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The Strategic Importance of Uzbekistan-U.S Economic cooperation in Central Asia

DSc, assoc. prof. Sultanova Gavkhar
University of World Economy and Diplomacy
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6747-9448 gsultanova@uwed.uz
MSc in World Economy, Ibrokhimov Khusanboy
University of World Economy and Diplomacy
https://orcid.org/0009-0006-7124-0134 khusanboyibrokhimov@gmail.com

Abstract

Strengthening economic relations between the United States and Uzbekistan has become a factor of growing importance for promoting sustainable economic development, regional integration, and strategic stability in Central Asia. Since the launch of sweeping market-oriented economic reforms in Uzbekistan in 2017, bilateral cooperation has expanded significantly, spanning trade, foreign direct investment, energy, infrastructure, digital technologies, agriculture, and education. This article examines the strategic importance of economic cooperation between the United States and Uzbekistan within the broader regional context and assesses its contribution to economic growth, investment attraction, and regional connectivity. The study employs descriptive, comparative, and analytical research methods—drawing on secondary data from international organizations and official government sources—to analyze recent developments in bilateral trade and investment and to identify the key opportunities and challenges that will shape future cooperation. Particular attention is paid to ongoing economic reforms in Uzbekistan, improvements in the investment climate, the country's strategic geographic location, and the role of regional initiatives in fostering stronger economic partnerships with the United States. The findings indicate that expanding bilateral cooperation has the potential to diversify the Uzbek economy, increase foreign direct investment flows, facilitate technology transfer, foster innovation, strengthen energy security, and enhance participation in regional and global value chains. At the same time, the study identifies several constraints—including relatively modest trade volumes, logistical and transport challenges, regulatory and institutional barriers, and geopolitical uncertainties—that continue to influence the pace of economic integration. The article concludes that strengthening institutional cooperation, promoting partnerships with the private sector, improving trade facilitation measures, supporting digital transformation, and expanding collaboration in strategic sectors will further consolidate the partnership between the United States and Uzbekistan. Such initiatives will not only deepen bilateral economic relations but also contribute to long-term economic resilience, sustainable development, and greater prosperity across Central Asia.

Keywords

Uzbekistan, United States, economic cooperation, bilateral trade, foreign direct investment, Central Asia, regional integration, strategic partnership.

Annotatsiya. Amerika Qo‘shma Shtatlari va O‘zbekiston o‘rtasidagi iqtisodiy munosabatlarning mustahkamlanishi Markaziy Osiyoda barqaror iqtisodiy rivojlanish, mintaqaviy integratsiya hamda strategik barqarorlikni ta’minlashning muhim omillaridan biriga aylanmoqda. O‘zbekistonda 2017-yildan boshlab amalga oshirilayotgan keng ko‘lamli bozor islohotlari natijasida ikki tomonlama hamkorlik savdo, to‘g‘ridan-to‘g‘ri xorijiy investitsiyalar, energetika, infratuzilma, raqamli texnologiyalar, qishloq xo‘jaligi va ta’lim kabi ustuvor yo‘nalishlarni qamrab olgan holda sezilarli darajada kengaydi. Mazkur maqolada AQSh va O‘zbekiston o‘rtasidagi iqtisodiy hamkorlikning Markaziy Osiyo mintaqasidagi strategik ahamiyati tahlil qilinib, uning iqtisodiy o‘sish, investitsiyalarni jalb etish va mintaqaviy o‘zaro bog‘liqlikni mustahkamlashdagi o‘rni baholanadi. Tadqiqotda tavsifiy, qiyosiy va tahliliy usullardan foydalanilgan bo‘lib, xalqaro tashkilotlar hamda rasmiy davlat manbalari ma'lumotlari asosida ikki tomonlama savdo va investitsiyalar rivojlanishining zamonaviy tendensiyalari, shuningdek, kelgusidagi hamkorlik istiqbollari va mavjud muammolari o'rganiladi. Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko'rsatadiki, iqtisodiy hamkorlikni yanada chuqurlashtirish O'zbekiston iqtisodiyotini diversifikatsiya qilish, to'g'ridan-to'g'ri xorijiy investitsiyalar oqimini ko'paytirish, texnologiyalar transferini jadallashtirish, innovatsiyalarni rivojlantirish, energetik xavfsizlikni mustahkamlash hamda mintaqaviy va global qiymat zanjirlaridagi ishtirokni kengaytirishga xizmat qiladi. Shu bilan birga, savdo hajmining nisbatan pastligi, transport-logistika infratuzilmasidagi cheklovlar, institutsional va me'yoriy to'siqlar hamda geosiyosiy noaniqliklar ikki tomonlama iqtisodiy salohiyatdan to'liq foydalanishga to'sqinlik qilmoqda. Xulosa qilib aytganda, institutsional hamkorlikni mustahkamlash, xususiy sektor sherikligini rivojlantirish, savdoni yengillashtirish choralarini kengaytirish, raqamli transformatsiyani qo'llab-quvvatlash hamda strategik tarmoqlarda hamkorlikni kuchaytirish AQSh va O'zbekiston o'rtasidagi strategik sheriklikni yangi bosqichga olib chiqadi va Markaziy Osiyoning uzoq muddatli iqtisodiy barqarorligi hamda farovonligiga xizmat qiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: O'zbekiston, Amerika Qo'shma Shtatlari, iqtisodiy hamkorlik, ikki tomonlama savdo, to'g'ridan-to'g'ri xorijiy investitsiyalar, Markaziy Osiyo, mintaqaviy integratsiya, strategik sheriklik.

Introduction

The growing importance of Central Asia in the global economic and geopolitical landscape has significantly increased international interest in strengthening economic partnerships with the region. Among the Central Asian countries, Uzbekistan has emerged as a key economic and strategic partner due to its large domestic market, abundant natural resources, favorable geographic location, and ambitious economic reform agenda. Since 2017, the Government of Uzbekistan has implemented comprehensive market-oriented reforms aimed at liberalizing the economy, improving the investment climate, expanding international trade, and attracting foreign direct investment (FDI). These reforms have created new opportunities for enhancing bilateral economic cooperation with major global economies, including the United States.

The United States considers Central Asia an increasingly important region for promoting economic resilience, regional connectivity, energy security, and sustainable development. Within this framework, Uzbekistan has become one of Washington's principal economic partners in the region. Bilateral cooperation has expanded beyond traditional diplomatic relations to encompass trade, investment, digital technologies, renewable energy, critical minerals, education, and infrastructure development. Recent initiatives and high-level economic dialogues have further strengthened the institutional foundations of the U.S.–Uzbekistan strategic partnership.

Despite these positive developments, the overall level of bilateral trade and investment remains relatively modest compared with the economic potential of both countries. Geographic distance, transportation and logistics constraints, regulatory barriers, limited market information, and geopolitical uncertainties continue to restrict the expansion of economic cooperation. Furthermore, although a growing body of literature examines Uzbekistan's economic reforms and the geopolitical significance of Central Asia, relatively limited attention has been devoted to evaluating the strategic importance of U.S.–Uzbekistan economic cooperation from an integrated economic perspective that combines trade, investment, regional connectivity, and long-term development opportunities.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the strategic importance of economic cooperation between the United States and Uzbekistan within the broader context of Central Asia. Specifically, the study seeks to assess recent trends in bilateral trade and investment, identify strategic sectors with high cooperation potential, examine the key opportunities and constraints affecting bilateral economic relations, and develop policy recommendations for strengthening long-term economic partnership.

To achieve these objectives, the study employs descriptive, comparative, and analytical research methods based on secondary data obtained from international organizations, official government publications, and academic literature. Trade and investment statistics, policy documents, and institutional reports are analyzed to evaluate the current state and future prospects of bilateral economic cooperation.

The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the existing literature on international economic cooperation by providing a comprehensive assessment of U.S.–Uzbekistan economic relations and offering policy recommendations for enhancing sustainable economic partnership. The study also contributes to a better understanding of Uzbekistan's strategic role in promoting regional economic integration and economic development in Central Asia.

Literature Review

The growing importance of Central Asia in the global economy has attracted increasing attention from scholars and policymakers, particularly regarding the region's strategic role in international trade, investment, and regional connectivity. Among the Central Asian countries, Uzbekistan has emerged as a key actor due to its economic reforms, favorable geographic location, and expanding engagement with international partners. Consequently, a growing body of literature has examined the evolution of Uzbekistan's economic development and its cooperation with major economies, including the United States.

Several studies have emphasized that the economic reforms initiated in Uzbekistan since 2017 have significantly improved the country's investment climate and strengthened its integration into the global economy. Researchers argue that market liberalization, currency reform, improvements in the business environment, and institutional modernization have increased Uzbekistan's attractiveness to foreign investors and created new opportunities for international economic cooperation. These reforms have also contributed to higher levels of foreign direct investment and greater participation in regional and global value chains.

Another stream of research focuses on the development of U.S.–Uzbekistan bilateral relations. Previous studies indicate that cooperation between the two countries has gradually expanded from political and security issues to broader economic areas, including trade, investment, energy, digital technologies, education, and infrastructure development. Recent policy initiatives and bilateral economic dialogues have further strengthened institutional cooperation and created favorable conditions for private-sector engagement. Nevertheless, existing research also notes that bilateral trade and investment remain below their full potential because of transportation constraints, geographical distance, limited market information, and regulatory challenges.

The literature on Central Asia also highlights the region's growing strategic significance in global supply chains and international economic cooperation. Scholars emphasize that increasing competition among major powers has enhanced Central Asia's role as a corridor connecting Europe and Asia. Within this regional framework, Uzbekistan is frequently identified as an important hub for trade, logistics, and investment because of its central location, relatively large domestic market, and active regional diplomacy. Several authors argue that deeper economic cooperation between Uzbekistan and the United States could contribute to sustainable economic growth, regional stability, energy security, and economic diversification.

Studies on foreign direct investment further suggest that investment flows from developed economies play a crucial role in supporting technological innovation, productivity growth, employment creation, and institutional development in emerging markets. In the case of Uzbekistan, U.S. investment is considered particularly valuable because it facilitates technology transfer, strengthens corporate governance practices, and promotes the development of high-value industries, including renewable energy, critical minerals, information technologies, and advanced manufacturing.

Despite the growing number of publications on Uzbekistan's economic reforms and Central Asia's strategic importance, relatively few studies provide a comprehensive assessment of U.S.–Uzbekistan economic cooperation by simultaneously examining trade, investment, regional connectivity, and long-term strategic partnership. Much of the existing literature focuses either on geopolitical and security issues or on individual aspects of bilateral economic relations, leaving limited analysis of their combined economic and strategic implications. Therefore, this study seeks to address this research gap by providing an integrated analysis of the strategic importance of U.S.–Uzbekistan economic cooperation in Central Asia. Unlike previous studies, this research combines an assessment of bilateral trade, foreign direct investment, strategic sectors of cooperation, and regional economic integration to evaluate both current achievements and future prospects. The findings are expected to contribute to the academic literature while offering practical policy recommendations for strengthening long-term economic cooperation between Uzbekistan and the United States.

Materials and Methods

This study employs a mixed-methods research design that integrates qualitative and quantitative approaches to examine the strategic importance of economic cooperation between the United States and Uzbekistan within the broader context of Central Asia. The combination of these methods enables a comprehensive assessment of bilateral economic relations by analyzing both statistical indicators and policy developments.

The research is based primarily on secondary data collected from reputable international organizations, official government institutions, and academic publications. Quantitative data on bilateral trade, foreign direct investment (FDI), and macroeconomic indicators were obtained from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations Comtrade Database (UN Comtrade), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the U.S. Census Bureau, the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR), the Statistics Agency under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and the Ministry of Investment, Industry and Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In addition, policy reports, bilateral agreements, and official government publications were reviewed to provide institutional and policy context.

The analysis focuses on the period from 2017 to 2025, reflecting the implementation of Uzbekistan's comprehensive economic reforms and the subsequent expansion of bilateral economic engagement with the United States. This period was selected because it represents a significant transformation in Uzbekistan's economic policy, characterized by market liberalization, improvements in the investment climate, and greater integration into the global economy.

Several analytical methods were employed to achieve the research objectives. Descriptive analysis was used to evaluate the current state and evolution of bilateral trade and investment relations. Comparative analysis was applied to examine changes in economic indicators over time and to assess Uzbekistan's position within the broader Central Asian region. Trend analysis was utilized to identify patterns in trade turnover, export and import dynamics, and U.S. investment activity. Furthermore, a comprehensive literature review was conducted to synthesize existing academic studies and institutional reports concerning U.S.–Uzbekistan economic cooperation, regional integration, and international investment. The collected data were systematically analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, comparative analysis, trend analysis, and graphical presentation to identify the key opportunities, challenges, and emerging patterns in U.S.–Uzbekistan economic cooperation. Tables, figures, and statistical indicators were employed to illustrate changes in bilateral trade volumes, foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows, and sectoral cooperation over the study period. These analytical tools enabled the identification of long-term trends and provided a comprehensive assessment of the evolution of bilateral economic relations.

The interpretation of the findings was guided by the theoretical frameworks of international trade, foreign direct investment, and regional economic integration. In particular, the study draws upon comparative advantage theory to explain the structure of bilateral trade, theories of foreign direct investment to assess the role of American investment in Uzbekistan's economic modernization, and concepts of regional economic integration to evaluate Uzbekistan's strategic position within Central Asia. By combining empirical evidence with established economic theories, the research provides a multidimensional understanding of the strategic importance of U.S.–Uzbekistan economic cooperation and its contribution to sustainable economic development, regional connectivity, and investment attractiveness. To enhance the reliability of the analysis, information obtained from various international organizations, government institutions, and academic publications was cross-checked and compared wherever possible. The use of multiple independent data sources reduced the likelihood of bias and improved the consistency of the research findings. Furthermore, both quantitative indicators and qualitative policy information were integrated to provide a more comprehensive evaluation of bilateral economic relations.

Despite the comprehensive nature of the study, several limitations should be acknowledged. Some statistical data for the most recent years remain preliminary and may be subject to future revisions. In addition, differences in data collection methodologies, reporting standards, and publication schedules among international databases may result in minor discrepancies in reported trade and investment figures. The study also relies primarily on secondary data, which limits the ability to capture firm-level or microeconomic perspectives on bilateral cooperation. Nevertheless, the use of authoritative and internationally recognized data sources, together with a systematic analytical approach, enhances the credibility, reliability, and validity of the research findings and provides a solid foundation for evaluating the future prospects of U.S.–Uzbekistan economic cooperation.

Results

1. Dynamics of U.S.–Uzbekistan Trade Turnover, 2017–2025

Bilateral trade between the United States and Uzbekistan has followed a modest but steadily upward trajectory since the launch of Uzbekistan's 2017 economic liberalization reforms, which floated the national currency and removed major barriers to foreign trade. According to official U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) data compiled from U.S. Census Bureau statistics, total U.S. goods and services trade with Uzbekistan stood at roughly $920 million in 2023 and rose to an estimated $1.0 billion in 2024, an increase of 8.1 percent ($76.5 million) year-on-year.

Uzbek official statistics corroborate this trend from the other side of the relationship: according to the U.S. Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration, Uzbekistan's trade turnover with the United States grew by 15 percent to $881.7 million in 2024, making the United States the country's eleventh-largest trading partner. By 2025, bilateral goods trade alone reached approximately $1.0 billion, with U.S. Commerce Department officials and Uzbek sources jointly confirming that turnover had "exceeded $1 billion" for the year — a milestone frequently cited in the memoranda signed between the two governments in 2025–2026.

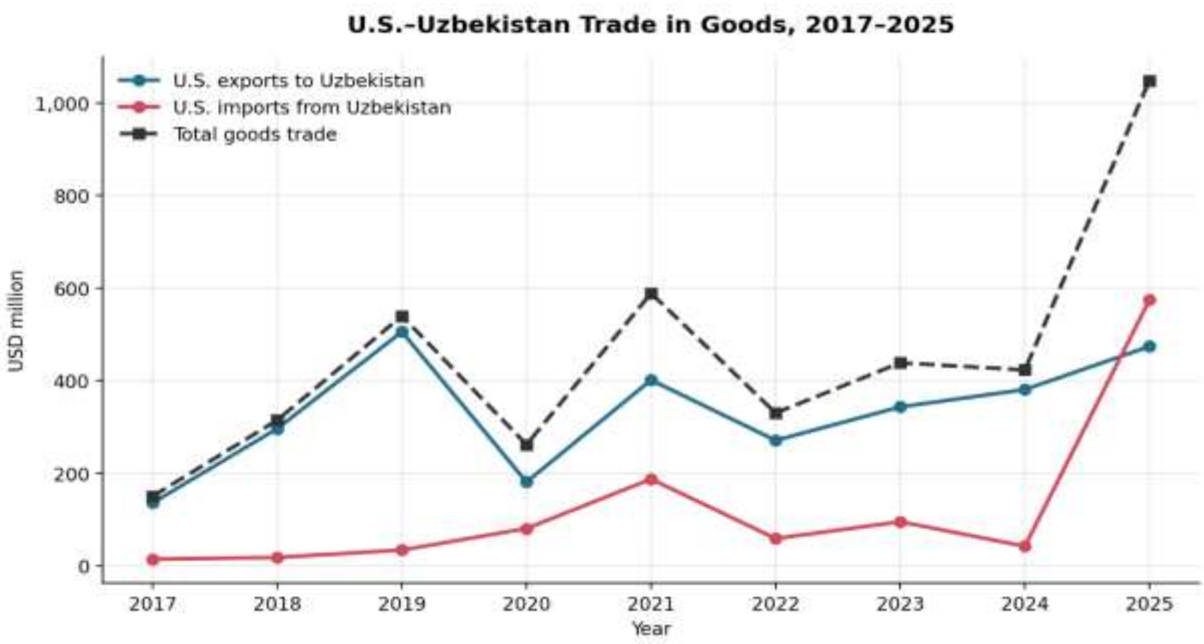
A notable feature of the 2017–2025 period is volatility driven by large, one-off capital purchases — particularly Uzbekistan Airways' periodic acquisitions of U.S.-manufactured aircraft — which can cause trade figures to swing sharply from year to year rather than reflecting a smooth linear trend. This pattern continued into 2025–2026, when new aircraft-supply agreements between Uzbekistan Airways and Boeing were signed alongside the broader package of bilateral economic agreements.

Table 1. U.S. Trade in Goods with Uzbekistan, 2017–2025 (USD million)

Year	U.S. Exports	U.S. Imports	Total Trade	U.S. Trade Balance
2017	136.1	14.3	150.4	+121.8
2018	296.5	18.2	314.7	+278.4
2019	505.5	34.2	539.7	+471.4
2020	181.1	80.7	261.8	+100.4
2021	401.3	187.4	588.7	+214.0
2022	271.0	59.0	330.0	+212.0
2023	343.3	95.3	438.6	+248.0
2024	380.7	42.4	423.1	+338.3
2025	473.9	574.4	1,048.3	−100.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Trade in Goods with Uzbekistan (compiled by author).

Figure 1. U.S.–Uzbekistan Trade in Goods, 2017–2025



Source: author's visualization based on U.S. Census Bureau data (Table 1).

As Table 1 and Figure 1 show, U.S. exports to Uzbekistan fluctuated between roughly \$136 million and \$506 million across 2017–2024 without a clear secular trend, largely because of irregular aircraft and equipment purchases. Imports remained a small fraction of total trade throughout this period — never exceeding \$187 million — until 2025, when they abruptly rose to \$574.4 million, reversing the historical pattern of a persistent U.S. trade surplus and producing the first U.S. trade deficit with Uzbekistan in the series.

4.2. Composition of Exports and Imports

The commodity structure of bilateral trade reflects a clear asymmetry between the two economies. On the U.S. export side, the leading categories are civil aircraft and aviation equipment (led by Boeing deliveries to Uzbekistan Airways), industrial and agricultural machinery, and — increasingly since 2024 — technology, cybersecurity, and water-saving/precision agricultural equipment supplied by U.S. companies such as Valmont Industries and Flowserve. U.S. goods exports to Uzbekistan reached \$473.9 million in 2025, up 24.5 percent (\$93.2 million) from 2024, according to USTR data.

On the import side, U.S. purchases from Uzbekistan traditionally centered on textiles, ferroalloys, and refined metals, but the structure shifted markedly in 2025: U.S. goods imports from Uzbekistan surged to \$574.4 million, an increase of 1,253.5 percent (\$531.9 million) over 2024 — a jump that pushed the bilateral goods balance from a \$338.3 million U.S. surplus in 2024 into a \$100.5 million U.S. deficit in 2025. This shift is consistent with Uzbekistan's broader export diversification strategy, in which precious metals, non-ferrous metals, and processed agricultural goods (cotton yarn, dried fruit, chemical fertilizers) have displaced raw commodity exports as the country's top foreign-currency earners.

Services trade complements the goods picture: total U.S. services trade with Uzbekistan (exports plus imports) reached an estimated \$603 million in 2024, with U.S.

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services exports of $278 million (up 25.2 percent from 2023) and services imports of $325 million (up 12.5 percent from 2023), leaving a U.S. services trade deficit of $47 million — down 30.9 percent from the prior year.

Table 2. Composition of U.S.–Uzbekistan Trade, 2024–2025 (USD million)

Category	2024	2025	Change
U.S. goods exports to Uzbekistan	380.7	473.9	+24.5%
U.S. goods imports from Uzbekistan	42.4	574.4	+1,253.5%
U.S. goods trade balance	+338.3	−100.5	surplus → deficit
U.S. services exports to Uzbekistan	278.0	n/a*	+25.2% (2023→2024)
U.S. services imports from Uzbekistan	325.0	n/a*	+12.5% (2023→2024)
U.S. services trade balance	−47.0	n/a*	−30.9% (deficit narrowed)

Source: USTR, Uzbekistan Country Trade Profile; U.S. Census Bureau.

4.3. U.S. Foreign Direct Investment in Uzbekistan

Separate, bilateral FDI-position statistics for Uzbekistan are not published in the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis's standard country tables, reflecting the still-modest scale of direct U.S. equity holdings relative to Uzbekistan's largest investment partners. According to the U.S. Department of State's Investment Climate Statement, China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the UAE, and Germany accounted for the bulk of Uzbekistan's $7.2 billion in FDI inflows in 2023, with China alone representing more than 65 percent of the accumulated FDI stock — underscoring the comparatively limited (though growing) direct U.S. equity presence to date.

Table 3. Uzbekistan's Aggregate Inward FDI, 2020–2024 (USD million, UNCTAD basis)

Year	FDI Inflow	FDI Stock
2020	1,728	10,288

2021	2,275	11,616
2022	2,498	13,845
2023	2,156	14,867
2024	2,836	16,728

Source: UNCTAD, World Investment Report 2025, Uzbekistan Fact Sheet. Note: UNCTAD's balance-of-payments series differs from the Central Bank of Uzbekistan's broader investment figures (which include reinvested and non-equity flows and reported $11.9 billion for 2024).

Nevertheless, three indicators point to a rapidly expanding U.S. investment footprint. First, aggregate FDI inflows into Uzbekistan's economy rose by more than 50 percent in 2024, reaching $11.9 billion (10.3 percent of GDP), and total FDI stock climbed to roughly $16.7 billion by year-end 2024, according to UNCTAD's World Investment Report 2025 — creating a substantially larger base into which U.S. capital is now flowing. Second, at the November 2025 C5+1 Summit in Washington, President Mirziyoyev and President Trump announced a package of prospective U.S.–Uzbekistan investment and purchase commitments valued at approximately $35 billion, with Uzbek officials subsequently describing a broader ten-year investment agenda potentially worth $100 billion. Third, a growing list of named corporate agreements — involving Cargill, Boeing, John Deere-adjacent machinery suppliers, Re Element Technologies, Denali Exploration Group, Palo Alto Networks, and Cleveland Clinic, among others — signals diversification of U.S. capital beyond the traditionally dominant energy and mining sectors into agribusiness, aviation, healthcare, cybersecurity, and critical-minerals processing.

4.4. Recent Economic Agreements (2024–2026)

The period since 2024 has seen an acceleration in the institutional architecture of bilateral economic relations:

• September 2024 – Signing of a U.S.–Uzbekistan Memorandum of Understanding on Critical Minerals, formalizing cooperation on geological exploration and clean-energy supply chains under the C5+1 framework.

• September 2025 – A roundtable in New York produced agreements spanning transport (Ministry of Transport–Boeing long-term cooperation), mining equipment manufacturing (Technopark–FLSmidth joint venture), healthcare (Akfa Group–Cleveland Clinic), and AI/biotech financing (Fund for Reconstruction and Development–Biologic International).

• November 6, 2025 – At the White House C5+1 Summit marking the platform's tenth anniversary, Uzbekistan and the United States signed roughly eight agreements covering rare-earth-element production (Ministry of Geology–Denali Exploration Group), rare-metals projects (Fund for Reconstruction and Development–Re Element Technologies), industrial modernization (Flowserve), water-saving agricultural technology (Valmont Industries), artificial intelligence and cybersecurity (Ministry of Digital Technologies–Palo Alto Networks), aircraft supply (Uzbekistan Airways–Boeing), and agricultural commodity trade (soybean and cotton contracts with Louis Dreyfus Company and Cargill). The same summit produced a Joint Statement of Intent on Economic Cooperation among the C5+1 governments, committing to expanded cooperation on AI, digital transformation, and cybersecurity.

• Late 2025 – Establishment, by presidential decree, of the Uzbekistan–U.S. Business and Investment Council, jointly chaired by the Head of the Presidential Administration and a U.S.-side representative, alongside a national AI infrastructure partnership with NVIDIA.

• June 2026 – A further Memorandum of Understanding between Uzbekistan's Ministry of Investments, Industry and Trade and the U.S. Commercial Service, signed in Tashkent, formalized mechanisms for business-delegation exchange and investment-project facilitation in energy, mining, agriculture, IT, and AI.

4.5. Strategic Directions of Cooperation

Critical minerals. Cooperation has evolved from the inaugural C5+1 Critical Minerals Dialogue (February 2024) into concrete industrial commitments. Uzbekistan has launched a national program — expanded from an initial \$2.6 billion to \$4.2 billion for 2026–2030 — to develop 76 critical-minerals projects, including newly discovered tungsten, lithium, germanium, and rare-earth-element deposits identified in 2024. U.S. engagement includes State Department-level MOUs, participation in the Minerals Security Partnership, and direct commercial agreements on rare-earth and rare-metals extraction.

Energy. Bilateral energy cooperation spans clean-energy infrastructure financing (e.g., Uzbekhydroenergo–Cargill Financial Services) and industrial-equipment modernization (Uztransgaz–Pangea Filtration Technology; pump-station upgrades with Flowserve), situated within Uzbekistan's broader diversification away from fossil-fuel dependence and its stated goal of raising GDP to \$200 billion by 2030.

Digital economy and artificial intelligence. This has emerged as the fastest-growing strategic pillar since 2025, encompassing the Ministry of Digital Technologies' cybersecurity and AI partnership with Palo Alto Networks, a national AI-infrastructure agreement with NVIDIA, and explicit C5+1 commitments to joint AI research, e-government digitalization, smart-city development, and cyber-resilience cooperation, as codified in the November 2025 Joint Statement of Intent on Economic Cooperation.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that economic cooperation between the United States and Uzbekistan has strengthened considerably in recent years, driven by Uzbekistan's market-oriented reforms and increasing regional economic integration. The expansion of bilateral trade, growing U.S. investment, and cooperation in strategic sectors such as renewable energy, digital technologies, and critical minerals reflect the evolving nature of the partnership.

Despite these positive developments, bilateral economic relations have not yet reached their full potential. Limited trade volumes, logistical challenges, regulatory barriers, and geopolitical uncertainties continue to constrain deeper economic engagement. Addressing these issues through policy reforms, improved transport connectivity, and enhanced investment protection could further stimulate trade and investment flows.

The results also suggest that Uzbekistan's strategic geographic location and ongoing economic modernization strengthen its position as a key economic partner for the United States in Central Asia. Expanding cooperation in innovation, infrastructure, and sustainable development would not only benefit both countries but also contribute to greater regional stability and economic resilience. Overall, continued institutional dialogue and private-sector collaboration will be essential for ensuring the long-term success of the U.S.–Uzbekistan economic partnership.

Conclusion

This study examined the strategic importance of economic cooperation between the United States and Uzbekistan within the context of Central Asia. The analysis shows that bilateral relations have developed significantly in recent years, supported by Uzbekistan's economic reforms, improvements in the investment climate, and expanding cooperation in trade, investment, energy, digital technologies, and infrastructure. These developments have strengthened Uzbekistan's position as a strategic economic partner for the United States in the region.

The findings indicate that there is substantial potential to further expand bilateral economic cooperation. Increasing trade volumes, attracting greater foreign direct investment, promoting technology transfer, and strengthening collaboration in strategic sectors can contribute to sustainable economic growth and regional development. At the same time, challenges such as transportation constraints, regulatory barriers, and geopolitical uncertainties should be addressed through coordinated policy measures and continued institutional dialogue.

In conclusion, strengthening U.S.–Uzbekistan economic cooperation will provide mutual economic benefits while supporting regional stability, economic diversification, and long-term prosperity in Central Asia. Future efforts should focus on enhancing trade facilitation, improving the business environment, encouraging private-sector partnerships, and expanding cooperation in innovation, renewable energy, and digital transformation. These measures will help unlock the full potential of the bilateral partnership and reinforce its strategic significance in the evolving regional and global economy.

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