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PROSPECTS OF TURKMENISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY AND UZBEKISTAN'S NATIONAL INTERESTS

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Abstract

The essence of this article is that the renewed relations with the political will of the presidents of these two neighboring countries, located in the Central Asian region, have been one of the main factors in the rapid development of all areas. However, these seen the raising of cooperation all spheres between two states. Also, this article also provides a detailed analysis of the relations between these two bordering countries in all areas.

Key words: Multilateral diplomacy, geopolitical, tendency, border, territory, neighbor countries, international relations, initiative, cooperation.

Introduction

Turkmenistan's foreign policy for the next seven years is envisaged to be implemented on the basis of separately identified key development principles. In particular, its future priorities, a number of pressing issues, such as consistently protecting the interests of the state and nation in the international arena, ensuring alternative external conditions that allow for the peaceful and sustainable development of the state and society, and unlocking human potential, are outlined in the "Foreign Policy Concept of Turkmenistan for 2017-2023" [1]. Turkmenistan ranks fourth in the world in terms of natural gas reserves. Therefore, hydrocarbon resources are recognized as one of the main factors in determining the prospects of Turkmenistan's foreign policy. In addition, the factor of leading foreign countries also plays an important role in determining



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foreign policy. These countries include the PRC, the Russian Federation, Iran, and the Central Asian countries bordering Turkmenistan.

In this regard, there is a possibility that Turkmenistan will become largely dependent on China for its gas exports in the future. As mentioned in previous chapters, the Central Asia-China gas pipeline consists of three lines from Turkmenistan to China through Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, and the construction of a fourth line through Tajikistan is also planned in the near future. Due to the above circumstances, the prospects for Turkmenistan's gas exports remain dependent solely on the PRC, which, in turn, is also paying great attention to the launch of new routes for gas exports from Turkmenistan in the future.

The results of the analysis show that the export of hydrocarbon resources will remain one of the most important factors in Turkmenistan's foreign policy in the near future. This, in turn, will depend on the future policy of the countries purchasing these energy resources towards Turkmenistan and the stability of relations between them. In this regard, when talking about the prospects of Turkmenistan's foreign policy, it is appropriate to pay special attention to the factor of leading foreign countries.

Prospects for Turkmenistan-Russia relations. Until January 2016, the main issue in the cooperation between Turkmenistan and Russia was the export of Turkmen gas to the Russian Federation. Recently, Turkmenistan has been trying to pursue an independent foreign policy, independent of the Russian Federation. However, the Russian Federation remains one of the five countries participating in Turkmenistan's foreign trade turnover. For Turkmenistan, the Russian Federation is considered the main leading country in determining the legal status of the Caspian Sea, which is why one of the last foreign visits of the President of Turkmenistan was organized precisely to the Russian Federation. Turkmenistan is also negotiating security issues in its relations with the Russian Federation. An example of this is the visit of the Russian Minister of Defense to Turkmenistan in 2016. In the near future, the Russian Federation will remain a foreign partner for Turkmenistan in the military and security spheres, as well as a key participant in the implementation of megaprojects put forward by Turkmenistan.



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Therefore, prospects for Turkmenistan-China relations. Today, the People's Republic of China ranks first in Turkmenistan's foreign trade relations. In the face of the problematic situation in gas trade with Russia and Iran, China has become Turkmenistan's closest gas exporter.

Recently, the Turkmen economy has seen a growing influx of Chinese capital. Chinese investors are participating not only in Turkmenistan's energy sector, but also in other economic projects.

Today, the import of Turkmen gas is the basis of bilateral cooperation. The further expansion of the Turkmenistan-China gas pipeline, which has a capacity to transport 30 billion cubic meters of gas per year, and the addition of new lines to it will further increase these capabilities.

Also, according to the "One Belt, One Road" project, Turkmenistan should serve as an important transit link for the products of all countries participating in this transport route. This country is also an important transit area for the delivery of Chinese goods to the Persian Gulf and European countries. For this, it is necessary to expand the existing road transport routes and build a railway line through Central Asia.

In addition, Chinese investments are penetrating all sectors of the Turkmen economy. The raw materials sector of the industry, consumer goods and transport systems are largely dependent on the flow of foreign investment, and China is one of the main partners in the development of these sectors. Therefore, in the near future, the PRC will remain one of the leading foreign countries that can influence Turkmenistan's foreign policy.

And also, relations between Turkmenistan and Iran. Today, Iran ranks third among Turkmenistan's external partners. The prospects of both countries focus primarily on the creation of a Central Asian transport system. Until now, Iran has been a partner for Turkmenistan in the field of gas exports, but after the suspension of gas exports in January 2017, the transport and transit sector has become a priority in interstate cooperation. In this regard, the "Uzbekistan Turkmenistan Iran Oman" transport corridor is of great importance for Turkmenistan. At the same time, Turkmenistan is recognized as the closest consumer market for Iran.



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Despite the fact that Iran and Turkmenistan will remain competitors in gas exports in the near future, the issues of developing the reserves of the Caspian Sea, creating transport infrastructure in the direction of Europe, and developing cooperation in geographically close neighborly relations will remain relevant in the future.

In this regard, it is of particular importance to assess the prospects of Turkmenistan's foreign policy in terms of the national interests of Uzbekistan. If we pay attention to the gradual development of relations between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, we can observe that both states conduct their relations based on the principles of mutual respect, recognition of state sovereignty and interests, and solidarity in regional and international dialogue. The main reasons for this are the closeness of the history, language, traditions, national and cultural values of the Uzbek and Turkmen peoples, as well as a number of factors.

Another important factor in ensuring this unity is the stable domestic policies of both states. These neighboring states, pursuing a peaceful foreign policy, strive to support each other in the international arena, and to take a united approach to preventing regional threats. In particular, cooperation in the fight against international terrorism, religious extremism, organized crime, arms and drug smuggling is an objective necessity for the positive development of relations between the states.

As is known, the cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan as independent states dates back to the establishment of diplomatic relations on January 7, 1993. During the period from 1991 to 2017, 18 high-level visits were made by the heads of state. In particular, 8 visits were made by the President of Turkmenistan to Uzbekistan, and 10 visits were made by the President of Uzbekistan to Turkmenistan.

Among the documents dedicated to the development of mutual cooperation, the "Interstate Agreement on Further Strengthening Friendly Relations and Comprehensive Cooperation" between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, signed in 2007, and the "Agreement on Strategic Partnership between the Republic of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan" signed in March 2017, are worth noting.

At the same time, events dedicated to intergovernmental cooperation of both countries, meetings between representatives of business circles are also



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important in further developing relations. In particular, the meetings of the Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan intergovernmental commission in Tashkent in September 2016 and January 2017 and the issues of mutually beneficial cooperation discussed at them are creating the basis for the effective development of these relations.

As a logical continuation of the intergovernmental meetings, on March 6-7, 2017, at the invitation of the President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev paid a state visit to Turkmenistan. During the talks, negotiations were held on all areas of bilateral cooperation, as well as areas of cooperation in the international arena.

International relations expert Rafik Sayfulin expressed his views on the fact that today Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have opportunities and prospects for cooperation in the provision of transit services within the framework of the "Silk Road Economic Belt" megaproject, not only in terms of common use of water and energy resources, but also in terms of prospects for cooperation [2]. Economic expert Bakhtiyor Ergashev noted that today Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan have not only common interests in the "Turkmenistan-China" gas pipeline, but also prospects for cooperation in the transport sector [3].

The presence of a large population of Turkmens in Uzbekistan and Uzbeks in Turkmenistan is of great importance in strengthening friendship between the countries. At the farewell ceremony for our first President Islam Karimov, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov noted that the memory of our Great Leader would be immortalized in Turkmenistan. For this purpose, one of the central streets of Turkmenabad was named after Islam Karimov, and a memorial complex was built on this street, with a bust of the first President installed.

In order to increase the competitiveness and attractiveness of international transport corridors passing through the territories of the two countries, the parties agreed to continue systematic and mutually beneficial cooperation aimed at further diversifying tariffs for transit transportation of foreign trade cargo and creating preferential conditions [4].



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