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SOI: [1.1/TAS](#) DOI: [10.15863/TAS](#)

## International Scientific Journal Theoretical & Applied Science

p-ISSN: 2308-4944 (print) e-ISSN: 2409-0085 (online)

Year: 2017 Issue: 08 Volume: 52

Published: 15.08.2017 <http://T-Science.org>

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**SECTION 13. Geography. History. Oceanology.  
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## UZBEKISTAN-TURKMENISTAN: CURRENT STATE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS

*Abstract: This article describes the relationship between the two brotherly peoples-Uzbek and Turkmen people, the political, socio-economic cooperation in this days. We have provided materials about are mutually beneficial relationship for the scientific community.*

*Key words: Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Central Asia, UN, the Strategic Partnership.*

*Language: English*

*Citation: Mirzaev GR (2017) UZBEKISTAN-TURKMENISTAN: CURRENT STATE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS. ISJ Theoretical & Applied Science, 08 (52): 37-42.*

*Soi: <http://s-o-i.org/1.1/TAS-08-52-5> Doi:  <https://dx.doi.org/10.15863/TAS.2017.08.52.5>*

### Introduction

The Uzbek and Turkmen peoples connect the commonality of history, that the similarity of languages, culture, traditions and customs. The scientific, literary and spiritual heritage of our ancestors is the common property of our peoples.

In the years of independence, relations between countries have risen to a qualitatively new, even higher level. Mutual support is one of the main components in our relations, as was concluded in the Treaty about Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between the Republic of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan of January 16, 1996 [1]. By the way, this document is a "crown" of a solid base of bilateral agreements, which today is about 200. In addition, Uzbek-Turkmen relations are developing dynamically in the spirit of the Interstate Agreement on the Further Strengthening of Friendly Relations and Comprehensive Cooperation signed in 2007.

Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan connected historical, during ages have been relationships, common cultural and spiritual values and the proximity of the languages, traditions and customs that have always connected our peoples [2]. Constructivism and focus on the future, focus on achieving real results, taking into account the potentialities of both sides have become a hallmark of the dialogue between the two neighboring states.

Relations between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are developing based on the principles of mutual trust, respect for interests, and mutual support in the international arena. The positions of

the sides on all actual issues of a global and regional nature are similar. The foreign policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan have based on the principles of the sovereign equality of states, the nonuse of force or threat of force, the inviolability less of borders, the peaceful settlement of disputes, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states and other universally recognized principles and norms of international law [16].

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev noted that the main priority of Uzbekistan's foreign policy is the Central Asian region, which connected with the country's national interests. "We invariably remain committed to an open, benevolent and pragmatic policy towards our closest neighbors - Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan. ..." [7].

As such, Turkmenistan's relations with the neighbors in the region have received new content. The development of fraternal, friendly ties with the immediate neighbors - Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan - will remain the most important direction of the foreign policy of neutral Turkmenistan.

### Materials and Methods

Tashkent and Ashgabat have similar views on issues of strengthening regional security and stability, intensify the negotiation process to resolve the Afghan crisis with the participation of international structures and neighboring states, joint struggle against such threats as international



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terrorism and extremism, drug trafficking, organized Transnational crime [4].

An example of constructive and fruitful partnership in the world arena is cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan within the framework of international organizations, in particular, the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea and others [9].

Special mention should be made of common approaches to strengthening and maintaining regional security, in particular, to resolve the situation in Afghanistan. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan assist the neighboring country in implementing a number of projects aimed at the restoration of important infrastructure facilities.

Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan have compatible positions on the issue of rational use of Trans boundary water resources in Central Asia. Thus, during the high-level talks in Ashgabat in October 2014, it was emphasized that when solving problems related to the water and energy sector, including the construction of large hydropower facilities on Trans Boundary Rivers, it is necessary to comply with international norms defined in the UN conventions and conduct an independent international examination of such projects [11].

Hold a common position on water and energy issues in Central Asia, which consists in their consideration because of universally recognized norms and principles of international law, taking into account the interests and agreement of all countries in the region [9].

One of the priorities trend of the interstate partnership is the fuel and energy sector. Uzbekistan as a co-author supported the UN Resolution "Reliable and stable transit of energy carriers and its role in ensuring sustainable development and international cooperation" initiated by Turkmenistan. Here, a vivid example of effective cooperation is the largest project on the construction of the Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan-Kazakhstan-China gas pipeline, put into practice in December 2009, jointly implemented [10]. On the agenda is the construction of another branch of the gas main along the route Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan-Tajikistan-Kyrgyzstan-China with an annual capacity of up to 25 billion cubic meters of "blue fuel" [17].

Evidence of the growing dynamics of bilateral relations was another meeting of the President of Turkmenistan with members of our government. Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov received the Uzbek delegation on the margins of the UN Global Conference on Sustainable Transport, happened in Ashgabat on November 26-27 in the last year. During the spiritual conversation, the prospects of bilateral cooperation had discussed, including in the transport and communication field.

In this context, it is important to note that our countries are unconditional support for each other within the frame of multilateral formats. The last vivid example of mutual favor was the support of Uzbekistan for the initiative of the head of Turkmenistan on the establishment of the International Day of Neutrality. As a result, on February 2 of this year, at the 71st session of the UN General Assembly, a resolution had adopted on the proclamation of December 12 as the International Day of Neutrality, co-authored by our country [18].

On March 6-7, 2017, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev paid a state visit to Turkmenistan at the invitation of the President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov.

During the talks, which took place in a traditionally friendly and confidential atmosphere, the heads of state exchanged views on the entire range of bilateral multifaceted cooperation, as well as on the areas of interaction in the international arena. The parties noted the similarity of positions on all the issues discussed.

It should note that this is Shavkat Mirziyoyev's first visit to a foreign country as the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Shavkat Mirziyoyev in his election program, speech at the inauguration ceremony of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, stressed that Uzbekistan will carry out mutually beneficial cooperation with all states, first of all with neighboring countries. This state visit of the President of our country has vividly confirmed that Uzbekistan in foreign policy attaches special importance to good-neighborly relations.

The results of the talks President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov signed the Joint Statement, the Strategic Partnership Agreement between the Republic of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Between the relevant ministries and departments of the two countries signed the Agreement on Economic Cooperation for 2018-2020. Also the Memorandum on the Further Development of Cooperation in the Field of Railway Transport, the Program for Cooperation in the Cultural and Humanitarian Sphere for 2017-2019, the Program of Cooperation between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs for 2017- 2018, contracts for the supply of agricultural machinery and chemical products from Uzbekistan to Turkmenistan. Between mayor's offices of Khorezm region and Dashoguz province, Bukhara region and Lebap province had signed agreements on cooperation in trade, economic and cultural-humanitarian spheres [19].

The strategic partnership agreement signed by the presidents within the framework of the talks was a solid foundation for expanding and deepening between the two states, said Shavkat Mirziyoyev [20].

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An important area of economic cooperation is transport communications. Regular transportation of goods to Turkmenistan through the territory of Uzbekistan and to Uzbekistan through the territory of Turkmenistan. Two states are transit countries for third countries.

As noted, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan have great opportunities in terms of international transit freight. Thanks to close cooperation in this direction, the volume of export-import goods of the two states transported through the territories of our countries reaches almost 2.5 million tons per year [8].

Naturally, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are important transit points at busy intersections of trade routes; practical mutually beneficial use has already begun with the opening of the Tejen-Serakhs-Mashhad railway line in May 1996. The first cargo served by this railway line was the composition with Uzbek cotton, directed through the Turkmen-Iranian border by transit to the ports of the Persian Gulf [10].

The undisputed priority of Turkmen-Uzbek cooperation today have been transport are. Speaking about this, President of Turkmenistan Berdymuhamedov stressed that the efforts of our states can and should be aimed at achieving the main goal - the creation of a powerful and modern infrastructure that would ensure the unification of transport systems in Central Asia, Europe and the Middle East. In particular, our country is ready for joint work on the transport route Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Caspian Sea-South Caucasus with access to the Black Sea ports of Georgia, Turkey, Romania and other countries [11].

The roads and railways of the two countries are a well-integrated system and fulfill the task of an advantageous transit complex not only for Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, but also for third countries. In January-September 2013, through the territory of Uzbekistan, 304.9 thousand tons of Turkmen cargos which were transited, from territory of this state - 283.8 thousand tons of Uzbek cargos. Expansion of cooperation and implementation of mutually agreed tariff policy in the field of transport communications and transit will not only allow the full realization of the potential of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, but will also increase their attractiveness for third countries.

In the opinion of the Uzbek side, it is expedient to optimize tariffs, introduce flexible preferences to increase the competitiveness and attractiveness of Turkmenistan's communications towards the ports of Bandar Abbas in Iran and Mersin in Turkey [6].

The Turkmen side highly appreciates Uzbekistan's willingness to actively participate in the creation of the transport and transit corridor "Central Asia-Middle East" (Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Oman), which was signed in April 2011 in Ashgabat. Its implementation aimed at diversifying and increasing the volume of transit traffic from our

region to world markets. In this connection, President Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov spoke about the need to start discussing the immediate aspects of the practical implementation of this promising project. The principle position of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on its terms and parameters is very important.

This witness to that there is a high transit potential in the two countries. In this context, it is necessary to note the historical significance of the agreement signed in Ashgabat on the formation of the new international transport and communication corridor "Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Oman". The agreement on the creation of this transport corridor was achieved on the initiative of the First President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov during his official visit to Turkmenistan in October 2010 [4]. The implementation of this project will allow us to use the shortest route to the ports in the Middle East, actively develop cargoes among the participating countries, give a new impetus to the inflow of investments into Central Asia and will strengthen the interest of other countries in using this corridor. Under the above-mentioned agreement, a legal meeting of the Coordinating Council took place in Tehran in February 2015, following which a protocol was signed providing for the adoption of concrete measures for the speedy implementation of the project [11].

Over the years of effective and constructive cooperation based on the principles of equality and mutual benefit, more than 200 documents regulating the mutual relations of the two states in all spheres of life were signed [15].

The volume of mutual trade turnover between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan in 2013 amounted to 353.9 million US dollars [21], and in 2014 reached 413 million dollars. However, as noted, the parties have even more potential in this area.

The economic potential of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan creates an opportunity for further expansion of the scope of cooperation. According to the intergovernmental agreement on mutual deliveries signed in 2012 and the agreement on economic cooperation for 2013-2017, consistent work is carried out to further diversify the structure and increase the volume of trade [12].

It is also noteworthy that mutual visits at the level of representatives of various departments have recently become more frequent. This testifies to a mutual understanding of the need to intensify bilateral trade and economic ties, to give them a qualitatively new content and character. During the 13th meeting of the Joint Turkmen-Uzbek Commission held in Ashgabat on January 24-25 this year, interest and readiness to diversify mutual trade turnover and search for new directions for cooperation taking into account the needs and

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opportunities of the two countries were ascertain by the commission [17].

It was a good tradition to organize the National Exhibition of Turkmenistan in Tashkent and the National Exhibition of Uzbekistan in Ashgabat. At the same time, in the development of trade between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, the establishment of the most favored nation treatment is of great importance [6].

In particular, on February 24, 2017, in Ashgabat, took place the presentation of the cars of the new brand Ravon, the successor of the brand Uz-Daewoo [23]. The event was organized by the Economic Association "Turkmen-UzAVTO", the State Trade Center "Turkmenistan" of the Ministry of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations. The official representatives of a number of factories for the production of cars of various modifications took part in the celebration. Among them, there is the joint-stock company GM Uzbekistan for the production of passenger cars, SamAvto, which specializes in the production of buses and trucks of medium-capacity under the Isuzu brand, a joint Uzbek-German enterprise for the production of trucks and special equipment, trailers of MAN brand etc.

As is known, Turkmenistan successfully implements programs aimed at the creation of new high-tech industries, modernization of fixed assets and technical re-equipment of enterprises, through the introduction of management, marketing, expertise achievements. At the same time, great importance is attached to studying the positive experience of foreign countries and applying it taking into account the priorities of the Turkmen economy.

On March 3, 2017, in Ashgabat, Uzarogtekhsoatholding opened the technical center of Uzbek agricultural equipment producer [24].

The delegation from Uzbekistan took part in the celebration, which included representatives of machine-building, service and leasing companies. Among the participants were representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Management of Turkmenistan, agricultural producers of our country, the Aykhal Velayat, the Dakhan associations, the private sector of the economy and the Agrarian Party.

Minister of Foreign Economic Relations, Investments and Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan Elyor Ganiev noted that the establishment of the Technical Center for the Sale and Maintenance of Agricultural Machinery would be another step in strengthening the fruitful cooperation between the two countries with significant growth potential.

Within the framework of trade and economic cooperation over the past ten years, agricultural machinery and attachments general coast USD 43 million were delivered to Turkmenistan from Uzbekistan. These are cotton seeders, cultivators, sprayers, tractor-trailers and spare parts for them. As noted at the presentation, the creation of the

Technical Center will strengthen and expand the fruitful partnership [24].

The participants of the event got acquainted with the training center on the training of Turkmen machine operators and repair specialists of Uzbek equipment, opened on the basis of "Turkmen-UzAVTO". Here everything is ready for the beginning of the educational process - visual aids and samples showing individual units and aggregates of agricultural machines, interactive training equipment.

There had been also an exhibition of spare parts and consumables necessary for servicing agricultural machinery.

Various models of agricultural machinery were presented at the site in front of the Technical Center. It was noted that in the tests conducted in 2014-2016, the Uzbek cotton picker showed itself well in the field conditions of Turkmenistan.

In addition to the samples presented at the exhibition, Uzbek machine-builders offer a range of models of garden, tilled and arable tractors from 40 to 215 horsepower, combine harvesters, mounted and trailed equipment [24].

### Cultural and humanitarian cooperation

An important factor in the development of bilateral relations is cultural and humanitarian cooperation. Since ancient times, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan have supported and are developing bilateral ties in the cultural and humanitarian sphere. Speaking of this, it is necessary to note the Program of Cultural and Humanitarian Cooperation for 2011-2013, signed during the official visit of the First President Islam Karimov to Turkmenistan in October 2010 [13].

The interaction between the ministries of culture of the two countries, which together in the framework of the Program of Cooperation for the last years, hold exhibitions of works by famous artists, craftsmen and craftsmen come to artisans' fairs, tours of musical and theatrical groups are carried out. In December 2012, an exhibition of artists of Turkmenistan was successfully held in Tashkent. In August 2013, in the city of Turkmenbashi, the delegation of Uzbekistan took part in the international festival of gifted children "Avaza - the Territory of Friendship", in September 2013 in Khiva, the Republican Turkmen Cultural Center organized anniversary events dedicated to the 290th anniversary of the Turkmen poet Makhtumkuli [5]. Turkmen masters of arts regularly take part in the international music festival "Shark Taronalari" and take prizes. At the international music festival Shark Taronalari in 2009, the singer from Turkmenistan Lale Begnazarova won the Grand Prix, and at the 2011 festival the Turkmen creative group Galkynysh took the third place [6]. To this we should add the bright and memorable Uzbek-Turkmen friendship festival held in October 2010 in Dashguz. His



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logical continuation was the joint concert of art masters of the two countries that was held on May 6, 2011 in Bukhara with great success [13].

During the official visit of President of Turkmenistan G. Berdimuhamedov to Uzbekistan in November 2013, the Program of Cooperation between the Governments of the two countries in the cultural and humanitarian sphere for 2014-2016 was signed, which facilitates the activation of cooperation between our states in these areas. In the summer of 2015, various events that positively affect the Uzbek-Turkmen good-neighborly relations were held in the cities of Turtkul, Karshi, Termez, Bukhara, Tashkent and in the Tashkent region by the Republican Turkmen Cultural Center and the Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan Friendship Society [11].

Another proof of this is the Days of Uzbek Cinema, which took place on September 26-28 last year in Ashgabat, within the framework of which eight feature films of Russian film directors were demonstrated. Including, "Parizod", "Unutma Meni", "Sehrli qalpocha", "Toza", "Zarb", "Ota", "Hayotda ..." and "Hazonzregi" [25].

With the rich traditions and customs of the fraternal people, the inhabitants of our republic could see November 7-11, 2016 during the Days of Culture of Turkmenistan in Uzbekistan. In Tashkent and Bukhara, with the participation of artists and masters of the arts of a friendly country, exhibitions, creative meetings with writers and poets, concerts and screenings of films took place [14].

Cooperation in the scientific sphere is developing. Our scientists conduct joint research in agriculture, petrochemical and other industries. In particular, the representatives of the Institute of Genetics and Experimental Biology of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, together with their Turkmen counterparts, are working to remove seed cotton and wheat varieties corresponding to the climatic conditions of Turkmenistan. Scientists conduct scientific and practical research in the petrochemical sector [6].

The Memorandum of Understanding signed between the National Library of Uzbekistan named after Alisher Navoi and the National Library of Turkmenistan in 2011 opened new opportunities for strengthening ties in the international book exchange, studying and practical implementation of modern library technologies, mutual exchange of experience and scientific developments [3].

Our countries have great potential in the tourism sector. In the framework of the Great Silk Road project, combined trips are organized. In other words, it is possible to establish the departure of the tourist who arrived in Uzbekistan through Turkmenistan and the arrival of the arriving in Turkmenistan through Uzbekistan. Thus, a favorable basis will be created to expand the cooperation of national airlines [6].

In the international exhibition and conference "Tourism and Travel" held in September in the city of Turkmenbashi, representatives of our country took part. In October 5-7, in Uzbekistan, the 21st Tashkent International Tourism Fair "Tourism on the Silk Road", the companies and companies of Turkmenistan reached an agreement with the Uzbek partners to expand ties in this direction, and organize joint tours. With the participants of the fair, manager of the state travel company Marysyyahat from Turkmenistan Ilyas Zhumayev said: "Close proximity and partnership of our countries, integration of the transport system allow organizing combined tours, in particular, by returning tourists who arrived to Uzbekistan through Turkmenistan, and Arrived in Turkmenistan - through Uzbekistan. At the Tashkent International Tourism Fair, we intend to get more acquainted with the opportunities of your country in the field of tourism, strengthen ties with travel companies and companies of Uzbekistan" [12].

On March 6-7, 2017, the state visit of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to Turkmenistan took place. They discussed the coordination of the two countries' steps in the field of international tourism and the possibility of creating in the future a common tourist space with agreed programs and routes. The President of Turkmenistan invited the Uzbek partners to implement joint investment projects in the Avaza National Tourism Zone.

### Conclusion

Thus, the Republic of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, realizing their historical responsibility for preserving and strengthening centuries-old ties of friendship, brotherhood and cooperation between the peoples of the two countries, reaffirmed their commitment to further deepening and strengthening bilateral economic ties, transport communications, culture, science, art, Sports and other spheres. And so, the confidence that the fruitful negotiations held, as well as the bilateral documents signed during the visit, will contribute to the further strengthening of the traditionally friendly and good-neighborly relations between the Republic of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan on the basis of equality and mutual benefit.

A serious problem for the region is its geographical isolation and isolation. In this regard, Uzbekistan will continue to make comprehensive efforts to "de-colonize" Central Asia through the creation of alternative transport and communication corridors. The most promising is the trans-Afghan route leading to sea communications in the Indian Ocean.

The implementation of this project in cooperation with neighboring and other interested countries, with the assistance of donor countries and

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international financial structures, will contribute not only to the sustainable development of the states of the region, but will also fundamentally change the geo-economic map of Central Asia.

Certainly, the historically established friendly relations between the peoples of the two countries, based on a common culture, mutual understanding and trust, ensure stability and peace in the Central Asian region.

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