



RELATIONS OF MODERN CHINA AND UZBEKISTAN

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ANNOTATION

In this article, the cooperation between Uzbekistan and the People's Republic of China in recent years are covered. Relations in the political, economic, infrastructure, cultural, educational and tourism spheres are mainly analyzed.

KEYWORDS: Uzbekistan, People's Republic of China, relations, economy, politics, culture, tourism, education, cooperation.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Uzbekistan and the People's Republic of China (January 2, 1992), cooperation between the two countries in the political, economic, cultural and educational spheres has been developing in all directions over the past years. The trade, economic and cultural ties between the peoples of these two countries, which have historically been carried out through the ancient Great Silk Road, are now in a new form, with modern speed and intensity. Nowadays, as strategic partners, bilateral relations between China and Uzbekistan, as well as multilateral cooperation within the "One Belt One Road" initiative and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, as well as other international organizations, are rapidly developing.

In the political sphere, first of all, it is possible to observe cooperation between the leaders of the two countries in the spirit of mutual trust and respect. The signing of "The Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership" (2012) between Uzbekistan and the People's Republic of China laid the foundation for the comprehensive and rapid development of cooperation. After the election of Shavkat Mirziyoyev as President of the Republic of Uzbekistan in December 2016, many new cooperation projects have been developed between these two countries. Sh. Mirziyoyev visited the People's Republic of China in May 2017 and June 2018. On May 12, 2017, the joint statement signed by Sh. Mirziyoyev and Xi Jinping on further deepening the comprehensive strategic partnership between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the People's Republic of China marked a completely new stage of cooperation for both countries. During the visit in 2017, more than 100 documents were signed at the interstate, intergovernmental and interagency levels. It was planned to implement many significant investment projects within the

framework of the agreements. Their total value was \$ 23 billion¹.

During the visit in 2018, Sh. Mirziyoyev took part in the 18th session of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Council of Heads of State in Qingdao. The President made the following important and topical proposals in his address to the council:²

Firstly, to form a strong and stable immunity of the population, especially the younger generation, against the ideology of terrorism and extremism.

Secondly, to expand trade and economic cooperation and strengthen cooperation.

Thirdly, the effective use of the transport and transit potential of the SCO space.

Fourthly, to unite all efforts to jointly implement innovation programs and projects.

Fifthly, to establish practical cooperation with the World Tourism Organization.

Within the framework of these proposals, many reforms are currently being implemented together with the SCO member states.

In general, cooperation between the governments of Uzbekistan and China, ministries and departments, as well as research scientists is well established today. Chinese scholars pay great attention to the study of modern politics and

¹ <https://uz24.uz/uz/politics/shavkat-mirziyoevning-hitoyga-davlat-tashrifi-yakunlandi>

² Speech by President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev at the enlarged meeting of the Council of Heads of Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization 10.06.2018 .

<http://uza.uz/oz/politics/zbekiston-respublikasi-prezidenti-shavkat-mirziyeevning-shan-11-06-2018>



economic development of Uzbekistan. In particular, they are watching the political activity and reforms of President Sh. Mirziyoyev with great interest. For example, in December 2019, the Chinese Academy of International Affairs hosted a presentation of the book “President Shavkat Mirziyoyev - the architect of the reform period in Uzbekistan”. The book reflects the strategic views of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev on the modern development and future of Uzbekistan, the active role of the head of state in ensuring security and development in the Central Asian region, the SCO and Eurasia. The information on the growth of development of Uzbekistan, the gradual changes in the domestic and foreign policy of our country in a historically short period of time has been brought to the attention of Chinese booklovers³.

Effective agreements between officials and politicians of the two countries create a great opportunity and legal basis for **economic** cooperation. There are 1016 enterprises with Chinese capital operating in our country, of which 116 are enterprises with 100% Chinese capital⁴. According to statistics of 2019, China ranks first among Uzbekistan’s foreign trade partners, with a trade turnover of \$ 7.6 billion⁵. In 2020, China was the first with \$ 6.4 billion, exports - \$ 1.9 billion, imports - \$ 4.5 billion⁶.

According to the joint statement of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the People's Republic of China on further deepening the comprehensive strategic partnership signed on May 12, 2017, Uzbekistan supplied goods such as agricultural products, natural resources and energy to the People’s Republic of China on the basis of mutual interest, as well as in the framework of the Agreement on Long-Term Trade signed on October 14, 2009. In the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding on investment cooperation between the Ministry of Commerce, the People’s Republic of China with the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, Investments and Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan support the participation of the Export-Import Bank of China and the State Development Bank of China in financing promising investment projects in the energy, hydropower, chemical, irrigation and land reclamation, construction materials industries and transport infrastructure development.

The export of agricultural products is growing among the products exported to China. In 2018 alone, exports of sweet cherries to China exceeded 500 tons, green beans 23,281 tons,

26 tons of grape seeds, 10,580 tons of raisins⁷. In addition, there are 22,850 plantations of medicinal plants in Uzbekistan, which are operated by 51 processing companies and exported to various countries around the world. Among these countries, China ranks first (31%)⁸.

In order to implement the provisions of the program of cooperation in high-tech industries, high-tech joint ventures for the production of finished products have been established in the Jizzakh Special Economic Zone. In recent years, the joint venture “Peng Sheng” in Syrdarya region of the Jizzakh Special Industrial Zone has produced high-tech leather processing, footwear, ceramic tiles, plumbing fixtures, and mobile phones worth about \$ 60 million projects were implemented. In particular, “Peng Sheng” joint venture was established in cooperation with the Chinese government, and today 7 projects have been implemented with its participation in Syrdarya regional branch of the “Jizzakh” Special Economic Zone. Mainly, the following projects were implemented such as shoes at “Peng Sheng Shoes”, ceramic tiles at “Peng Sheng ceramics”, mobile phones at “UzTE Limited” and animal feed at “Peng Sheng Feed”, plumbing tools at “AWP”, ceramic granite tiles at “Peng Sheng” joint venture, production of paint for ceramic tiles and leather processing at “Peng Sheng Charm”⁹.

The efforts are being made to strengthen regional cooperation in the field of transport in the direction of **infrastructure** connection of the “Silk Road Economic Belt” project and to create rail and road corridors connecting the two countries. The construction of the shortest railway network between Uzbekistan and China is one of the current strategic directions of cooperation in the field of mutual economic and transport. It will ensure that China and Central Asian countries have access to South Asia. The construction of the “Angren-Pop” electrified railway will serve as a “bridge” in this regard, and the “Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan-China” railway construction project can serve as a link. Wholly, \$ 455 million has been spent on the construction of the tunnel, which was built jointly by the joint stock company “Uzbekistan Railways” and the company “China Railway Tunnel Group”. The launch of the “Angren-Pop” electrified railway line through the Kamchik Pass at an altitude of 2,200 meters above sea level will create an opportunity for freight and passenger transportation by rail between the Fergana Valley and other regions of the country. In addition, the project is expected to serve as a key link in the future China-Central Asia-Europe new international transit railway corridor. In the construction work, more than a thousand workers and specialists of China Railway Tunnel

³ http://uza.uz/oz/society/khitoyda-prezident-shavkat-mirziyeev-zbekistondagi-islo-otla-07-12-2019?sphrase_id=4665884

⁴ http://uza.uz/oz/society/zbekiston-khitoy-i-tisodiy-imkoniyatlar-yanada-kengaymo-da-01-11-2019?sphrase_id=4666203. 01.11.2019.

⁵ <https://nuz.uz/ekonomika-i-finansy/46076-minvneshrtorg-uzbekistana-obnarodoval-itogi-vneshney-torgovli-za-2019-god.html> 17.01.2020.

⁶ <https://xs.uz/uzkr/post/ozbekistonning-2020-jilda-qajsi-davlatlar-bilan-tashqi-savdo-ajlanmasi-yuqori>

⁷ http://uza.uz/oz/society/zbekiston-khitoy-i-tisodiy-imkoniyatlar-yanada-kengaymo-da-01-11-2019?sphrase_id=5049909

⁸ <https://www.podrobno.uz/cat/uzbekistan-i-kitay-klyuchi-ot-budushchego/kitay-stal-glavnym-importerom-lekarstvennykh-rasteniy/> 16.07.2019

⁹ <http://www.biznes-daily.uz/uz/gazeta-birja/41948-vatan-ravnaqi-yulidagi-islohotlar>



Group and more than 3,000 Uzbek railwaymen took part. A tunnel with length 19.2-kilometer has been opened on the 123.1-kilometer-long “Angren-Pop” railway crossing the Kamchik Pass. “Angren-Pop” electrified railway plays a special role in the further development and prosperity of our country.

Many events and fruitful projects are being implemented between the two countries in the fields of **culture, science and education**. In 2016, Chinese head of the government Xi Jinping, accompanied by President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, visited Bukhara and got acquainted with the cultural monuments there. After that, there was decided to further strengthen cooperation between the parties on social, humanitarian and cultural ties between the two countries. Cities as Bukhara and Luo Yang of China, have been declared friendly cities. In addition, the cities of Tashkent and Shanghai, Samarkand and Xi’an are cooperating in various fields on the basis of agreements of friendly cities. In China and Uzbekistan, days of Culture, exhibitions, concerts and film festivals are regularly held. In particular, the Day of Culture of Uzbekistan on the theme “Journey to the Pearl of the Silk Road” was held on December 24-27, 2019 in Beijing, China. The ensembles “Bukhara waves” and “Bukhara beauties” of the Bukhara regional branch of the State Philharmonic Society of Uzbekistan took part with their meaningful programs. Moreover, the event included a unique exhibition of national crafts of Uzbekistan, various dialogues and meetings¹⁰.

The interest of Chinese artists in the culture and art of Uzbekistan can be observed through many events. For example, the first statue of Uzbek culture in China was erected in 2003 by the great artist, miniature artist Kamoliddin Behzod at the 6th World Forum of Sculptors in Changchun, China. Similarly, a statue of the great thinker Alisher Navoi was erected at Shanghai University in 2017. Art exhibitions “Works of famous artists of Uzbekistan” have been organized in a number of major cities of China. A number of mutual visits of representatives of culture and arts of the two countries took place. In particular, Chinese artists are actively participating in the “Sharq Taronalari” International Music Festival.

Also, Chinese and Uzbek scientists are also cooperating closely on the preservation and restoration of intangible cultural monuments and historical monuments. In 2018, Tashkent hosted the International Conference on Techniques for the Preservation of Cultural Monuments “One Belt One Road”. The scientists from Uzbekistan, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkey held a roundtable discussion. In the conference, the preservation of historical monuments of Khiva was focused¹¹.

In the field of education, the exchange of students and researchers in the field of interstate and interagency learning,

including the study of Uzbek and Chinese languages, is increasing. Confucius Institutes have been opened at the Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies and Samarkand University of Foreign Languages. Every year, more than 350 listeners learn Chinese.

In June 2010, the Uzbek language department was opened at the Faculty of Russian and Central Asian Languages of the Central University of Chinese Nations. Starting from the 2012-2013 academic year, Uzbek language teaching has been established at Beijing University of Foreign Languages.

The development of cooperation between the two countries has led to an increase in the need for Chinese scholars in all fields. In order to train qualified Chinese scholars in our country, the Faculty of Chinese Studies was established at the Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies by the decision No. №PP-2228 of September 3, 2014. There are such departments as “Chinese language and literature”, “Chinese economy”, “Chinese history, philosophy and politics and its role in international relations”, “Methods and pedagogy of teaching Oriental languages”.

Today, the Chinese language is taught in many higher education institutions in Uzbekistan. Along with local Chinese language teachers, Chinese volunteer teachers also teach. Every year, the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China holds the “Chinese Language Students’ Art Festival” and the “Chinese Bridge” International Public Speaking Competition.

Uzbekistan has a great potential for **tourism** development. There are more than 7,400 cultural heritage sites in the country, 209 of which are included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. In addition, the republic has 11 national nature parks and state reserves, 12 order reserves, 106 museums and other tourist facilities that can attract tourists¹².

Many practical projects and decisions are being made between the two countries to develop the tourism industry and increase the number of tourists. In particular, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev signed a decree “On the establishment of a visa-free regime at the entrance to the Republic of Uzbekistan for citizens of the People’s Republic of China and its Hong Kong Special Administrative Region” in 2019. The decree was adopted in order to create favorable conditions for cultural, scientific, educational exchange between the two countries, improve the investment climate and develop the country’s tourism potential.

According to the document, from January 1, 2020, by the carrier for citizens of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China, including the People’s Republic of China, the State Security Service of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the units of the Border Troops with the provision of preliminary information on passengers in a timely manner, provided that there is a return ticket, the procedure for visa-free travel to the Republic of Uzbekistan through international airports of the country for a period not

¹⁰ <http://filarmoniya.uz/665-hitoj-davlatining-pekini-sharida-zbekiston-madaniyati-kunlari.html>

¹¹ http://www.sohu.com/a/275896131_170361 16.11.2018.

¹² <https://strategy.uz/index.php?news=693>



exceeding 7 days has been established¹³. According to statistics from the State Committee for Tourism Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the number of tourists visiting Uzbekistan in 2019 increased by 39% compared to 2018¹⁴.

In September 2019, a week of “Wonderful China, colorful Uzbekistan” was held by the State Committee for Tourism Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in Uzbekistan, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People’s Republic of China. It is planned to hold such events to further strengthen tourism ties between the two countries¹⁵.

In conclusion, great attention is paid to the development of Uzbek-Chinese relations in a modern and new form. This can be observed in the initiatives of the President of Uzbekistan at the international forum. According to him¹⁶: Firstly, Tashkent is interested in maximizing the transport potential of Central Asia and the formation of the “China-Central Asia-West Asia” economic corridor. Secondly, Uzbekistan aims to develop “smart” agriculture and establish a joint center for agri-innovation. Ensuring food security in a changing climate is one of the most important challenges in the modern world. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the core risks to food security for the Central Asian region are soil degradation, water scarcity and outdated approaches in agriculture. In these conditions, it is very important to ensure the introduction of the most modern agricultural technologies, which allow to save water resources, rise crop yields and disease resistance. In this area, the cooperation with China and other partners, which have achieved high results is required. The developments of Chinese provinces, where high-tech zones in agriculture are actively developing, are of practical interest. In the future, such regions of China can become partners of Uzbekistan in the establishment of the Center for Agrarian Innovation. Thirdly, it is necessary to make full use of scientific and humanitarian potential for the development of human capital. The quick introduction of the latest achievements of science and technology in all spheres of life is the most significant condition for sustainable economic development, improving the living standards of the population and ensuring the high competitiveness of the country¹⁷.

At present, China is implementing an action plan on cooperation in science, technology and innovation under the

“One Place, One Road”. It was planned to establish 4 major initiatives together with the partners: scientific-technical and humanitarian exchange, creation of joint laboratories, establishment of technoparks and cooperation in the field of technology transfer.

At the same time, it is necessary to ensure the rise of human capital to fulfill the set tasks, to enlarge the educational opportunities of the youth. It requires the use of advanced methods of training mature personnel through the exchange of experience, the organization of professional development in technologically modern industries.

These and a number of other tasks can be solved by creating training and production centers, in the process of which the leading universities of the countries of the Great Silk Road can take part. The University Alliance of the new Great Silk Road, which includes 151 universities from 38 countries, could play an important role in this.

The fourth is the development of tourist exchanges. In order to achieve real results in the field of tourism, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev proposed to establish the International Silk Road Tourism Association in Samarkand at the forum “One Place, One Road” and to hold annual tourism forums “One Place, One Road”.

The expressed initiatives and proposals are significant for the cooperation between the two countries, thus ensuring that the relationship continues in a modern approach.

¹³ <https://uzbektourism.uz/cyrl/newnews/view?id=735>
12.09.2019.

¹⁴ <https://uzbektourism.uz/cyrl/research>

¹⁵ <https://uzbektourism.uz/cyrl/newnews/view?id=728>

¹⁶ <https://strategy.uz/index.php?news=693>. Eldor Aripov,
“ONE PLACE, ONE ROAD”: WHAT INITIATIVES DID
THE PRESIDENT OF UZBEKISTAN PROMOTE?
11.18.2019.

¹⁷ <https://strategy.uz/index.php?news=693>. Eldor Aripov,
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