



CONSTRUCTION OF NEW RAILWAY LINES IN THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN IN THE EARLY PERIOD OF INDEPENDENCE

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Annotation: *In this article, based on historical and economic analysis, the processes of formation of the national railway infrastructure and construction of new railway lines in the early period of independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan (1991-2000) are highlighted. It is substantiated that the dependence of the republic's railway networks on external logistics centers, transit dependence, and territorial disruptions during the Soviet era necessitated ensuring national transport security under the conditions of independence.*

In particular, the study analyzes the economic, social, and geopolitical significance of such strategically important projects as the Navoi-Uchkuduk-Nukus route, the Tashguzar-Boysun-Kumkurgan line. The role of the Uzbekistan Railways Company, established in 1994, in the implementation of the national transport policy, the unification of the railway network into a single management system, and the strengthening of internal territorial integration are revealed on a scientific basis.

The article shows that as a result of the construction of new railway lines, transport independence between the southern and northern regions of the republic has been strengthened, transit potential has increased, and the infrastructure of the domestic market has developed. The impact of these processes on regional economic development, the formation of industrial zones, and the expansion of social infrastructure is also analyzed.

The research is conducted on the basis of historical, systematic, and comparative analysis methods, and the role of the reforms carried out in the transport sector in the first years of independence in strengthening state sovereignty is substantiated by scientific conclusions.

Keywords: *Independence period, railway infrastructure, new railway lines, transport security, national logistics system, regional integration, transit potential, economic reforms, transport policy, Uzbekistan Railways.*

In the first years of independence, a number of problems arose in the acquisition of independent railway lines by the states of Central Asia. The main reason for this was the existence of interconnected railways in the period before the collapse of the Soviet regime. The Soviet "heritage" in infrastructure connected the countries of the region with the center, Moscow, as raw material-producing areas. In these conditions, ensuring integration and regional connectivity within the republics of Central Asia through railways has become a pressing issue. First of all, one of the main tasks was the construction of railway lines that would serve to connect all regions with the center. "Currently, the road connecting the Republic of Karakalpakstan, Khorezm, and Surkhandarya regions of our country with the center of the Republic passed through Turkmenistan, and the railway connecting the Fergana Valley passed through the Sughd region of Tajikistan".



This, in turn, causes a number of problems in delivering passengers and cargo to their destinations. In particular, as a result of political changes, a large amount of customs duties had to be paid for the movement of trains on the route passing through Turkmenistan. "In addition, cargo transported by rail had to travel an additional distance of 360 kilometers in the northern direction - to the Republic of Karakalpakstan and Khorezm region, 194 kilometers in the southern direction - to the Surkhandarya region from the territory of Turkmenistan, and 100 kilometers in the eastern direction - to the Fergana Valley from the territory of Tajikistan[1]".

Therefore, starting in 1993, the construction of main railway lines began in the Republic of Uzbekistan to connect Surkhandarya, Kashkadarya regions, the Republic of Karakalpakstan, and Khorezm region through a single railway line. Official Tashkent has begun creating an alternative railway route through the territory of the Republic of Turkmenistan to the Republic of Karakalpakstan and Surkhandarya region. Because the actual transit movement required not only a lot of time, but also unnecessary hassle and large funds.

To address this issue, a resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers on the reconstruction and construction of new lines of the Navoi-Uchkuduk-Sultanuvaystag-Nukus railway was adopted. This project was aimed at increasing the capacity of passenger and freight transportation by rail, developing new lands and mineral deposits, solving production and social issues in the territories of Navoi region and the Republic of Karakalpakstan, and forming a unified state railway network.

As a result of this project, during 1994-2001, railways with a total length of almost 700 kilometers were built from Navoi to Nukus. After the launch of this line, a large quantity of necessary products for the population began to be supplied to the Republic of Karakalpakstan and Khorezm region. This railway passed through the cities of Navoi, Uchkuduk, Miskin, Turtkul, and reached Nukus. Previously, the Turkmenobod (Chorjo'y) - Urgench railway, passing through Turkmenistan, was used to travel from other regions of Uzbekistan to the Republic of Karakalpakstan and Khorezm region. The completed railway reduced the distance by 450 kilometers, and the travel time by 6-7 hours. After this, the country's budget will be saved 19 million US dollars for travel to the western regions. This railway also played a significant role in the development of regions rich in mineral resources, such as Navoi, Karakalpakstan, and Bukhara[2].

"In the first years of independence, a number of railway lines were built in our country. In 1993, the Nukus-Kumshungul railway, in 1994 the Kumshungul railway-Chimboy and the 74-kilometer-long Nukus railway-Sultanuvaystag (Sultanuizdag), in 1996 the 60-kilometer-long Tuyamuyun railway-Turtkul railway, in 1995-2001 the 342-kilometer-long Uchkuduk II railway - Sultanuvaystag, in 1995-2009 the Tashguzar railway-Kumkurgan railway, in 1997 the 12-kilometer-long Yakkabog Chirakchi[3].

These new railway lines created the opportunity to strengthen economic ties within the country and connect remote areas with the center. For example, the Nukus-Kumshungul and Tuyamoyin-Turtkul routes connected the Republic of Karakalpakstan and Khorezm region with the center, which expanded trade and production opportunities in these regions. This network allowed for faster and cheaper transportation of goods, contributing to the economic development of the regions.



In the first years of independence, the railway system of Uzbekistan achieved significant successes, but in the process of adaptation to the new era, it also faced serious problems. After Uzbekistan gained independence, complete control over railway infrastructure was established, which is crucial for ensuring transport sovereignty. One of the major successes was the construction of new lines connecting remote areas directly with central cities, which will reduce dependence on routes that previously passed through neighboring countries such as Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan[4].

Along with the listed achievements, on the other hand, acute problems of the industry persisted. Much of the railway infrastructure inherited from the Soviet Union was outdated and required extensive modernization. The railway network was designed to serve the needs of Soviet logistics, and not Uzbekistan's independent economic priorities, which initially caused inefficiency. Dependence on certain routes passing through neighboring countries also initially proved difficult, as cross-border dependence led to logistical delays and increased costs. The transition to a market economy left Uzbekistan with limited financial resources for large investments needed in the railway sector. Although corporatization helped attract certain investments, the available funds were insufficient to cover the full volume of necessary upgrades and expansion. This limited the pace of modernization and made it possible to meet the growing demand for efficient cargo and passenger transportation services. The transition from a centrally planned system to a corporate, market-oriented structure was very difficult, as it required the formation of new skills and management experience. Initial efforts to introduce modern management methods were sometimes slowed down due to a lack of experience and the need for technical training among workers[5].

In conclusion, it should be noted that in the initial period of independence, significant successes were achieved in the activities of JSC "Uzbekistan Railways," in particular, the sovereignty of the railway was strengthened, new routes were built, and steps were taken to modernize management. However, problems such as outdated infrastructure and financial constraints prevented the rapid realization of the industry's full potential. Despite these challenges, the Uzbekistan railway network created a solid foundation for its operations in these early years, which subsequently allowed for further growth and expansion of connections in the Central Asian region.

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