



UZBEKISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY: STRENGTHENING REGIONAL AND GLOBAL TIES

Omonboy Xaytimmatov

Teacher at Uzbekistan State University of World Languages

E-mail: xaytimmatovo@gmail.com

Tel: (97) 858 00 62

[ORCID: 0009-0000-3638-7698]

Abstract: The new Uzbekistan's foreign policy is aimed at strengthening regional cooperation and expanding global partnerships, with a focus on stability, economic growth, and the development of diplomatic relations. By actively participating in international organizations, trade agreements, and regional dialogues, our country seeks to support peace, security, and sustainable development. Uzbekistan's policy is based on the principles of mutual respect, non-interference in internal affairs, and the promotion of economic integration with neighboring states. Through the implementation of a balanced and pragmatic foreign policy, Uzbekistan strives to play a significant role in addressing regional and global issues, as well as contributing to overall progress and international cooperation.

Key words: Foreign policy, Regional cooperation, Global partnership, Stability, Economic growth, Diplomatic relations, International organizations, Trade agreements, Regional dialogue, Peace, Security, Sustainable development, Mutual respect, Non-interference, Economic integration, Balanced policy, Pragmatic policy, International cooperation

Introduction. In recent years, Uzbekistan has undergone significant transformations in its foreign policy. Once known for its cautious diplomatic approach, the country is now playing an increasingly important role in Central Asia and beyond. Under the leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Uzbekistan has focused on strengthening relations with neighboring states, expanding economic cooperation with global power centers, and enhancing its participation in international organizations. This article analyzes Uzbekistan's new foreign policy direction, including regional diplomacy, global partnerships, and future challenges.

Methodology. The analysis presented in this article is based on official government statements, reports from international organizations, and academic research on Uzbekistan's foreign policy. Additionally, economic and diplomatic data from sources such as the World Bank, the United Nations (UN), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) have been examined. Comparative assessments of Uzbekistan's past and present foreign policy strategies help illustrate key shifts in the country's diplomatic approach.

Results. One of the most significant changes in Uzbekistan's foreign policy is the improvement of relations with Central Asian countries. For example, the Treaty on Allied Relations between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Kazakhstan, signed on December 22, 2022, was officially ratified on November 30, 2023¹. This document aims to further develop strategic cooperation between the two countries, strengthen political, economic, and cultural-humanitarian ties, and ensure regional security. The ratification of the treaty signifies a new stage in the friendly relations between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan and contributes to deepening integration processes in Central Asia.

¹ O'zbekiston Respublikasi Qonuni, URL: [O'RQ-882-coh 30.11.2023. O'zbekiston Respublikasi bilan Qozog'iston Respublikasi o'rtasida ittifoqchilik munosabatlari to'g'risidagi Shartnomani \(Toshkent, 2022-yil 22-dekabr\) ratifikatsiya qilish haqida](https://oqozog.uz)

In 2022, Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev signed laws concerning certain sections of the state border between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, as well as the joint management of the Andijan Reservoir². These agreements are aimed at resolving border and water resource issues that have remained unsettled for 30 years. According to the treaty, Uzbekistan will receive 4,957 hectares of reservoir territory and 19.5 hectares of protective land, while Kyrgyzstan, as compensation, will receive 1,019 hectares of pastureland and 12,849 hectares of land. Both parties have committed to the responsible use, protection, and security of water resources. This agreement serves to strengthen friendship and cooperation between the two nations.

Relations between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan have significantly improved in recent years, steadily developing across all sectors. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's state visit to Tajikistan in March 2018 marked a new chapter in bilateral ties, fostering expanded cooperation in political, trade-economic, transport-communication, and cultural-humanitarian spheres³. On June 2-3, 2022, the official visit of Tajik President Emomali Rahmon to Uzbekistan undoubtedly elevated the dialogue between the two countries to a new level.

On July 14, 2022, Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Turkmen President Serdar Berdimuhamedov held a meeting in Tashkent. During the negotiations, they discussed strengthening the strategic partnership between the two nations, expanding trade and economic ties, and enhancing cooperation in transport, energy, agriculture, and water resource management. Additionally, both sides agreed to deepen cultural and humanitarian relations and to strengthen collaboration on regional security issues⁴. These efforts have contributed to strengthening stability in Central Asia while enhancing economic and political cooperation.

Uzbekistan is actively working to strengthen its ties with major global powers. For instance, by supporting China's *Belt and Road Initiative*, Uzbekistan has expanded cooperation in infrastructure investments, trade agreements, and the energy sector. Relations with Russia remain stable, particularly in the areas of economic collaboration and security, with ongoing partnerships in energy and defense. Meanwhile, the United States supports Uzbekistan's economic reforms, counterterrorism efforts, and progress in human rights. Uzbekistan also engages in dialogue with the European Union on trade agreements, development projects, and political reforms.

Uzbekistan has also established extensive relations with Middle Eastern countries. On March 29, 2022, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan paid an official visit to Uzbekistan. During his visit, the second meeting of the Uzbekistan-Turkey Strategic Partnership Council took place. The relationship between Uzbekistan and Turkey is rooted in a long history, with cultural and religious commonalities serving as a foundation for strengthening economic ties. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992, more than 100 bilateral agreements and protocols have been signed between the two nations. In recent years, trade and economic cooperation have significantly increased: mutual trade, which amounted to \$196 million in 2000, surged to \$3.4 billion by 2021⁵. Copper and copper products, along with cotton fiber, dominate Uzbekistan's export composition, while industrial equipment and spare parts lead its imports. Plans are in place to further strengthen trade and economic ties between the two countries in the future.

On January 16, 2024, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Uzbekistan and the UAE signed a cooperation protocol on mutual exemption from entry visa requirements. Under this agreement, Uzbek citizens gained the right to stay in the UAE visa-free for up to 30 days⁶. As a result, the number of countries Uzbek citizens can visit without a visa reached 29, elevating Uzbekistan to 71st place in the *Global Passport Power* ranking.

² Prezident matbuot xizmati. URL: [Ўзбекистон Президенти Қирғизистон билан чегара ва Андижон сув омборига оид қонунларни имзолади](#)

³ ["Тоҷикистон билан yaxshi qo'shnichilik munosabatlarini yanada mustahkamlash – O'zbekiston tashqi siyosatining ustuvor yo'nalishi bo'lib qoladi"](#)

⁴ [Давлатлараро мулоқотни мустаҳкамлаш, ўзаро манфаатли хамкорликни кенгайтириш – бош вазифа](#)

⁵ [Ўзбекистон - Туркия: савдо-иқтисодий хамкорлик истикболлари - Review.uz](#)

⁶ [Ўзбекистон фуқаролари учун визасиз борадиган давлатлар сони яна биттага кўпайди](#)

Cooperation between Uzbekistan and Saudi Arabia has significantly expanded in recent years, unlocking new opportunities across various sectors. Within the framework of Saudi Arabia's *Vision 2030* initiative, economic ties between the two nations have strengthened, leading to joint projects in energy, information technology, transport, and logistics⁷. For example, Saudi Arabia's **DATAVOLT** company has launched a partnership to establish innovative data centers in Uzbekistan. Additionally, regular meetings at the level of foreign ministries are being held to discuss the further development of cooperation in political, trade-economic, and cultural-humanitarian spheres. These efforts are elevating the strategic partnership between the two countries to a new level.

President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, made an official visit to Kuwait on February 17-18, 2025. During the visit, he held high-level talks with the Emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Mish'al Al-Sabah. Meetings with members of the Kuwaiti government, leaders of major companies, and heads of banking and financial institutions were also held⁸. The discussions focused on expanding cooperation in trade, investment, industrial cooperation, green energy, transport, infrastructure, and agriculture. Cultural-humanitarian relations and tourism cooperation were also on the agenda.

Uzbekistan has also established extensive relations with South Asian countries. Notably, cooperation between Uzbekistan and India is growing in the fields of agriculture and defense. In this context, Uzbekistan's Minister of Agriculture, Ibrahim Abdurakhmonov, met with the Indian Ambassador to Uzbekistan, Smita Pant. They reached agreements to accelerate the export of fruits and vegetables, enhance cooperation between scientific research institutes and agricultural scientists, and address logistics issues⁹. Additionally, a delegation from the Ministry of Defense of Uzbekistan visited India in December 2023 and became familiar with the activities of the Infantry School in Madhya Pradesh. During the meeting with representatives of the Indian Army, the importance of military cooperation between the two countries, including the annual "Friendship" exercises and experience exchange programs, was emphasized¹⁰. Such collaborations in various sectors serve to strengthen the strategic relations between the two countries.

Furthermore, relations between Uzbekistan and Pakistan have elevated to the level of strategic partnership, becoming more active in the economic, transport, and logistics sectors. Trade volume has increased from \$122 million in 2019 to \$387 million in 2023, with the goal of reaching \$1 billion¹¹. A Tashkent–Lahore air route has been established, and a Tashkent–Karachi cargo transport system is being planned. The Trans-Afghan Railway project will strengthen regional integration. This cooperation is contributing to the sustainable development of both countries.

Discussion. In addition to its traditional allies, Uzbekistan is expanding its diplomatic and economic relations with other regions. Trade and economic relations between Uzbekistan and Malaysia have been developing, strengthening bilateral cooperation. In 2023, mutual trade volume reached \$360 million. Uzbekistan primarily exports agricultural products and textiles to Malaysia, while it imports petrochemical products and electronics from Malaysia. Cooperation in the fields of investment and tourism is also growing, with new joint projects being planned.

On February 4-5, 2025, President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, visited Malaysia on an official visit at the invitation of Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim. During the visit, high-level talks were held in Kuala Lumpur, meetings with leaders of Malaysia's leading companies took place, and a joint business forum and other events were organized¹². The signing of a joint statement and several agreements between the two countries is of significant importance.

⁷ [O'zbekiston va Saudiya Arabistoni hamkorligi. Istiqbolda yana qanday yo'nalishlar bor?](#)

⁸ [Ўзбекистон Республикаси Президенти расмий ташриф билан Кувайт Давлатида бўлади](#)

⁹ [O'zbekiston-Hindiston: bir qancha yo'nalishlarda hamkorlik aloqalari](#)

¹⁰ [O'zbekiston va Hindiston mudofaa sohasidagi aloqalarni rivojlantirmoqchi](#)

¹¹ [O'zbekiston – Pokiston: strategik sheriklik va mintaqaviy integratsiya istiqbollari](#)

¹² [O'zbekiston – Malayziya: savdo va iqtisodiy aloqalar yanada rivojlanadi](#)

In recent years, it is noteworthy that Uzbekistan's foreign policy has been focusing heavily on developing cooperation both globally and regionally. Specifically, at the Conference of Ministers of Culture of the Islamic World held in Jeddah, discussions were focused on strengthening cultural ties between countries, while the Uzbekistan-Japan IT Forum aimed at enhancing collaboration in new technologies and innovation. Furthermore, the Uzbek Ambassador emphasized the need to further develop diplomatic relations and international cooperation at the Oman Diplomacy Academy.

Uzbekistan is also more actively participating in international institutions such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the United Nations (UN), and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). For example, Uzbekistan supported a UN resolution calling for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestine¹³. This involvement provides Uzbekistan with the opportunity to influence regional politics, contribute to economic initiatives, and strengthen cooperation on security matters.

The changes in Uzbekistan's foreign policy are shaping it into a regional leader and a global partner. The country's new diplomatic approach has led to a number of positive outcomes, including increased trade volumes, economic development, and the promotion of regional stability. However, there are also challenges to address. Uzbekistan must strive to balance its relations with major powers, avoid economic dependency, and resolve security issues. Future diplomatic actions should focus on maintaining strategic balance and expanding global cooperation.

Conclusion. Uzbekistan's foreign policy has undergone significant transformation. The country has moved from a limited diplomatic approach to active regional and international engagement. By strengthening ties with neighboring countries, deepening economic cooperation with major powers, and expanding its role in global organizations, Uzbekistan has gained a prominent position on the international stage. In the future, the country's ability to manage geopolitical issues and ensure sustainable economic growth will define its success in the global arena.

References:

1. Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (November 30, 2023). No. OPK-882: On the ratification of the Treaty on Allied Relations between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Kazakhstan (Tashkent, December 22, 2022).
2. Press Service of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (November 30, 2023). On the ratification of the Treaty on Allied Relations between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Kazakhstan (Tashkent, December 22, 2022). Lex.uz. Retrieved from <https://lex.uz/uz/docs/-6681113>
3. Press Service of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (June 12, 2023). The President of Uzbekistan signed laws on the border with Kyrgyzstan and the Andijan reservoir. Prezident.uz. Retrieved from <https://president.uz/uz/lists/view/5339>
4. Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Kazakhstan. (2023). Further strengthening of good-neighborly relations with Tajikistan remains a priority of Uzbekistan's foreign policy. Uzembassy.kz. Retrieved from <https://uzembassy.kz/uz/article/tojikiston-bilan-yaxshiqoshnichilik-munosabatlarini-yanada-mustahkamlash--ozbekiston-tashqi-siyosatining-ustuvor-yonalishi-bolib-qoladi>

¹³ ООН. Генеральная Ассамблея. (18.09.2024). *Резолюция о прекращении незаконного присутствия Израиля на оккупированной палестинской территории*. Доступно по ссылке: <https://news.un.org/ru/story/2024/09/1456401>.

5. Review.uz. (2023). Uzbekistan - Turkey: prospects for trade and economic cooperation. Review.uz. Retrieved from <https://review.uz/uz/post/uzbekistan-turciya-perspektiv-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva?ysclid=m75xpyncn33983089740>
6. Kun.uz. (April 26, 2021). Cooperation between Uzbekistan and Saudi Arabia. What other directions are there in the future? Kun.uz. Retrieved from <https://kun.uz/news/2021/04/26/ozbekiston-va-saudiya-arabistoni-hamkorligi-istiqbolda-yana-kanday-yonalar-bor?ysclid=m75y3nmj97973879013>
7. Government Portal of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (2023). The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan will pay an official visit to the State of Kuwait. Gov.uz. Retrieved from <https://gov.uz/oz/agro/news/view/18013>
8. Kun.uz. (December 21, 2023). Uzbekistan and India want to develop defense ties. Kun.uz. Retrieved from <https://kun.uz/news/2023/12/21/ozbekiston-va-hindiston-mudofaa-sohasidagi-aloqalarni-rivojlantirmoche?ysclid=m75yl04lhd478903777>
9. UZA – National News Agency of Uzbekistan. (2023). Uzbekistan – Pakistan: strategic partnership and prospects for regional integration. UZA.uz. Retrieved from https://uza.uz/oz/posts/ozbekiston-pakistan-strategik-sheriklik-va-mintaqavi-integratsiya-istiqbollari_683110?ysclid=m8spkg07hb954746727
10. UZA - National Information Agency of Uzbekistan. (year 2023). Uzbekistan - Malaysia: trade and economic relations will further develop. UZA.uz. Retrieved from https://uza.uz/oz/posts/ozbekiston-malayziya-savdo-va-iktisodiy-aloqalar-yanada-rivojlanadi_684622?ysclid=m8spl78972495095241
11. OON. General Assembly. (18.09.2024). Resolution on the termination of the illegal presence of Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory. Available at: <https://news.un.org/ru/story/2024/09/1456401>.