



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN UZBEKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN

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Article history:	Abstract:
Received: April 6 th 2023 Accepted: May 6 th 2023 Published: June 11 th 2023	In this article, practical actions have been taken to achieve positive results in the economic, political and social spheres of the Republic of Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. As the most powerful country in Central Asia and one of Afghanistan's northern neighbors, Uzbekistan has had political ties with Afghanistan since its independence in 1991, with the exception of other periods (civil wars between jihadist organizations in the first half of the 1990s). stages of history. In the three decades of relations with Afghanistan, this country has taken a neutral side. Uzbekistan is a model that has chosen pragmatism, state-state relations, active diplomacy and mediation in its conflict with Afghanistan. In the late 1990s, the country introduced innovative plans for the 6+2 and 6+3 contact groups in 2008. Also, in the last few years, this country has shown a great interest in conducting intra-Afghan negotiations.

Keywords: Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Pragmatism, infrastructure, SCO, CIS, "Tehrik-i-Taliban"

The expansion of cooperation between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan can continue only if there are inviolable security guarantees for the Uzbek side, said Obid Hakimov, director of the Center for Economic Research and Reforms. Shavkat Mirziyoyev: "It is important to prevent the isolation of Afghanistan and its transformation into a "hunker state". Uzbekistan-Afghanistan relations have significantly strengthened in recent years. Uzbekistan's support for establishing peace in Afghanistan and involving it in regional trade and economic relations made it possible to give a friendly tone to the interstate relations between the two countries. The new government in Afghanistan has not changed its position regarding the development of cooperation with the southern neighbor of Uzbekistan. Trade and economic foundations of cooperation Uzbekistan-Afghanistan relations are actively developing in recent years. Since 2017, Uzbekistan's policy towards Afghanistan has changed from caution to openness. The issues of establishing mutually beneficial cooperation in all areas were in the first place. This change was connected with the need to establish friendly relations with all neighboring countries, unlock the economic potential of Uzbekistan's economy, economic development of neighboring countries, and implementation of cheaper transport routes. In addition, Uzbekistan has repeatedly announced that it will not resolve the Afghan conflict by military means. The only effective means of achieving peace is the rapid involvement of the Afghan economy in world economic relations and the support of the world community for the socio-economic development of Afghanistan. In this regard, Uzbekistan contributed to solving this problem

by actively expanding trade with its southern neighbor and implementing large interstate infrastructure projects. Today, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan are important trade partners for each other. According to the State Statistics Committee of Uzbekistan, Afghanistan ranks sixth (5 percent) in the country's total export volume. In the last four years, the volume of trade between the countries has increased 1.5 times. 2020 was especially fruitful when, despite the pandemic, the volume of trade increased by 25% to \$777 million. Uzbekistan mainly supplies wheat flour (28.1%), electricity (17.2%), provides services in the field of railway freight transportation (25.3%) to the Afghan market. Afghanistan imports 83% of its total energy consumption. The main supplier is Uzbekistan - 2.7 billion. kW h (52% of electricity imported by Afghanistan). Exports increased significantly in 2020, mainly due to a more than 2-fold increase in wheat flour supply from \$104.3 million to \$217.3 million in value terms, and electricity exports increased by 31.7 percent. In addition, for the needs of Afghanistan's economy, Uzbekistan increased the export of cement by 21% and the export of ferrous metallurgy products by 26.6%. It is worth noting that if in 2019, exports to Afghanistan were carried out in the name of only 293 goods, in 2020 they reached 662. In addition to the development of trade cooperation, the implementation of large interstate infrastructure projects was also actively implemented. In particular, this is the Mazari Sharif-Kabul-Peshowar railway project of great regional importance. Another important project is the construction of the Surkhan-Puli-Khumri transmission line, which will significantly increase the supply of



electricity for the population and economy of Afghanistan.[1] Uzbekistan is one of Afghanistan's northern neighbors in Central Asia. Uzbekistan is the most powerful country in Central Asia due to its military power, economic power, high population and literacy rate, as well as its geopolitical strategic location in the heart of Central Asia. Compared to other republics of Central Asia during the Soviet Union period, it helped the country to occupy a regional leadership position in the region even after gaining independence. The natural border line of the Amu River separates this country from Afghanistan. total border is 137 km. In order to establish a direct and official line of communication between the two countries, the Soviet Union built the "Friendship Bridge" in 1982, consisting of two railway and road lines connecting the city of Termiz with the port of Hayraton.

Official relations between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan began after the collapse of the Soviet Union and Uzbekistan's independence in 1991. The history of relations between the two countries can be divided into three stages. The first period from 1991 to 2001, when Uzbekistan gained independence due to the civil war in Afghanistan and the shock of Uzbekistan's initial independence, was characterized by a lack of significant bilateral relations. In 2001, and after the establishment of a US-backed republic in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, along with other countries, opened an embassy in Kabul in an attempt to mend relations. Finally, the third phase began in 2021 after the Islamic Emirate took over the country. , and it is characterized by a constant mutual desire to expand relations between governments.

Based on this description, it is necessary to ask what relations and relations Uzbekistan has with the Tehriki Taliban since the restoration of the Islamic Emirate, as well as what historical relations this country has with the Tehriki Taliban. was To find a comprehensive answer to this question, the topic is considered from several angles.

The attitude of Uzbekistan to the Taliban. Before the establishment of the Islamic Emirate in 1996, the government of Uzbekistan had official ties with the Islamic State of Afghanistan led by Burhoniddin Rabbani, but supported the group led by Abdul Rashid Dostum (Uzbek origin) fighting against the central government. - powered. . Relations between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan changed when the Tehrik-i-Taliban emerged and quickly captured 90 percent of Afghanistan. Earlier, the Uzbek government ruled Afghanistan's northern provinces of Mazari Sharif and Bandar Hayraton, despite its southern borders being supported by Abdulrashid Dostum, after the Islamic Emirate ruled northern Afghanistan. was busy

determining the share of the Uzbeks. dominates these fields. Uzbekistan felt extremely safe in its southern regions. As a result, when the Friendship Bridge was closed, he implemented the most stringent border protection.

The possibility of cooperation and collusion between the Islamic Emirate and the groups was the main factor that made Uzbekistan feel distrustful of its neighbors. Groups such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMM) have been active against the Uzbek government. Despite this fear, and in the light of Islam. The Emirate of Uzbekistan, which destroyed the only Uzbek party led by Abdul Rashid Dostum, pursued a less pragmatic policy and took a hostile position against the Islamic Emirate.

The country tried to remain neutral in the conflict between the Islamic Emirate and the coalition of remnants of the Islamic State led by Burkhaniddin Rabbani and other groups such as the Resistance Front and the Junbish Party led by Abdulrashid Dostum. Establishing an inclusive government in Afghanistan. In addition, the Uzbek government did not remain indifferent to the issue of Afghanistan and took the initiative to create a contact group "6+2" (six neighboring countries of Afghanistan, including Russia and the USA) to resolve the Afghan crisis. In July 1999, the declaration of 13 points was announced in Tashkent, in which the general principle that the military option is not the solution to the Afghan crisis and the crisis of this country was emphasized.

Although these negotiations did not have a significant impact on the situation in Afghanistan, the most important task for the Uzbek government was to demonstrate its good intentions towards Afghanistan and help resolve the crisis in the neighboring country peacefully. In addition, in order to reduce its vulnerability from Afghanistan as much as possible, Uzbekistan should not allow groups opposed to the government of Uzbekistan to carry out destructive operations against this country from Afghanistan.

In 2000, the President of Uzbekistan openly stated that he does not consider the Islamic Emirate a threat to his country and expects only the Islamic Emirate and the Northern Alliance to form a coalition government. Even the ambassador of Uzbekistan in Islamabad met with the representatives of the Islamic Emirate, and both sides undertook not to interfere in each other's internal affairs.

Uzbekistan's anti-republican policy and the Taliban's struggle against American ties.

After the events of September 11 and the fall of the Islamic Emirate as a result of the American invasion of Afghanistan, Uzbekistan reopened its embassy in Kabul



and its consulate in Mazar-e-Sharif. During this time, in addition to expanding relations with the administration of Kabul, Uzbekistan allowed the US to use the Qarshi Air Base for military operations and material and technical support in Afghanistan. As a result of protests against the Uzbek government's response to the Andijan events in 2005, the United States suspended its use of this base.

Despite the fact that Uzbekistan has good relations with the administration of Kabul, even after 2009, relations between this country and the United States became closer, and the United States was again allowed to transfer civilian goods to Afghanistan through this country. However, during the 20-year war against the American occupation and the government of Kabul, Uzbekistan never officially considered the Taliban a terrorist organization and did not have a hostile attitude towards them. The government of Uzbekistan has been pursuing a neutral and peaceful policy towards Afghanistan for the past twenty years. As in the late 1990s, the country's president presented a plan to establish a 3+6 contact group (Afghanistan's six neighbors plus Russia, America, and NATO) at the 2008 NATO meeting in Bucharest, which was largely ignored. Parties[2]. The country has stepped up diplomacy in recent years to strengthen its neutrality policy, as well as Jamila's efforts to mediate with its troubled neighbor, most notably the country's reception of Taliban representatives. According to the theory of the regional security complex, security issues between two countries are said to be issues that cannot be resolved through political and diplomatic means, and both sides use other means, such as military force, to resolve them entirely in their own interests. using them individually, unilaterally or jointly with other countries. Among the most important security issues, we can mention historical enmities, border and territorial disputes and claims, support of the respective population in the country, and others. Second; The interrelationship between security and political stability in Afghanistan and the security of Uzbekistan: due to Uzbekistan's continued commitment to establishing a stable government in Afghanistan and refraining from any destabilizing activities in Afghanistan The second factor is the relationship between its own security and security and stability in Afghanistan. . In fact, Uzbekistan always feels threatened by the presence of groups like the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and the now more dangerous ISIS group, and instability in Afghanistan is an opportunity for groups against the Uzbek government. there is and ISIS to attack and destabilize this country. Therefore, that country is trying to strengthen its internal security and stability, to

support the existence of security and stability in Afghanistan, which is now caused by the Islamic Emirate.

Third; Mutual economic attractions and requirements of the two countries: The attractions and requirements of the two countries can be reviewed in the economic attractions and transit requirements section. In terms of economic attractiveness, as a neighboring country, Uzbekistan has a lot of economic and production potential for Afghanistan, which can greatly contribute to the prosperity of Afghanistan's economy. Uzbekistan, a country rich in mineral resources, especially oil and gas, and electricity production, plays an important role in meeting Afghanistan's current needs. In the field of industry and agriculture, this country can be a worthy helper for Afghanistan because it has a relatively developed industry in the production of various types of machinery and has sufficient experience in the field of mechanized agricultural production.[3]

The first railway line of Afghanistan (Bandar Hayraton-Mozor Sharif railway line) was built with the help of Uzbekistan. Afghanistan is an export destination for Uzbekistan as an attractive country for investment in industry and agriculture. Based on the transit needs of the two countries, Uzbekistan can make profitable investments in areas such as mining and processing, road and railway infrastructure, and mechanization of agricultural production in Afghanistan. can be associated with it as a state. A densely populated area of South Asia through Afghanistan. Also, passing through Afghanistan, this country should reach the countries of Pakistan and Iran, and finally reach the water ports of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman. The Afghan side can reach the countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China and Russia through Uzbekistan. In addition, the direct railway connecting Afghanistan with China first passes through Uzbekistan. In this regard, the two countries of Afghanistan and Uzbekistan should implement the Trans-Afghan railway line as soon as possible and the Khaf-Hirot railway, which directly connects Uzbekistan. they should focus on extending the line to Mazori Sharif. The Port of Termiz will lead to Iran's railway network and will revolutionize transit and interregional trade.

The security puzzle is that when a state feels threatened by another, it will focus its attention and economic power on increasing its offensive military power, while the other state tries to do the same[4]. This process, leading to an arms race, always puts the two countries in constant fear of each other. It is said that the rocket attack from the territory of Afghanistan



to the territory of Uzbekistan is the work of the Daesh group.

As the most powerful country in Central Asia and one of Afghanistan's northern neighbors, Uzbekistan has had political ties with Afghanistan since its independence in 1991, with the exception of other periods (civil wars between jihadist organizations in the first half of the 1990s). stages of history. In its thirty-year relationship with Afghanistan, this country adopted a neutral side in its affairs. Uzbekistan is a model that has chosen pragmatism, state-state relations, active diplomacy and mediation in its conflict with Afghanistan. In the late 1990s, the country introduced innovative plans for the 6+2 and 6+3 contact groups in 2008. Also, in the last few years, this country has shown a great interest in conducting intra-Afghan negotiations.

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