

FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF UZBEK-TAJIK INTERSTATE RELATIONS

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Abstract. *The states of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are considered neighbors that have been tested for centuries. During the years of independence, these two countries achieved further strengthening of neighborly relations. The article discusses these processes.*

Keywords: *Uzbekistan-Tajikistan cooperation, trends, reforms, cooperation, security, political relations, investment, economy, diplomacy.*

INTRODUCTION

It shows that Uzbekistan-Tajikistan relations as sovereign states began in 1991. Development trends of mutual cooperation include two periods. The first is the period until 2016, during which the establishment of political, diplomatic, economic and cultural-humanitarian relations between the two countries and the consistent development of these processes are observed. To some extent, relations have developed moderately at this stage. A strategic cooperation was established between the two countries. Their attitude towards the problems in the Central Asian region is common and they have been supporting each other at the international level.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In 2018, important events took place in the relations between the two countries, which brought the cooperation between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to a qualitatively new level. The main success in strengthening the rapprochement and cooperation between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan was the signing of the agreement "On mutual travel of citizens of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan" in 2018, which made life easier for millions of citizens of both sides. This was an impetus for the development of tourism in both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Starting from March 16, 2018, citizens of two countries can stay in each other's territory without a visa (up to 30 days) with valid travel documents (diplomatic, service and general passports). In 2018, the President of Tajikistan E. Rahmon paid a practical visit to Tashkent, and 26 new documents were signed as a result of his visit. Among these documents, there were several important agreements that fundamentally changed the relationship between the two countries. "Agreement on strategic partnership between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan" was one such agreement[2]. In 2018, the President of Tajikistan E. Rahmon paid a practical visit to Tashkent, and 26 new documents were signed as a result of his visit. Among these documents, there were several important and "fateful" agreements that fundamentally changed the relations between the two countries. "Agreement on strategic partnership between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan" was one such agreement [3].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Naturally, the historical, economic space, cultural-humanitarian, natural and geographical proximity of the two countries, the presence of complementary resources and production created great conditions and opportunities for the development of all relations, including cooperation in the economic sphere. The level and potential of economic development of Uzbekistan and

Tajikistan differ from each other. According to the forecasts of the World Bank, the annual growth of the GDP of Tajikistan for 2020 will be -2%, and in 2021 it will be 3.7%. The most favorable forecast for Uzbekistan was made by the World Bank: in 2020, the country's gross domestic product will be 1.5 percent, and in 2021, it will be approximately 6.6 percent[4].

According to the Tajikistan Trade Portal, Uzbekistan took the fifth place among the main trade partners of the Republic of Tajikistan in 2021. In 2021, the trade turnover between the republics amounted to 447.8 million US dollars[5]. The main goods of trade are: Mineral fuel, oil and their distillation products; bituminous substances, ores, slag salt: sulfur; soil and stone; cement, cotton and fertilizers. It should be noted that the volume of mutual trade between the two countries has increased 30 times compared to 2015. The heads of state defined the priority tasks of increasing the volume of trade to 500 million US dollars, and in the long term to 1 billion dollars.

Issues of trade-economic and investment cooperation, issues of mutual cooperation in the field of transport and other sectors of the economy, as well as cultural-humanitarian issues are considered within the work of the intergovernmental commission on trade-economic cooperation between the Republic of Uzbekistan, Republic of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, established in 2002.

Enterprises with the participation of Uzbekistan's capital are actively working in Tajikistan within the framework of industrial cooperation, including. "ArtelAvestoElectronics" JV, a producer of household appliances, which is in great demand among the local population. Uzbek national brand "Artel" opened a joint venture "Artel Avesto Electronics" in Tajikistan. The Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan Abdulla Aripov, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan Kahir Rasulzoda and the Chairman of the National Council (Majlisi Milli) of the Oliy Majlis took part in the opening ceremony. Rustam Emomali, Mayor of Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan. The development of international cooperation in the field of electrical engineering has reached a new height. A vivid example of this is the Uzbekistan-Tajikistan joint venture "Artel Avesto Electronics" in Dushanbe [7]. Today, the Artel Avesto Electronics factory produces several models of vacuum cleaners and electric water heaters. It is planned to move to the second stage by 2021, to launch the production of televisions and washing machines[6].

In 2017, air traffic between Tashkent and Dushanbe was restored, work was resumed on the Galaba-Amuzang section, and the A-377 international highway was opened on the Samarkand-Penjikent section. Presidents of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Imamali Rahmon, took part in the commissioning ceremony of the restored part of the Galaba-Amuzang-Khushadi interstate railway line, which was suspended in 2011, in Dushanbe on March 9, 2018. The ceremony was broadcast live on Tajikistan's state TV channels. When talking about logistics, one cannot fail to mention that mutually beneficial Uzbekistan-Tajikistan cooperation is developing in order to develop new markets. In particular, on June 3, 2021, a meeting was held in Dushanbe between the Deputy Minister of Transport of Uzbekistan and the Minister of Transport of Tajikistan, in which the possibility of developing transport and transit opportunities between our countries, as well as the possibility of activating road transport routes to China through Tajikistan.

Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have resumed regular bus service. According to the Ministry of Transport of Tajikistan, regular bus service between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan has been restored after the ban was lifted due to the risk of spreading the coronavirus. Khojand-Tashkent-Khojand international bus routes now run daily. In addition, flights are carried out by transport companies of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. To board the flight, the passenger must present a proof of vaccination

against COVID-19 or a certificate with a negative PCR test result. The length of the route between the extreme points of the route is 174 km. Travel time including customs clearance at the border is approximately 4.5 hours.

Thus, we can say that Tashkent's goal of strengthening friendship, good neighborliness and cooperation is fully understood and supported by brother Dushanbe.

The political systems of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have a lot in common. First, both countries are presidential republics with similar features in their politics. Secondly, both countries are unitary, with a similar administrative-territorial division of the country: region, city, district, urban settlements, rural community and village. Countries are secular republics and the state is separated from religion. Also, Tashkent and Dushanbe are members of many international organizations such as UN, CIS, OSCE, OIC, CSTO, IMF, SCO and others.

Solving the issues of delimitation and demarcation of state borders between countries is one of the most important factors in the way of mutually beneficial cooperation. With the beginning of the "thaw" in Uzbekistan, the new leadership set a path to resolve all the border problems and disagreements that have been accumulating for decades with the neighbors. Over the past 4 years, there have been bilateral meetings between Tashkent and Dushanbe, visits by members of ministries and committees dealing with demarcation and delimitation of state borders, and dozens of high-level agreements and contracts have been signed, including:

- Protocol on the exchange of memoranda on the ratification of the agreement on certain sections of the state border between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (Tashkent, 17.08.2018);
- Agreement on separate sections of the Uzbekistan-Tajikistan state border.

CONCLUSION

It can be said that Tashkent and Dushanbe have enough points of contact to claim the driving role of regional cooperation in the future in maintaining and further developing active political and economic cooperation. Despite the fact that Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are authoritarian republics, if they actively cooperate economically, the lives of millions of citizens on both sides of the border will be much easier, if not better. Economic cooperation between the countries of the region allows to solve many problems of the citizens of the countries of the region. It should be understood that any changes, whether economic or political, directly affect other countries.

Strengthening cooperation between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan can actually play a decisive and fundamental role for regional cooperation in Central Asia. Uzbekistan has already taken the first step (improving relations with all countries in the region, signing many agreements on mutually beneficial and strategic partnership) to claim the central link of regional political and economic processes. All this happened thanks to Shavkat Mirziyoyev's new domestic and foreign policy. The change in the political climate in Central Asia has completely changed the course of events in the region and has directly affected the entire spectrum of relations between Central Asian states and international and regional actors.

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