

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF UNITED STATES-CENTRAL ASIA RELATIONS

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### Abstract

US withdrawal from Afghanistan has transformed the Central Asian region into a center of attention for global powers with China, Russia and the United States competing for influence in the region. United States has established certain core principles to attain its objectives in the Central Asian region which are applicable for all the states; nevertheless, its relationship with Kazakhstan holds tremendous importance due to its vast resources, growing economy, young population, a tilt of its leadership towards the United States in the Global Power politics and a trade balance with the Americans superseding all the other states of the region. Subsequently, the US relationship with Uzbekistan also has its significance due to the concept of 'New Uzbekistan' eventually becoming a reality. The political system of the country is gradually accepting the democratic norms, globally accepted human rights and subsequently promoting the market-based capitalism oriented financial system. This research highlights the relationship of United States with all the Central Asian states respectively taking into account the historical dynamics of relationship, the balance of trade between each two sides since 2017 and the acceptance of Western standards and the way of life in every state. Qualitative methods of research will be employed while the data will be analyzed through content analysis technique.

### Keywords

Uzbekistan, United States, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Balance of Trade, Global Power Dynamics, Foreign Policy.

### Introduction

Election of President Biden as the Leader of United States followed by the American withdrawal from Afghanistan has transformed the US foreign policy in Central Asian states. Although the United States was one of the first few countries

to recognize Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan as the newly established independent states; nevertheless, perception of United States throughout these states has been more of an opportunistic and transient global power.<sup>70</sup> The very first objectives of American strategy were to secure the remaining Soviet weapons of mass destruction while encourage the CA states to consolidate their own autonomy and subsequently cease the Russian dominance on infrastructure and transportation routes for natural gas and petroleum from Central Asia. This strategy was called as US Policy towards Central Asia 1.0 which was predominantly focused on capitalistic oriented financial system, democratically elected governments and socioeconomic convergence across the region.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, the American policy towards Central Asian region underwent a significant transformation after the 9/11 attacks and the American intervention in Afghanistan. United States Policy towards Central Asia 2.0 was primarily focused on politico-economic reforms in addition to security considerations with special reference to facilitation of the American forces in Afghanistan.<sup>72</sup> It is also important to mention that Central Asian region is vital to American foreign policy for reasons other than its abundant mineral riches.

While the region has significance for Russia, China and Iran; the influence of United States in the region due to its geostrategic interests paved the way for enhanced cooperation. Over the course of last two decades; the region has served as the hub of Great Power Competition amongst Russia, the United States and China which has created diversions within the societal framework; thereby furthering an intensified debate amongst the masses over the hegemonic support of these global powers. United States has maintained diplomatic and cordial ties with Kazakhstan whereby both states cooperate in terms of geo-economics and security dimensions. Since the conflict in Ukraine, Kazakhstan has demonstrated a willingness to distance itself from the Russian Federation by publicly opposing Vladimir Putin and adamantly stating that it is unwilling to evade sanctions from the United States in order to support Russia. Nevertheless, the rest of the Central Asian states have primarily favored the Russian federation regardless of the opportunities they might attain; if they chose to strengthen their relationship with the United States. Since the United States has withdrawn its forces from Afghanistan; there has been a

<sup>70</sup> Nurlan Aliyev, "Us Presence in Central Asia: Realities and Perspectives," *The Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst* (2020)

<sup>71</sup> Patrick Mendis and S Uralbayev, "The Biden White House and the New Foreign Policy in Central Asia," *Вестник КазНУ. Серия международные отношения и международное право* 93, no. 1 (2021)

<sup>72</sup> Richard Sokolsky Eugene Rumer, and Paul Stronski, "U.S. Policy toward Central Asia 3.0," *Carneige Endowment for International Peace*, 25 January 2016, Available at <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2016/01/us-policy-toward-central-asia-30?lang=en>.

considerable shift in the US foreign policy towards Central Asian states primarily focusing on anti-Russian and anti-Chinese orientation in addition to politico-economic, security and humanitarian objectives in the region. This policy has been attributed as US foreign policy towards Central Asia 3.0.<sup>73</sup> Although the overall nature and stance of relationship in the present dynamics is entirely different than the last two decades; the US is obligated to ensure its strong foothold in the region through its strengthened relationship with CA states in order to further its dominance in the international order. This research study will assess the challenges and opportunities of Central Asian states; particularly American foreign policy and its relationship with Uzbekistan during last one decade. Politico-economic cooperation as well as the security dimensions of the relationship will be thoroughly assessed while the challenges faced by both states in contemporary geostrategic dimensions will also be highlighted. Furthermore, the US relationship with the other CA states as well as the overall impact on the global order will be further discussed as well. A comprehensive account of this research study will highlight the overall challenges and prospects for US interests in the Central Asian region.

### **Research Methodology**

This research study is qualitative, analytical and inductive in nature. Primary as well as the secondary sources of data will be consulted to gather the literature available on the subject. Primary sources of research encompass the official state monitored government websites of Central Asian states as well as the United States. Secondary sources of data encompass books, research articles, research magazines, reports of the think tanks, news channels and other authentic websites that are globally recognized. This research study will be inductive in nature since it will emphasize on specific dynamics of relationship between the United States and Central Asian states and will eventually conclude with general observations with reference to their relationship. Data collection of this research study will be done through content analysis technique. Graphs and Smart art will also be used to assess the nature of the relationship between the US and CA states.

### **Fundamental Tenets of American Foreign Policy in Central Asian Region**

American foreign policy and its relationship with the Central Asian states is primarily based on few fundamental principles. These include its security relationship which constitutes its Geopolitical Vector and focuses on enhanced diplomatic outreach as well as multidimensional efforts in the field of armament

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<sup>73</sup> Mendis and Uralbayev, "The Biden White House and the New Foreign Policy in Central Asia."

and military cooperation.<sup>74</sup> The second fundamental tenant lies around the socioeconomic relationship with CA states which may be termed as the economic vector which is manifested in the desire of the government of the United States and businesses to have as much influence as is practicable and feasible revolving the enormous hydrocarbon reserves of Central Asian countries especially Kazakhstan's uranium, crude oil and natural gas reserves.<sup>75</sup> The third fundamental tenant of US foreign policy in CA region revolves around the politico-ideological and humanitarian dimensions. Since the values of promoting democratization, protection of human rights and market-based economic system are the core values of US foreign policy that are promoted by their diplomatic missions across the world; efforts have been made by means of public diplomacy and sociocultural outreach in the CA states as well to attain these objectives.

### 1. Relationship with Uzbekistan

Over the course of last three decades, United States has shared a complicated relationship with Uzbekistan since both sides have maintained fair share of cooperation and challenges. Both states shared cordial diplomatic ties after 1991; yet the relationship soared after the Color Revolution in the neighboring states and Uzbekistan's suppression of protests throughout Andijan which was criticized by the US State Department. Following the incident, Uzbekistan became closer to the Russian and Chinese governments while limited the utilization of the Karshi-Khanabad airfield by the American troops during the course of war on terror in Afghanistan.<sup>76</sup> Although the US presence in the Central Asian states; particularly in Uzbekistan can be deemed as an accepted fact due to global war on terror and presence of NATO forces in Afghanistan; nevertheless, the US Commander of Operations in Afghanistan, General Tommy Frank in 2007 categorically negated to build a permanent military base in Central Asia.<sup>77</sup> However, this assertion cannot be accepted since the US has remained in competition with China and Russia for its influence across Central Asian states. Nevertheless, aside global geopolitics, the United States and Uzbekistan have participated in various security and socioeconomic dialogues on regional and international forums to address the challenges of regional security cooperation, the counter-terrorism challenges in Afghanistan and the overall global order. During recent tenure of President

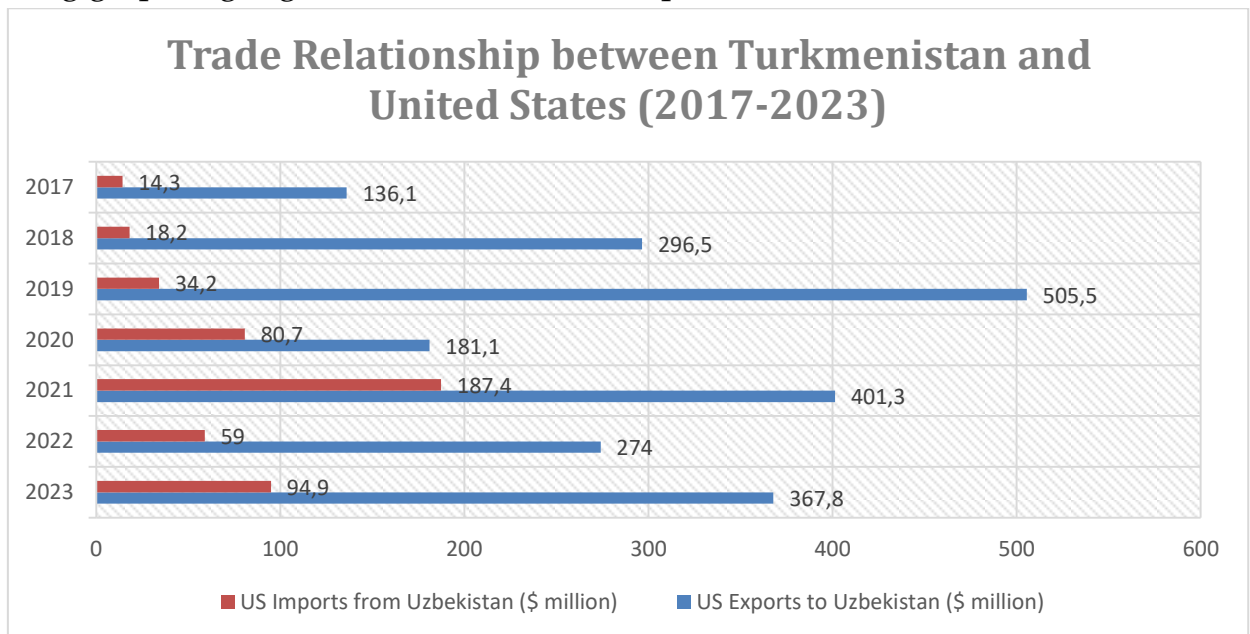
<sup>74</sup> AA Kokoshin and ZA Kokoshina, "The Main Vectors of the Us Foreign Policy Strategy in Central Asia," Herald of the Russian Academy of Sciences 92, no. Suppl 7 (2022)

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Shokhrukh Yunusov, "Recent Updates in Us-Central Asia Relations: The Consequences of the Us Withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Need for a New Strategy," International Journal of Education, Vocational and Social Science 2, no. 02 (2023)

<sup>77</sup> Shahram Akbarzadeh, "Uzbekistan and the United States: Friends or Foes?," Middle East Policy 14, no. 1 (2007)

Shavkat Mirziyoyev in Uzbekistan, the country has witnessed significant changes in terms of its politico-economic dynamics. He is making efforts in order to establish a “New Uzbekistan” where the principles of market based economic system, democratization and human rights are acceptable.<sup>78</sup> The Biden Administration has also lauded the reforms undertaken by Uzbekistan in order to pursue democratic objectives while US Secretary of State Antony Blinken also visited Uzbekistan in 2023 and lauded the country’s efforts with respect to labor laws.<sup>79</sup> In terms of economic relationship; the total number of American companies operating in Uzbekistan have significantly increased over the course of last eight years while the overall volume of services and trade has multiplied three times. The following graph highlights the trade relationship between the two states.



Source: [The United States Census Bureau](#)

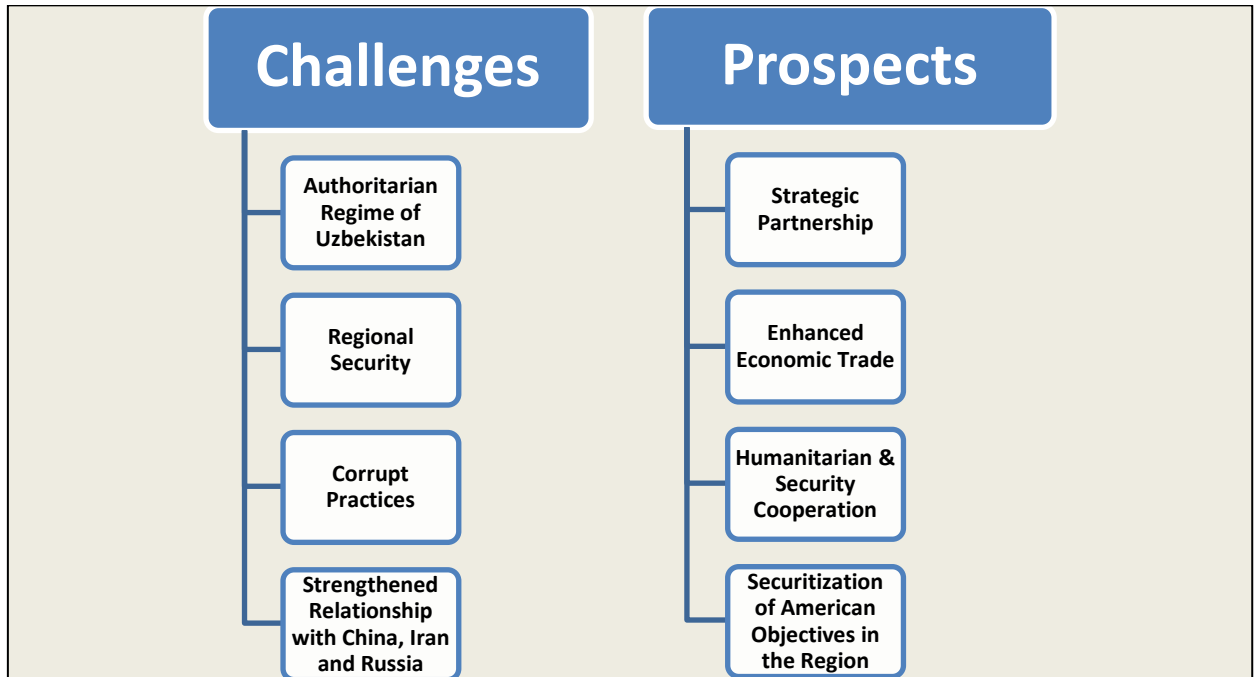
The aforementioned graph indicates that trade between the two sides has been steadily increasing and although the trade graph significantly declined during the COVID-19 epidemic; a significant upward trend has been witnessed since then. Furthermore, the prioritization of fundamental human rights in modern Uzbekistan has made it possible for the country to collaborate with US officials on several projects that seek to enhance the quality of life for average Uzbeks.<sup>80</sup> This includes several programs for female entrepreneurs and people who are promoting the

<sup>78</sup> Ambassador Furqat Sidikov, "New Uzbekistan’s Reform Agenda: A Catalyst for Stronger Us Bilateral Relations " The Diplomat, 6 September 2023, Available at <https://thediplomat.com/2023/09/new-uzbekistans-reform-agenda-a-catalyst-for-stronger-us-bilateral-relations/>.

<sup>79</sup> Nike Ching and Navbahor Imamova, "Blinken Welcomes Reforms in Uzbekistan Visit " Voice of America (VoA), 1 March 2023, Available at <https://www.voanews.com/a/blinken-to-discuss-reforms-in-uzbekistan-visit/6984637.html>.

<sup>80</sup> Jamshid Khodjaye, "Uzbekistan, USA to Strengthen Strategic Partnership " Kun.UZ, 26 June 2023, Available at <https://kun.uz/en/news/2023/06/26/uzbekistan-usa-to-strengthen-strategic-partnership>.

concepts of gender equality and religious freedom. The following infographic highlights the subsequent challenges and prospects in the bilateral relationship between the two states which have impacted the nature of relationship historically and are expected to do so in the future as well.



### Challenges and Prospects of Uzbekistan-US Relationship

Although all of these factors hold respective importance; a major challenge impacting the bilateral relationship is the influence and growing economic partnership of Uzbekistan with China, Russia and Iran. Since bilateral trade of Russia and China has been simultaneously growing with Uzbekistan due to multitude of factors; their dominance is subsequently intensifying; thereby threatening the American objectives in the region. Although the Uzbek leadership is primarily more interested to further extend its ties with Americans; expecting them to completing sideline Russian and Chinese seems a dreadful task in a complex environment of multipolarity.<sup>81</sup> While the dynamics of relationship has its unstable roots due to strong influence of Russians in Uzbekistan, who are still one of its largest trading partners, prospects for sustenance and promotion of Uzbekistan-US relationship in terms of socioeconomic dynamics and human rights are considerably high.

### 2. Relationship with Tajikistan

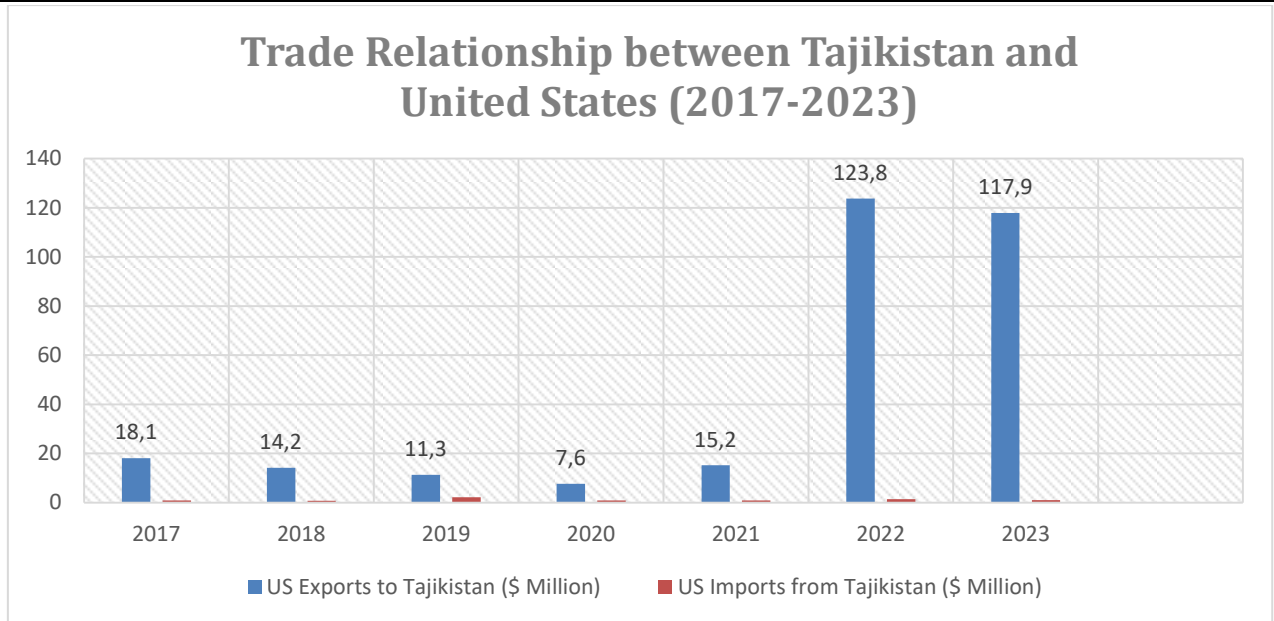
Diplomatic ties between the two sides were established in 1992 while both states have shared strong and cordial ties with each other during last three decades.

<sup>81</sup> Ph.D. Gavin Helf, "Blinken Debuts New U.S. Approach in Central Asia," United States Institute of Peace (USIP), 2 March 2023, Available at <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/03/blinken-debuts-new-us-approach-central-asia>.

Both states cooperate on a number of issues ranging from regional security dynamics to counterterrorism, regional integration and socioeconomic development. Over the course of last one decade; the relationship between the two sides have remained strengthened since the reformation agenda has been implemented in Tajikistan under the leadership of President Emomali Rahmon. Both states have also collaborated on regional and international platforms with Tajikistan being the only state to bring together all the Central Asian states alongside United States in C5+1 platform in order to take initiatives for regional security and stability.<sup>82</sup> In terms of cooperation on human resource; more than 3400 people have travelled to United States since the establishment of bilateral ties between the two sides in 1992.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, there are eight US spaces in Tajikistan that are located in its different cities including Khujand, Panjakent, Khorugh, KulobIsfara, Dushanbe, Gharm and Bokhtar. In terms of counterterrorism and security cooperation; Tajikistan and United States have held multiple dialogues particularly with reference to the security situation in Afghanistan over the course of last two decades. Since the relationship between the two sides has continued to strengthen over the course of last three decades; the US administration has recognized the potential for advancing democratic principles in Tajikistan and working on the issues of human rights and market based economic system and has opened a full-scale USAID mission in Tajikistan. This highlights the growing US interests in Tajikistan and its potential for contribution in the international framework. It is also important to highlight that although both countries have shared growing relationship over the years; their economic ties have been minimally impactful with Tajik exports to US in minimal ranges whereas the US exports to Tajikistan have been considerable. Trade balance between the two sides has always remained in favor of United States as the following graphic representation highlights the volume of US trade with Tajikistan since 2017.

<sup>82</sup> Andrew Wilder, "Thirty Years of U.S.-Tajikistan Partnership: What's Next? A Look at Past Achievements and the Path Forward " *ibid.*, 14 April 2022, Available at <https://www.usip.org/events/thirty-years-us-tajikistan-partnership-whats-next>.

<sup>83</sup> U.S. Embassy Dushanbe, "Fact Sheet on 30 Years of U.S.-Tajik Relations " US Embassy in Tajikistan, 23 December 2021, Available at <https://tj.usembassy.gov/30-years-of-u-s-tajik-relations/>.



**Source:** [The United States Census Bureau](#)

It must be pertinently noted that the US exports to Tajikistan have crossed \$100 million in 2022 as well as in 2023 which indicates that there exist tremendous opportunities for the American businesses to flourish in Tajikistan. Nevertheless, since the trade balance between the two sides is significantly high, the Tajikistan government needs to ensure that its products are exported subsequently to United States as well. Overall, since Tajikistan and United States have cooperated in terms of security dynamics with specific reference to Afghanistan; there presently lie the opportunities for them to enhance their relationship in terms of politico-ideological domains while Tajikistan must refrain from becoming a hub of power play amongst the global powers including Russia, the US and China.

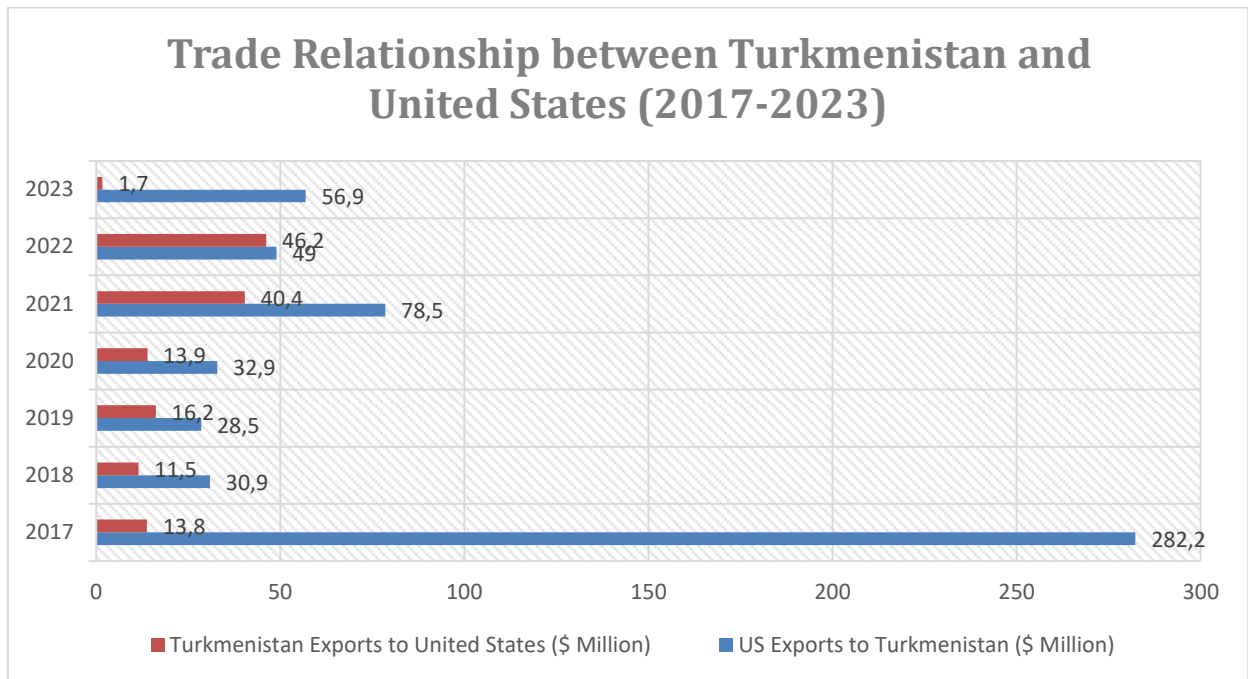
### 3. Relationship with Turkmenistan

Diplomatic relationship of United States with Turkmenistan commenced in 1992 following the independence of CA states from the Soviet Union in 1991.<sup>84</sup> Since Turkmenistan is a critical geographical region in terms of its borders with Iran and Afghanistan; its significance for United States tremendously exceeded over the course of last two decades due to the presence of US troops in Afghanistan. Key areas of Cooperation between the United States and Turkmenistan comprise of regional security and stability, the energy sector, socioeconomic dynamics and the education sector. United States and Turkmenistan have been cooperating on border security dynamics and issues of regional security wherein their mutual relationship has furthered in C5+1 in which they have

<sup>84</sup> Our Relationship, "U.S.-Turkmenistan Relations," US Embassy in Turkmenistan, Available at <https://tm.usembassy.gov/our-relationship/policy-history/>.



engaged on matters pertaining to border security dynamics and regional cooperation.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, both states also have Trade and Investment Framework Agreement in order to enhance their prospects of attracting investment for climate change programs as well as the economic cooperation between the two sides.<sup>86</sup> The following graphic representation highlights the trade relationship between the two sides since 2017.



**Source:** [The United States Census Bureau](#)

It can be assessed that trade balance between United States and Turkmenistan has remained comparatively equal since 2018 onwards; however, it has faced an extreme downward trajectory in 2023 with Turkmenistan exports to United States valued around at only \$1.7. Although both states have the tendency and capacity to further strengthen their relationship; Russian and Chinese influence in the region followed by the instability in Afghanistan presents complex challenges. During the Biden Administration; the United States has sought to promote the concept of democratization in Turkmenistan which encompassed measures relating to development of the private sector and financial reforms.<sup>87</sup> Both states also cooperate on number of international platforms including the World Bank, IMF, IAEA, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and United Nations.

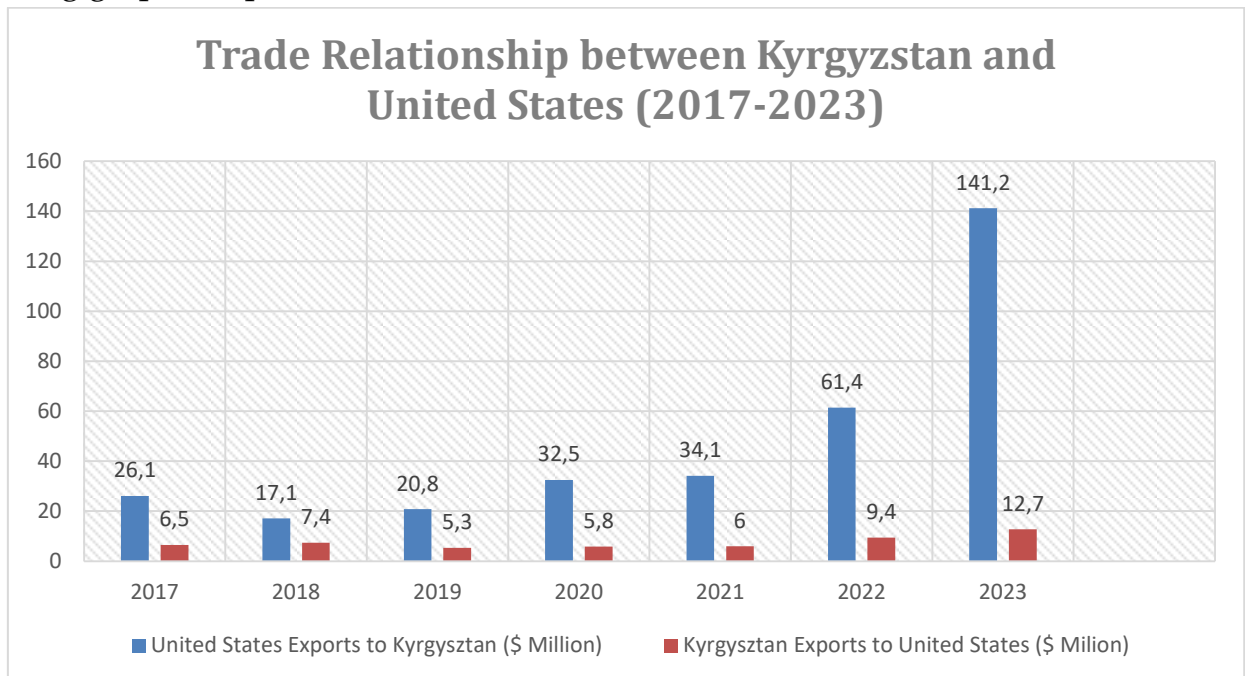
<sup>85</sup> Faisal Javed, "American Relations with Turkmenistan after War on Terrorism," Pakistan Journal of International Affairs 1, no. 1 (2018)

<sup>86</sup> Yolbars Kepbanov, Slavomír Horák, and Berdymyrat Ovezmyradov, The Investment Climate in Turkmenistan: Challenges and Possible Ways of Attracting Foreign Investment (Sociology of Law, Lund University, 2022).

<sup>87</sup> Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, "U.S. Relations with Turkmenistan " US Department of State, 27 July 2020, Available at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-turkmenistan/>.

#### 4. Relationship with Kyrgyzstan

Diplomatic relationship between Kyrgyzstan and United States commenced in 1991 following the dissolution of Soviet Union and subsequent independence of CA states. Since then both states have cooperated in terms of politics and security, socioeconomic dynamics, education and human rights issues. The United States has supported the transformation of politics and economy in Kyrgyzstan in addition to offering emergency relief in times of need and non-fatal defense assistance. Having a particular focus on the Fergana Valley, the United States and Kyrgyzstan collaborate on border surveillance and security-related initiatives.<sup>88</sup> The Kyrgyz Republic has also been supported by the United States in its requests for securing help from the international organizations; particularly with reference to the World Trade Organization (WTO) which its government joined in 1998.<sup>89</sup> Both states are also exploring the possibility of signing an expanded bilateral collaboration agreement (BCA) with the sole objective to strengthen their bilateral partnership across sectors such as healthcare, functioning of democratic government, education, religious freedom and the protection of human rights. A thorough analysis of United States and Kyrgyzstan economic relationship can be assessed through following graphic representation;



Source: [United States Census Bureau](#)

<sup>88</sup> Steven Parham, "The Problem with Our Borders in Batken": Local Understandings of Border Control and Sovereignty in Kyrgyzstan (B. Budrich, 2016).

<sup>89</sup> Smeets Muktar and Djumaliev Muktar, "Kyrgyz Republic and Structural Reforms: Twenty Years of Wto Membership," Вестник Санкт-Петербургского университета. Экономика 35, no. 4 (2019)

Although the trade balance between the two sides has predominantly remained consistent over the course of last seven years; a significant rise in United States exports towards Kyrgyzstan has been witnessed in 2023 indicating the prospects of growth in the economic ties of both states. Major exporting products of Kyrgyzstan comprise of Petroleum, metal ores, vegetables, dried leguminous, copper, cotton yarn, scrap and waste.<sup>90</sup> Similarly, some of the products imported by Kyrgyzstan comprise of knitted fabrics, motor vehicles, base metal mountings and raw commodities of footwear. It also needs to be highlighted that Kyrgyzstan shares an exceptionally amicable relationship with the Russian Federation which is also one of its highest trading partners. This fact supersedes the country's relationship and the prospects of growth with the United States; thereby making it a sandwich states between the two global powers.<sup>91</sup> In addition to traditional power politics, the United States and Kyrgyzstan have cooperated in education and cultural dynamics. English language instruction constitutes a component of the academic and cultural collaborations between the United States and Kyrgyzstan. The Kyrgyz Republic's initiatives to expand its educational system, particularly colleges and universities in addition to professional development have received help from the United States. Although the relationship between the two sides soared when United States expressed its reservation over the human rights issues including the limitations imposed by the state on press freedom alongside the arrest of politicians in the country. More recently, the administrations of both states have collaborated in terms of development of Information Technology (IT) sector, green economy alongside other projects with the objective of further advancing the concept of sustainable growth. It can be comprehended that United States and Kyrgyzstan have shared amicable relationship with each other and although challenges have persisted in the bilateral ties of both states; there are prospects of strengthening the relationship in a multipolar global order.

## 5. Relationship with Kazakhstan

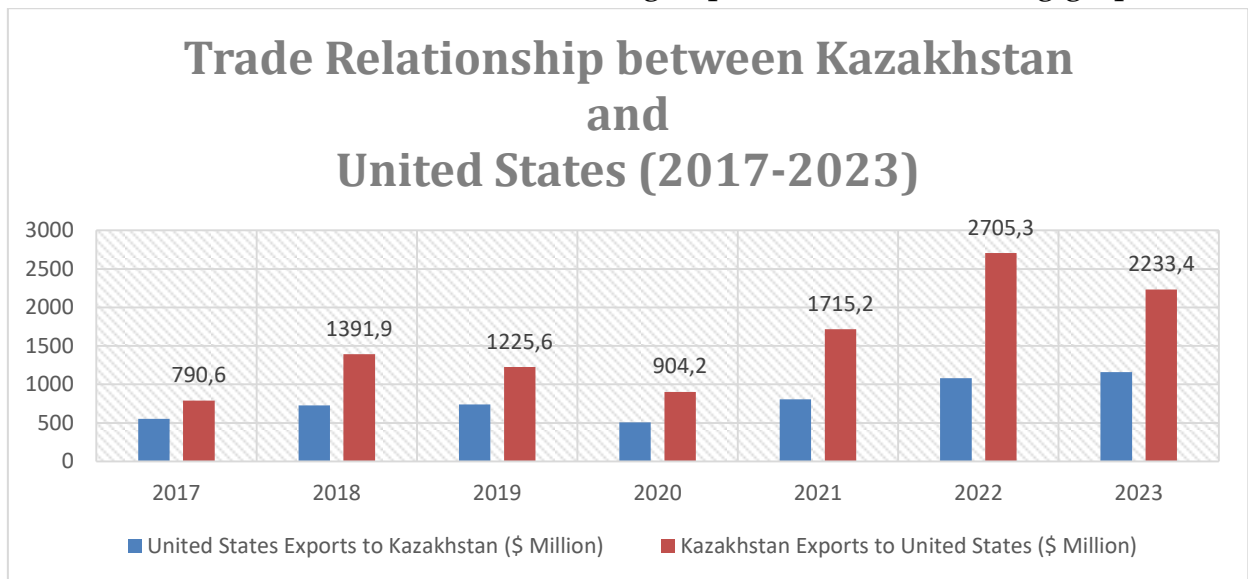
Diplomatic relationship between the Kazakhstan and United States commenced in 1991 soon after the former's independence in 1991. Both states have shared amicable ties with each other over the course of last three decades and have cooperated in the fields of education, healthcare, economy, security and counterterrorism.<sup>92</sup> Over the course of last one decade; trading relationship

<sup>90</sup> Aleksandra Loboda, "Economic Prospects of Kyrgyzstan from a Geopolitical Perspective," (2023)

<sup>91</sup> Nurzat Namatbekova and Kalyynur T Saliev, "Foreign Policy of Kyrgyzstan between Russia and the United States," *Linguistics and Culture Review* 5, no. S4 (2021)

<sup>92</sup> Martha Brill Olcott, *Kazakhstan: Unfulfilled Promise* (Carnegie Endowment, 2010).

between the two sides has continued to grow steadily. A graphical representation of bilateral trade between the two sides is being depicted in the following graph;



**Source:** [The United States Census Bureau](#)

Kazakhstan is the only country amongst all the Central Asian states wherein its trade balance with United States has always been in its favor since 2017 as can be witnessed in the graph. This data also highlights 67.6% annual trade growth in favor of United States while 28.2 % annual trade growth in favor of Kazakhstan during the evaluated time frame of 2017-2023. This indicates the growth of relationship as well as the prospects of improving the economic relationship between the two sides. Some of the products exported by Kazakhstan to United States include crude as well as the refined petroleum, mineral products, precious metals, Sulphur, tantalum, lead, phosphorus, uranium and poultry meat. Subsequently, some of the products exported by the United States to Kazakhstan include cars and spaceships, technological products including cellphones and laptops, machinery and chemical products. Global cultural exchanges continue to hold a significant position in the ties connecting these two nations. The most frequently used one is Work & Travel program which enables Kazakh graduates to find employment within the United States and eventually several of these students decide to remain as long-term residents in the country; thereby contributing towards the economy of United States as well as supporting their home countries as well through foreign remittances.

It is important to mention that the geographic position of Kazakhstan in the Central Asian states has allowed it to become an important partner for China, Russia and the United States with each global power striving to secure its interests in the region through its relationship with the country. While the main objective of

United States is to counter China, Russia and Iran while subsequently take an aggressive view of the security situation and the Taliban government in Afghanistan; it is possible through strengthening its relationship with Kazakhstan which is located at the heart of Eurasia. American connections with Kazakh have a significant impact on its aspirations to establish more profound relationships with Central Asia in the future. As an emerging power, Kazakhstan has the most prosperous economy throughout the surrounding region. Astana as the capital of Kazakhstan is emerging as one of the most developed cities in the world while the US businesses have invested significantly in the city. The manner in which Washington strengthens its relations with Astana will be contingent on two distinct factors. Firstly, a middle ground of cooperation between the two sides needs to be identified in terms of their political, socioeconomic and security dynamics wherein the United States is also clear on what it can offer Kazakhstan whereas the Kazakhs also may clearly identify on their provisions of facilitation for United States in securing its regional objectives. Secondly, Kazakhstan also has to assess and identify a balance point amongst all the global powers who have associated their aspirations and have expressed their strong commitment in strengthening their relationship with Kazakhstan. Ties between the United States and Kazakhstan remain critical at a juncture of growing great power competition. There are additionally a few crucial settings whereby situation may advance quickly, even if each party will have to cautiously negotiate how to proceed ahead for their own particular reasons. It also needs to be highlighted that the Kazakh leadership pay special focus to its relationship with United States as its Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Murat Nurtleu met with the US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken during their visit to Washington in March,2023. The dialogue between the two sides focused on attracting a greater portion of US investments in a modernized Central Asian economic system.

Another significant point of contention in the contemporary dynamics is that Kazakhstan is at the forefront of taking the charge to improve interconnectedness amongst its allies in the eastern and western regions with Central Asian nations at a pivotal juncture in history. On one end; the Ukraine-Russia conflict has created clarified distinctions amongst the global powers and due to its proximity with the Russian Federation; Kazakhstan is bound to uphold its amicable relationship with them. Subsequently, the US trade and security war with China is impacting the overall geopolitics of the region. Washington is working more than ever to exert influence over China in terms of military superiority and global economic dynamics. This situation has put Kazakhstan at a critical juncture since it maintains

close relationship with China as well along with sharing its border while subsequently has continued to strive amicable political relationship with United States as well. Although most of the states in the present international order are assessing their relationship with all the global powers particularly the Russian Federation and United States; nevertheless, Kazakh leadership seems eager to foster its deeper and strengthened ties with United States indicating their futuristic tendencies to further their ties irrespective of Chinese and Russian tendencies throughout Kazakhstan.

Another important point of contention in their relationship lies in the fact that almost 40% of population of Kazakhstan comprise of young people.<sup>93</sup> This presents an opportunity for the United States to invest in those young mind luring them to accepted westernized principles of the society by offering them educational and cultural scholarships, conduct trainings and workshops while work towards building a positive public perception; something that the country has been doing since decades in different parts of the world. This will not only create a positive image of the United States not only throughout Kazakhstan; but the entire Central Asian region as these states are interconnected with each other. Moreover, the next leadership of Kazakhstan will be more in favor of strengthening its ties with US instead of China and Russia in the futuristic global politics.

### **Concluding Arguments**

It can be comprehended that United States has to invest and strengthen its deeper ties with all of the Central Asian states in order to secure its objectives throughout the region. Merely, influencing its socioeconomic as well as the political relationship with Kazakhstan while overlooking the other states will eventually create problems for it since the Russian and Chinese are heavily investing in these countries in terms of economic and human investment. Aside promoting the democratic values and market-oriented economic system; the United States must focus on strengthening the nature of relationship with these states. It can also be ascertained that the Central Asian region may evolve to become a competing space for the global powers making it extremely difficult for the host states to collaborate with them and simultaneously address their respective interests in a volatile and unstable region.

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<sup>93</sup> The World Factbook, "Kazakhstan," CIA, 22 May 2024, Available at <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/kazakhstan/>.

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