



UZBEKISTAN–CHINA RELATIONS AT A NEW STAGE

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Abdulaziz Abdujabborov

Researcher

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Abstract. *His article discusses the historical roots and current relations between Uzbekistan and China, emphasising the role of economic relations in these ties. Today China plays a crucial role in Uzbekistan's foreign policy. The establishment of relations and the agreements and partnerships formed with China contribute significantly not only to Uzbekistan's economy but also to its political and social spheres. Cooperation with China has led to job creation, economic growth, major investments, social and cultural development and opportunities for young professionals and students, including visa-free entry for education. These aspects, along with the friendly relations between the two nations, are explored in this article.*

Keywords: *economic sectors, political sectors, international agreements, transit, visa, international cooperation, sovereignty, international law, Great Silk Road, transport connections.*

INTRODUCTION

Uzbekistan and China have engaged in joint political and economic activities since ancient times. Both nations possess a rich historical heritage dating back to the distant past. The trade routes of the Great Silk Road played a pivotal role in the development of both peoples and in shaping their standing in international relations. Diplomatic ties between China and Uzbekistan existed even prior to that era; notably, prominent scholars from Uzbekistan, such as Umar ibn Kamoliddin Bukhari and Mahmud Khwarazmi, travelled to China to conduct their work. The spread of medical knowledge to China also marked a significant milestone of that time. Political and diplomatic relations between China and Uzbekistan were evident throughout the eras of the Turkic Khaganate, Karakhanid rule, the Timurid state, the Emirate of Bukhara and the Chinese Empire (From the History of Uzbekistan–China Relations, 2022). These ties have been maintained to the present day, and contemporary political, economic, cultural and social relations are

making a substantial contribution to the development of our country.

In recent years relations between Uzbekistan and China have expanded significantly; consequently, high-level negotiations have been followed by the signing of bilateral documents and joint statements, alongside other mutually beneficial cooperative activities. China currently holds a significant place in Uzbekistan's foreign policy, ranking as one of the country's strategic partners and its primary trade and economic partner. Dynamic growth in trade and economic relations can be observed across all sectors.

MAIN PART

Notably, in June 2024 the governments of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and China signed a trilateral agreement on cooperation regarding the railway project (Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan & Government of the People's Republic of China, 2024). Under this project, scheduled for construction starting on 27 December, the average annual freight volume on the line is projected to reach five million tons by 2035. This strategic link will strengthen interstate economic ties. Furthermore, in accordance with the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 27 January 2025, the priority areas for developing the transport and logistics system through to 2030 are the further development of international and regional cooperation; the reduction of delivery times for goods to foreign markets; and the attraction of additional transit cargo flows through the application of flexible tariff policies and the simplification of customs procedures, among many other plans (Mirziyoyev, 2025). Accordingly, the planned "project of the century" creates extensive opportunities for implementing the aforementioned decision.

In recent years cooperation ties have been developing not only at the level of states and governments but also between regions. The meetings held emphasise that continuing and further expanding cooperation is mutually beneficial. The following documents were signed in the presence of the leaders: an agreement between the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Government of the People's Republic of China on cooperation in the field of environmental protection; an agreement on technical and economic cooperation; an agreement on cooperation in human resource development; an agreement on cooperation between state scientific research institutions; an agreement

between the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovations of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China on cooperation in the field of Chinese language teaching; a protocol between the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China on phytosanitary requirements and control regarding the export of chickpeas from Uzbekistan to China; a protocol between the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China on deepening cooperation regarding China–Central Asia–Europe railway express services; and a protocol between the Ministry of Economy and Finance of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China on developing cooperation in the field of new electric vehicles.

The documents signed also include a protocol of agreement between the Ministry of Poverty Reduction and Employment of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the People's Republic of China on cooperation in the field of poverty reduction; a protocol of cooperation between the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovations of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Ministry of Science and Technology of the People's Republic of China on further strengthening scientific and technical cooperation (Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovations of the Republic of Uzbekistan & Ministry of Science and Technology of the People's Republic of China, 2024); a protocol between the Technical Regulation Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Standardization Administration of the People's Republic of China on cooperation in the field of standardisation; an agreement between the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Civil Aviation Administration of China on the joint establishment of an “Air Silk Road” (Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Uzbekistan & Civil Aviation Administration of China, 2024); a cooperation plan in the tourism sector for 2024–2026 between the Tourism Committee under the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China (Tourism Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan & Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China, 2024); an agreement on establishing partnership relations between the Tashkent region and Shaanxi province;

and an agreement on establishing partnership relations between the cities of Samarkand and Qingdao, among others.

These agreements serve to foster not only economic development but also political advancement in our country. It is also worth noting that political ties can provide a solution for preventing potential interstate conflicts.

Uzbekistan and China are linked by deep historical ties rooted in the Great Silk Road. They are also united by similarities in culture, traditions, mentality and values. In this context the parties paid special attention to developing tourism and fostering close cultural cooperation between their peoples.

A visa-free regime between Uzbekistan and China, aimed at fostering the development of tourism, will come into effect in the first half of 2025. In addition, an agreement on a mutual visa-free regime between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan was signed in the city of Chengdu on 1 December 2024 (Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan & Government of the People's Republic of China, 2024; Gazeta.uz, 2024). This document represents another important step towards further intensifying bilateral ties, increasing trade turnover and developing relations between the two peoples, as Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov noted (Saidov, 2024).

Today Uzbekistan is making significant strides in international relations. One such step – specifically, the relationship between Uzbekistan and China – has been examined here. Every new step taken today contributes to the development of the country, and the rise of the “New Uzbekistan” can be observed across every sector. The major strides the independent nation has taken in the economic, political, cultural and social spheres are leading to remarkable achievements. These diplomatic ties are clearly fostering the growth of Uzbekistan's market economy and expanding employment opportunities, which represents a tremendous opportunity for its citizens.

CONCLUSION

Extensive initiatives are also being undertaken for students. The exchange of personnel and the advancement of science are driving the political, economic and socio-cultural development of both nations. Just as the great Asian states have long united in pursuit of grand ideas and goals, Uzbekistan continues to advance this process

and is assuming a leadership role. The agreements of recent years show that bilateral relations have moved beyond trade alone and now cover transport connectivity, science, education, tourism, standardisation and regional partnerships, which creates a stable institutional basis for the further development of cooperation.

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