



**QADIMIYLIKDAN FAROVONLIKKA: MARKAZIY OSIYO BILAN TARIXIY ALOQALAR VA DIPLOMATIK MUNOSABATLAR HAMDA IQTISODIY KUCH MARKAZI SIFATIDA O'ZBEKISTONNING ISTIQBOLLARI**

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**Annotatsiya.** Markaziy Osiyo mintaqasi Pokiston uchun tarixiy va iqtisodiy aloqalar, bir-birini to'ldiruvchi savdo va birinchi navbatda bir-biriga yaqin bo'lganligi sababli muhim ahamiyatga ega. Bu Pokistonni geografik istiqbolga olib keladi, bu esa uni bir vaqtning o'zida Markaziy Osiyoning va Janubi-Sharqiy Osiyoning a'zosi qiladi. Hind va Oksus miloddan avvalgi 2500 yildan 2400 yilgacha yaqin aloqada bo'lgan va miloddan avvalgi 1500 yilgacha juda yaqin aloqada bo'lgan. O'zbekiston Pokiston, Xitoy, Qirg'iziston va Qozog'iston o'rtasida imzolangan To'rt tomonlama tranzit transporti to'g'risidagi bitimning (QTTA) bir qismi bo'lishga rozi bo'lganligi sababli Pokiston CAga Xitoy orqali kirishi mumkin. Maqolada, shuningdek, Pokiston va Markaziy Osiyo mamlakatlari iqtisodiyotlari o'rtasidagi kuchli savdo to'ldiruvchisi ko'rsatilgan. Pokiston 1991 yilda O'zbekiston mustaqilligini birinchilardan bo'lib tan olgan va diplomatik aloqalar o'rnatgan davlatlardan biri bo'ldi. Xitoyning "Bir makon bir yo'l" tashabbusi (BRI) O'zbekistonga sezilarli ta'sir ko'rsatadi, bu loyihaning qiymati O'zbekiston iqtisodiyoti uchun katta ahamiyatga ega ekanligi bilan ajralib turadi. O'zbekistonda mahalliy ishlab chiqarish 2018-yildagi 50 milliard dollardan 2019-yilga kelib 58 milliard dollarga yaqin 15 foizga oshdi, aholi jon boshiga to'g'ri keladigan O'zbekiston yalpi ichki mahsuloti esa 13 foizga o'sdi, dollar kursi ko'tarilgach, 1529 dollardan 1725 AQSh dollariga yetdi. Inflyatsiya 2018-yildagi 27,5 foizdan 2019-yilda 19,2 foizga tushdi. Pokiston va O'zbekiston 1992 yildan buyon 70 dan ortiq turli shartnomalar imzolagan bo'lib, shundan 26 tasi savdo va tijoratga tegishli. 2019-yilda Pokiston va O'zbekiston o'rtasidagi umumiy savdo hajmi taxminan 28 million dollarni tashkil etdi. Biroq, Pokiston uni yanada kuchaytirishi mumkin va bu savdo hajmini oshirish uchun katta salohiyat mavjud. Tovarlarining umumiy savdo salohiyati 424 million AQSh dollarini tashkil etadi, bu Pokistonning 2019-yilda ushbu mamlakat bilan savdo qilganidan 15 baravar ko'pdir. Pokiston bu salohiyatdan foyda olish uchun bir qator siyosat muammolari ustida ishlashi kerak.

**Kalit so'zlar:** Markaziy Osiyo, Pokiston, iqtisodiyot, tarix, tarixiy aloqalar, O'zbekiston, savdo, Xitoy-Pokiston iqtisodiy koridori.

**FROM ANTIQUITY TO PROSPERITY: PAKISTAN'S HISTORIC TIES AND DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH CENTRAL ASIA AND THE PROSPECTS FOR THE ECONOMIC POWERHOUSE-UZBEKISTAN**

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**Annotation:** The region of Central Asia (CA) is important for Pakistan due to historical relations, economic ties, trade complementarity and above all sharing of close proximity to each other. This puts Pakistan into a geographical perspective, which makes it, at once a member of the CA as well as Southeast Asia. Indus and Oxus came into close contact from 2500 to 2400 BC and kept a very close relationship till 1500 BC. Pakistan may access the CA through China as Uzbekistan has agreed to become part of the Quadrilateral Traffic in Transit Agreement (QTTA) already signed among Pakistan, China, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. The article also shows strong trade complementarity between the economies of Pakistan and CA countries. Pakistan was one of the first countries to recognize Uzbekistan's independence and establish diplomatic relations in 1991. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has a significant impact on Uzbekistan, which stands out as the value of the project has big importance for Uzbekistan's economy. Uzbekistan domestic production increased by about 15% from US \$ 50 billion in 2018 to US \$ 58 billion by 2019, while Uzbek GDP per capita increased by 13%, from US \$ 1,529 went to US \$ 1,725 when the dollar

went up. Inflation fell from 27.5% in 2018 to 19.2% in 2019. Pakistan and Uzbekistan have signed more than 70 different agreements, since 1992, out of which 26 are related to trade and commerce. In 2019 Pakistan and Uzbekistan had a total trade volume of US \$ 28 Million approximately. However, Pakistan can further enhance it and there is sizeable potential for increase in this trade volume. The total trade potential of items amounts to US\$ 424 Million, which is 15 times more than what Pakistan traded with this country in 2019. Pakistan needs to work on a number of policy problems to profit from this potential.

**Key words:** Central Asia, Pakistan, economy, history, historical Relations, Uzbekistan, trade, China Pakistan economic corridor (CPEC).

### ОТ ДРЕВНОСТИ К ПРОЦВЕТАНИЮ: ИСТОРИЧЕСКИЕ СВЯЗИ И ДИПЛОМАТИЧЕСКИЕ ОТНОШЕНИЯ ПАКИСТАНА С ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОЙ АЗИЕЙ И ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОЙ ЭЛЕКТРОМАГНИТКИ – УЗБЕКИСТАНА

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**Аннотация.** Регион Центральной Азии (ЦА) важен для Пакистана из-за исторических отношений, экономических связей, торговой взаимодополняемости и, прежде всего, непосредственной близости друг к другу. Это ставит Пакистан в географическую перспективу, что делает его одновременно членом ЦА и Юго-Восточной Азии. Инд и Окс вступили в тесный контакт с 2500 по 2400 год до нашей эры и поддерживали очень тесные отношения до 1500 года до нашей эры. Пакистан может получить доступ к ЦА через Китай, поскольку Узбекистан согласился стать частью Четырехстороннего соглашения о транзитных перевозках (QTTA), уже подписанного между Пакистаном, Китаем, Кыргызстаном и Казахстаном. В статье также показана сильная торговая взаимодополняемость между экономиками Пакистана и стран ЦА. Пакистан был одной из первых стран, признавших независимость Узбекистана и установивших дипломатические отношения в 1991 году. Китайская инициатива «Пояс и путь» (BRI) оказывает значительное влияние на Узбекистан, что выделяется тем, что ценность проекта имеет большое значение для экономики Узбекистана. Внутреннее производство Узбекистана выросло примерно на 15% с 50 миллиардов долларов США в 2018 году до 58 миллиардов долларов США к 2019 году, а ВВП Узбекистана на душу населения увеличился на 13%, с 1529 долларов США до 1725 долларов США, когда доллар вырос. Инфляция снизилась с 27,5% в 2018 году до 19,2% в 2019 году. Пакистан и Узбекистан с 1992 года подписали более 70 различных соглашений, из которых 26 связаны с торговлей и коммерцией. В 2019 году общий объем торговли Пакистана и Узбекистана составил около 28 миллионов долларов США. Тем не менее, Пакистан может еще больше увеличить этот объем торговли, и существует значительный потенциал для увеличения этого объема торговли. Общий торговый потенциал товаров составляет 424 миллиона долларов США, что в 15 раз больше, чем Пакистан торговал с этой страной в 2019 году. Пакистану необходимо работать над рядом политических проблем, чтобы извлечь выгоду из этого потенциала.

**Ключевые слова:** Центральная Азия, Пакистан, экономика, история, исторические связи, Узбекистан, торговля, Китайско-Пакистанский экономический коридор.

**Introduction.** The region of CA is important for Pakistan due to many reasons. These include the historical relations, economic ties, trade complementarity and above all sharing of close proximity to each other. The present study endeavors to present a literature review on the topic so that Pakistan can further its trade relations with CA and especially with Uzbekistan. The question before the study is to know the bottlenecks in the trade of Pakistan, which are hindering the trade prospects. The study also

endeavors to find solutions to these problems through its analysis.

The research objective therefore, is to arrive at an analysis, so that both, the region of CA and Pakistan profit from mutual trade. For the present study to be able to do the same it is very imperative to get to know the history of the region. Once the study has established the historical importance of CA for Pakistan, it needs to delve into trade related importance of CA for Pakistan. Now trade is of two kinds, internal and external. This study will focus

on external trade with CA. While having a look at these dimensions the study also cannot ignore the importance of different trade routes available to Pakistan for trade with CA and their respective suitability. Therefore, finally the study has presented a discussion on different trade routes to realize the research objective as stated above.

**Analysis of Literature.** CA countries are known to the world as part of Soviet Bloc countries in CA region. These republics declared independence from Soviet Russia in 1992. These include Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan (WorldBank, 2018). However, some estimations also include among these countries, the South Caucasian state of Azerbaijan and also Afghanistan (Pritchin, 2017). However, for the present study, both Afghanistan and Azerbaijan are not included as part of CA.

Before embarking upon an in-depth study on the topic, it is imperative to understand the importance of CA for Pakistan, first. Though Pakistan has deep historical connections with CA and there are multiple strategic reasons to show that CA is indeed very important for Pakistan.

Foremost, let us delve into the maps of both CA and Southeast Asia. This indulgence is important as:

“Maps are a way of conceiving, articulating and structuring the human world, which is biased towards, promoted by, and exerts influence upon particular sets of social relations” (Harley, 2009, p. 129).

By observing the map of CA and Southeast Asia, we will be able to visualize the placement of Pakistan for both regions and the ‘social relations’, Pakistan possibly has with both the regions. These relations have gone through many thicks and thins during the course of history, and it is felt that so much dust has settled on these relations that these are evidently nonvisible to Pakistanis generally. A closer look at the map may incite a few minds to really wonder and ask the question, why and most importantly, how. On a recent visit to Pakistan, the Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev presented a book to the Prime Minister of Pakistan containing 3000 common words between Uzbek and Urdu languages (APP, 2022). This means a diffusion of centuries between both the languages, which would not have been possible without strong historical and social relations with the CA.



Map 1: South East and Central Asia

Source: (US Department of State, 2009)

A close look at the map, reminds one of what Kaplan (Kaplan, 2013) very rightly wrote in his book:

“Pakistan can be viewed as an artificial puzzle piece of a territory, straddling the frontier between the Iranian-Afghan plateau and the lowlands of the sub-continent, encompassing the western half of the Punjab,....., crazily uniting the Karakoram in the north (some of the highest mountains in the world) with the Makran Desert

almost a thousand miles away to the south by the Arabian Sea”. (Kaplan, 2013, p. 242)

This puts Pakistan into a geographical perspective, which makes it, at once a member of the CA as well as Southeast Asia. This argument is based on the fact that the ‘Karakoram in the north’, as narrated by Kaplan is actually the Silk Route travelling from Pakistan into the CA, either through Afghanistan or through China. Later in this article, different routes through Afghanistan

and China will be critically compared for further understanding, however, it suffices to argue here that Pakistan is geographically linked with CA. Actually, it is the only country which connects CA with the rest of the South East Asia. Not only this, but Pakistan also has the potential to link CA with Middle East, Far East and Africa. To further his argument, Kaplan writes:

“Today’s political geography is historically unique, however: an Indus valley state and a powerful Gangetic state both fighting for control of an independent Central Asian near-abroad. Because the Indus and its tributaries, with Punjab at its heart, is the demographic core of the Indus-to-Oxus region, encompassing today’s Pakistan and Afghanistan”. (Kaplan, 2013, p. 244)

For Kaplan, the Indus valley state is Pakistan; Gangetic state is India and finally, he also speaks of an Indus to Oxus region. Holding further discussions, one issue which has been highlighted by Kaplan is that, both India and Pakistan are in a state of conflict over the control of CA, including Afghanistan. Now, this merits for an argument that CA is indeed important for Pakistan.

However, going further, one needs to build an understanding of what is ‘Indus to Oxus Region’ and how come Pakistan’s Indus valley is the demographic core of this region. The answers to such questions may find us in History and its annals.

For history of the Indus or Pakistan, as Kaplan has put it, let us review what Ahsan has to argue about it (Ahsan, 1996). He argues that the land called Indus valley in the ancient times, which is now more or less the same land encompassing Pakistan, has never really been part of India as we know the Indian state today. His argument is further augmented by Kaplan as he also calls India the ‘Gangetic state’. Further, Ahsan argues that:

“As I journeyed into the past, it dawned upon me that Pakistan had existed for almost five and a half of the last six thousand years. Indus had seldom been part of India”. (Ahsan, 1996, p. XV)

If one agrees with Ahsan and if Pakistan or the region of Indus had existed for so long in history, what was its relationship with Oxus region, if not India? But before all questions, one must wonder; what Oxus region is.

News of this lost region in history and the subsequent civilization began to surface in the 1970s (Lawler, 2006). Some archaeologists came to excavate in the southern Soviet Union (CA) and Afghanistan. Their findings, published only in obscure Russian-language journals, described a culture named the Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex. Bactria is the ancient Greek name for

northern Afghanistan, while Margiana is further north in present day Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, both CA countries. This civilization thrived on the banks of river Amu, as did Indus and Gangetic 3rd to 2nd millennia BC. The Amu River was known as the Oxus River in Greek history. Thus, the name of the civilization became Oxus (Bertille Lyonnet D., & Nadezhda A, 2021). Now having taken a note of Oxus region, one must revert to the original question, and that is, what was the relationship between Indus and Oxus region.

Indus and Oxus came into close contact from 2500 to 2400 BC and kept a very close relationship till 1500 BC, according to archeologists (Francfort, 2016). Francfort writes that, “We must keep in mind that Eastern Bactria, by the road of the Dorah Pass via Badakhshan, Chitral and Swat, is easily connected to Northern Pakistan” (Francfort, 2016, p. 472). For the interest of the readers, Dorah pass is in the Badakhshan province of Afghanistan. According to Ahsan, the Bactrians from Oxus region had taken over Indus by 180 BC. Later Scythians from Oxus ruled Indus and this rule lasted till 226 AD, when the Persians claimed Indus for themselves (Ahsan, 1996, pp. 64-67). Thus, CA and Pakistan have close ties with each other than the rest of Southeast Asia.

Even the Emperor Zaheeruddin Babar, the founder of the Indian Mughal dynasty, was born in the Farghana region in eastern Uzbekistan, on the border with Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. Even before that, almost all the Turkic and Tatar rulers of Afghanistan and the Indian subcontinent hailed from CA (Spear, 1972).

In addition to these political roots, Indian Muslims also had deep religious ties with CA. Samarkand and Bukhara are still revered as holy places in Islamic scholarship by the people of India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. Under the auspices of these political and religious ties, trade between CA and South Asia flourished. The Silk Roads linked the entire Eastern world from Kashmir in Indus valley and Xinjiang in China to the heart of Eurasia and Eastern Europe (Francfort, 2016). The proverbial caravan serais, synonymous with Peshawar's Qissa Khwani Bazaar, were the stopping places for trade convoys carrying goods between CA and the South Asian regions as far as Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

This closer historical interaction between these two regions received its first setback when Tsarist Russia clashed with the British Empire of India, both of whom sought to curb each other's advances and established buffer zones between their territories (Ahsan, 1996).



**Map 2: Central Asia with Neighboring Countries**

*Source: (Nations Online, 2022)*

Later, when the Soviet Union brought all the CA republics under its rule, this entire region became completely isolated from the subcontinent, alienating the peoples of both regions from each other.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 once again allowed these republics to declare their sovereignty and establish independent relations with all countries in the region and the world. In their search for partners for political, diplomatic, and economic cooperation, the five CA states found their natural allies in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran.

Even looking at Map 2, also puts this relationship in perspective. Other than India, Pakistan does not share its borders with any of the Southeast Asian countries, any map of the region holds witness to this argument. However, Pakistan has historically been well connected with Afghanistan, CA and Iran. Having said this, even Pakistan's future is now with China (CPEC) and not with Southeast Asia. As Frankopan has eloquently concluded his seminal work with the words:

From east to west, the Silk Roads are rising once more. It is easy to feel confused and disturbed by dislocation and violence in the Islamic world, by religious fundamentalism, by clashes between Russia and its neighbors or by China's struggle with extremism in its western provinces. What we are witnessing, however, are the birthing pains of a region that once dominated

the intellectual, cultural and economic landscape and which is now re-emerging. We are seeing the signs of the world's center of gravity shifting – back to where it lay for millennia. (Frankopan, 2019)

**Research Methodology.** The study employs an analysis of secondary sources, both qualitative and quantitative, available to the researchers on history, trade, statistics, comparison of markets, trade bottlenecks and their possible remedies. This has been done by economic comparison and analysis, logic, grouping of information, analysis and synthesis.

**Analysis and Findings.** One interesting fact about all the CA is that these are land locked countries, Caspian Sea being the only respite, which itself is a land locked sea. This very geographic character of CA makes these countries dependent upon other nations for access to open seas and international trade. Until recently, CA countries have been dependent on Russia for such international trade, however, they have been searching for better options and easy access to open seas. For this the CA countries have developed closer ties with China, which provides them easier access to South China Sea and the Pacific. Still this route to international trade is expensive for the CA countries (Haron, 2009). However, the question remains, what is it that the CA countries are so eager to export to the world? The answer to this question is, abundance of oil, natural gas and natural resources, which are yet to

be seen in such huge quantities anywhere in the world (CIA, 2009).

Pakistan is a country which, geo-strategically can provide the shortest route to CA countries for easier access to Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. Pakistan's position as the most viable option for CA becomes evident while looking at the world map and noticing that Syria, Iraq and Iran, all three countries which can provide a parallel option to CA are all unstable economies, either politically or war torn. Therefore, Pakistan can provide a trade route to CA with easy access to whole of Asia, Middle East and Africa.

Having established this, one must ask the question, what's in it for Pakistan? The answer is all but simple. To begin with, CA countries have a total population of 7.5 Million and the only source of agricultural produce is Fergana Valley, which in total comprises of 22,000 Square KMs, out of which only 12000 Square KMs are being used for agricultural produce (IFAD, 2020). Essentially, this is insufficient to feed the whole population of CA, when 1500 Square KMs out of these are producing cotton. Therefore, foremost Pakistan being an agricultural country can find a good market for export of its agricultural produce among CA countries.

As CA countries are landlocked, Pakistan can have access to their market through China or Afghanistan. However, Afghanistan is reluctant to

provide access to Pakistani products to reach out to the Central Asian market. Also, Afghanistan still remains politically unstable and any long term investment in the country remains susceptible to failure. Pakistan may access the CA through China as Uzbekistan has agreed to become part of the Quadrilateral Traffic in Transit Agreement (QTTA) already signed among Pakistan, China, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Similar conceptualization has also been presented by Professor S. Frederick Starr as The Greater Central Asia Partnership (GCAP), (Starr, 2005). Moreover, Dr. Aftab Qazi has coined a new term for this idea; 'the Geopolinomics of Central Asia's Traditional Indus Basin Corridor', (Kazi, 2006).

Such ideas should be implemented by Pakistan. For doing so, it is important not only to provide access to CA but also to conduct trade with them. When we look at the trade complementarity among CA countries and Pakistan, it shows a very encouraging picture. From 1995 to 2017 the trade complementarity of economies of CA countries with Pakistan is very strong which indicates healthy, positive prospects for future trade potential (Khan, S.; Ali, S.; Urooge, S., 2019).

Looking at a product wise analysis also reinforces the strong trade complementarity between the economies of Pakistan and CA countries. The table below shows a product wise analysis of percentage share of imports and exports between Pakistan and CA countries.

Table 1.

Composition of Imports & Exports; Pakistan and CA Countries, 1995-2017

Sr. No.	Main Imports	Share (%)	Main Exports	Share (%)
1.	Coffee, Tea	1.57	Sugars and Sugar Confectionery	2.47
2.	Salt Sulphur	2.25	Other Vegetable Textile Fibers	2.48
3.	Raw Hide, Skins and Leather	3.83	Edible Fruit and Nuts	4.69
4.	Inorganic Chemicals	4.17	Pharmaceutical Products	5.56
5.	Iron and Steel	15.22	Oil Seeds and Oleaginous Fruits	12.38
6.	Cotton	70.09	Cereals	65.67

Source: (Khan, S.; Ali, S.; Urooge, S., 2019)

Numerous studies have highlighted the spatial, social, and economic importance of CA countries in their analysis. In this section a review of other research related to the analysis of CA trade behavior with our trading partners in general and Pakistan is presented.

The political significance of the country began in the 20th century when political philosophers began to play a leading role in the world's economy. The great philosopher Halford Mackinder reveals that the environment plays a vital role in politics. The importance of the

economic sphere can be demonstrated in the 19th century in a contest between the British and Russian empires in CA. For example, an article (Rauf, 2017) highlighted the importance of CA in his study. It has focused on the top three countries like Russia, the United States and China, as well as the competition between them in CA. He affirmed that an exotic conflict is taking place in the CA, in which the CA countries give its client countries different positions. He reiterated that, although 25 years after the country gained independence, CA countries were still looking for partners to

improve their security. The superpowers know the economic and political significance of the CA countries and therefore try to reach different agreements and interact with them. Another article (Sohail, 2014) explores the economic future of Afghanistan, India and Pakistan in South CA. They focus on these countries because these countries are similar in culture, religion, and economy to Central and South Asia. They concluded that the CA region is rich in large reserves of energy (oil and gas) as well as large sources of gold and other precious metals. Therefore, developing countries such as Pakistan, India, and China, as well as developed countries such as the United States, have a keen interest in these resources for their economic development. Great powers like the United States and the EU are targeting the CA's vast resources. Most countries want to have access to and influence over the resources of this region. The major economies are competing for access to the CA's major resources. In addition, they conclude that due to the lack of access and the location of the CA countries, the energy industry is trying to provoke conflict in Afghanistan. If security concerns were confirmed, the region could be a major concern for major powers such as India and the United States.

Similarly, another article (Javaid, 2016) analyzed Pakistan's relationship with CA countries. They said that Pakistan is endeavoring to further its relations with the CA countries in various areas, taking into account the rich resources of the region. Similarly, CA countries also offer Pakistan the opportunity to benefit from one another. As the CA is made up of five different countries, Pakistan has a number of agreements and trade agreements between each country. However, another topic (Linn, 2012) examined regional economic integration and CARs to determine whether they were true or false. He noted that the breakup of the Soviet Union had caused considerable economic hardship among the CA countries. However, in 2000 the region experienced economic development as well as internal and external integration. Even with abundant energy sources and oil and gold mines, other precious metals and educated human resources, the value of CA countries is difficult to exploit in neighboring countries like Pakistan due to the lack of good state-owned companies. Thus, strong institutional communication between the countries of Central Asia and neighbors is required in order to derive mutual benefit from these resources.

Another article (Jaffry, 2016) explored the growth of economic significance and CAR

strategies. He came to the conclusion that Central Asia has a very important geographical location, sharing borders with powerful nations and having major sources of power. Energy results suggest that CA region contains approximately 15 to 31 million barrels of oil, while gas reserves have been estimated at 230 to 360 trillion cubic feet. Pakistan will benefit more from its successful strategic relationship with the CA countries. In her contribution, (Fatima, 2015) has the strategic and economic interest focus. CA is deeply rooted in cultural and religious similarities with the South Asian region (especially Pakistan). Although these regions have many resources, economically, they are not very powerful. Benefit from the importance of their place. Although they are rich, they cannot afford to go abroad to use their wealth and explore their economies. In another study (Asif, 2011) also examined the vision and challenges of Pakistan's relations with CA countries. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, CA offered Pakistan the opportunity to develop strategic relations with the CA countries. It concluded that Pakistani policymakers need to take action that can turn challenges into opportunities. Pakistan should take steps to secure the CA's gas pipeline by developing economic relationships with them. Pakistan must ensure peace and security to promote economic relations with CA countries. Pakistan and the CA countries have similar membership in many agreements and letters of intent. They are members of the SCO and ECO, whose main purpose is to promote good transport in the region. In Pakistan, the ports of Karachi and Gwadar are the shortest and safest routes to CA countries.

#### Transportation Routes with CA

Having already shared the historical connection of CA with Pakistan through ancient Silk Routes. Now is the time to look at the options available to Pakistan and CA countries for connectivity through different routes in the present.

So far Pakistan has been trading with CA countries through Afghanistan. This trade has been prone to all the challenges being faced by Afghanistan internally. Political instability and internal warfare of the country has been a big challenge. However, now in the shape of CPEC, Pakistan has the potential to bypass Afghanistan for trade with CA countries. In order for us to answer this question, first let us understand, how Pakistan and CA were separated for past years. To explain this we need to have a closer look at the geography of the area.



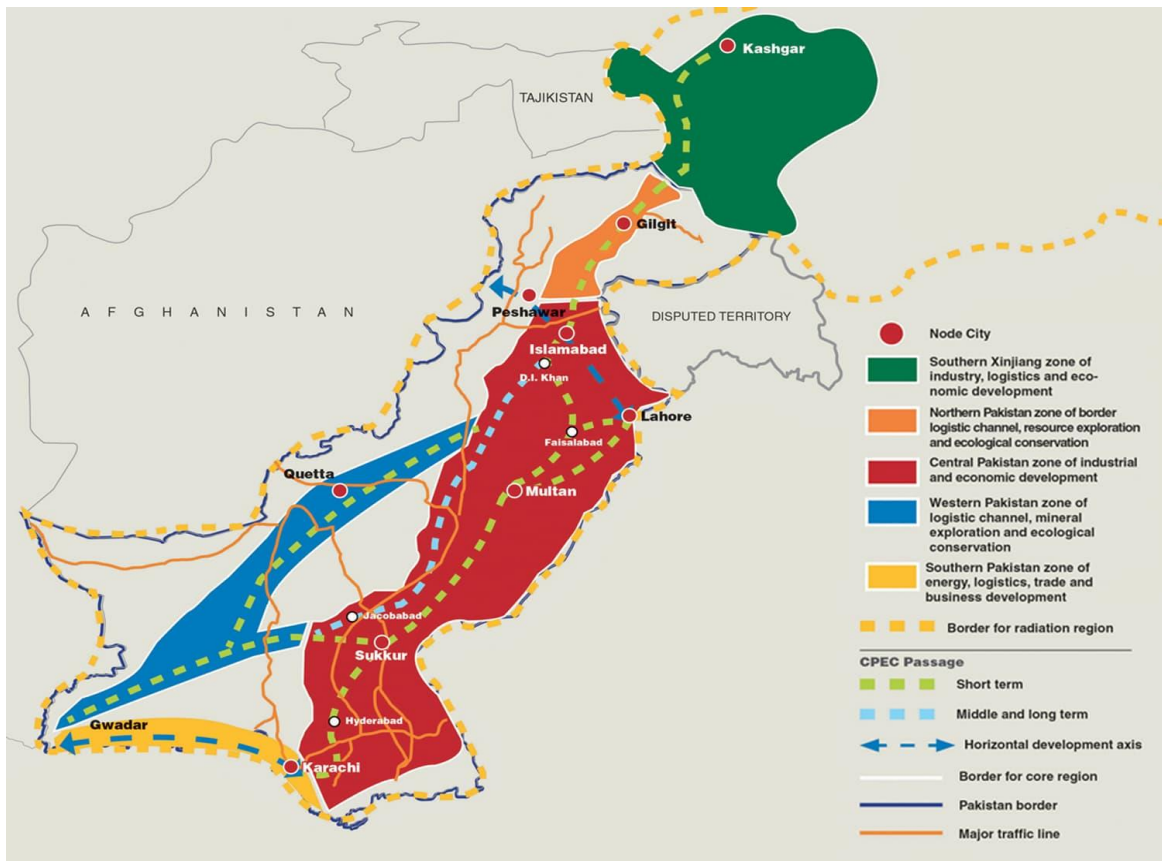
**Map 3: Central Asia with Afghanistan and Pakistan**

*Source: (Nations Online, 2022)*

Pakistan is separated from CA on north western border by Afghanistan and on north eastern border by China. Before CPEC, the shortest route available to Pakistan for access to CA was through Afghanistan. Afghanistan, being marred by internal strife was not a secure route.

Therefore, connectivity between Pakistan and CA was only possible by means of air travel and cargo.

However, with the advent of CPEC, this geographical limitation has been removed. To understand this, one must have a look at CPEC routes agreed between Pakistan and China.



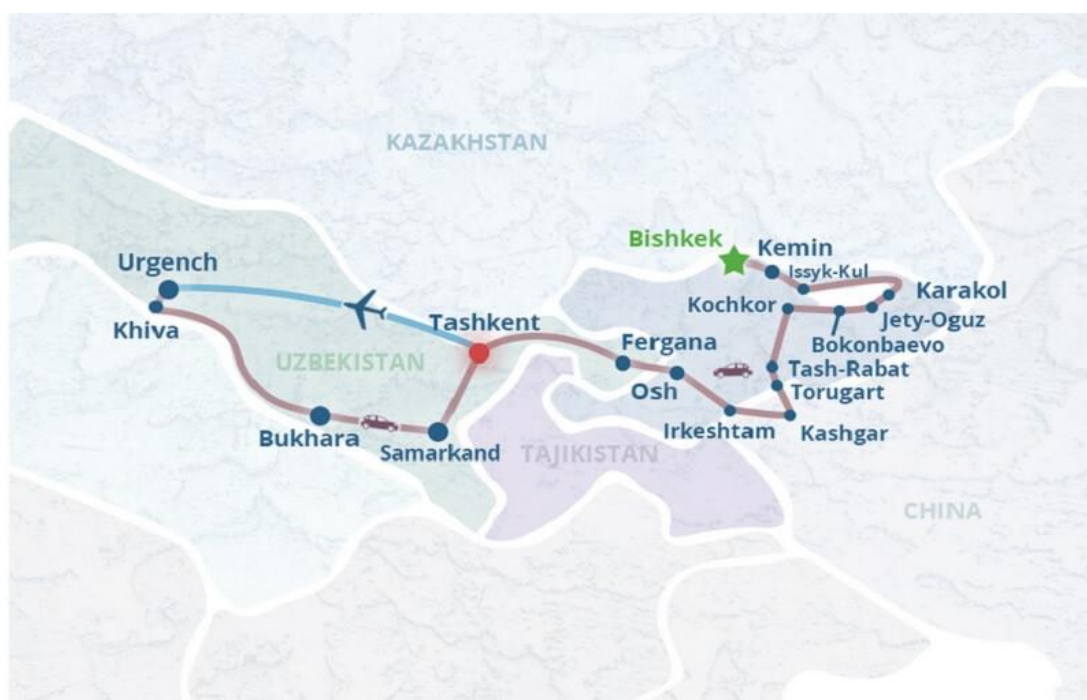
**Map 4: CPEC Routes in Pakistan**

*Source: (CPEC Authority, Pakistan, 2022)*



Due to CPEC, both Gwadar and Karachi ports are connected with the Chinese city of Kashgar.

Having said this, now let's see another map, showing how Kashgar is connected to Central Asia.



**Map 5: Road Connection of CPEC with CA**

*Source: (DND, Kyrgyzstan, 2018)*

The distance from Khunjrab Pass (Pakistan) to Kashgar (China) is around 400 KMs. The distance from Kashgar to Torugart Pass is only 163 KMs. Therefore, the total distance from Khunjrab Pass to CA is 563 KMs, which is much less than 820 KMs of distance from Peshawar to Kabul to Tarmez. The Khunjrab – Kashgar – Torugart and also Irkeshtam to Fergana in Uzbekistan route is also part of ancient Silk Roads. That is how, CA is presently connected with Pakistan and also explanation of all arrows connecting the region with each of the countries.

Thus, CPEC provides much faster and easier route to Pakistan for accessing CA markets and vice versa. According to estimates, 75% of trade of CA with China is already passing through Kashgar (Mir Sher Baz Khetran & Muhammad Humayun Khalid, 2019). Therefore, CPEC as a trade route not only connects China with Gwadar but also Pakistan with CA.

#### Uzbekistan: History and Relations

Pakistan was one of the first countries to recognize Uzbekistan's independence and establish diplomatic relations in 1991. After Uzbekistan's independence in the early 1990s, it was destined to become a partner of Pakistan. Their similar demographic configuration (Pakistan and Uzbekistan), their common religion and their historical ties (between the Farghana Valley and the Indian subcontinent) give a

powerful impetus to the construction of long-lasting and warm bilateral relations between the two countries (Khetran, 2020).

The geographical location of Pakistan and Uzbekistan is another factor that can help improve bilateral relations between the two countries. Both states lie on the borders of their respective regions and can serve as connection points between the (naturally) resource-rich CA region and the agricultural Central region of South Asia. The famous Farghana Valley in Uzbekistan has historically remained a trading hub that has contributed immensely to the economic progress and development of the entire Asian continent.

Relations between the two countries were initially strained by the situation in Afghanistan, a country bordering the two countries, due to their support for opposing Afghan factions. However, relations improved after the fall of the Taliban and the death of Uzbek President Islam Karimov and the subsequent deepening of Uzbek activities in the countries of the region under his successor Shavkat Mirziyoyev. The two countries have a warm and deep relationship as the interests of both countries have aligned in Afghanistan – with Uzbekistan officially hosting a Taliban delegation in 2019.

The two countries have exchanged various high-level presidential and prime ministerial visits. Pakistani Prime Ministers have visited

Uzbekistan in 1992, 1995, 2015 and 2021. Uzbek Presidents have visited Pakistan in 2006 and 2022.

Overview of Uzbekistan

The Republic of Uzbekistan (Uzbekistan) is a CA country covering an area of approximately 447,400 square KMs. It covers 2294 KMs diagonally and 1500 KMs from perpendicularly, thus it is a huge country geographically. It cuts through four other CA countries and is one of only two other nations on the globe which is altogether encircled by other completely land locked countries. Uzbekistan shares borders with Turkmenistan in the south-west, with Kazakhstan in the north, with Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in the south and east respectively. Not only this, it also has a smaller border with southern Afghanistan.

Uzbekistan is a Muslim country and most of its population hail from the Sunni sect of Islam. Having said this, the second largest Muslim sect in the country is Shia Muslims. The country also has a sizeable population of Russian Orthodox Christians and a small minority of Jews. The country has made Uzbek as its national and official language. Uzbek is closely related to Turkish language. Uzbekistan also has a small Russian speaking population. The general atmosphere and social environment of the country is very accommodative with less state control on public life. There are numerous famous cultural places in Uzbekistan. Most of these are in the historical cities of Bukhara and Shakhrisayabz.

After the disintegration of USSR in 1991, Uzbekistan claimed freedom from the Russian tutelage on August 31, 1991. Once independent, Islam Karimov became the president of the nation. The people of the country choose to make the nation a constitutional republic. This meant that the President of the country will also become the head of state as well as of the government. According to the constitution of the country, it is a democracy, where all citizens can run for elections and register their political parties. The

constitution guarantees universal suffrage for all, without any discrimination. Uzbekistan has a bi-cameral parliamentary chamber, which means it has two chambers of parliament.

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, despite long-standing regional security problems, have been able to maintain peace on their borders. Not only this but rising above regional disputes both countries have established the highest rate of foreign trade among themselves in comparison to the rest of the CA countries.

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has a significant impact on Uzbekistan, which stands out as a surprise due to the peculiar history of the mega project. The value of the project has big importance for Uzbekistan's economy. The project is going to have huge positive effect on tourism industry in Uzbekistan. As a result of this project, the integration of CA into international transport and communications systems within the BRI framework has taken place.

As discussed before, the country has many historical sites. Therefore, it possesses huge capability for promotion and making earnings from a thriving tourism industry. There are around approximately 7,000 locations of interest with reference to history, architecture and archeology.

Economy of Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan domestic production increased by about 15% from US \$ 50 billion in 2018 to US \$ 58 billion by 2019, while Uzbek GDP per capita increased by 13%, from US \$ 1,529 went to US \$ 1,725 when the dollar went up. Inflation fell from 27.5% in 2018 to 19.2% in 2019. The key rate in 2019 was 3.7%. Uzbek Som continued to depreciate against the US dollar and in 2019 the exchange rate of Uzbek Som was 8,837 US dollars.

Uzbekistan's global trade deficit has risen by almost 8%, from US \$ 6.4 billion in 2018 to US \$ 6.9 billion by 2019. Foreign direct investment in Uzbekistan saw an increase of 283%, from US \$ 0.6 billion in 2018 to US \$ 2.3 billion in 2019.

**Table 2**

**Uzbekistan Key Economic Indicators**

Economic Indicator	2018	2019
GDP <sup>2</sup> (US\$, Billions)	50.4	57.9
GDP Growth (%)	5.4	5.6
GDP per Capita (US\$)	1,529	1,725
Unemployment (%)	9.3	NA
Inflation (%)	27.5	19.2
Interest Rate (%)	-5.9	3.7
Exchange Rate (Uzbekistani Som per US\$)	8,070	8,837
Trade Balance (US\$, Billions)	-6.4	-6.9
Current Account Balance (US\$, Billions)	-3.6	-3.2
FDI, net inflows <sup>2</sup> (US\$, Billions)	0.6	2.3

Source: (WB, 2022)

The convenience of making business points from measuring the overall level of control performance and reflects each country's distance from the best performance control of each indicator seen around the world. 0 points define low performance, while 100 points define excellent performance. Uzbekistan has seen a dramatic increase in facilitating business points from 62 in 2015 to 70 in 2019. In 2019, Uzbekistan ranked 69th place in the global ease of doing business.

#### Trade Related Agreements with Pakistan

Pakistan and Uzbekistan have signed more than 70 different agreements, memorandum of understanding and other official documents since 1992. Those agreements relating to commerce and trade are mentioned below (MoFA, Pakistan, 2022):

1. Convention between the Governments of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income signed in 1992
2. Agreement between the Governments of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Economic and Trade Cooperation signed in 1992
3. Agreement between the Governments of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan on the Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investment signed in 1992
4. Memorandum of Understanding about Cooperation for Regulation of Transit Transportation between the Ministry for Foreign Economic Activity and the Governments of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan signed in 1997
5. Agreement on Mutual Assistance in Customs Administrations between Pakistan and Uzbekistan signed in 2001
6. Agreement on Cooperation in the Sphere of Support of Small and Private Entrepreneurship between the government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan signed in 2006
7. Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on trade-economic and investment cooperation
8. Memorandum of Understanding between the Central Board of Revenue, Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on methodological instruments for exchange of information on customs statistics of bilateral trade signed in 2006
9. Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of a Joint Business Council (JBC) between Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan and the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (PFCCI) signed in May 2006
10. Agreement on Cooperation between the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan and the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry signed in 2006
11. Agreement between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan on cooperation in the field of transport and transit of goods signed in 2007
12. Memorandum of Understanding between Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Chamber of Commerce & Industry of Tashkent signed in 2007
13. Protocol of the Fourth Session of the Joint Pakistan Uzbekistan Inter-governmental Commission on Trade, Economic and Scientific Technical Cooperation signed in Tashkent in 2009
14. Agreement on Cooperation between the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (RCCI) and the Tashkent Chamber of Commerce & Industry (TCCI) signed in 2009
15. Memorandum of Understanding between the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Pakistan and Tashkent Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Uzbekistan signed in 2009
16. Protocol on the exchange of the Instruments of the Ratification of the Agreement between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan on cooperation in the Field of transport and transit of goods signed in 2011
17. Memorandum on Trade and Economic Cooperation between the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan (CCIUZ) signed in 2011
18. Protocol on Amending the Convention between the Govt. of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Govt. of the Republic of Uzbekistan for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income signed in 1995; now signed in 2015.
19. Memorandum of Understanding between the Trade Development Authorities of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Ministry of Foreign Economic signed in 2015
20. Memorandum of Understanding between Namangan City of Namangan Province of

the Republic of Uzbekistan and Lahore City of Punjab Province of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on Development of Economic, Investment, Touristic and Scientific and Technical Cooperation signed in 2019

21. Agreement on Transit Trade (AUPTT) between the government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan signed in 2021

22. Protocol on the Exchange of Pre-arrival Information on Goods moved across the State Border between the government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan signed in 2021

23. Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation between the Ministries and Organizations of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan in the spheres of Railroads and Automobile Transport, Telecommunications, Energy and Banking signed in 1992

24. Agreement between the State Bank of Pakistan and the Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan signed in 1992

25. Memorandum of Understanding between National Bank of Uzbekistan and National Bank of Pakistan, signed in 2006

26. Memorandum of Understanding between National Bank of Uzbekistan and Habib Bank Limited signed in 2006

#### Bilateral Trade Situation with Uzbekistan

From 2015 to 2019, Uzbekistan's imports from Pakistan increased by 1,041%, while its import from Uzbekistan increased by 382%, increasing Pakistan-Uzbekistan trade by 1,911%. Pakistan's exports to Uzbekistan were US \$ 22.6 million, while its import from Uzbekistan was US \$ 5.4 million in 2019. Pakistan recorded US \$ 17.2 million in trade with Uzbekistan in 2019 (Deepak, 2018).

In terms of exports to Pakistan, major products included "medicines", "edible fruits", "milling products" and "other textile products" among others. Pakistan's exports to Uzbekistan

increased by about \$ 20.6 million from 2015 to the year 2019. Pakistan's exports of most favorite five products to Uzbekistan accounted for about 81% of the total exports from Pakistan to Uzbekistan in 2019. From 2015 to 2019, Pakistani exports of "medicines" and "edible fruits" to Uzbekistan increased by 2,021% and 30,732%, respectively.

Other exports include 'Guava', 'Trees', 'Wilkins', 'Wheat' and 'Potatoes'. In 2019, Pakistan's exports to Uzbekistan for these items accounted for about 80% of Pakistan's total exports to Uzbekistan. Between 2015 and 2019, the combined Pakistani export of these items to Uzbekistan increased by about US \$ 18 million.

Imported goods mainly include "Salt", "Zinc", "Edible Vegetables", "Cotton" and "Silk", among others. Pakistan's total revenue from Uzbekistan recorded an increase of about US \$ 4.3 million over the period 2015-2019. In 2019, Pakistan's combined "salt" and "zinc" import from Uzbekistan accounted for 85% of the total Pakistani imports from Uzbekistan. Between 2015 and 2019, Pakistani purchases of "salt" and "zinc" from Uzbekistan increased by about US \$ 2.8 million and US \$ 1.4 million, respectively.

Top products also include 'Sulfur', 'Raw Zinc', 'Kidney Beans', 'Cotton' and 'Raw Silk'. Pakistan's combined sales of its top five imported goods from Uzbekistan of this type increased by approximately US \$ 5.3 million during the 2015-2019 period. In 2019, Pakistan's combined sales of these types of products from Uzbekistan accounted for approximately 97% of Pakistan's total revenue from Uzbekistan.

#### Future Trade Prospects with Uzbekistan

In 2019 Pakistan and Uzbekistan had a total trade volume of US \$ 28 Million approximately. However, Pakistan can further enhance it and there is sizeable potential for increase in this trade volume. Following is a table of export items, Pakistan is currently not exporting to Uzbekistan with respective cumulative export potential for the year 2020:

**Table 3:**

#### **Pakistan Export Potential for Uzbekistan**

Sr. No.	Type of Items	Cumulative Export Potential
1.	Portland cement	US\$ 152 Million
2.	Prepared foodstuff	US\$ 62 Million
3.	Vegetable products	US\$ 87.5 Million
4.	Chemicals	US\$ 35.5 Million
5	Plastic articles	US\$ 86.8 Million

*Source: (ITC, 2022)*

The total trade potential of above shown items amounts to US\$ 424 Million, which is 15 times more than what Pakistan traded with this

country in 2019. The potential is huge, however, this is not being realized by Pakistan. There are

multiple reasons for this failure, which are given below.

**Conclusion and Suggestions.** Uzbekistan is a market which is growing at a steady pace in CA. However, the Uzbek government is very protective about its local industry, that's why they have imposed heavy tariffs on the import of products, which are already being manufactured in the country. The country is employing a protectionist trade outlook. Still the trade potential for Pakistan is big enough to focus on this CA country.

Trade problems with Uzbekistan include the availability of viable trade routes. Most of the exports now a days going through Afghanistan, which has its limitations as the country puts various restrictions on cargo as discussed in this chapter before.

Secondly, the currency rate of Som fluctuates in Uzbekistan and it is not standardized. Due to government restrictions on trading in USD, the traders face various kinds of problems due to differentials in exchange rate.

Due to language barrier, the availability of information on market trends and demands is not available for traders in Pakistan, unless they personally have contacts in the country. The language also plays a role in hindering trade when it boils down to negotiating with the Uzbek traders.

Having discussed the major problems in trade with Uzbekistan, it is strongly recommended that the CPEC route should be made operational for trade with Uzbekistan, as discussed earlier in this article.

TDAP (Trade Development Authority of Pakistan) in collaboration with any of the Pakistani university should start Uzbek language classes for traders to get facilitated. TDAP should also start a one window operation for trade with Uzbekistan.

Banking channels between Uzbekistan and Pakistan are negligible. Though the countries have signed 3 MoUs on this subject, however, so far there has been no development in this regard. The central bank of Uzbekistan has agreements with SBP (State Bank of Pakistan), NBP (National Bank of Pakistan) and Habib Bank Limited of Pakistan. However, none of these banks are facilitating any kind of trade with Uzbekistan.

The reason for this is that MoUs and agreements between governments are often devoid of ground realities. Such agreements are only drafted and signed to give respect to high level officials when they visit each other, after the visits however, these agreements only become part of a file for nobody to bother.

All the above-mentioned banks are state owned and have made no progress towards the realization of these agreements. Opening of LCs (Letter of Credit) is a problem while trading with Uzbekistan as a result. Neither the SBP negotiates nor updates on the state rates of Som, this becomes a potential risk for the traders.

The SBP should come up with a detailed plan to overcome these banking channel issues, if Pakistan is to successfully trade with Uzbekistan. Even more significant now is the planning of Export – Import Bank of Pakistan (Exim-Pakistan).

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**ЖАҲОН ИҚТИСОДИЁТИГА ИНТЕГРАЦИЯЛАШУВ ШАРОИТИДА  
ЎЗБЕКИСТОН РЕСПУБЛИКАСИНИНГ ТАШҚИ ИҚТИСОДИЙ  
АЛОҚАЛАРИНИ РИВОЖЛАНТИРИШ**

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**Аннотация.** Мақолада глобаллашув шароитида Ўзбекистон Республикасини ташқи иқтисодий фаолиятини ривожлантиришнинг асосий босқичлари ва тенденциялари таҳлил қилинган ҳамда экспорт имкониятларини кенгайтириш масалалари қўрилган.

**Калит сўзлар:** глобаллашув, халқаро савдо, ташқи иқтисодий алоқалар, рақобатбардошлик, протекционизм, экспорт, импорт, тенденция, тўғридан тўғри хорижий инвестициялар.