

UZBEKISTAN'S RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN TODAY ARE PROSPECTS FOR AFGHANISTAN

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Annotation: This article analyzes the views of expert researchers on the role of the Afghan factor in interstate relations today, in particular on the possible influence of this factor on the relations between Uzbekistan and Pakistan, and on other countries and especially those adjacent to Afghanistan.

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When addressing Uzbekistan's relations with Pakistan Today, Farhat Asifinng, President of the Pakistan Institute of peace and diplomacy, should cite the following opinion: "for many centuries, the inhabitants of the land where the present-day state of Pakistan has been located today have been inspired by the inhabitants of the country where Uzbekistan is located, their history, culture, lifestyle, ideas, and have maintained. Merchants and Sufis traveled from the great cities of Samarkand and Bukhara to the Indus Valley and its environs, spreading knowledge, not only engaging in trade, but also exchanging ideas and worldviews. Several mystical allomas also traveled to South Asia, delivering to the people the true ideas and meaning of Islam and promoting religious tolerance, solidarity and human respect throughout the region".¹

Fully integrated into the above thoughts of a foreign Specialist, let's go to the analysis of the relationship between Uzbekistan and Pakistan based on today's pragmatic realities, pursuing mutually beneficial goals.

In the foreign policy of an independent Uzbekistan, it can be noted that the southern direction in this region continues to be a priority for a number of reasons with a political and geopolitical nature, as well as for the purpose of opening a short direct route to the Indian Ocean through Afghanistan and Pakistan.

¹ Uzbekistan and Pakistan are united by deep historical and rich heritage commonality | Institute of Strategic and interregional studies under the president of the Republic of Uzbekistan (isrs.uz)

When Kezi arrives, it is necessary to quote Said Asad Ghilani, Pakistan's ambassador to Uzbekistan. "The history of bilateral relations between Pakistan and Uzbekistan goes back to the distant past with its roots. Our countries have a common culture and spiritual values. There are a lot of commonalities that bind us – we are the petals of a flower.

After gaining independence, Uzbekistan confidently and persistently chose the path of progress. And in 2016, serious and significant changes took place in this process of prosperity. Under the leadership of the Honorable President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Uzbekistan entered a new stage of development. We see that the whole worldview of the country has changed in recent years. At the International and regional levels, Uzbekistan has become an important subject. Likewise, Pakistan-Uzbekistan relations have acquired a new meaning at this stage.

Today, relations between our countries have reached a very high level. In Afghanistan, there is a common sense of interests, uniform views on peacebuilding, human rights protection and many other issues. I would like to note that when the socio-economic sphere is stuck, bilateral trade has already exceeded 100 million \$ and say that it is necessary to reach a new level once the situation in Afghanistan has improved.

Pakistan and Uzbekistan were elected to join the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2021-2023. Our states have demonstrated their determination on issues related to the protection of human rights. As for cultural ties, Pakistan and Uzbekistan have a common spiritual and educational heritage. In particular, Pakistan has a large following of Bahawuddin Naqshband. On the other hand, our Uzbek friends will enjoy their eyes if they see the amazing, remarkable sights of Pakistan.

Strong ties with Pakistan had been attempted as early as the early years of independence. This cooperation is carried out taking into account today's specific situation in Central and South Asia.

Pakistan is also an important partner with a rapidly developing nuclear potential, with a large population, giving way to the sea for Uzbekistan. In this sense, the fact that the Islamic Republic of Pakistan is located in a strategically important part of South Asia, close to Central Asia and almost adjacent to the Middle East, from the point of view of global and territorial geopolitics, as well as in setting off a number of problems in this part of the world, Sezi's acquisition of status.

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President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev in his next address to the Parliament of the country on December 29, 2020 also mentioned Pakistan as the partners that will establish mutually beneficial cooperation of Uzbekistan when the priority areas of foreign policy are listed for the next year.

Currently, one of the countries in Central Asia that is trying to strengthen its status is Pakistan. However, Pakistan's position is weaker than that of Russia, China, the United States, Turkey, Iran. But recently, Pakistan has been seeking to establish cooperation with countries in Central Asia, in particular Uzbekistan. This is because Uzbekistan is the most populous country in Central Asia. Secondly, it has rich reserves and an important geostrategic status. Pakistan also has a rapidly developing, large population, sea harbors that are important to Uzbekistan.

It is also worth noting that Uzbekistan passed into the market economy within the countries of Central Asia in the period 1989 - 2000 without some pain. For example, from 1989 to 1996, the decrease in GDP (GDP) was 17% in Uzbekistan, -49% in Tajikistan, 48% in Kyrgyzstan, 43% in Kazakhstan, 29% in Turkmenistan.²

Of course, such relative stability has not been overlooked by Pakistani analysts. By 1996, GDP began to rise in Uzbekistan. GDP growth by 2000 was close to 7%. In addition, Uzbekistan is the largest exporter of cotton, the second in the CIS in terms of gold reserves, and the 8th in the world. The oil and gas sector is developing rapidly in our country. Uzbekneftgaz is establishing cooperation with mature companies such as Agip (Italy), ExxonMobil (USA), Japans National Oil Corporation (Japan), which is also attracting Pakistan. The mechanical engineering industry and the production of Tool Equipment are developing rapidly. It is noteworthy that the volume of foreign innovations in the textile industry exceeded \$ 1.25 billion from 1995 to 2010, and Pakistan also has a decent share in this.³ From 2000 to 2012, the total volume of foreign investment grew 2.9 times.⁴ Uzbekistan's foreign trade turnover was \$ 26.286 billion in 2012 from \$ 6 billion in 2000.⁵ The basis of our country's exports is mainly raw materials – gold, gas, cotton, black metal, food.

And when it comes to the importance of the cooperation of the two countries in the development of Afghanistan, it is necessary to restore the road connecting

² Azmat Hayat Khan, Shabir Ahmad Khan. Pak-Uzbek trade and economic relations. Area Study Center (Russia, China & Central Asia). University of Peshawar. September, 2006.

³ 2010-Legkaya promishlennost Uzbekistana. URL: http://ukrexport.gov.ua/ukr/analiz_v_rinkiv/ozb/6797.html. URL: http://ukrexport.gov.ua/ukr/analiz_v_rinkiv/uzb/6797.html.

⁴ Gazeta.uz. October 17, 2012. URL: http://polpred.com/?ns=1&ns_id=683484

⁵ Uzbekistan's foreign trade turnover in 2012 amounted to \$26.286 billion. February 20, 2013. URL: <http://www.uzdaily.uz/articles-id-14556.htm>.

Peshawar with Termez in order to raise the trade economic cooperation of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan, which will make it possible to connect not only with Uzbekistan, but also with other countries of Central Asia. Therefore, great importance is attached to the development of communications, the renovation of the Korakurum highway, the construction of cars and railways, the pulling of oil and gas pipelines through Afghanistan.

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoev arrived in Pakistan on a state visit on March 3, 2022, and on March 4, 2022, along with Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Shahbaz Sharif, Uzbekistan and Pakistan signed an agreement on the development of strategic partnership.

During the visit, the importance of starting work on the construction of the strategic railway "Termez – Mozori Sharif – Kabul – Peshawar", which will go to international seaports through the territory of Pakistan, was highlighted.

We believe that the Termez – Mozori-Sharif – Kabul - Peshawar Railway, which is called the "project of the century", contributes to the general prosperity of the peoples of not only our countries, but also our wide regions," Shavkat Mirziyoev noted.

During negotiations with the Prime Minister of Pakistan, effective views were exchanged on the agenda of the region and today's situation in Afghanistan. It was noted that the growing humanitarian situation in this country is of serious concern and concern.

The head of our state called on the international community to unite efforts to provide assistance to the Afghan people. Cooperation between Uzbekistan and Pakistan in the fields of security, military-technical, combating terrorism, extremism and transnational crime is developing effectively. Within the framework of regional and international organizations, mechanisms for working together are established. Uzbekistan and Pakistan have confirmed that they are committed to continuing to support each other in the United Nations, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Islamic Cooperation Organization, Economic Cooperation Organization.⁶

As can be seen from the opinions of the head of state, the problem of Afghanistan remains relevant for our country, regardless of whether Uzbekistan's relations with the United States, Pakistan in trade and economic, political and other spheres develop in a positive or negative way, and regular attention is paid to this issue.

Uzbekistan's Foreign Minister Vladimir Norov expressed concern about the decline in international attention to Afghanistan in a speech at the 77th session of the UN General Assembly on September 24, 2022. "It is extremely important not to let

⁶ <https://xs.uz/uzkr/post/biz-pokiston-bilan-birgalikda-nafaqat-ikki-mamlakat-balki-strategik-zhihatdan-muhim-bolgan-markazij-va-zhanubij-osiyo-mintaqalari-ortasidagi-mustahkam-hamkorlik-koprigini-bunyod-etayapmiz-dedi-shavkat-mirziyoev>

Afghanistan remain isolated surrounded by existing problems. The restoration of the Afghan economy, its inclusion in interregional economic processes, the implementation of infrastructure and socially significant projects should be a common priority of the international community. The UN, international financial institutions and support from donor countries are needed to solve these problems".

At the same time, it is worth citing the opinions of Ismatulla Irgashev, an experienced diplomat from Uzbekistan, ambassador to different countries for many years, consul in Afghanistan, and currently the special representative of the president of Uzbekistan for Afghanistan. "It should be noted that for the past 20 years, important state institutions have been created in Afghanistan to ensure the rights of people, women and other nationalities residing in this country, as well as the functioning of civil society. We believe that they should be saved for the future of Afghanistan, taking into account their special importance," the United States, which was raised at the conference, expressed its support for the proposal to create a new four-way political platform with the participation of Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan.⁷

Based on the above views of the head of state and political figures, it is possible to come to a conclusion that Uzbekistan will seek to ensure peace in Afghanistan and make good neighborly, comprehensive, mutually beneficial economic cooperation in the future, as well as strengthen its relations with the United States and Pakistan for this purpose.

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