations and cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkey. The works of A. Alimov, S. Safoev, M. Rahimov, Q. Rajabov, X. Bekmurotov, and others can be mentioned among them.

In X. Bekmurotov's dissertation titled "Economic and Cultural Cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkey," detailed information is provided about the economic and cultural ties, friendly relations, and official visits between the two states.

In the doctoral dissertation (DSc) of Ubaydullayeva Saodat Fatxullayeva titled "Problems and Prospects of the Formation of the Regional Security



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Interdependence System in Central Asia,” the political situations of that period are analyzed. Through this scientific work, we gain insights into Uzbekistan’s foreign policy and its cooperation with other Central Asian republics. Moreover, this study was used for comparative analysis in highlighting the topic of cooperation with Turkey.

Among Turkish researchers, the article by Deniz İstikbal titled “Orta Asya’da yeni iş birliği alanları: Türkiye-Özbekistan ilişkileri” is also valuable. It provides information mainly about economic cooperation, agreements, and technical partnerships.

3. Research Results

In April 1992, the visit of Uzbekistan’s state delegation to Saudi Arabia, the official visit of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey, Süleyman Demirel, to Uzbekistan, and the opening of the Turkish Embassy in Tashkent became important steps in the development of international relations. In January 1993, the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Ankara began its activities, and the Consulate General of Uzbekistan was opened in Istanbul. The First President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, I. A. Karimov, made official visits to Turkey in December 1991, July 1994, and November 1997, and in October 1998, he took part in the celebrations dedicated to the 75th anniversary of the Republic of Turkey. In turn, Turkish Presidents T. Özal, S. Demirel, and other statesmen made several official visits to Uzbekistan.

In general, the cooperation relations between Uzbekistan and Turkey can be analyzed in three stages:

1. The first period – from 1991 to 2005, during which cooperation was established (December 16, 1991). The Treaty on Eternal Friendship and Cooperation was signed in 1996, broad opportunities were created for Turkish entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan, active cultural cooperation was established, thousands of students were sent to study in Turkey, and Turkish schools and lyceums were opened in Uzbekistan. During this period, Turkish Presidents and Prime Ministers made official visits to Uzbekistan and sought to elevate bilateral cooperation to the highest possible level. Turkey imported non-ferrous metals and their products, fabrics, knitwear, cotton fiber, and food products (such as



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fruits and nuts) from Uzbekistan, while exporting mechanical equipment, underground transport vehicles, optical instruments, furniture, electrical appliances, plastic goods, chemical products, carpets, and other goods to Uzbekistan. In the field of science and technology, bilateral relations between the Center for Science and Technology of Uzbekistan and the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey developed successfully. In recent years, Uzbek scientists have regularly participated in conferences and symposia organized by Turkish scientific centers in fields such as nuclear physics, biology, ecology, and agriculture.

2. The second period – from 2005 to 2016, is regarded as a period of stagnation. This period is characterized by several factors, including internal and external political circumstances and certain personal political ambitions. The stagnation period began in 2005 when Turkey voted in favor of a resolution at the UN General Assembly accusing the Uzbek government of using disproportionate force during the Andijan events (although the resolution was not adopted). After that, relations between the two countries gradually deteriorated. Another notable feature of this period was the attempt to expel Turkish investors from Uzbekistan.

3. The third period – began after the meeting between Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in the city of Samarkand in 2016. In a short period, the leaders of the two countries held about ten direct meetings. In particular, on October 25-27, 2017, Shavkat Mirziyoyev paid an official visit to Turkey and met with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. During this historic visit, 26 agreements were signed between Turkey and Uzbekistan in the fields of aviation, transport, investment, diplomacy, education, healthcare, defense, trade, culture, and banking.

On March 7, 2021, the Turkish Consulate General was opened in the city of Samarkand. In general, it should be emphasized that benefiting from Turkey's vast experience in education, science and technology, innovation, healthcare, and tourism services, as well as developing cooperation in these areas, has had a positive impact on Uzbekistan's development. Particular attention has been given to ensuring the effectiveness and future prospects of these mutual relations. Such cooperation aims to learn from past mistakes and avoid repeating



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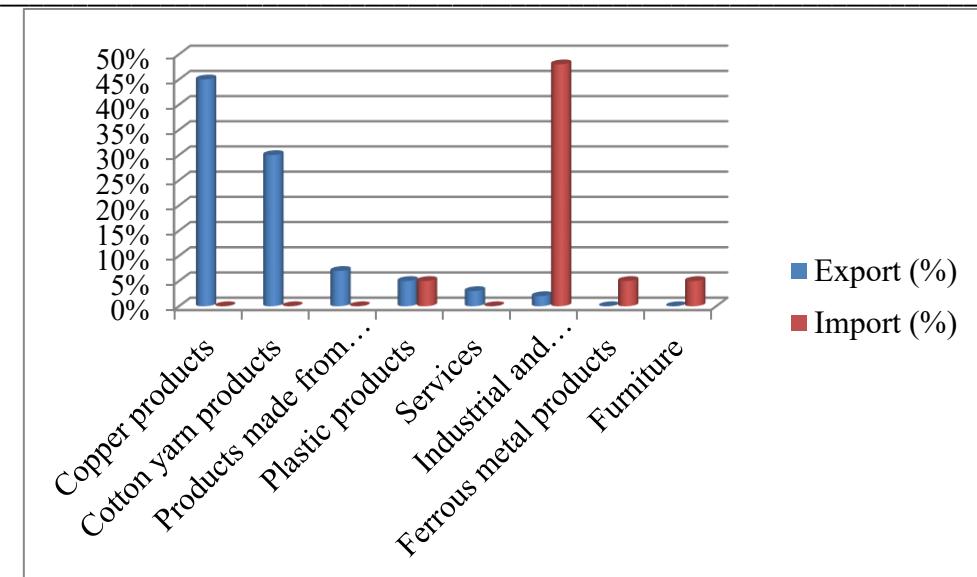
them, as well as to develop relations with Turkey based not on ideological grounds but on the priority of economic interests.

Conclusion

In March 2019, Uzbekistan celebrated the 29th anniversary of the establishment of official diplomatic relations with Turkey. In this regard, if we analyze the changes that have taken place over the past years in the system of relations between the two countries – formed in the spirit of brotherhood and kinship, as well as based on mutual economic interests – we can clearly observe that these relations are acquiring a new form and substance.

It should be noted that the solid foundation of relations between Tashkent and Ankara was laid during the early years of Uzbekistan's independence. Uzbekistan's integration into the global community and its worthy position in the system of international relations are being implemented in accordance with its strategic priorities in political, economic, and cultural fields. On this basis, a new stage has emerged in the cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkey. The rational approaches applied in their mutual relations have paved the way for the opening of a new chapter in the foreign policies of both countries. Indeed, the Republic of Turkey, which today possesses significant geostrategic and economic potential and holds a respected position in the international arena, shares deep-rooted historical, religious, linguistic, and cultural ties with the Uzbek nation.

The article also analyzes the development of economic relations between Uzbekistan and Turkey, the current state and prospects of cooperation in banking and trade, and their joint efforts in developing the textile industry. In 2016 alone, more than 20 enterprises were established in Uzbekistan with Turkish investment. Additionally, 53 Turkish companies were accredited under the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, Investments, and Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan.



Products with a high share in foreign trade with Turkey

In recent years, Turkey has become Uzbekistan's fourth-largest trading partner in foreign trade. There is significant potential to further expand mutual trade, particularly by increasing the volume of exports to European markets through Turkey.

Moreover, the cooperation of Turkish companies in developing Uzbekistan's tourism infrastructure and creating new tourist destinations plays an important role. Today, tourism is becoming one of the most profitable sectors of the global economy, and Uzbekistan and Turkey have established dynamic collaboration in this field. Turkey's experience in the so-called "*smokeless industry*" – tourism – along with its well-developed travel agencies and companies, plays a vital role in the development of this sphere in Uzbekistan.

In particular, projects implemented by Turkish entrepreneurs and specialists to create new tourism routes contribute to Uzbekistan's integration into the global tourism market and the growth of the number of foreign visitors.

Based on the data and analyses presented above, it can be concluded that cooperation between the two fraternal nations – Uzbekistan and Turkey – has a positive impact on the economic growth of both countries, as well as on the increase of production and trade indicators. This, in turn, underscores the importance of continuing to expand comprehensive cooperation not only in



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political and economic fields but also in culture, education, transportation, and tourism.

In the future, it is advisable for both countries to implement new strategic projects and initiatives aimed at further strengthening their bilateral relations and achieving shared development goals.

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