

Uzbekistan and the United States: Expanding Strategic Cooperation



The visit of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the United States, which is taking place as part of his participation in the first meeting of the Board of Peace, is not just another diplomatic event, but a logical continuation of the strategy of pragmatic and mutually beneficial dialogue with Washington built over recent years. It demonstrated a shift from symbolic political interaction to systemic coordination in security, economics, trade, and humanitarian exchanges.

This visit marks the culmination of an intensive partnership over the past six months. Meetings on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, the C5+1 summit, participation in events in Davos, and the signing of the Charter of the Board of Peace, as well as personal contacts between the two leaders, have fostered a stable dynamic of political dialogue. This fifth summit in six months demonstrates that relations have entered a phase of regular strategic communication, with each meeting reinforced by concrete agreements.

The visit's busy business program confirmed its practical nature. During his stay in the United States, the head of state held talks with representatives of the American administration, financial institutions, and business circles, including the Export-Import Bank of the United States, the International Development Finance Corporation, the American-Uzbekistan Chamber of Commerce, as well as the heads of major companies such as Traxys, Valmont Industries, Gulf Oil, Aviagen, John Deere, BlackRock Financial Markets Advisory, Oppenheimer, and others. Following the signing of bilateral documents, the parties solidified agreements in priority areas such as the agro-industrial complex, critical minerals, financial market development, improving the investment climate, and the creation of an investment platform.

Discussions with the US Trade Representative and the Secretary of Commerce deserve special attention. During these talks, the need to intensify work within the framework of the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement between the countries of Central Asia and the United States was emphasized. This

gives cooperation not only a bilateral but also a regional dimension, strengthening Uzbekistan's position as a coordinator of economic processes in the region.

Viewed historically, the current stage's foundation was laid back in 2018 during Shavkat Mirziyoyev's first official visit to Washington, when agreements worth over \$4.8 billion were signed. This package signaled Uzbekistan's systemic openness to international businesses. In 2021, the Strategic Partnership Dialogue was established, and its subsequent expansion testifies to the institutionalization of bilateral relations. The invitation of the Uzbek leader to the G20 summit in Miami, personally initiated by US President Donald Trump, further confirmed the country's strengthening international status and recognition of its growing role on the global agenda.

The economic dimension of cooperation is demonstrating steady growth. While trade turnover stood at \$408 million in 2018, it will consistently exceed \$1 billion by the end of 2024-2025. The current three-year Economic Cooperation Program, worth \$35 billion, reflects the long-term nature of the parties' intentions. At the same time, the structure of interaction is undergoing a qualitative change: the emphasis is shifting from trade operations to the implementation of investment and production projects.

Today, flagship American companies such as Air Products, General Electric, General Motors, Boeing, Honeywell, and John Deere are actively operating in Uzbekistan. The \$8.7 billion package of agreements signed at the C5+1 summit, including a contract for 22 Boeing aircraft, investments in the critical minerals sector, and projects in the agro-industrial sector, confirms the practical focus of the dialogue.

The transformation of the export structure is particularly revealing: services now account for approximately 86% of Uzbek exports to the US, with the IT sector remaining the key driver. Of the 800 active digital services exporters, 448 target the US market, accounting for 45% of all industry exports. This demonstrates that the partnership is gradually becoming more high-tech, moving beyond traditional commodity-based models.

The humanitarian dimension of cooperation is no less important. Academic exchange is expanding, the number of joint research projects is growing, and the integration of Uzbek specialists into international educational networks is strengthening. Currently, 40 Uzbek universities are implementing partnership programs with more than 25 US universities. Webster University's Tashkent branch and the American University of Technology, established jointly with Arizona State University, are successfully operating. Thus, a long-term intellectual infrastructure for strategic partnership is being formed.

Overall, the current stage of relations between Uzbekistan and the United States is characterized by a transition from symbolic declarations to systemic coordination on issues of regional security, sustainable development, investment policy, and technological modernization. These achievements confirm that Uzbekistan is steadily establishing itself as a key US partner in Central Asia.

Kayumova Madinabonu,

Leading Researcher of the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan