

KAZAKHSTAN JOURNAL OF FOREIGN STUDIES

№ 1–2 (01–02) 2021



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**Cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan:
Economics and Politics**

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**U.S./Kazakhstan bilateral relations
in a multipolar world**

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**Central Asian vector of Kazakhstan's foreign policy:
Achievements, Challenges, Prospects**



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Scientific Magazine



Founder: Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
Editor-in-Chief: Sanat Kushkumbayev, Deputy Director of KazISS under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
Publication: “NV-Media” IE.
Proof-reader: Oleg Ponomarev.
Editorial address: Republic of Kazakhstan, 010000, Nur-Sultan, Beibitshilik, 4, tel.: +7 (7172) 75-20-20, fax +7 (7172) 75-20-21, email: office@kisi.kz, www.kisi.kz.
Magazine is registered by the Ministry of Information and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
Certificate of registration of a periodical, news agency and network publication No. KZ17VPY00039008 dated 13.08.2021.
Printed: Print House Gerona LLP. Total circulation: 500 copies.
Magazine coverage: Republic of Kazakhstan, countries of Central Asia and of near abroad.
When reprinting articles, a link to the journal is required.
Editorial opinion does not necessarily coincide with the opinion of the authors.

The magazine is published with the financial support of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

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FOREWORDS



MUKHTAR TILEUBERDI

**Deputy Prime Minister –
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan**

Dear Reader!

You are holding in your hands the first issue of the Kazakhstan Journal of Foreign Studies, dedicated to the 30th anniversary of our nation's Independence.

During these years, our peaceful and constructive foreign policy has become a strong foundation for the development of the internal potential of the nation. Since 1991, Kazakhstan has established itself as a reliable and predictable partner in international affairs, secured legal recognition and consolidation of state borders, established and maintains diplomatic relations with 186 countries of the world.

For three decades, Kazakhstan has been pursuing a constructive, balanced and multi-vector foreign policy. Our state is a member of many reputable international organizations, constantly interacts with the UN and its various specialized agencies (WHO, IMF, UNICEF, UNESCO, etc.), and strengthens cooperation with other influential multilateral structures such as the WTO, World Bank, ADB, EBRD, IAEA, OSCE, CICA, SCO, CIS, etc.

Kazakhstan hosted the OSCE and OIC summits, successfully held the specialized exhibition EXPO 2017 and several other major international events. Our country

has provided a platform for negotiations to end hostilities between the warring parties in Syria. The contribution of Nur-Sultan to the settlement of the conflict through dialogue is recognized by the UN and numerous world leaders.

This year, we commemorated an important historical date – the 30th anniversary of the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. Thanks to the strong-willed decision of its First President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan embarked on its nuclear-weapons-free history. This unprecedented decision was appreciated by the UN community, which declared August 29 as the International Day against Nuclear Tests.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic that began last year and taking into account the risks associated with the threat of bioterrorism, a new urgent task for the international community, in our view, is the development and launch of a system of multilateral control over biological weapons. As President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev emphasized in his statement at the general debate of the 75th UN General Assembly session in September 2020, the nations around the world should work together to prevent biological disasters and risks in the future. In this regard, he proposed to establish an International Biological Safety Agency, accountable to the Security Council, on the basis of the 1972 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction. This initiative has raised significant interest among our international partners and experts in this area, and today Kazakhstan's diplomacy is holding practical consultations on this issue with all interested parties.

Next year will be marked by the 30th anniversary of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) and the holding of its VI summit in the capital of Kazakhstan. The idea of convening this platform was first voiced by Nursultan Nazarbayev at the 47th session of the UN General Assembly on October 5, 1992. The driving force behind this initiative was the desire to create an effective and acceptable structure for all to ensure peace and security in Asia. We are trying to adapt CICA to the new realities and needs of the international agenda, developing new dimensions such as cooperation in the field of epidemiological security, public health and pharmaceuticals, as well as digitalization.

In 1994, Nursultan Nazarbayev proposed the idea of creating a Eurasian Union, designed to rationalize relations on a new, mutually beneficial basis between the post-Soviet states. 20 years later, an Agreement on the Establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union was signed in the Kazakh capital. Currently, within the framework of the EAEU, trade, economic, investment and humanitarian ties are increasing, cross-border and interregional cooperation is dynamically developing, large-scale joint projects are being implemented in various fields.

Over the years of Independence, Kazakhstan has created its own unique model of a society of interethnic and interfaith harmony, known and recognized throughout the world. The experience of Kazakhstan turned out to be in demand at the global

level, therefore our capital became the venue for the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

The 19th meeting of the Secretariat of the Congress, held on 6 October 2021, confirmed the relevance of the tasks of interfaith and inter-civilizational dialogue during the pandemic, when people tend to turn towards spirituality even more. In these conditions, it is important for representatives of different faiths, as well as religious leaders and politicians who bear a special responsibility for strengthening the values of tolerance and peace in these turbulent times, to maintain an atmosphere of benevolent, substantive dialogue, mutual respect and the desire to understand each other. This work will be continued and strengthened as part of the preparations for the VII Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, which is planned to be held in Nur-Sultan in September 2022.

Among other urgent tasks for all countries of the world, including Kazakhstan, one should highlight the development of effective national strategies for low-carbon development. Despite its high dependence on fossil fuels and the long road ahead to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement on climate, Kazakhstan's commitment to developing a carbon-free economy has no alternative.

As a party to the Paris Agreement, we have voluntarily committed ourselves to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 15% by 2030 from 1990 levels. In addition, in December 2020, President Tokayev announced an ambitious goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2060. Currently, the Doctrine of achieving carbon neutrality of Kazakhstan until 2060 is being developed in order to thoroughly decarbonize the economy. This document will present a long-term vision for the transition to low greenhouse gas emissions and the necessary transformations in all sectors of the economy.

From the first days of his presidency, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev clearly outlined the continuity in the implementation of both the domestic political strategy as well as the foreign policy of Kazakhstan. Our country continues to carry out constructive, “multi-vector”, balanced diplomacy, which has proven its effectiveness, ensuring a positive dynamic in the interaction of our country with leading foreign policy partners and other foreign states, while not compromising its national interests and firmly defending them in the international arena.

In the context of tectonic shifts in the global order, it is quite logical that Kazakhstan should adapt its foreign policy course to dynamic changes in the system of international relations. This includes challenges and threats such as the crisis of confidence and an increase in conflicts between various international actors, which leads to confrontation through sanctions, the erosion of the fundamental principles of international law, the exacerbation of extremism and an arms race, the activation of hybrid, cyber, trade and currency wars.

An important stage in the further improvement of Kazakhstan's diplomacy is associated with the approval by the Head of State of the new Concept of the Foreign

Policy of Kazakhstan for 2020–2030, in which the time frame for long-term planning of foreign policy activity was increased to ten years for the first time.

The key provisions of this conceptual document demonstrate the invariability of Kazakhstan’s foreign policy and the steadfastness of the fulfillment of its obligations previously assumed in accordance with international treaties and agreements.

Guided by the concept of a “listening state”, outlined by President Tokayev, the foreign policy establishment pays special attention to the human factor, which means focusing on the interests of both the state and society as a whole.

This was reflected in the further strengthening of the emphasis in the daily work of domestic diplomacy on promoting the practical interests of citizens of Kazakhstan and national business in the modern world. Our national diplomacy is becoming increasingly practical and focused on the specific needs of society and individual citizens. One of its manifestations was the large-scale work to assist tens of thousands of our compatriots, who expressed such a desire, to return home with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the same time, the Government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continue to actively work with international business to preserve existing investment projects in the current unfavorable conditions and attract new ones. Despite the obvious difficulties, certain successes have been achieved in this area as well. According to UNCTAD’s latest World Investment Report, in 2020, the extremely negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global economy has led to a decrease in the volume of net foreign direct investment worldwide by more than one third, reaching the lowest level in the last 15 years. Nevertheless, this indicator has increased in Kazakhstan by almost 35%, as a result of which our country ranked first among 17 countries with economies in transition and 34 landlocked countries.

In the current environment, we intend to continue to adapt the tools for attracting new foreign investment to new realities and to ensure effective protection of the interests of companies already operating in our market.

Overall, as a result of the successes achieved over the years of Independence, Kazakhstan has become an influential regional state, respected for its substantive contribution to international efforts to create a space of good-neighborliness and security in Eurasia.

At the same time, the country’s foreign policy is also designed to practically contribute to the progressive development of the national economy, maintaining internal stability, inviolability of the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of our country.

A significant contribution to the formation and implementation of the foreign policy strategy of any state is also made by an established expert and analytical community. An open reasoned discussion on public platforms, including on the pages of specialized publications, is a tool for a substantive and meaningful discussion of topical problems of international relations.

For many years, the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of Kazakhstan has been the leading think tank of our country, whose deep, systematic and consistent work, as well as constructive interaction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs contributes to the constant improvement and strengthening of our nation's foreign policy.

In this regard, I would like to wish the editorial staff, authors and readers of the new edition of the Kazakhstan Journal of Foreign Studies brilliant ideas, creative approaches and successful implementation of the set objectives!



ZAREMA SHAUKENOVA

Director of Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Dear Readers!

The Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, in collaboration with Representative office of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Kazakhstan, is pleased to present the first issue of the scientific and analytical journal “Kazakhstan Journal of Foreign Studies”.

The scientific journal focusing on topical issues of foreign policy of Kazakhstan and the Central Asian states. The journal will cover in detail and promote the results of scientific research on international relations, the regional agenda, as well as political, socio-economic development, the recent history of our country and the Central Asian states, prospects for regional cooperation and security.

This year the Republic of Kazakhstan celebrates a significant date – the 30th anniversary of Independence. In this regard, the first issue of the journal is dedicated to the path of our country in foreign policy for three decades. This issue presents articles on bilateral relations with Kazakhstan’s key partners — Russia, China, the USA, Turkey and Central Asian countries.

It should be noted that since gaining sovereignty, Kazakhstan has managed to achieve significant results in foreign policy, the distinctive feature of which is balance and constructiveness. However, our country, as you know, had to go through a difficult path before it was recognized as a reliable and predictable partner in the world community.

In the early days of Independence, the young state faced the issue of forming the key principles of its diplomacy and the system of national priorities. At that time, there were such processes in the world as globalization, reformatting the system of international relations, the redistribution of promising

markets and the occupation of new economic niches. In addition, Kazakhstan with a huge nuclear arsenal caused particular interest and concern among foreign partners.

In this regard, one of the first and important political decisions, which was supposed to demonstrate the peace-loving attitude of the young state, was the voluntary nuclear disarmament. This year, on this occasion, Kazakhstan also celebrated the anniversary date — 30 years since the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site.

Foreign policy, international relations, regional and global security issues have always been the most important priority of Kazakh government. It is explained by the fact that Kazakhstan is located in the very center of Eurasia — in a region where the interests of global and regional players intersect. The proximity with such nations as Russia and China increases the strategic importance of the Republic of Kazakhstan at the international level. The existing potential in the transport and communication sphere, rich reserves are the object of increased attention from the world community.

All this has a direct impact on the formation of Kazakhstan's foreign policy strategy, the distinctive feature of which is multi-vector nature. The conceptual foundations of the country's multi-vector course were defined and laid by the First President — Elbasy Nursultan Nazarbayev, which subsequently became the main unique and distinctive feature of Kazakhstan's diplomacy.

After 30 years since Independence, it can be confidently noted that the multi-vector course has fully justified itself. This concept implies balancing between various geopolitical centers of power that influence Kazakhstan and the Central Asian region as a whole. Now it is obvious that the President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev decided to continue with multi-vector diplomacy and repeatedly noted that foreign policy activities should bring concrete benefits to the country, business and every citizen.

It should be noted that by the 30th anniversary of its Independence, Kazakhstan has managed to become an equal, responsible, respected and authoritative member of the world community. Today, our country maintains diplomatic relations with more than 180 UN member states. All the necessary international conditions have been created to strengthen the sovereignty of the country and its further development.

In conclusion, I would like to express my great gratitude to all the authors for their contribution to the preparation of the first issue of the journal. The list of authors of scientific articles includes well-known and recognized international experts who reflect on the main stages of the development of Kazakhstan's foreign policy, focusing on the analysis of bilateral relations, key issues on the international agenda and prospects for the development of Kazakhstan's diplomacy.

I would like to express special gratitude to our partner, Representative Office of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Kazakhstan and its head Mr. Johannes D. Rey for his support and many years of fruitful cooperation with Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies. It is important to note that the Foundation is actively represented in Kazakhstan, carrying out activities in various areas that contribute to foreign policy

dialogue, peace, security, democratization processes, building a social market economy and a rule of law state. Joint work done on the main idea and concept of the journal opens a new page in cooperation between Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

We hope that the presented journal will interest a wide range of readers and will expand knowledge about Kazakhstan's foreign policy, as well as help scientists, experts and politicians to delve deeper into the specifics of international politics in Central Asia as a whole.

**DR. PETER HEFELE**

**Director Asia and the Pacific
of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Berlin**

**JOHANNES D. REY**

**Resident Representative of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
in Kazakhstan**

Dear Readers!

Welcome to the first issue of the new academic journal “Kazakhstan Journal of Foreign Studies” on behalf of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS). The concept of this new academic journal is inspired by our bi-monthly magazine “Politische Meinung” (Political Opinion) which we publish since 1956 on current issues of politics, public life, culture and religion.

The new magazine “Kazakhstan Journal of Foreign Studies” is a result of our cooperation with the Kazakhstan Institute of Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (KazISS) and aims at highlighting current political trends and debates, research findings and analysis from various spheres of life in Kazakhstan and other countries of Central Asia. It will cover a wide range of topics and issues, from foreign policy and geopolitics, economics, social developments to public interest and history. Among our authors are leading local and international academic researchers, analysts, political scientists, economists and historians.

We expected the Journal to fulfil an important demand for information and debate among other scientific journals and to become a source of debate. The content of the Journal can be accessed globally via Web-site in the future; hard copies in Kazakh, Russian and English will be available throughout Central Asia.

During 30 years of Independence, Kazakhstan’s relations with Germany have gained strategic importance for both countries. It was only one year after Independence in 1992 when diplomatic relations between our countries were established. Both nations

are linked not only by history, to a large extent due to the ethnic Germans in Kazakhstan. Active political dialogue and dynamic developments have taken place at all levels, from trade and investment to cultural and humanitarian cooperation.

Today Germany is one of Kazakhstan's leading foreign economic partners, as well as a key investor in the economy. German companies actively invest in the non-resource sector of Kazakhstan's economy, particularly in the processing industry, the chemical industry, building materials, transport and agribusiness. In Central Asia, Kazakhstan is Germany's leading trading partner – a region which has become of major importance in geopolitical debates these days.

In 2007 Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung has been invited by the Kazakh Government to open an office in Astana/Nur-Sultan. Our activities aim at fostering closer and friendly relations and mutually beneficial cooperation between our countries. We are confident that this Journal will greatly contribute to further strengthening the dialogue between our countries.

We would like to express our gratitude to Zarema Shaukenova, director of KazISS, to the editorial board members and the authors.

SCIENTIFIC ARTICLES

COOPERATION BETWEEN RUSSIA AND KAZAKHSTAN: ECONOMICS AND POLITICS



SERGEY LEBEDEV

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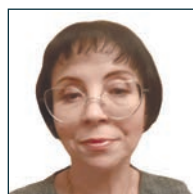


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■ **Abstract.** This article covers the issues of relations between Russia and Kazakhstan in the politics and economy using the methodology of foreign policy analysis. The synthesis and the historical method are also used. The article traces the evolution of Russian-Kazakh relations, analyzes the creation of the EurAsEC and the Customs Union. The outstanding role of Kazakhstan in the creation of these integration projects is emphasized. The migration

dimension of Russian-Kazakh relations is analyzed separately. The article emphasizes that migration, on the one hand, promotes cultural and social exchange between countries, but at the same time also creates certain political difficulties. The authors also analyze certain discrepancies existing between Russia and Kazakhstan. First of all, these are issues of historical memory and symbolic policy, as well as issues of language policy. There are also purely economic contradictions between Russia and Kazakhstan. However, despite these contradictions, relations between Russia and Kazakhstan have a stable base, both in politics and in the economy.

■ **Keywords:** foreign policy, Russian-Kazakh relations, economic cooperation, integration projects, Customs Union, EurAsEC.

■ **Introduction.** Russian-Kazakh relations are a subject for reflection by political researchers, economists and historians. There is a significant volume of papers devoted to this topic in scientific discourse. First of all, the article by K.E. Meshcheryakov should be mentioned, which is devoted to the analysis of the dynamics of Russian-Kazakh relations in the 1990s [1]. A similar study was conducted by A.V. Beloglazov [2]. The economic aspect of Russian-Kazakh relations is studied by M.A. Polozhikhina [3]. T.B. Sarbayev explores the issue of relations between Russia and Kazakhstan within the framework of Eurasian integration. The article by A.V. Kovalyova is of particular interest because it analyzes cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan in the space industry (Baikonur Cosmodrome) [4]. Finally, the impact of the pandemic on Russian-Kazakh relations is assessed by I. Akylbayev [5]. M. Dzhantaleyeva points to the outstanding influence of the Russian-Kazakh partnership on stability in the Caspian region [6]. V.G. Yaroslavtsev focuses on economic modernization and evaluates Russian-Kazakh relations based on modernization imperatives [7]. A.M. Shalamova explores the partnership between Russia and Kazakhstan in the law enforcement sphere [8].

■ **Research methods.** The article actively uses the historical method and “foreign policy analysis” [9].

■ **Results.** Russia and Kazakhstan have close relations in the political and economic spheres. The countries are actively cooperating in the field of Eurasian economic integration. It is the ex-President of Kazakhstan N.A. Nazarbayev, who at his speech in 1994 at Moscow State University, proposed the idea of creating a new integration association — the Eurasian Economic Union. Thereafter, Nazarbayev repeated his idea on multiple occasions and defended it both at home and internationally. A few years after this speech, the first attempt was made to create a Customs Union. By mid-1996, a package of documents establishing the CU was prepared. However, it was not signed due to certain economic contradictions between the parties — the countries could not agree on a common list of tariff and non-tariff exemptions from the free trade regime.

The idea of the customs union was revived in 2006. The decision was made at the EurAsEC Council by three participating countries — Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus at the Sochi summit. The parties, among other things, agreed to use a single customs tariff and apply uniform measures to regulate trade with third countries. Kazakhstan warmly supported the idea of creating a Customs Union and took on part of the legal and economic efforts to creation of this integration project. In January 2009, the Senate of the Parliament of Kazakhstan ratified a package of agreements on creation of a customs union with Russia and Belarus. In May 2009, the Secretary General of the EurAsEC (and the representative of Kazakhstan) Tair Mansurov informed Nazarbayev that the three countries have already agreed on almost 90% of all necessary documents. He also added that negotiations were underway to coordinate the remaining documents.

After formation of the Customs Union, Kazakhstan continued to take an active part in the activities of this integration project. Only from 2010 to 2012 there was a twofold increase in trade turnover between Kazakhstan, on the one hand, and Russia and Belarus, on the other. At the end of 2019, the trade turnover between Russia and Kazakhstan amounted to \$19.6 billion. At the same time, Russian exports to Kazakhstan amounted to \$14 billion, and Kazakh imports to Russia amounted to \$5.56 billion. The main Russian export items are machinery, equipment, vehicles, apparatuses, metals and products made from them, chemical industry products, as well as products of animal and vegetable origin [10].

It should be added that the idea of a Customs Union was widely supported by public in Kazakhstan, even though the creation of a common customs space led to some price increases. According to a poll conducted in 2013, 67% of the Kazakhstan residents had a positive attitude to the presence of Kazakhstan in the Customs Union.

Ex-President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev has repeatedly emphasized the inevitability of the integration of the Kazakh economy into the Customs Union. For example, in October 2013 in Astana, Nazarbayev spoke at an expanded meeting of the Government of Kazakhstan and noted that the volume of the domestic market of Kazakhstan is limited. The source of growth of the Kazakh economy can be integration into the Customs Union and the development of new markets, the expansion of the market space, “therefore, we are now talking about the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union...”[11].

Recently, economic relations between Russia and Kazakhstan have also received a new dimension — migration. It should be noted that in the political discourse, the issue of migration has varying interpretations. Firstly, the departure of people indicates a certain disproportion in socio-economic development between Russia and Kazakhstan (although it is gradually leveling off, since Kazakhstan steadily ranked indicator of GDP per capita after Russia). Secondly, mostly natives of the northern and eastern regions leave, which creates a disparity between the overpopulated south and the desert north of Kazakhstan, and the proportion of Russian-speaking and Russians leaving is also high. Thirdly, compared to other Central Asian countries, Kazakhstan is characterized by

low demographic growth. For example, in 1991 the population of Kazakhstan was 16.3 million people, and in 2017 — 18 million people [12]. As a comparison, in Uzbekistan the population has grown from 19 million people to 32 million people during the same period.

According to Russian Statistics Agency, 1.4 million people came to Russia from Kazakhstan from 1997 to 2015. About 300 thousand people moved to Kazakhstan from Russia. The migration balance is 1.1 million people — a figure that is very significant for Kazakhstan. The so-called educational migration, when young people go to get an education in Russia, and then stay there to work is a special problem for Kazakhstan. According to the HSE, at the beginning of the 2015/2016 academic year, 237.5 thousand foreign students studied in Russia [13]. Of them, 79% are students from CIS countries. Of them 36% are students from Kazakhstan. In other words, every fourth foreign student in the Russian Federation is a citizen of Kazakhstan.

At the same time, indeed, increase in migration has a positive effect — strengthening cultural and economic ties between the two countries.

The level of integration of the both countries achieved almost immediately after the launch of the EAEU shows, for example, the following situation. In November 2013, Vladimir Putin and Nursultan Nazarbayev met within the framework of the Forum of Interregional Cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan. Presidents discussed issues and problems of development of bilateral cooperation, as well as issues of interaction within the framework of various integration projects. In particular, the issues of expanding partnership in the fuel and energy, space, nuclear and agricultural spheres were raised. Vladimir Putin stressed the importance of the Forum for strengthening the partnership between Russia and Kazakhstan. In turn, Nazarbayev noted that industrial cooperation is a key area of development of cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan. He gave examples of successful cooperation between businesses of both countries — the mining and metallurgical complex, the uranium and chemical industries. For example, Kostanay region supplies pellets to metallurgical enterprises of Russia, and Pavlodar region supplies aluminum raw materials. N.A. Nazarbayev added that the Russian company Evraz Holding is completing the construction of a rolling mill in Kostanay. The plant, which Nazarbayev spoke about, was launched in December 2013, and already in 2014 received the Golden Hephaestus award in the nomination “Project of the Year” [14]. Nazarbayev said that at that time, more than 50 Russian-Kazakh projects totaling \$6 billion were implemented or planned to be implemented on the territory of Kazakhstan. At the same time, he stressed the importance of developing production with high added value.

The course of industrial cooperation outlined by the Presidents was actively implemented. Already in December 2013, the second meeting of the working group on formation of Eurasian technology platforms was held in Moscow. During the meeting, the results of the first stage of the formation of technology platforms in 2013 were summed up and arrangement of their further work in 2014 was considered. The issue of creation of possible mechanisms for financing joint projects within the framework of Eurasian

technology platforms was discussed. It was also decided to form other directions on the basis of Russian and Kazakh technology platforms.

Despite the difficulties that have developed for Russia and Kazakhstan due to a number of circumstances: lower energy prices, sanctions and counter-sanctions, the global coronacrisis, the previously achieved level of interaction between the two economies continues to persist.

Currently, the parties are actively developing economic cooperation. By the end of 2021, the trade turnover between Russia and Kazakhstan may amount to \$23 billion, which exceeds the indicators of the pre-pandemic period [15]. Russia ranks first in terms of trade turnover (20%) and imports to Kazakhstan (34%). Russia also ranks third in the structure of Kazakhstan's exports.

According to data for 2019, Russia is among the top five investors in the economy of Kazakhstan in terms of direct investment, along with China, Switzerland, the USA and the Netherlands [16]. There are more than 7 thousand enterprises with Russian participation in the capital and more than 3 thousand Russian-Kazakh joint ventures operating in Kazakhstan. The largest Russian companies are represented in Kazakhstan – Rosatom State Corporation, Rosneft, Gazprom, Lukoil, Sber, Rusal, Severstal, Mechel, VTB, and etc.

Cooperation is developing most closely in the fuel and energy sector. Russian oil and gas corporations are involved in the development of the Tengiz, Karachaganak and Korolevskoye fields. About three-quarters of Kazakhstan's oil is exported through Russia. In turn, Russian oil is transiting through Kazakhstan to China. Lukoil and KazMunayGas Kazakhstan Corporation signed an agreement on development of the Al-Farabi field, which is located in the Kazakh sector of the Caspian Sea.

At the same time, a negative balance remains in the foreign trade balance of Kazakhstan with Russia. This is a long-standing problem that worsened after the formation of common markets. To even out the situation, Kazakhstan may increase the export of agricultural products to the Russian Federation. Another problem that arose immediately after the formation of the Customs Union was the rise in prices for a number of goods.

Active investment cooperation continues. For 9 months of 2020, Russian investors implemented projects worth \$100 million in Kazakhstan. Among the implemented projects, the construction of an underground copper-zinc mine at Vesenne-Aralchinskoye field should be highlighted. It is also worth mentioning the construction of a solar power plant with a capacity of 100 MW by the HEVEL group of companies.

In July 2020, an intergovernmental agreement was signed for construction of fertilizer plant with a capacity of 1 million tons of fertilizers per year by Eurochem. Investments in the project will amount to \$1.2 billion. The St. Petersburg Tractor Plant is beginning the production of “Kirovets” tractors within the premises of Kostanay Tractor Plant. By 2025, Kostanay Tractor Plant will be able to produce up to 3 thousand tractors per year.

In September 2020, the construction of the KamLitzKZ cast iron casting plant was launched. This is a project of the Russian company KamAZ, the volume of investments will amount to \$200 million.

Finally, it should be noted that Tatneft and the Kazakhstan Allure Group of companies have agreed to establish a joint venture for the production of tires in Kazakhstan.

In turn, investors from Kazakhstan invest in such sectors of the Russian economy as mining and manufacturing, agriculture, food production, hotel business and logistics. For example, in 2018, KAZ Minerals acquired Baimskaya copper deposit for \$900 million. It is assumed that the total investment in the project will amount to \$6 billion.

Socio-economic cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan is also developing at the regional level. First of all, we are talking about cross-border cooperation. Russia and Kazakhstan have the largest continuous land border in the world, with a length of more than 7,500 kilometers (it is the second after the American-Canadian one, but it goes both in the south and in Alaska).

The legal regulation of cross-border relations begins with the signing of the Agreement on Cooperation between the Border Regions of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan dated January 26, 1995. Thereafter, the most important aspects of cross-border cooperation were outlined in such documents as Cross-border Cooperation Programs for 1999–2007, 2008–2011, 2012–2017, Agreement between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation for Kazakh-Russian state border dated January 18, 2005, and the Program of cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan in the humanitarian sphere [17]. A new Concept of cross-border cooperation was signed in 2019 [18]. It should be added that cross-border cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan is developing not only on paper, but also in practice. For example, in December 2013, the Akimat of the South Kazakhstan region signed an agreement with the Moscow region, whereby the Moscow Region will allocate land plots for the construction of logistics centers for Kazakhstani agricultural producers. Akim of the region Askar Myrzakhmetov noted that at the moment the main problem of agricultural producers in Southern Kazakhstan is not production, but the sale of products at a favorable price. Therefore, the Akimat carried out work to have business contacts within the framework of the Customs Union. It was also planned to build logistics centers in Yekaterinburg and Siberia.

In 2010, construction of a road between the Chelyabinsk region and Kazakhstan began. However, thanks to Kazakhstan's entry into the Customs Union, construction has accelerated. Initially, it was about the construction of a road to Andreevskiy settlement (length – 14 kilometers). But later it was decided to build an asphalt highway to the border with Kazakhstan (length – 27 kilometers). Investments in the project amounted to 100 million rubles.

Cooperation between the Altai Territory and Kazakhstan is growing. The common border exceeds 800 kilometers, so economic ties between Altai and Kazakhstan are getting stronger. As of 2013, 15 companies with Kazakh participation were operating

in the Altai Territory. At the same time, the share of Kazakh capital in total foreign investments in the economy of the Altai Territory was 36%. In turn, Kazakhstan accounted for 60% of all machine-building products exported from the Altai Territory [19]. It should be added that in the first year after the abolition of customs control, the trade turnover between the Altai Territory and Kazakhstan increased by 10%.

In this vein, a milestone event was the signing of cooperation agreement between three border regions of the Altai Territory and Shemonaikha area of the East Kazakhstan region [20]. This agreement will allow the relations of municipalities to reach a new level. Within the framework of the agreements, it was planned to create a joint venture in the woodworking industry, in the agricultural sector and in the agro-industrial complex. It is also planned to intensify work on attracting tourists to these territories.

Russia and Kazakhstan have very close cooperation in the field of security. Both countries are members of the CSTO, and, at the suggestion of the Kazakh side, a rotational appointment of the CSTO Secretary General was introduced relatively recently (previously, the Russian representative Nikolai Bordyuzha was the permanent Secretary General). The US withdrawal from Afghanistan and instability in this country increase the relevance of military-political cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan both on a bilateral basis and within the framework of the CSTO.

At the same time, there are certain contradictions between Russia and Kazakhstan that have not yet been resolved. Firstly, it should be noted that both countries have similar economic models, which means that in the markets of the PRC and the EU they act not as partners, but as competitors. Due to the similarity of the economic model, Russia and Kazakhstan have almost no segments where they could complement each other. At the same time, we are talking not only about the hydrocarbon market, but also non-primary exports. Russian and Kazakh companies are competing for the same market niches. This competition does not contribute to the growth of mutual understanding between countries.

Secondly, Russia and Kazakhstan have different approaches to the ideology and assessment of certain historical events (for example, the events of March 2014). Kazakhstan seeks to distance itself from anti-American rhetoric and seeks to show that, being a reliable economic partner of Russia, it is at the same time a sovereign state with its own foreign policy priorities. It should be added that the national-patriotic ideology is gradually gaining popularity in Kazakhstan (especially among young people). This means that there will be heated discussions about symbolic politics, historical memory, ideology, etc. As an example, we can cite the statements of State Duma Deputy Vyacheslav Nikonov, who stated that “the territory of Kazakhstan is a great gift from Russia” [21]. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan handed a note of protest to Russian diplomats, and the President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev published an article in the magazine “Sovereign Kazakhstan” in which he criticized the statement of Nikonov. It seems that such war of words will only intensify in the future.

Moreover, there is a serious risk that issues of historical memory will become a weapon in the hands of political populists seeking to play the nationalist card.

A separate dimension of these disputes is language policy. On the one hand, Kazakhstan is one of the countries in the post-Soviet territory with the highest level of Russian language proficiency among the population. According to the census data, up to 80% of the residents of Kazakhstan speak Russian [22]. At the same time, the number of school children studying in Russian is growing. For example, in 2013–2014 academic year there were 808 thousand of them, then in the 2020–2021 academic year this indicator was 1 million [23]. Despite this, the Government of Kazakhstan is conducting a course on Latinization of the Kazakh language. More than 90% of the document flow in the state bodies of Kazakhstan is in the Kazakh language. Thus, Kazakhstan emphasizes that it is a sovereign state with its own independent language policy. In turn, many experts in Russia are currently critical of the language situation in the country.

Geopolitically, there is currently a certain contradiction between Kazakhstan's interest in a multi-vector foreign policy and the growing influence of Russia and China in Central Eurasia amidst growing opposition of the United States (together with their allies – collective West) to these two continental powers. However, Kazakhstan used to be able to balance various vectors of its foreign policy earlier (for example, Nursultan acted as an effective mediator between Russia and Turkey, offered its mediation services to Moscow and the collective West on the Ukrainian issue, etc.). The election of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, who has extensive diplomatic experience, can serve as a guarantee that Kazakhstan will continue to effectively implement a multi-vector policy amidst growing uncertainty and turbulence in world politics.

In Russia, many experts express concern that the change of generations of the Kazakh elite will lead to the loss of many achievements in Russian-Kazakh relations. However, taking into account the current geopolitical situation in relations between China and the United States, as well as the growing risks in Central Asia, it seems that there is currently no alternative to the preservation and development of Kazakh-Russian relations.

■ **Conclusion.** In conclusion, it should be noted that in the conditions of growing conflict in world politics, relations between Russia and Kazakhstan remain highly stable. They have a strong economic basis, and there is a solid geopolitical component associated with the structure of international relations in Central Eurasia. There is a sufficient number of problems related to the economy, language, history, demography, migration, etc., which can be resolved within a large number of different forms of interaction, both multilateral and bilateral.



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U.S./KAZAKHSTAN BILATERAL RELATIONS IN A MULTIPOLAR WORLD



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■ **Abstract.** In the three decades since Kazakhstan's achievement of Independence and national sovereignty, the United States and Kazakhstan have enjoyed stable and mutually beneficial bilateral relations. Foreign policy generally takes place in the broad context of international relations. This article, however, methodologically limits analysis to the narrow band of state-to-state bilateral relations. The argument here posits four chronological stages of U.S. policy toward Kazakhstan: post-Cold War momentum; post-9/11 global enforcement; global repositioning; and global re-leveraging. The argument posits four stages of Kazakhstan foreign policy toward the United States: response and recovery; national rebuilding; international repositioning; and rebalancing. The bilateral focus brings to light foreign policy priorities of both countries. Looked at using this methodological tool, the historical record illustrates the high U.S. priority on international security and the high Kazakhstan priority on strengthening national sovereignty. The two countries' policy motivations were quite different but produced significant complementarity. The paper raises the question whether similar complementarity can be achieved in the future.

■ **Keywords:** American foreign policy, Kazakhstan foreign policy, diplomacy, world order, bilateral relations, international security, multi-vector foreign policy.

INTRODUCTION – THREE DECADES OF STABLE RELATIONS

The U. S. /Kazakhstan bilateral relationship can be characterized as highly important. From the point of view of Washington, U.S. relations with Kazakhstan are important for several reasons. Kazakhstan occupies a geographical position of geostrategic importance. Kazakhstan is a major producer and exporter of natural resources, one of the world's top oil producers and the world's largest producer of uranium. Kazakhstan was an unprecedented leader in decommissioning a Soviet-era nuclear weapons complex and world leader in subsequent nuclear non-proliferation measures. Kazakhstan was an early and earnest promoter of policy modernization, adopting and very effectively pursued seven key policy priorities: national security; domestic stability; economic growth based on a market economy; improvements in health and education; efficient energy use; improved spheres of transport and communication; and the professionalization of public administration [1]. Kazakhstan developed a highly successful diplomatic capacity.

From Kazakhstan's point of view, the United States has been important for the role it played on a global level as a stabilizing force in the network of international institutions. For decades the United States was responsible for the world's largest national economy and was a major producer, consumer, importer and exporter of a broad range of goods and services, ranging from primary commodities to advanced technologies. The United States supported the world's largest military expenditures, was a leading member of key international institutions including the United Nations.

The United States played a leading role in the world's largest security alliance, NATO, and as well key roles in other similar regional international security coalitions.

For these and other reasons, both the United States and Kazakhstan considered the bilateral U.S./Kazakhstan relationship to be highly important. The U.S./Kazakhstan bilateral relationship emerged soon after Kazakhstan's Independence and has remained a stable and mutually beneficial for three decades. But the world in 2021 looks quite different than it did in 1991. The status-quo that has been established following the disintegration of the USSR has been under increasing pressure. World order is by its very nature multipolar but the level of dissension today is arguably more multifarious than it has been in the past three decades. The rising influence on a global level of the Russian Federation and the Chinese Peoples Republic raises new questions regarding multilateral relationships and, as a consequence, of bilateral relationships between many countries. The emergence of new technologies, particularly in the fields of cybernetic information and automated weapons systems, is reshaping the correlation of forces of the past.

Situated at geostrategic fulcrum point in the rapidly changing international system, Kazakhstan occupies a pivotal position and can be expected to play a role of increasing global importance in years to come. The Kazakhstan Foreign Policy Concept 2020–2030 accurately identifies challenges emerging from the rapidly changing international

security environment. Kazakhstan's "Foreign Policy Concept" refers to the declining functionality of multilateral security institutions and the eroding efficiency of preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution mechanisms. Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev rightly called for giving new thought to shaping policies capable of addressing these emerging challenges [2].

In the pages to follow, the author of this paper proposes to pay a special attention at the challenges of the international security terrain. The methodological tool employed here intentionally limits the broad spectrum of foreign policy information and focuses specifically on the bilateral relationship between the United States and Kazakhstan. The paper briefly explains the methodology used in this approach. The paper then proceeds to a description of U.S. policy from the perspective of Washington as it looked at Kazakhstan as a newly emerging state, committed to peace, prosperity and strengthening its national sovereignty. Then the following section is dedicated to a political role of the Kazakhstan capital, Nur-Sultan (as a center of policy making – ed. note). This section analyzes policies pursued with respect to the United States, emphasizing the objectives and goals of Nur-Sultan. On the basis of this survey, the paper concludes with the observation that the factors which motivated the policies of the two countries were different but did complement one another.

The focus on bilateral relations leads to some important conclusions regarding the U.S./Kazakhstan relationship. By lowering the aperture to focus exclusively on bilateral relations, some unconventional conclusions regarding U.S./Kazakhstan foreign relations emerge. Two important conclusions emerge, one from the point of view of Washington's motivations and one from the point of view of Nur-Sultan's motivations.

Over the years it has been commonplace for analysts and journalists surveying American foreign policy toward Kazakhstan to stress the idea that U.S. policy was guided by the commercial interests of Kazakhstan's leading U.S. based foreign investor, the Chevron corporation, or by the myriad other U.S. based commercial corporations seeking access to Kazakhstan's mineral wealth during the early days of national independence. The analysis in this paper evidences that, despite perfunctory rhetorical statements, U.S. policy toward Kazakhstan was overwhelmingly led by international security concerns. U.S. commercial interests in the oil and mineral sectors and the ever-present concern with promotion of American exports was always an important element in U.S. policy toward Kazakhstan, but it was always in the background or in a position of second priority. American commercial interests were never the leading element of U.S. policy toward Kazakhstan; international security interests were always in first position.

From the point of view of Nur-Sultan's motivations in bilateral relations with the United States, for the first three decades of Kazakhstan's Independence, the long-term prosperity of Kazakhstan was the key goal of policy makers but that goal could only be achieved if Kazakhstan was successful in securing and sustaining national sovereignty. Achieving and strengthening Kazakhstan's national sovereignty was a necessary condition of Kazakhstan's national prosperity.

BILATERAL RELATIONS – THE ‘NARROW RED BAND’ OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

Bilateral relations between states represents one of the most immediate and consequential forms of interaction in today’s complex international community. A conventional definition of the international community refers to the membership of the United Nations (UN). The UN lists 193 member states. These states interact directly with one another, as well as with private entities and with non-governmental entities, on a bilateral basis but also with other states, separately and collectively, in the context of multilateral dialogue or in the context of multilateral organizations.

Direct bilateral relations consist of state-to-state, one-to-one interaction. It is the fundamental channel in which states represent their interests without intermediation or without the interposition of other entities. The first goal of the bilateral relationship is to calibrate the interests and capacities of their partners. It is not true that the goal of bilateral relations is to achieve a full compliance of international relations to national relations of one state. Critical aspects of international relations on a routine basis are dealt with through other multilateral channels or forums. Sometimes the bilateral relationship takes a secondary role to other forms or channels of interaction. Sometimes decision-making priorities emerge that are not addressed in bilateral discussions. Sometimes relations with third parties take precedence over the bilateral relationship. Indeed, sometimes outcomes are determined by factors that seem to dismiss, discount or completely ignore the bilateral channel. But this does not diminish the unique place of bilateral relations as an ongoing dialogue.

Seated across the table from one another, each party in the bilateral dialogue can express views, convey its national intentions, describe national capabilities, and articulate goals and purposes in pursuing national objectives. At the same time, each party can assess the capabilities and intentions of its counterpart on the other side of the table. Foreign policy decision-making is inevitably reflexive in the sense that states have their own capabilities, intentions, and strategies but they never make decisions on the basis of their own preferences alone; they always make judgments on the basis of how their actions will fit into the actions of the counterpart [3]. Two aspects — capabilities and intentions — are the guiding factors in bilateral discussions.

These naturally give rise to practical questions. What was the prevailing state of play in the international system at Kazakhstan’s emergence as a newly independent state? What were the goals and policies of the United States? How have these evolved in the past three decades? What were Kazakhstan’s goals, policies and achievements during this period? How have these changed and evolved in the changing international system? What do these general observations portend for the future bilateral relationship?

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD KAZAKHSTAN

The United States and the Republic of Kazakhstan established full diplomatic relations on December 16, 1991, initiating a bilateral partnership and at the same time signaling

to other countries around the world of the acceptance of Kazakhstan as a separate, independent and sovereign member of the international community. U.S. Secretary of State James Baker visited Kazakhstan early in 1992, underscoring America's commitment to Kazakhstan's reform agenda. At the Coordinating Conference on Assistance to the New Independent States that took place in Washington D.C. in January 1992, U.S. President George Bush noted that "in Central Asia, President Nazarbayev is leading the fight for reform." The U.S. Congress expeditiously supported new legislation to offer financial support to independent Kazakhstan¹. The U.S. established diplomatic representation in Alma-Ata in March 1992 and soon afterwards opened an U.S. Embassy that would become the largest and most influential in the Central Eurasian region². Almaty quickly became the most significant diplomatic center the region, home to Embassies from all the major countries of the world.

The U.S. government has conducted transparent relations with Kazakhstan and has regularly provided public information regarding U.S. policies, interests and objectives. Currently panoply of reports detailing economic and political aspects of U.S. bilateral policy toward Kazakhstan are publicly available³. Similarly, documents articulating the approach of the U.S. toward Kazakhstan in the context of regional partners, such as C5+1 Strategy, the U.S. Strategy for Central Asia (2015) and the "United States Strategy for Central Asia, 2019–2025" are also available [4].

Although this is not expressed in official U.S. policy documents, a number of propositions regarding U.S./Kazakhstan bilateral relations can be adduced from observation. There is a general organizational principle that "cadres decide everything". This is often true of diplomacy. The priority assigned by the United States to Kazakhstan is reflected in the leadership choices of diplomatic missions. Another general principle of organizational theory is that rhetorical statements of policy objectives should always be considered in comparison with financial commitments. Finally, a holistic reading of U.S. policy toward Kazakhstan can be interpreted in terms of four successive stages: post-Cold War momentum; post-9/11 global pacification; global repositioning; and re-

¹ Former Soviet Union Demilitarization Act of 1992, 22 U.S.C. ch. 68 §§ 5901–5931, is a United States Federal law created to coordinate disarmament efforts with the former Soviet Union. The Act, better known as the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1993, provided legislative authority for the United States Department of Defense supporting armament retooling, chemical demilitarization, and nonproliferation initiatives.

² In 1992 the city changed its name to "Almaty" to conform to the native Kazakh language spelling.

³ U.S. policy as a matter of principle and in accordance with federal statutory mandate produces periodic reports regarding important policy conditions and actions in such areas as market conditions and human rights. Recent public reports include "2021 Fiscal Transparency Report: Kazakhstan"; "2021 Investment Climate Statements: Kazakhstan"; "2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: Kazakhstan"; "2020 Report on International Religious Freedom: Kazakhstan"; "2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Kazakhstan"; and "Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs: Kazakhstan Summary." These and many other Kazakhstan related reports may be found on the U.S. State Department website and the U.S. Embassy website. The purpose of all government-prepared country-specific reports is to inform members of the U.S. Congress as well as the public regarding current conditions for the purposes of comparison and contrast. The purpose is not to "lecture" partner countries but to provide transparent, publicly available information in order to facilitate informed dialogue. These reports provide useful background information for bilateral discussions.

leveraging. U.S. assessments of Kazakhstan foreign policy intentions and capabilities include the Congressional Research Service periodic reports on foreign areas⁴.

Chief diplomats serve the head of state in their country of assignment. Leading diplomats conduct the policy determined by the head of state and ambassadors serve as the chief of mission, reflecting the priorities of the head of state. During the period 1991-present, the office of the U.S. Secretary of State has been filled by eleven occupants. The first of these, James Baker, visited Kazakhstan in person in 1992 and subsequent secretaries, with the exception of Lawrence Eagleburger and newly appointed and presently serving Antony Blinken, made state visits to Kazakhstan. Visiting secretaries of state routinely praised Kazakhstan for its commitments to international security, its economic progress and its stable promotion of national sovereignty.

It is noteworthy that ambassadorial appointments to Kazakhstan, beginning with William Courtney in August 1992 and continuing through nine appointments to William Moser at the present day drew exclusively from professionally advanced career foreign service officers. As known, ambassadorial level appointments may be either political appointments or draw from the professional foreign service. There are approximately 200 country missions around the world. A large number of ambassadorial appointments are also made to international organizations and filling positions such as special envoys, coordinators, and representatives. The fact that the position of U.S. ambassador to Kazakhstan was filled only by professional diplomats reflects the high priority assigned to Kazakhstan by the U.S. White House over the past six administrations.

Another important aspect of foreign policy is how the financial value of the activities reflects policy priorities. The U.S. budget is designed primarily to provide for the safety and prosperity of American citizens, not for the conduct of foreign policy. First priorities are American priorities. The planned U.S. government expenditures on an annual basis are included in a foreign affairs component and a defense component but other funding categories may also contribute substantially. The U.S. annual budget, adopted for the so-called fiscal year (October to September of the forthcoming year) is organized in terms of foreign affairs, defense, and domestic affairs. The defense component comprises a large portion, much larger than foreign affairs. In the Biden administrations Fiscal year 2022 budget, roughly 46 percent of total outlays are assigned directly to defense [5]. These expenditures constitute funding for foreign activities, but they also contribute significantly to domestic expenditures, such as personnel and military equipment expenditures. Consequently, these expenditures have significant domestic constituencies.

⁴ A source for U.S. bilateral relations with Kazakhstan is the Congressional Research Service (CRS) which produces reports for members of Congress. The client for the CRS is Congress, but some of the reports are available through the CRS website (<https://crsreports.congress.gov/>) and through a partner website EveryCRSreport. (<https://www.everycrsreport.com/>). Reports such as "Kazakhstan: Recent Developments and U.S. Interests." CRS Report No. 97-1058 (July 22, 2013) offer a candid window into U.S. foreign policy assessments.

A highly simplified rule of thumb of assessing U.S. foreign policy expenditures suggests that on a practical level the annual funding reflects the aggregate priorities. Roughly put, the priorities in terms of the time and energy that policy makers put into foreign issues run along the lines as follows: approximately 40 percent is devoted to national and international security; roughly 40 percent is devoted to economics and commerce; roughly 20 percent is devoted to the broad range of issues such as human rights, education, health and activities within the frames of the “soft power” traditional doctrine.

U.S. policy toward Kazakhstan included these three components (security, economics, everything else) distributed in four stages: post-Cold War transition; post-9/11 global law enforcement during the global war on terrorism; global repositioning during disengagement from Iraq and Afghanistan; and the current stage of re-leveraging in a multipolar community. What stands out, is how clearly the international security component dominated the first three stages.

During the Soviet era nuclear weapons facilities were spread out throughout the USSR [6]. At Independence Kazakhstan inherited 1,410 nuclear warheads as well as the Semipalatinsk nuclear-weapon test site. President Nazarbayev’s first formal act of office when Kazakhstan became an independent country in 1991 was to declare an immediate moratorium on nuclear weapons testing⁵. Immediate negotiations led to mutual agreement in which the Central Asian countries gained assurances of the protection of a U.S./Russian cooperative security umbrella [7]. In May 1992, the representatives of Kazakhstan, Belarus, Ukraine, Russia and USA met in Lisbon to sign a five party Protocol to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. At the same time Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan, as the post-Soviet states possessing nuclear weapons, committed themselves to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Kazakhstan made a historic decision to commit itself to nuclear complex dismantlement and nuclear non-proliferation [8]. Later, in 1994, Kazakhstan transferred more than a half-ton of weapons-grade plutonium to the U.S. for disposition. In 1995, Kazakhstan removed its last nuclear warhead and, with U.S. assistance in May 2000 completed the sealing of 181 nuclear test tunnels. Kazakhstan signed the START Treaty (1992), the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (1993), the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (2001). In March 2009, Kazakhstan led in the establishment of the Treaty on Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in Central Asia. Kazakhstan voluntarily gave up nuclear weapons to help reduce its threat. During the same period, other countries, including Pakistan, North Korea, and Iran, did the

⁵ Nazarbayev’s first decree as president of sovereign and independent Kazakhstan, signed on August 29, 1991, was to impose a moratorium on nuclear weapons testing in Kazakhstan.

opposite. Kazakhstan holds the distinction of being the first declared nuclear weapons state (in compliance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty) that voluntarily decided to relinquish the possession of nuclear weapons⁶.

A robust military-to-military exchange has taken place in the past three decades. Legislation that provided defense cooperation had provisions which allowed the President to waive some Congressional restrictions regarding compliance with human rights and political reform objectives [9]. Kazakhstan and the United States in 2010 launched the “Annual Bilateral Consultations (ABC) under Strategic Partnership”—having set a framework for cooperation on range of security issues including regional cooperation, security, democratic reform, economic development, energy, science and technology, and people to people contacts. Discussions of international security on a bilateral level in the context of the U.S./Kazakhstan Strategic Partnership Dialogue continue.

The United States has supported innovative measures as Kazakhstan’s hosting of the IAEA Low-Enriched Uranium Bank to provide assurances of the availability of nuclear fuel for power generation at foreign nuclear facilities. The agreement was welcomed as a significant step in the movement toward nuclear non-proliferation. The initiator of the idea, Nursultan Nazarbayev, has long labored to put the nuclear genie back in the bottle. Nazarbayev has argued consistently against the dangers of nuclear arms proliferation. In the French newspaper *Le Monde*, Nazarbayev recently appealed to Iranian leaders, urging them to abandon nuclear ambitions and follow Kazakhstan’s development strategy [10]. Nazarbayev pointed out that Kazakhstan’s abandonment of nuclear weapons played an important and beneficial role in Kazakhstan’s economic and political development.

The second major component of U.S. policy is the commerce component. The U.S. sought to facilitate Kazakhstan’s transition from the communist system to a market-based economy. Many areas of macro-economic reform in Kazakhstan started early and were highly successful, even providing a model for other post-communist countries. The Kazakhstan government put great effort into establishing a legal foundation and regulatory system for a private economy. The Kazakhstan government broke with the Russian ruble, introducing the national currency, the Tenge, which soon became convertible currency. Privatization legislation, based on the Czech model, was passed in late 1993 and proceeded to move most major state-owned assets through the privatization process by the end of 1996. The government

⁶ *There are states other than Kazakhstan that have relinquished nuclear weapons development programs. South Africa, for instance, maintained a weapons development program for a period of time before closing it. The South Africa program, however, was a surreptitious program, in violation of international accord. Kazakhstan’s nuclear weapons were covered under the provisions of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Article VI of the NPT pledges the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons by all parties. Kazakhstan was thus the first and only formally declared nuclear power member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty to voluntarily relinquish nuclear weapons.*

turned major enterprises over to the private sector, including most power generation facilities and coalmines. The government liberalized most prices by the end of 1994. The government established sound monetary and fiscal policies including revenue, spending, and borrowing policies. The government actively encouraged international trade and foreign investment. Kazakhstan became a regional leader in the efforts to spur Eurasian economic integration and policy harmonization in accordance with international standards [11]. The government established a regulatory structure for the private banking and financial sector. The government passed environmentally sound, oil and gas legislation that meets international standards. In May 2000 Kazakhstan won praise from the International Monetary Fund for its decision to repay \$385 million in IMF credits prior to the due date. In March 2002 the U.S. Department of Commerce classified Kazakhstan as a market economy, the first former Soviet country to achieve this status. Kazakhstan's transition to an independent and sovereign country was not painless, but it was rapid and ultimately successful.

Kazakhstan today is a substantial trade partner with the United States with a total of \$2 billion in two-way trade in 2019. U.S. firms have invested tens of billions of dollars in Kazakhstan, concentrated in the oil and gas sector. Kazakhstan has made progress in creating a favorable investment climate. A U.S./Kazakhstan Bilateral Investment Treaty and a Treaty on the Avoidance of Dual Taxation have been in place since 1994 and 1996, respectively. Kazakhstan became a member of the World Trade Organization on November 30, 2015. In President Nazarbayev's meeting with U.S. President Donald J. Trump in January 2018 a number of major trade agreements consisting of specific commercial contracts worth \$7.5 billion were signed. The Whitehouse underscored in press releases that the trade agreements were designed to: Promote U.S. investment in the technical modernization of Kazakhstan's economy (initiate the purchasing of Boeing planes in Kazakhstan; Initiate the assembling of 900 new General Electric locomotives in Kazakhstan; and further collaboration with the U.S. in Kazakhstan's agriculture sector) [12].

The U.S. facilitated Kazakhstan's economic transition to the model of market economy, but it did not direct it and the commercial interests never challenged the central role of national security concerns.

Several examples underscore this. One example is the case of AES, the electric production and distribution company. AES was formed in 1981 and registered as a U.S. based corporation. AES became a leader in acquiring and managing electricity

⁷ On March 26, 2002, the U.S. Department of Commerce found that Kazakhstan has operated as a market economy since Oct. 1, 2001. The determination was made based on the analysis of currency convertibility, foreign investment, free wage rate determination, government ownership or control of production, and government control of resource allocation.

production and distribution in foreign countries. As part of its effort to modernize the aging Soviet-era electricity generating facilities and grid transmission system, the Kazakhstan government took a series of steps to attract foreign capital and technical expertise through a competitive bidding process. (Kazakhstan Resolution No. 663 of May 1996 “About the Programme of Privatization and Restructuring of the Electric Energy Sector”.)

The U.S. government fully endorsed and enthusiastically facilitated the entry of AES into the Kazakhstan market during the first stage of Kazakhstan’s privatization. AES, and its subsidiaries, won a series of bids, gaining ownership of the large Ekibastuz coal-fired electricity generation plant, the Ust-Kamenogorsk and Sogrinsk thermal generating plants, Ust-Kamenogorsk and Shulbinsk hydroelectric plants, and an array of electricity distribution facilities. AES held ownership of the Ekibastuz facility from 1996 until 2007 when despite its expectations and wishes, found itself in position where it had to relinquish ownership of Kazakhstan facilities.

The transfer of ownership for some of the AES facilities involved ample remuneration, but AES had intended to remain as the owner of the facilities. AES later filed suit against the Kazakhstan government, alleging violations of contractual obligations. In November 2013, the AES suit was resolved in arbitration, largely in favor of the Kazakhstan government.

The case of the exit of AES from Kazakhstan illustrates that U.S. policy facilitated but did not guide U.S. investment in Kazakhstan. When Kazakhstan domestic conditions changed and the electric energy sector had recovered from the crisis conditions of the early 1990s, the Kazakhstan government decided upon the transfer of ownership to quasi-public companies it could more directly control. U.S. policy makers discreetly objected to the transfer of ownership but did not oppose it in any direct fashion. No official statement was ever made regarding the “nationalization” of American-held assets.

KAZAKHSTAN INDEPENDENT

Kazakhstan’s national Independence was a product of the end of the Cold War. From the point of view of Washington, the end of the Cold War came as a surprise. The American analytical community did not in advance “predict” the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The policy community was generally unprepared for the events and the long-term implications. Reflecting on the lessons of history, many in the American policy community expected Kremlin leaders to send tanks to defend the borders of the East European countries. Many were genuinely surprised when that did not happen in the way models, exercises and simulations led us to believe they would.

The breakup of the USSR marked a moment in history when the old assumptions, old precepts and the old rules of politics seemed to no longer apply. The emergence of a new, sovereign, and independent Kazakhstan called for a bold and determined new approach to foreign relations. During the early days of the disintegration of the USSR,

the foreign policy calculations of the Soviet republics was predicated upon a principle of national independence outside the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics but within the sphere of influence of Russia. That situation was forever changed by the Alma-Ata Declaration of 1991 which legally formalized the national sovereignty of Soviet republics as independent states. The Alma-Ata Declaration institutionalized a framework and mutual understanding among post-Soviet states which made it possible to avoid the dangers of the republics being split into a European and Asian parts. Kazakhstan's role in organizing and facilitating the Alma-Ata Declaration emphasized that Kazakhstan was an independent and sovereign state which promoted peace, stability, and security amid the processes of globalization and regional economic integration.

Russian policy officials soon reciprocated by asserting the principle of the so-called "Kozyrev doctrine" [13]. This was the idea that relationships among the former Soviet states relationships were to be interpreted in terms of the "Russian sphere of special interests"—a tendency which continues to the present day. Kazakhstan's position then was explicit in insisting that mutually beneficial economic integration was desirable but political integration was contrary to the principle of national sovereignty.

My own view of the period of Kazakhstan's transition from 1991 until the present stresses four stages of development: response and recovery; rebuilding; repositioning; and rebalancing. Each of these stages represent a different posture in Kazakhstan's foreign policy in general and Kazakhstan's approach to the United States.

Kazakhstan's response and recovery period was a period of close affiliation with the United States and reliance upon the common U.S./Kazakhstan interests in addressing the legacy of the nuclear arms race. The U.S. established good relations quickly in 1991 as the USSR was disintegrating.

Kazakhstan's initial policies toward the U.S. were receptively oriented toward the challenges of responding to the economic upheavals brought about by the disintegration of the Soviet system and helping the economy to recover from the shock and begin diversification. U.S. assistance was gratefully welcomed by Kazakhstan official sources, especially during the period 1992–1998. The Kazakhstan structural reform programs that began with the public policy improvements and privatization in the private sector drew on significant sponsorship from U.S. official sources and from private companies, particularly in the energy fuels and mineral extraction sectors.

Kazakhstan's rebuilding period began with a new legislative framework for private enterprise and privatization. Kazakhstan officials adopted policies regarding foreign investment, foreign ownership, foreign immigration policies in order to attract foreign partners and at the same time prevent neo-colonial control of industry, property, and citizenship. Many areas of macro-economic reform in Kazakhstan were highly successful, even providing a model for other post-communist countries

The first years of Independence were traumatic for Kazakhstan. The collapse of Marxist ideology and the severing of the Soviet-era commercial, scientific, and cultural

relationships left Kazakhstan without a clear foundation for political legitimacy. Central Asian analysts stepped forward to meet the new challenges.

Umirserik Kassenov, the late head of the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies, saw the importance of Kazakhstan assuming a cooperative position in international affairs. Kassenov stressed that the “strengthening of poorly developed state sovereignty in Central Asia is possible only if national development of the former Soviet Asian republics proceeds in parallel with the deepening of interstate cooperation and integration [14].

President Nazarbayev, as leader of a multinational and multi-cultural society, avoided resorting to a narrow idea of nationalism or establishing the hegemony of a particular ethnic group. Nazarbayev sought to develop a new intellectual legitimacy for the community of Eurasia [15]. Nazarbayev established a working group of specialists who were asked to solve the problem of articulating a conceptual foundation for the new Eurasian community. The working group prepared a series of proposals which resulted in the format for Eurasianism [16].

President Nazarbayev announced the idea in a speech at Moscow State University in March 1994 on the subject of the common Eurasian heritage of the countries of the former USSR [17]. He called for the reestablishment of a single Eurasian economic field characterized by mutual respect, equality, and fair play. Nazarbayev’s arguments regarding the many commonalities of geography, history, culture, and commerce among the countries of Eurasia were geared to encouraging greater cooperation among the countries. He sought to translate these ideas into specific policies. Successful economic and security programs should, Nazarbayev argued, reinforce the commonalities among the countries and facilitate the continued growth of commercial and political links throughout Eurasia [18]. Nazarbayev’s early statements made it clear that he opposed anything resembling the restoration of Soviet-era economic and political practice under auspices of the CIS or any other similar organization.

As the Kazakhstan’s economy grew and its role in the international community expanded, the republic entered the period of repositioning. Kazakhstan witnessed significant success in initiating new policies, promoting new business, and attracting foreign direct investment. In this stage, Kazakhstan foreign policy in a determined fashion shifted from a reactive foreign policy posture to an active posture.

A reactive policy posture implies a response to a situation, or to an action taken by other parties.

An active policy implies the pursuit of specific objectives. In general, a country’s foreign policy tends to be reactive in comparison with domestic policy. In terms of international law, all states enjoy equal legal rights but in terms of international politics all states are certainly not the same. The degree to which a state is proactive in foreign policy is proportional to the degree to which the state is influential in the international community. The more influential the state, the more its foreign policy tends to be proactive; the less influential the state, the more reactive its foreign policy.

In the 21st century Kazakhstan took actions which demonstrated the capacity to draw in substantial flows of foreign direct investment and take a seat in the most important multilateral institutions, joining the World Trade Organization, entering into an Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the European Union, and taking a seat on the United Nations Security Council (2017–2018). The opening of the Astana International Financial Centre in 2018 open channels of financial interaction with capitals around the world. Kazakhstan, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, took measures to relax border restrictions inviting business and tourism from many countries around the world. Opening Kazakhstan to business people and visitors around the world contributed to international understanding and cooperation, even when it drew criticism from states-partners who claimed they had the exclusive right to vet travelers to determine whether they should have right to travel to post-Soviet countries.

Kazakhstan's success in this repositioning period was so great that keen observers noted "Kazakhstan has developed a record of being the most proactive and innovative former Soviet republic in the sphere of international cooperation" [19]. It is Kazakhstan's proactive policy that is leading toward the next stage of rebalancing in a rapidly changing world.

BILATERAL RELATIONS IN A MULTIPOLAR WORLD

The prism of analyzing bilateral relations brings important features of a country's foreign policy to light. But in the end, countries pursue national interests and that sometimes requires factoring in aspects of the larger world views. Bilateral relations must be factored in to multilateral relations.

Kazakhstan's initial policies toward the U.S. were receptively oriented toward the challenges of responding to the economic upheavals brought about by the disintegration of the Soviet system and helping the economy of the country to recover from the shock and begin diversification. U.S. assistance was gratefully welcomed by Kazakhstan official sources, especially during the period 1992–1998. The Kazakhstan structural reform programs that began with the public policy improvements and privatization in the private sector drew on significant sponsorship from U.S. official sources and from private companies, particularly in the energy fuels and mineral extraction sectors.

U.S. policy toward Afghanistan in particular and Central Asian states, and consequently Kazakhstan, was abruptly changed by the 9/11 attacks on the United States and the subsequent U.S. involvement in Afghanistan and the global war on terror. This period from 2001 until 2014 might be regarded as a period of repositioning of Kazakhstan with respect to the United States. Kazakhstan was a cautious supporter—but not an ardent advocate—of U.S. policies in the counter-terrorism and counter-organized crime activities during this period.

The three decades of Kazakhstan's multilateral foreign policy activities were neither contested politically nor financially promoted by the U.S. side of the U.S./Kazakhstan bilateral relationship. On the whole, over three decades, U.S. bilateral policy was not oriented toward directly influencing Kazakhstan's relations with third parties, with the exception of the recurring and strong warnings during the Trump administration of the risks of rising Chinese foreign policy influence in Kazakhstan, particularly in the form of extensive new infrastructure projects in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative [20].

Issues such as the predictable but widely unpredicted emergence of the COVID-19 SARS pandemic created enormous disruption for Kazakhstan. In comparative and in absolute terms, the Kazakhstan government's response to the pandemic was prompt and effective [21]. The costs of the epidemic in terms of life, livelihoods and economic disruption were enormous. The worst of this period may soon be behind us, but there is no assurance that a repeat of this or even worse challenges may not be far ahead of us. Kazakhstan's repositioning posture can be expected to be geared to meet these challenges.

The status quo arrangements that emerged at the end of the Cold War were common sense arrangements for the time and conditions. But the social, economic and technological changes that have reshaped Asia in the past three decades have changed some factors and must be calculated in new assessments.

Chinese leaders share with Kazakh leaders a vision of a closely linked Eurasia and Asia, connected by a modern infrastructure supporting commercial vitality. China's proposal — "One Belt, One Road" — is a plan to finance and politically endorse economic development along the ancient "silk road" trading routes between China and Europe. The great bulk of Beijing's recent overseas lending pledges have been financed through the China Development Bank and the China Ex-Im Bank. Looking ahead, the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has signaled yet a new phase of dynamic transformation throughout Asia, a transformation which draws Kazakhstan and the other Central Asian countries toward an eastern-oriented foreign policy posture [22].

There are new concerns that some forms of economic integration imply a corresponding political integration as well. The benefits of economic efficiency introduced by new transportation and communication technologies may inevitably entail some form of political centralization. When this argument is expanded into the realm of great power competition the geostrategic implications seem more ominous. The level international diplomatic playing field of the immediate post-Cold War period seems to be eroding in favor of a fundamentally different international security terrain.

This new terrain is not new, but very old. Graham Allison's arguments draw on ancient history in warning of the security dilemma returning in the context of a new

contest between or among great powers. In *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape the Thucydides's Trap?* Graham Allison raises the classical question [23]. In the span of only one generation, China rocketed from a relatively underdeveloped and economically backward country to a juggernaut of economic and technological development. The great military strategist Thucydides described how the rise of Athens was seen as a threat to the position of Sparta and brought about a series of adjustments which eventually made a war between the two city-states inevitable. Allison rhetorically asks whether the power transition as America loses its position as the preeminent world leader in the international community to rising China, will this also make war between China and America inevitable? Even if it does not lead to direct conflict, can the tensions generated by this new competition greatly obstruct future cooperation?

CHANGE, CHALLENGE, AND CONTINUITY

Relations between Kazakhstan and the United States have remained remarkably stable during the past three decades. The focus on bilateral U.S./Kazakhstan relations used in this paper illuminates some aspects of foreign policy that may be obscured by the conventional “big picture” perspective. The narrow-gauge analysis of bilateral relations describes the priorities of the U.S. concentrating on issues of international security. The analysis describes Kazakhstan concentrating on issues of national sovereignty. The motivations which led the two states to close collaboration not identical — but they were complementary. This was close collaboration but for different reasons. Continuous and stable relations between the two states for three decades resulted in large measure from complementarity.

At the beginning and throughout the three years of Kazakhstan's national Independence, the leadership's primary goal was to build and develop the means to sustain its independence and national sovereignty. An advanced and educated population was the foundation for the strategy of producing and marketing primary commodities that financially supported the transition to stable national independence. Kazakhstan's multi-vector foreign policy involved the United States as a sustaining vector from the beginning and through to the present day, benefitting from the U.S. position as a defender of values, norms and principles in the international community. Kazakhstan subtle but effective diplomatic efforts enabled it to avoid pitfalls of confrontation with neighbors and competition over regional influence. Kazakhstan's successful efforts to develop a professional diplomatic corps have paid rich dividends.

At the beginning of Kazakhstan's national Independence, the perspective from the point of view of the United States was different. Many observers point to the United States as being primarily focused on commercial interests in the energy fuels and mineral sectors. It is commonplace for observers to aver that U.S. policy was essentially driven by these considerations. I have presented facts and provided argument for the view that,

while these factors were always present in the background of U.S. policy, they never played a determining role. During the first stages of Kazakhstan's Independence, U.S. policy was primarily oriented toward supporting international security concerns. At the earliest stage, U.S. posture was oriented towards doing as much as diplomatically possible to prevent the resuscitation of Soviet-style communism. As Kazakhstan progressed, U.S. policy shifted to supporting Kazakhstan's national sovereignty. U.S. policy supported Kazakhstan national sovereignty not to divide peoples of the former Soviet Union from one another but rather to underscore the principle that a national community, such as Kazakhstan, has the right to protect its own interests.

Seen in bilateral perspective, it is clear that U.S. policy toward Kazakhstan was atypical. If the "rule of thumb" description of typical American bilateral foreign policy priorities used in this paper (40% national security; 40% economics and trade; 20% all else) is accurate at all, then it would also be accurate to say that U.S. priorities toward Kazakhstan differed significantly from the standard U.S. policy formula. The assessment of this review of U.S./Kazakhstan bilateral relations, for the reasons outlines in the arguments above, would be closer to 60% national security, 20% economics and trade; and 20% everything else (health, education, nutrition, gender equality, civil rights, and so on). In other words, U.S. foreign policy toward Kazakhstan was very specifically oriented and conducted with an eye on international security concerns. This was an atypical set of priorities for U.S. foreign policy, a set specifically shaped for unique conditions of the U.S./Kazakhstan bilateral relationship.

The international security terrain today is substantially different than it was three decades ago. The U.S. foreign policy concerns over these past three decades have been focused on international security, especially with respect to Kazakhstan. The foreign policy concerns of Kazakhstan were heavily focused on national independence and sovereignty. Today the international security situation is fundamentally different, with new challenges crowding onto America's foreign policy agenda. The robustness of Kazakhstan's national sovereignty and Kazakhstan's role as a major international partner is no longer in any question. The reasons which initially brought the U.S. and Kazakhstan into close and stable collaboration no longer apply in the way they did in the past. Both countries now confront common challenges, but they are not the same ones as in the past. Finding the policy complementarity of the past in the years ahead will require strategic consideration anew and, presumably, enhanced bilateral dialogue.

In years past it was commonplace to speak of the "correlation of forces" to describe the balance and imbalance of vectors of power in the world community. Given the current state of world affairs, all signs point to substantial changes in the international correlation of forces. Leading strategic thinkers debate whether the structural changes currently taking place in world order are the result of fundamental shifting, ineluctable and presumably long-enduring forces or whether the changes

are situational consequences of current self-serving political agendas which can be expected to change over time [24]. Many strategic thinkers are seeking to identify the formula for a “new global order” which could be widely recognized and swiftly adopted as more equitable, more effective and more enduring.

That might be a successful maximalist solution, but it is one that requires a considerable enterprise of effort. A minimalist solution — one closer at hand, might be more practical. Enhanced bilateral relationships based on mutual understanding and mutually beneficial exchange is such a minimalist solution. The U.S./Kazakhstan bilateral relationship has been an exceptionally stable and productive relationship in the past. The reasons for seeking the benefits of a continued stable bilateral relationship under present circumstances may differ from those of past, but they certainly merit effort.



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THE IMPACT OF CHINA'S ENERGY DEVELOPMENT ON COOPERATION WITH KAZAKHSTAN



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■ **Abstract.** The whole world is on the verge of a global change in the energy structure to achieve carbon neutrality. This is especially true of the second largest world economy – China, in which energy is the most important driver of all economic growth. What will be the future Chinese energy policy and what will be the role of Kazakhstan in the future energy structure of China is the most important issue that requires serious analysis already in the current period. It is obvious that “green technologies” and the fight against carbon emissions are the main trend of China’s development for the coming decades.

■ **Keywords:** energy, energy resources, Kazakh-Chinese cooperation, strategy.

Analyzing the specifics of China’s energy strategy, it is necessary to clearly realize that we are not just looking at a strategy for the development of a separate industry. The PRC’s energy sector is the most important component for the functioning of the second, and in some cases already the first economy in the world, it is an area that is as closely connected as possible with such key areas as the agenda of international relations, security, economic reforms, the welfare of citizens, environmental indicators and much more.

After achieving this year the first centennial goal of building a moderately prosperous society, China has focused its efforts on achieving the next fundamental goal – achieving the level of

medium-developed countries. Energy policy acts as a key factor designed to ensure the achievement of these goals. We can trace the main priorities in this area on the basis of the 14 five-year plan published on March 5 this year, which focuses on improving the quality of economic development and living standards of people [1].

In the energy sector, the most important vector of development is ecology and green development, since it is impossible to achieve a qualitative increase in the living standards of people with the existing environmental problems of China. The country leads the world in terms of CO₂ emissions into the atmosphere. In 2019, for example, China accounted for 30% of all global carbon dioxide emissions.

Last year, the President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping at the UN General Assembly has stated that China will achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 [2]. To achieve this ambitious goal, China must reach a peak in greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere by 2030. Therefore, for the next five years, the task has been set to reduce energy intensity by 13.5%.

In addition, the 14th five-year plan provides a reduction in emissions by 18% per unit GDP, but it is difficult to specify exact figures here, since for the first time in the five-year plan there were no specific targets for GDP growth. The so-called "benchmarks" were proposed, allowing both central and local authorities to focus more on achieving social or the same environmental goals, without dwelling on the specific growth standards laid down.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

The most important principles of energy policy for the 14th five-year plan are the movement towards carbon neutrality, the development of renewable energy and the reduction of energy intensity [3].

The key points of China's domestic energy strategy include the following:

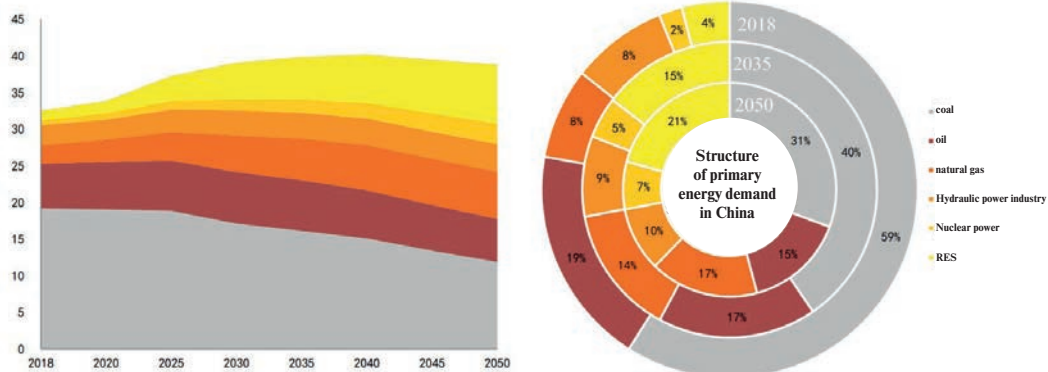
- Striving for carbon neutrality;
- Reduction in energy intensity and reduction in emissions per GDP unit;
- Reduction in the share of coal;
- Increasing the share of such sources as: natural gas, nuclear energy, renewable energy, hydrogen energy;
- Gradual modernization of a number of sectors of the economy, taking into account the new principles of energy sector functioning.

As for the external strategy, its priorities are more traditional and have been observed by China for the past decades, but the aggravation of the international situation undoubtedly increases the importance of almost every one of them.

If we consider specific energy sources, then China plans to significantly reduce the use of coal: from 57% in 2020 to almost 30% in 2050.

The use of oil is also planned to be reduced, but not so significantly, but natural gas, on the contrary, will be used more widely, its share is expected to almost double to 17%.

Structure of primary energy demand in China, megaton oil equivalent, %



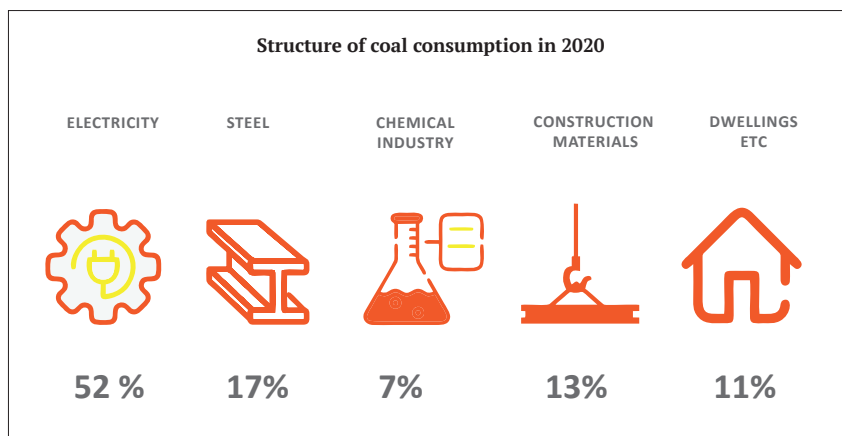
Source: CNPC 2050 Energy outlook / CNPC. 2020. CNPC Economics and Technology Research Institute [4]

Particular attention is planned to be paid to increasing the share of nuclear energy and renewable energy sources, their share is planned to increase to 20% by 2035.

COAL

If we focus in more detail on the key points of the Chinese energy strategy, then one of the basic goals is, of course, to reduce dependence on coal. Chinese experts suggest that the share of coal in energy consumption will decrease from 57% in 2020 to 50% by 2025 [5].

However, it is not so easy to abandon coal smoothly — it accounts for more than half of the net electricity production, which is then used both in industry and in the residential sector.



Source: China Energy Transition Status Report 2021[6]

The dependence of the Chinese economy on coal has become one of the main causes of the energy crisis that occurred in China this fall (2021). Thus, the shortage of coal, along with an increase in demand and rising prices, on the one hand, and the need to limit carbon dioxide emissions, on the other hand, led to restrictions on a number of industries, and sometimes on ordinary consumers of electricity.

However, in general, the trend is encouraging: coal consumption in China has seriously slowed down in recent years and it is expected that this indicator will soon become negative.

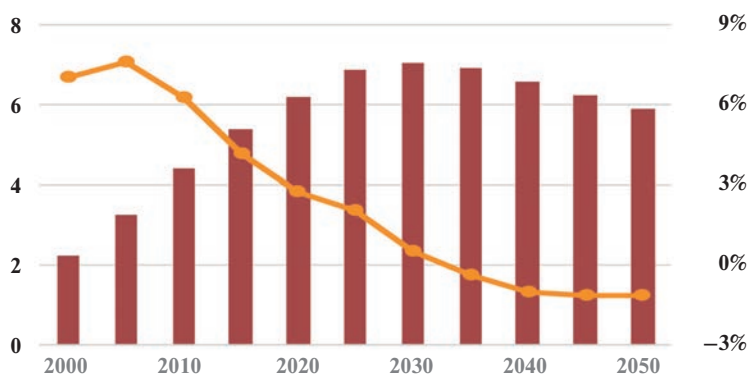
In addition, the introduction of so-called “green coal” is now underway as one of the compromise measures, we are talking about high-calorie coal, but first of all this means the introduction of technologies to reduce carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere, environmentally friendly waste disposal and the transfer of coal-fired thermal power plants to new technologies.

OIL

Oil plays a special role in China's energy policy. This is the dominant source of energy for transport currently and in the future for the next quarter of a century.

According to the forecasts of the CNPC Economics and Technology Research Institute, oil consumption will grow from 700 million tons in 2020 to 730–750 million tons in 2025. Peak oil consumption is expected around 2030, then it is expected to decrease to 590 million tons by 2050 [4].

Oil demand and its growth dynamics



Source: CNPC 2050 Energy outlook

Nevertheless, the role of oil for China should by no means be underestimated in the long term. If the share of coal is planned to be purposefully reduced, then the share and role of oil will remain extremely significant.

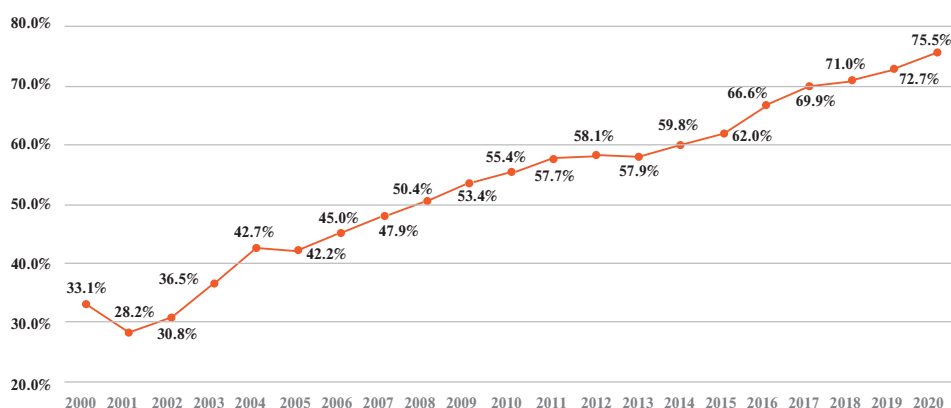
China remains the largest oil-importing country: about 542 million tons of oil were imported in 2020. This means that China gets about 75% of its oil consumption due to imports.

The largest source of oil imports in 2020 is Saudi Arabia, which accounts for 15.7% of all imports. Saudi Arabia is followed by Russia and several other OPEC countries, such as Angola, Iraq and Iran [8].

It is very important for China to ensure the safety of imports of petroleum products, especially under conditions of current complicated situation in the world.

The level of dependence of the PRC economy on crude oil imports is growing every year, and therefore it makes sense to increase the potential of Kazakh-Chinese cooperation in the field of crude oil supplies, since the need for this resource will only increase in the coming years.

The level of China's dependence on crude oil imports from 2000 to 2020 .



Source: China Energy Transition Status Report 2021 [6]

The 14th five-year plan specifies the following priorities in the field of oil production and supply: “to liberalize market access for oil and gas exploration and development in an orderly manner, to accelerate the utilization of deep-sea, deep-seated and unconventional oil and gas resources, and promote the increase in oil and gas reserves and production” [1].

GAS

The gas plays one of the basic role in the Chinese energy strategy: according to the forecasts of the Chinese authorities, in the next five years, the gas-based electricity generation increase by one-and-a-half times. In addition, gas will be more actively used as fuel for transport. Taking into account the fact that gas as a source of electricity is much more environmentally friendly than coal – gas power plants emit 50% less greenhouse gases than coal-fired ones – the use of gas becomes an obvious priority in the energy strategy of the People’s Republic of China.

It is expected that within the framework of the 14th five-year plan, gas consumption will grow from 326.2 billion m³ in 2020 to 420-500 billion m³ in 2025 and will continue growing. By 2035, the demand for gas in China may double [9].

According to the Wood Mackenzie scenario, during the period from 2020 to 2030, gas demand in China will grow by an average of 5.5% per annum. After 2030, growth will slow down, but by 2050, the demand for gas in China may reach about 660 billion m³ [10].

Today, China is the largest importer of pipeline gas and is expected to become the leading importer of liquefied natural gas (LNG) in 2021, leaving Japan behind. The demand for LNG is expected to double in the next 10 years [10].

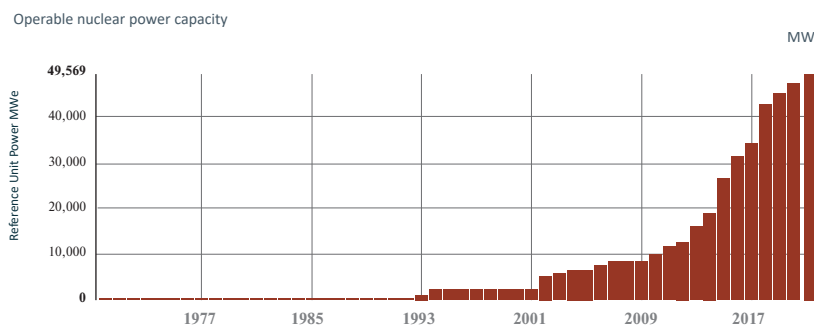
Today, Russian gas supplies to China are actively increasing. According to Chinese customs, its price turns out to be the most profitable. Thus, according to January 2021 data, the price of Russian gas was \$118.5 per thousand cubic meters. For comparison, Turkmenistan at the beginning of 2021 sold its gas to China at \$187 per thousand cubic meters, Kazakhstan – at \$162, Uzbekistan – \$151, Myanmar – \$352 [9].

NUCLEAR POWER INDUSTRY

China occupies a leading position in the world in terms of the pace of development of nuclear energy. As of 2021, the country has 49 operating nuclear power units with a total capacity of 46,569 GW. Over the years of the 13th five-year plan, their capacity has almost doubled [11].

In general, the share of nuclear power industry in total electricity generation increased from 1.85% in 2011 to 4.9% in 2019. The volume of nuclear power production amounted to 348.1 TWh, which is about 10% of the world's output, which brought China to third place after the United States and France in terms of total installed capacity of nuclear power and in terms of energy output [7].

The current capacity of the nuclear power industry of the People's Republic of China,



Source: World Nuclear Association, Nuclear Power in China

It is expected to reach the target of 70 GW of the installed capacity of nuclear power industry by 2025, at the moment this figure is 52GW [7]. According to possible scenarios presented by the Nuclear Energy Association, if the target installed capacity of 70 GW is reached by 2025, then there is a possibility of extremely active growth in the next five years.

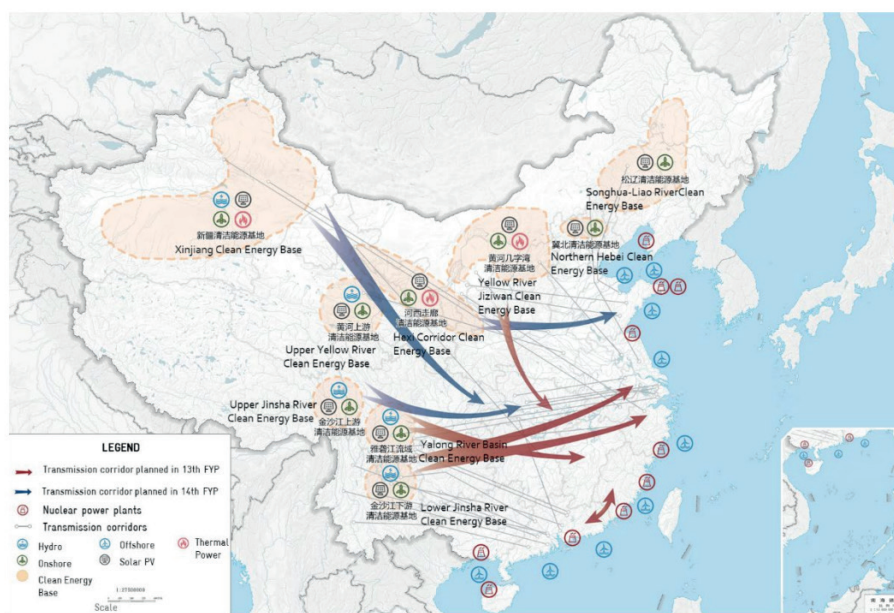
RES

According to the plans of the Chinese leadership, the share of non-fossil resources in the total energy consumption of the People's Republic of China is planned to increase to 20% by 2030 [1].

By the beginning of the implementation of the 14th five-year plan, the installed capacity of solar energy was 250 GW. This became possible thanks to the development of production technologies in China that are key for the generation of solar energy — polysilicon, silicon wafers, solar cells and modules.

The key volume of wind power generation is associated with the marine electric power industry and is provided by the coastal provinces Guangdong, Jiangsu, Zhejiang. The plans of these provinces emphasize the sustainable and large-scale development of offshore wind energy. The development of hydrogen energy is also indicated as a promising direction [7].

Location of clean energy bases in the 14th five-year plan



14th five-year socio-economic development plan /2021-2025/ and long-term goals until 2035

According to the 14th five-year plan, R&D spending will be significantly increased. Its priorities include the preparation of strategic scientific and technical resources and creation of a number of national laboratories in such major innovative areas as quantum information, photonics and nanoelectronics, network communications, artificial intelligence, biomedicine, and – most importantly – modern energy systems, etc. [12].

PROSPECTS OF KAZAKH-CHINESE COOPERATION

China is a long-standing and stable energy partner of Kazakhstan. Energy cooperation covers several areas: from the extraction and development of hydrocarbon deposits to the construction of infrastructure and from nuclear energy to the introduction of the latest technologies in the field of renewable energy generation.

Over the years of cooperation, two important pipelines have been built for the transportation of energy resources: oil pipeline and gas pipeline. About 150 million

tons of oil were transported through the Kazakhstan-China pipeline, of which about 12 million in 2020. In general, according to the Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kazakhstan has managed to transport about 147 million tons of oil to China since the start of operation of the Kazakhstan-China pipeline and 44 billion cubic meters of gas since 2013 through the Sarybulak-Zimunai and Kazakhstan-China gas pipelines [13].

Chinese companies hold an important share in oil and gas production in Kazakhstan. According to 2020 data, China ranks 4th regionally in terms of oil production in Kazakhstan, after Kazakhstan, the United States and Europe. China accounts for 16% of total oil production in Kazakhstan.

As for companies, CNPC ranks 3rd in the list of top 10 investors in oil production in 2020, accounting for 11.5% of production, or 9.86 million tons of oil. Citic produced 1.4%, or 1.22 million tons of oil in 2020 [14].

A number of data suggest that today the potential of the Kazakh-Chinese energy partnership is not being fully used. Thus, for the first half of 2021, China ranks only 10th in the list of countries to which Kazakh oil is exported [15]. In addition, 2021 figures show a decline in exports of both oil and natural gas to China.

Kazakhstan's exports to China in January-July 2021 and dynamics compared to the corresponding period in 2020[16]

1.	Commodity item	US Dollar	growth
2.	Copper and copper alloys	1.3 billion	+30%
3.	Copper ores and concentrates	880.5 million	+40,3%
4.	Crude oil and petroleum products	745.2 million	-27,6%
5.	Natural gas	675.5 million	-27,5%
6.	Ferroalloys	441.1 million	+6,7%
7.	Iron ores and concentrates	402.1 million	+46,4%
8.	Raw zinc	300.4 million	+24,6%
9.	Natural uranium	174.9 million	-63,5%
10.	Precious metal ores	126.9 million	+6,3%

Source: LS with reference to the SRC

At the same time, the potential for the development of bilateral energy cooperation, including well-established mechanisms for interaction and supply of energy resources, the above-shown steady trend of increasing demand in China for such energy resources as gas, oil, uranium, allows Kazakhstan to significantly expand the role of Kazakhstan in the implementation of China's energy strategy. Taking into account the fact that from 2023 Kazakhstan falls under the carbon tax in Europe and the profitability of energy source supplies in this direction will decrease significantly, the Chinese export vector is becoming more and more significant.



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RELATIONS BETWEEN KAZAKHSTAN AND TURKEY: BEYOND 30 YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION



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■ **Abstract.** On December 16, 1991 Kazakhstan declared its independence from the Soviet Union. Turkey recognized Kazakhstan's Independence on the same day. 2021 marks the thirtieth anniversary of independent Kazakhstan. Three decades of independent Kazakhstan witnessed a continuous deepening of relations between Nur-Sultan and Ankara. Apart from establishing an unbreakable strategic partnership in the political area, two countries succeeded in building ever stronger ties in terms of economic relations, trade, education and culture at large. The high-level commitment from the leaderships of both countries have been conducive to this end. Today, both countries are on the eve of exploring new venues of interaction and cooperation. After presenting an overview of the past thirty years of relations between two countries, this paper presents tourism, renewable energy and agriculture as areas where lies a synergistic potential of collaboration.

■ **Introduction.** Kazakhstan and Turkey are two brotherly countries with a shared historical and cultural past. Turkey is the first country which officially recognized Kazakhstan, back in 1991 [1]. Since Independence of Kazakhstan, relations between two countries have been developing intensely in many spheres including politics, military, trade, education, science, culture, etc. Today, Kazakhstan and Turkey are each other's significant partners in their respective regions. Relations have been institutionalized through a great number of official agreements.

From a broader perspective, the partnership between these two friendly nations has always been a big contribution to the peace and prosperity of Turkic World, Eurasia and the globe. This article discusses the past and current status of relations between these two countries.

As mentioned above, relations between two nations have deep roots, with the first official diplomatic relations beginning between the Kazakh Khanate and the Ottoman Empire in the early 18th century. Because of distance and the general circumstances of the era, relations were mainly confined to exchange of official letters and issues related to pilgrims from Kazakhstan visiting holy cities of Mecca and Medinah, which were Ottoman territories at the time.

A turning point occurred when, at the invitation of Kazakhstan's then-President of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic Nursultan Nazarbayev, the official visit of the President of Turkey Turgut Özal took place, in March 1991, before Independence of Kazakhstan from the Soviet Union. This visit has a symbolic importance in the sense that it was the first time when a foreign head of state visited modern Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan and Turkey signed an agreement on cooperation in political, trade-economic, scientific-technical, ecological, cultural, social, communication, and in other areas during the visit [2].

In September same year, the Presidents Nazarbayev and Özal signed a declaration in Ankara containing the principles and objectives of bilateral relations. President Nursultan Nazarbayev defined during his visit to Turkey, the 21st century as the "Turks' century" [3]. Turkey established diplomatic relations with Kazakhstan following the latter's independence after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. On March 2, 1992, diplomatic relations were officially established, Turkey became the first country to establish diplomatic relations with sovereign Kazakhstan. On April 21, 1992, the first Ambassador of Turkey to Kazakhstan, Argun Ozpay, presented his letter of credentials to the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev. Therefore, after Turkey became the first country to establish diplomatic relations with Kazakhstan, the Turkish diplomatic mission became the first foreign representation in the history of independent Kazakhstan. Reciprocally, Kazakhstan opened its Embassy in the capital of Turkey, Ankara, later in the same year.

Since then, relations gained momentum through a number of high-level visits. During the period of his presidency since 1991, the First President of Kazakhstan, Elbasy Nursultan Nazarbayev visited Turkey 24 times, in total. Current President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev is also planning an official visit to Turkey. Meanwhile, the Turkish side paid dozens of official visits to Kazakhstan at the presidential and ministerial levels, too. Presidents and Prime Ministers of Turkey visited Kazakhstan 21 times, until 2019 [4].

This high number of visits contributed to a rapid institutionalization of bilateral relations. The Intergovernmental Joint Economic Commission was established in late 1993. In October 2009, the Strategic Partnership Agreement was signed during the

visit of President Nursultan Nazarbayev to Turkey. 2012 represents another milestone in relations between two countries. The High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC) was established during the visit of then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, to Kazakhstan in May 2012. The mechanism of HLSCC has provided an institutionalized framework to bilateral relations. The first meeting of the HLSCC was held on 11–12 October 2012 during the visit of President Nursultan Nazarbayev to Turkey. The second meeting of the HLSCC was held during the visit of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to Kazakhstan on 15-17 April 2015.

From an analytical perspective, it can be argued that relations between Kazakhstan and Turkey were supported from the highest level contributing to the ever-deepening nature of relations between two countries. To illustrate, the authority and personality of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Elbasy Nursultan Nazarbayev played a special role in the development of Kazakh-Turkish relations in the spirit of friendship and cooperation. Also, Turkish presidents, Turgut Ozal (1989-1993) and Suleyman Demirel (1993-2000) played significant roles in the early period of relations between two countries. The consistent intensification of cooperation between the two friendly countries in many areas including politics, trade, education is basically due to this strong mutual support at the highest level [5]. Let us now turn to main areas where Kazakh-Turkish relations have been materialized most.

ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AND TRADE

Economic relations and trade has always been one of the spearheads in Kazakh-Turkish relations. The trade between two countries demonstrates an upward trend in general. In 1992, the trade volume between two countries amounted to \$30 million only. In 2005 it exceeded the \$1 billion limit for the first time [6]. While Turkey's exports to Kazakhstan increased from \$460 million in 2005 to \$979 million in 2020, Kazakhstan's exports to Turkey grew from \$559 million in 2005 to nearly \$1.2 billion in 2020. It should be noted that the COVID-19 pandemic caused some trade disruptions all over the world, particularly in 2020, resulting in a shrinkage in trade volumes. Bilateral trade volume reached its peak, to almost \$3,9 billion in 2019. In the course of the visit of President of Kazakhstan Nazarbayev to Turkey in 2018, Nazarbayev and Erdogan declared their common goal to increase the volume of trade to \$5 billion in the short run and to \$10 billion in the long run. Thus, due to the pandemic it is yet to be seen when the aforementioned goals will be realized. In Kazakhstan, Turkish entrepreneurs are active particularly in sectors of food, medical-chemical industry, construction, hotel management, retail and manufacturing. Turkish construction companies in Kazakhstan have completed projects worth \$23,5 billion by 2019.

Turkey is second only to Russia in establishing joint enterprises with foreign participation in Kazakhstan, with more than 2 thousand companies. Until 2020, more than 5 hundred projects worth \$24.4 billion are being implemented with the participation of Turkish investors, in total. Turkish investments are present in

various sectors of the economy of Kazakhstan: construction, telecommunications, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, food processing, industrial projects. Kazakhstan sells oil and oil products, metals, grain and other raw materials to Turkey while Turkey supplies fabrics, clothing, footwear, industrial equipment, household goods and construction goods to Kazakhstan [7].

As it is well-known, Kazakhstan and Turkey are situated at two strategic locations when the modern Silk Road is concerned. Kazakhstan is the starting point of the westward route originating from China (and east Asia at large), while Turkey is located at the westernmost point of the route in Asia, gradually appearing more of a hub connecting the Middle East, Balkans and Caucasus. As aptly put, wings of Eurasia, Turkey towards the west, Kazakhstan towards the east [8].

Both countries' importance in world trade networks increased after China officially announced its mammoth project of "the Belt and Road" at Nazarbayev University in Astana (Nur-Sultan) back in 2013. Today, Kazakhstan shares the biggest dry port in the world, namely Khorgos with China, while Turkey hosts critical portions of Eurasian railroads, highways and sea ports. In brief, both countries play pivotal roles vis a vis the Belt and Road Initiative and greatly contribute to the smooth functioning of trade operations along this global network. End of the hostilities between Azerbaijan and Armenia could possibly contribute to enhancement of trade along this route and more specifically between Kazakhstan and Turkey. Opening up a new corridor between Nakhcivan and Azerbaijan will shorten the route of the so-called "middle corridor".

EDUCATION AND CULTURAL SPHERES

Cultural exchanges among countries generally demonstrate the true color and density of bilateral relations. Despite the sizable geographic distance, cultural interaction between Kazakhstan and Turkey has always tended to be intense. This is mainly because of the fact that two countries share a common history, speak languages from the same family, and have close cultural values in general. This shared culture unfolded itself soon after Kazakhstan's Independence in numerous forms, notably in the educational area.

Following the establishment of diplomatic relations between Central Asian states and Turkey, Turkey launched the Great Student Project in 1992 and offered thousands of scholarships annually for university students coming from the "atayurt" (fatherland). According to the research authors D. Ametbek and A. Amirbek from Kazakhstan's perspective, Turkish scholarships were considered as an important opportunity to increase the level of education. Until 2011, Turkey was the country which provided the most number of scholarships for Kazakh citizens [9]. According to the Higher Education Information Management System Statistics of Turkey, the number of Kazakh university students studying in Turkey for the 2018–2019 academic year was 2,191 [10].

Khoja Akhmet Yassawi International Turkish-Kazakh University was established by the intergovernmental agreement between Kazakhstan and Turkey on October 31,

1992. Since its inception, it has been one of the pioneering and most significant elements in Kazakh-Turkish cooperation in educational and cultural realms. According to official figures for the 2018-2019 academic year, there were more than 10,000 students enrolled in different programs at the university, and the number of students from the Turkic World and related communities was 1,372 [11]. While the main campus is based in the spiritual capital of Turkic world, the city of Turkistan, the university also has units in centers like Almaty, Shymkent and Kentau. Akhmet Yassawi University is now ranked among the top universities in Kazakhstan and in greater Central Asia according to QS rankings [12].

Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) of Turkey is another significant venue where Kazakh-Turkish relations manifest. TIKA has an office in the capital city Nur-Sultan focusing basically on expert training, internships, experience sharing, humanitarian aid, development assistance, and the provision of Kazakh universities and hospitals with books and equipment. According to D. Tal dybayeva, an analysis of TIKA's annual reports in the last two decades denote a significant increase in scope and number of activities and assistance measures in years [13].

With regard to cultural exchanges between Kazakhstan and Turkey, one should also mention Yunus Emre Institute, which plays an active role in the promotion of the Turkish language and culture in Kazakhstan. Yunus Emre Institute's main mission is to improve Turkey's relations with different cultures of the world. The institute began its activity in Kazakhstan by opening an office in the capital Nur-Sultan in 2010. It is also worth mentioning that Kazakhstan is currently the only country in Central Asia that hosts a branch of the Yunus Emre Institute, which is affiliated to the Yunus Emre Foundation. Since its opening, the Yunus Emre Institute has been organizing many activities such as Turkish language teaching, Turkish summer schools, Turkish folk dance courses, archery courses, etc. In addition to these, the Applied Cultural Diplomacy Training Program also provides opportunities for students within the Yunus Emre Institute [14]. Finally, it should also be noted that activities of both TIKA and Yunus Emre Institute are not limited to Nur-Sultan where their offices are located but covering the entire Kazakhstan.

The Turkic Council, TURKSOY, TURKPA, the Turkic Academy, and the Foundation of Turkic Culture and Heritage should be mentioned as significant venues related to cultural and educational cooperation where Kazakh and Turkish officials mutually utilize as regional fora for dialogue and initiation of numerous projects. These initiatives, most of which originated in the 1990s, recently gained notable authority and are able to give impetus for further cultural cooperation among all Turkic states.

The International Organization of Turkic Culture (TURKSOY), was founded in 1993 thanks to proposal from Nursultan Nazarbayev, the First President of Kazakhstan. Since then it has become one of the pillars of Turkic integration in terms of culture. TURKSOY aims revival of cultural, humanitarian and spiritual ties between the Turkic-speaking peoples and popularizing Turkic culture at a high international level. "Cultural Capital of the Turkic World" appears to be one of the noteworthy titles which was initiated by TURKSOY in 2012. Within this framework, each year, a city

from one of the Turkic state is awarded with the title of the “cultural capital”. Nur-Sultan (then, Astana) was chosen as the first cultural capital of the Turkic world in 2012. In 2013, Eskişehir of Turkey was chosen as the cultural capital. The city of Khoja Akhmed Yassawi – Turkistan, was declared the cultural capital of the Turkic world in 2017. TURKSOY chose Kastamonu in 2018 and Bursa of Turkey in 2022. It should be underlined that TURKSOY is significant not only in terms of its range of activities, but also with regard to its geographic scope. While all independent Turkic states are members of TURKSOY, namely Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan, its observers include even a wider area: the Altai Republic, Bashkiria, the Autonomous Republic of Gagauzia, the Republic of Khakassia, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, the Republic of Sakha, Tatarstan and Tuva.

Last but not the least, Kazakhstan and Turkey developed a tradition of commemorating their cultural figures of historical importance, fostering the sharedness of their past. To illustrate, in 2016, a monument to the Kazakh poet Suyunbay Aronuly was opened in Ankara, an alley named after kuishi Tattimbet Kazangapuly and a park named after kuishi Dina Nurpeisova appeared. In 2017, a street in Ankara was named in honor of the great Kazakh zhyrau Zhambyl Zhabayev. In 2018, a monument to Magzhan Zhumabay was erected in Ankara, and a school in Istanbul was named after Abai Kunanbay. In gratitude for the contributions to the unification of the Turkic world, a monument to Nursultan Nazarbayev was opened in Ankara in 2010. This has been the first monument in Turkish capital devoted to a foreign leader, symbolizing the level of friendship between two countries. In response, a monument in the name of the founder of the modern Turkish Republic Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was built in Nur-Sultan [15].

POLITICAL SPHERE

Kazakhstan and Turkey are actively developing political cooperation within the framework of international organizations including the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Economic Cooperation (ECO), the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the CICA, the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the Cooperation Council of Turkic-speaking States.

Good political relations between two countries have become visible in many occasions. Kazakhstan and Turkey have always supported each other with regard to their regional or international endeavors. For instance, Kazakhstan has actively supported Turkey’s bid for membership in the European Union. Turkey supported Kazakhstan’s candidacy for the world exhibition, “Expo-2017”. Turkey also supported Kazakhstan as a candidate for non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council. Turkey’s role in support of Kazakh membership in the WTO should also be underlined. Turks will never forget the full support of Kazakh people and Kazakh leadership by Elbasy Nursultan Nazarbayev after the failed coup attempt in 2016. Nazarbayev was the first leader who

visited Turkey after the incidence. Finally, it should be reminded that Kazakhstan's role, through Nazarbayev's leadership, was pivotal in rapprochement between Turkey and Russian Federation in 2016-2017.

Cooperation in military affairs is a relatively new contribution to basket of benefits both countries aim to develop in the last threedecades. Within this context, in a meeting in September 2018 between presidents Nursultan Nazarbayev and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the "Military Cooperation Agreement" and the "Mutual Protection Agreement for the Classified Information in the Military Field" were signed [16]. In line with these texts, we have seen an exchange of visits by heads of military staff in recent years which herald a more fruitful military cooperation in the years to come.

KAZAKHSTAN AND TURKEY: NEW HORIZONS OF COOPERATION

While cooperation between two countries continues to grow in many dimensions, there are several relatively less-developed areas where Kazakhstan and Turkey may develop stronger partnerships in the years to come. I would argue that tourism, renewable energy, and agriculture are three realms with considerable potential for win-win scenarios. In this section, I will briefly touch upon these areas.

Firstly, tourism should be mentioned as a promising sphere. Cooperation between Kazakhstan and Turkey in the area of tourism started in October 1992, with the signing of the specific agreement on cooperation in tourism in Almaty. Cooperation in tourism between two countries gained momentum particularly after the establishment of the institutionalized framework of Kazakh-Turkish Intergovernmental Joint Economic Commission in late 1993. As of the second half of the 2010s, nearly half a million Kazakh citizens are visiting Turkey for touristic purposes on a yearly basis. Unfortunately, this flow is not reciprocal. Number of Turkish tourists who visit Kazakhstan is around one fourth of the above mentioned figure. However, there is a huge potential in this context: Kazakhstan is known as part of the ancestral fatherland ("atayurt") of Turkish people and there is a great sympathy towards Kazakh culture in Turkey. Moreover, Kazakhstan is full of natural wonders like Altyn Emel Park, Charyn Canyon, Tien-Shan Mountain range, limitless steppes, etc. In addition it is a motherland to such historical sights as Otrar, Turkistan (and Akhmet Yassawi's Mosoleum), and modern cities like Nur-Sultan which hosts a great number of attractions [17]. Given the increased transport capacities between two countries via the opening of new airports like the one in Istanbul and one in Turkistan, we could expect that the flow of tourists across two countries will intensify in the near future.

Secondly, renewable energy is another area that both countries may greatly benefit from an enhanced level of cooperation. Like between their economies in general, energy relations between Kazakhstan and Turkey also feature a significant degree of complementarity. Kazakhstan is a country with huge renewable energy potential. Apart from conventional hydro-energy, the country is also rich in terms of solar energy and wind energy. To illustrate, Kazakhstan's wind energy potential is around eleven

times of its current electricity consumption. In terms of solar, the country's potential is comparable to the whole of the European Union. So, Kazakhstan will likely become a net renewable energy exporter in the medium term. Meanwhile, Turkey is a country with an energy deficit and the demand for energy is increasing at an average annual rate of 6%. Turkey wants to diversify its energy use, with more focus on renewables and with new suppliers. Within this context, renewable energy may become a new area where two countries have solid reasons to cooperate. Finally, cooperation in renewables may strengthen both countries' positions in global climate-change negotiations.

Agriculture is the third sector where both countries may tremendously benefit from advanced cooperation. With immense land resources, Kazakhstan is already a significant country in terms of agricultural production. Nevertheless, the country's potential is far greater than what has been hitherto realized. With increased use of efficient irrigation infrastructure and educated personnel, Kazakhstan has a potential to become the biggest exporter of agricultural products to a population of more than 2.5 billion in its adjacent regions. Turkey, on the other hand, has some renowned agricultural experience, ranking 11th in the world, in terms of the net output of its agricultural sector [18]. Turkey has completed a comprehensive development project (Turkish acronym GAP) based on efficient utilization of water resources in its southeastern territory and developed an unrivaled experience on dam building, water management, and human development. The country also started to produce state-of-the-art agricultural machinery with competitive pricing. In brief, depending on the level of incentives from the public sector, and high-level political will, Kazakhstan and Turkey may make this synergistic potential a reality.

■ **Conclusion.** Kazakhstan and Turkey are two strong wings of Eurasia with a shared past, and a common destiny. The last three decades witnessed significant advances in a plethora of issues from politics to economics, from culture and education to science. The ever-growing structure of relations and integration between two nations give us realistic hopes for further convergence. Nevertheless, there is room for improvement. While the world's economic center of gravity is moving towards the Asia-Pacific, and given their unbreakable partnership, both countries should integrate their potentials in order to deal with the upcoming challenges of a more globalized, yet regionally compartmentalized world. This paper presented tourism, renewable energy and agriculture as three main headings that our countries need to focus for greater cooperation. As mentioned above, the complementarity of economic structures of Kazakhstan and Turkey paves the way for joint ventures in these areas where both countries may reap enormous benefits from. As long as the high-level commitment to the deep and dense relationship between Kazakhstan and Turkey continues to prevail, so will be the benefits jointly produced for the well-being of whole populations of the two countries.



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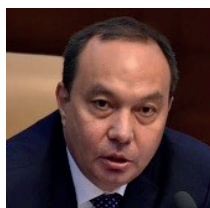
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UZBEKISTAN—KAZAKHSTAN: A NEW LEVEL OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP



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*“For us, Kazakhstan is a time-tested and life-tested closest neighbor, with whom we are bound by the indissoluble centuries-old ties of friendship and brotherhood.” [1]
Shavkat Mirziyoyev*

■ **Abstract.** The article analyzes the state and level of strategic partnership between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. With the use of systematic, comparative, quantitative, retrospective and content analysis, the peculiarities of the relations between the two countries in the political, trade and economic, transport and logistics, cultural and humanitarian spheres are revealed. Special attention is paid to the current processes of regionalization and the role of Tashkent and Nur-Sultan in ensuring stability and sustainable development in Central Asia. The paper highlights promising areas of mutually beneficial cooperation between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, as well as the influence of strategic relations between the two countries on the establishment of interconnectedness between Central and South Asia.

■ **Keywords:** Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Central Asia, regional interconnectedness, Consultative Meeting of the Presidents of Central Asian countries.

Relations between the peoples of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan have deep historical roots, based on a solid foundation of centuries-old friendship, good neighborliness and mutual support.

Uzbek-Kazakh cooperation, based on the principles of mutual trust, respect and consideration of each other's interests, can rightfully be considered as one of the exemplary mutually beneficial cooperation between the two sovereign states.

At the same time, due to their geopolitical position, as well as economic potential, both countries play an important role in the development of Central Asia and unlocking the full potential of the region. In addition, their strategic partnership is aimed not only for the benefit of the peoples of both countries, but is also an important factor in the further comprehensive sustainable development of the entire Central Asia.

A NEW ERA OF UZBEK-KAZAKH COOPERATION

To date, the countries have managed to create all necessary conditions for strengthening close cooperation – from a solid legal framework to full mutual understanding and support at all levels.

The treaty base includes more than 220 interstate and intergovernmental documents, including the “Treaty of Eternal Friendship”, “Joint Declaration on Further Deepening of Strategic Partnership and Strengthening of Good Neighborliness”.

Such documents in international practice are an indicator of the highest form of strategic and allied relations.

One of the important driver of Uzbek-Kazakh cooperation is the established regular political dialogue at all levels.

Since September 2016, 11 mutual visits at the highest level have taken place; the Presidents of both countries have held meetings 17 times within the framework of multilateral international and regional events. During the same period, the Presidents of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan held telephone conversations 43 times on topical issues of bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

The Joint Intergovernmental Commission on Bilateral Cooperation has significantly intensified its work, and from 2019 conducts events exclusively with the participation of the Prime Ministers of both countries. Moreover, the heads of government of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan have held eight meetings since 2017 to discuss topical issues of trade and economic, agricultural, water and energy, transport and logistics, as well as interregional cooperation.

Ties between representative authorities have strengthened, giving an additional impetus to interstate relations. The parliaments of both countries signed a roadmap for the development of inter-parliamentary cooperation, and the activities of the Commission on Cooperation of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan and the Senate of the Parliament of Kazakhstan, have been launched as well.

Regular trust-based dialogue at all levels makes it possible to implement specific agreements on further strengthening friendship and cooperation between both countries.

Trade and economic relations have received a significant boost. First, this was facilitated by signing of a bilateral agreement on the main directions of trade and economic cooperation for 2017—2021.

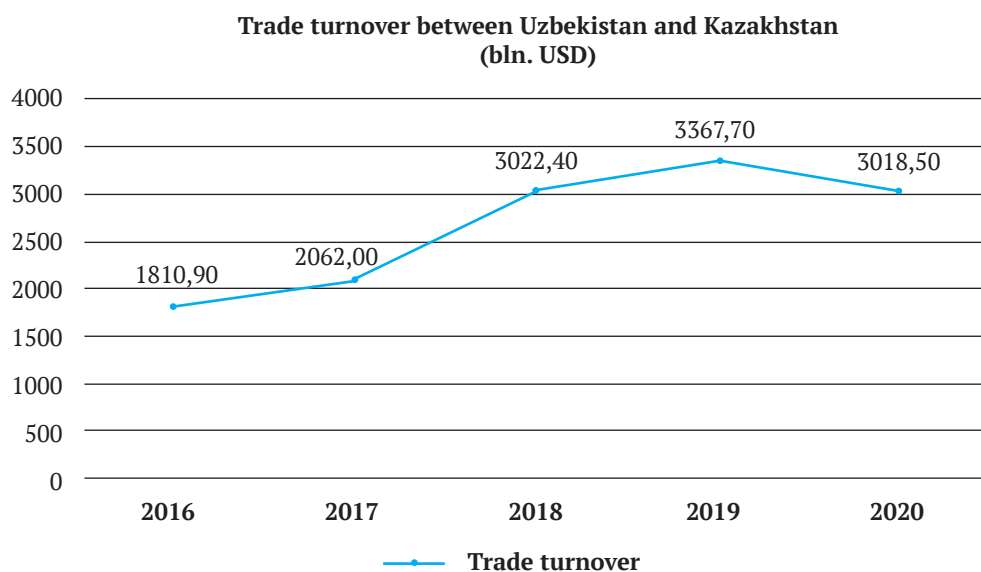
In addition, a new mechanism of interaction was introduced between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan – Interregional cooperation forums.

The first such Forum was held in 2018 in Shymkent, the second one – in 2020 in Khiva. As a result of both events, about 70 interdepartmental, interregional and commercial agreements were signed in mechanical engineering, agriculture, financial and banking, industrial, infrastructure, pharmaceutical fields and others totaling more than \$830 million [2].

Another mechanism of economic cooperation was the creation of joint trading houses selling various products. Currently, there are four such trading houses supplying food, chemical and petrochemical products.

The foreign economic policy aimed at strengthening mutually beneficial relations is already yielding its material fruits. Mutual trade between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in 2020 reached \$ 3 billion, which is 67% more than in 2016.

In January–May 2021, the bilateral trade turnover amounted to \$1.5 billion. This is 46% higher than in the same period in 2020 [3]. The Presidents of both countries set a task to increase the volume of mutual trade to \$10 billion in the near future. It is safe to say that countries have a huge potential to achieve this goal.



In particular, the International Center for Trade and Economic Cooperation (ICTES) “Central Asia” on the Uzbek-Kazakh border is intended to serve this purpose. It is planned to create an industrial zone with cluster cooperation projects on the basis of the ICTES for the implementation of joint production of food products, polypropylene, household chemicals, building materials, light industry products, as well as for processing agricultural products.

The launch of these projects involves the creation of more than 10 thousand jobs during the investment period and about 40 thousand during the operational period.

The capacity of the Center per day is estimated as 5 thousand trucks and 35 thousand people. The implementation of this mega-project is designed to give a multiplicative effect for foreign trade and the economy of both countries.

Active cooperation in the trade and economic sphere serves not only to establish and strengthen multilevel ties, but also contributes to the development of priority sectors of the economy of both countries, allowing to expand the nomenclature for commodity exchange.

Investment cooperation is also developing rapidly. Over the past year, the number of enterprises with Kazakh participation in Uzbekistan has increased from 809 to 919, \$84.9 million of Kazakhstani investments have been disbursed.

At the same time, in Kazakhstan, the number of enterprises with Uzbek participation has now reached 1,231 from 1,145 in 2019.

Collaboration in the field of industrial cooperation was taken to a new qualitative level. Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan have stepped up cooperation in terms of creating value chains that will form a capacious and self-sufficient market capable of effectively resisting various external shocks.

Successful examples of cooperation are such joint projects as the production of Chevrolet cars in Kostanay, a garment factory in Turkestan, a textile factory in Shymkent, and etc.

Joint projects are being implemented for production of medical devices, autoclaved aerated concrete, SAZ buses, HOWO trucks, and the assembly of Hyundai cars, kitchen stoves and water heaters. Therefore, in 2020, the share of Artel products in the market of semi-automatic washing machines in Kazakhstan amounted to 50%, kitchen stoves - 65%, and water heaters – 37%.

One of the key components of Uzbek-Kazakh relations is the transport and logistics sector, which plays an important role in the development of both countries.

Thanks to the agreed tariff policy, there is a positive trend in the transportation of goods between the countries. Despite the pandemic, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan observed an increase in indicators for all types of cargo transportation. Thus, in the first quarter of 2021 alone, the volume of container traffic amounted to 233 thousand tons. TEU with an increase of 57% compared to the same period in 2020. The volume of cargo transportation by road for 6 months of 2021 increased by 18%, amounting to 1.3 million tons [4].

At the same time, countries are working intensively on the implementation of joint infrastructure projects. In particular, issues of project for construction Turkestan-Shymkent-Tashkent high-speed railway, which will connect the tourist cities of both countries and significantly increase the tourist flow, are being discussed.

Countries also considering the project of laying a new railway line “Maktaaral-Darbaza”, which will increase the volume of communications between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, as well as reduce the load on existing border crossing “Saryagash-Keles”.

Currently, more than 50% of Uzbekistan's trade turnover transits through the territory of Kazakhstan. According to the estimates of the Asian Development Bank, trade between regions and transit trade along existing corridors will increase by 35% in 2025 and by 65% in 2030 compared to the level of 2019 [5].

In this regard, the parties support the fullest utilization of the ports of the Caspian Sea, large cross-border logistics centers, as well as the extensive use of the possibilities of the Trans-Afghan corridor "Termez-Mazari-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar" in the future.

In general, the joint measures taken by Tashkent and Nur-Sultan to develop the railway infrastructure indicate their intention to continue effectively using each other's transit potential.

Successful implementation of these projects will provide Kazakhstan with access to South Asia and the Middle East through Uzbekistan, and Uzbekistan with access to the markets of the EAEU countries, the Caucasus and Europe through the territory of Kazakhstan.

Another important area of cooperation is the cultural and humanitarian sphere, cooperation in which is a clear example of the spiritual closeness of both countries and peoples. Similar history, culture, and values serve as a solid foundation for today's interstate cooperation.

In this context, the celebration The Years of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan became a historical event, in which more than 120 cultural events have been conducted.

In Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, special attention is paid to the preservation and transfer of the heritage of the outstanding ancestors of the peoples of both countries to the younger generation. Thus, in 2018, the Decree of the President of Uzbekistan was adopted on in-depth study and promotion in our country of the heritage of the outstanding son of the Kazakh people, poet, thinker and humanist Abay Kunanbayev [6].

His immortal messages are especially relevant today, in real life. This decision can be described in the Abay's words – "A person who remembers the words of the wise becomes prudent himself". Studying the works of the great Abay undoubtedly contributes to the spiritual enrichment of the younger generation.

Kazakh national cultural centers play a special role in creating and maintaining the most favorable conditions for the study and promotion of the Kazakh language and literature in Uzbekistan. Currently, they are actively involved in the socio-political life of the country.

In January 2019 the President of Uzbekistan Sh.Mirziyoyev personally got acquainted with the activities of the Uzbek-Kazakh National Cultural Center in Mirzachul district, where the Kazakh National Theater is also located.

It is also important that in Uzbekistan about 400 schools teach the Kazakh language. In order to achieve higher and professional education in the Kazakh language, students study at the Tashkent State Pedagogical University named after Nizami, Karakalpak State University, Gulistan State University, Nukus, Jizzakh and Navoi State

pedagogical institutes. A Council on Kazakh Literature has been established under the Writers Guild of Uzbekistan. More than 50 books of Kazakh writers and publicists have been published in recent years.

At the same time, tourism is gaining special importance in the development of cultural and humanitarian ties, being one of the effective social phenomena in the intercultural dialogue.

It should be noted that a lot of work has been done in Kazakhstan to develop the infrastructure of Turkestan, the spiritual capital of the Turkic world. In particular, work has been carried out on restoration of the mausoleum of Khoja Akhmet Yassavi and construction of new facilities.

Tourists want to immerse themselves in history, get acquainted with the architectural monuments of Asia, visit the holy sites of the Islamic world. For their convenience, there are plans to combine the ancient cities of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan into one large route: “Turkestan—Samarkand—Bukhara—Khiva”.

One of the last practical steps to develop cooperation in the field of tourism was development of a draft agreement between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan for introduction of the so-called Asian Schengen project “Silk Visa” (Silk Road visa). The Visa supposes that any foreigner who has legally entered Kazakhstan or Uzbekistan can freely move through the territory of both countries without obtaining a visa from each of the states separately.

REGIONALIZATION IN CENTRAL ASIA

As to prospects of Uzbek-Kazakh cooperation, it is necessary to focus on processes of regionalization in Central Asia, which directly depends on the effective interaction of Tashkent and Nur-Sultan.

Most foreign experts see the need for regional cooperation as an axiom. In their opinion, such factors as historical, geographical, cultural, religious interconnectedness, common challenges and threats that form regional identity have predetermined the inevitability and priority of regional interaction in Central Asia [7].

In recent years, regional cooperation has become a priority for both Tashkent and Nur-Sultan. Both Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan are clearly aware of the responsibility that both countries bear together – responsibility for stability in the region and for its sustainable development.

The priority of the Central Asian countries in the foreign policy of Uzbekistan was determined by President Sh. Mirziyoyev immediately after his election and was subsequently reflected in many strategic documents, as well as initiatives and practical actions.

In particular, the Strategy of Action on the five priority areas of Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017–2021 provides for creation of a belt of security, stability and good-neighborliness around our country, as well as the settlement of issues of delimitation and demarcation of the State border [8].

In turn, the new foreign policy concept of Kazakhstan for 2020–2030 has increased the importance of the Central Asian vector. It is emphasized that Kazakhstan intends to strive for: 1) development of cooperation in Central Asia; 2) strengthening the geopolitical and geo-economic subjectivity of the region; 3) improving the conditions for investment cooperation; 4) joint counteraction to internal and external challenges and threats.

In this context, the joint implementation of the initiative of the President of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev on organization of regular consultative meetings of the Presidents of Central Asian States should also be noted.

This initiative was fully supported by the President of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbayev and the first such meeting was held on the proposal of the President of Kazakhstan on March 15, 2018 in Astana.

The new format has demonstrated its relevance for the Central Asian countries to support regular confidential dialogue and the development of coordinated approaches on regional issues. The practical implementation of this initiative became possible thanks to the firm commitment of the Central Asian Countries to the idea of common interests and responsibility for the future of the peoples of the region.

Another significant event was the adoption of the Resolution “Strengthening regional and international cooperation to ensure peace, stability and sustainable development in the Central Asian region” by the UN General Assembly in June 2018.

This decision was an important stage in formation of Central Asia as a single consolidated region with states able to jointly solve common regional problems.

Today, our countries also share a common vision for achieving lasting peace in Afghanistan, on which the security, stability and sustainable development of Central Asia depend.

In particular, during the consultative meetings of the Presidents of Central Asian countries held in Tashkent in 2019 and in Turkmenbashi in 2021, the leaders of the Central Asian countries outlined a common position on the need for an early political settlement of the conflict in Afghanistan through non-violence, cease-fire, dialogue and compromise.

At the same time, the Presidents of States stressed the importance of involving Afghanistan in the system of trade, economic, transport and communication ties with neighboring countries as an important condition for normalizing the situation and returning this country to peaceful life.

The Central Asian countries are fully aware that peace in Afghanistan opens up new unique and strategic opportunities for the restoration and further development of the system of interconnectedness between Central and South Asia.

In this regard, in July 2021, at the initiative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev, Tashkent hosted a high-level international conference “Central and South Asia: Regional Interconnectedness. Challenges and Opportunities”, during which new fundamental ideas were developed for early stabilization of the situation in Afghanistan, as well as restoration of trans-regional interconnectedness between the

large regions of Eurasia. According to Kazakh Foreign Minister M. Tleuberdi, prospects for deepening interregional ties are very relevant for Central Asian countries that do not have access to the seas. According to the Minister, the projects proposed at the conference in Tashkent are of particular interest to Kazakhstan [9].

The key link in restoring historical interconnectedness between the regions is the implementation of major infrastructure projects. In particular, construction of the Trans-Afghan corridor “Maazri-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar” will link Central and South Asia and ensure the shortest access of our countries to the sea, and will create a powerful platform for achieving inclusive economic development of both regions. In this vein, it should be emphasized that the President of Kazakhstan K. Tokayev, during the Consultative Meeting of the Presidents of Central Asian countries in Turkmenbashi, stated the prospects of this project for the countries of the region [10].

It is not unjustified, since such interconnectedness could not only significantly facilitate the task of free movement of goods and services, attracting capital, but also contribute to strengthening good-neighborly and friendly relations and mutual understanding between the peoples of Central and South Asia.

Moreover, it will contribute to the restoration of Afghanistan’s historical role as a land bridge, which in turn will become a powerful factor for the economic development of this long-suffering country, its post-conflict settlement and the achievement of long-term and lasting peace, strengthening common security and stability in the Eurasian region.

In general, in a relatively short period, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan have actually become the closest strategic partners. Undoubtedly, in the future, bilateral relations based on mutual trust and the centuries-old history of fraternal peoples will only grow stronger, and Tashkent and Nur-Sultan is playing an increasingly important role in Central Asia, contributing to regional stability and prosperity.



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KAZAKHSTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY STRATEGY: THE NURSULTAN NAZARBAYEV FACTOR



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In 1979 he graduated from Kirov Kazakh State University. Later he graduated from the graduate school of Lomonosov Moscow State University. In the system of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, K. Abuseitov held the positions of Head of the Departments of International Security and Arms Control, Director of the Department of Multilateral Cooperation and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. He has repeatedly headed the diplomatic missions of the Republic of Kazakhstan – the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Switzerland and the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the UN Office and other international organizations in Geneva, the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and concurrently in Ireland, Iceland, Sweden, the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Norway.

■ **Abstract.** The name of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan – Elbasy Nursultan Nazarbayev left a mark in the history of the Kazakhstan as the name of the founding father of the independent country.

In the year of the 30th anniversary of Independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan, leading world experts assess the achievements of the country over the years of independent development: “President Nursultan Nazarbayev managed to build a modern Kazakh state <...> managed to realize a success story” [1].

Since the early days of Independence, N. A. Nazarbayev attached great importance to the foreign policy and international cooperation. The smart diplomacy has become one of the key tools in ensuring Kazakhstan's sovereignty and security, consistent promotion of the country's national interests in the conditions of the modern multipolar world order [2].

■ **Keywords:** Kazakhstan; the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan; Elbasy; Nursultan Nazarbayev; the era of Independence; multi-vector foreign policy; nuclear disarmament.

Like many other spheres of government, N. Nazarbayev's efforts in development of foreign policy and ensuring the security of Kazakhstan has its amazing story. This is the story

about how the country almost from the scratch very quickly established itself as a leading voice in international affairs.



Speech of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N. A. Nazarbayev at the general debate of the 70th anniversary session of the UN General Assembly, New York, September 28, 2015.
Archive of the press service of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan

The bold decision made by N.A. Nazarbayev even before Kazakhstan achieved independence – to close the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site and subsequently renounce the status of a nuclear weapons state – became the hallmark of our country when entering the world community. It was with this strong-willed decision that the First President of Kazakhstan set out on a journey to elevate his country to the rank of a highly respected, accepted and trusted member of the global family of nations.

Those who worked closely with the First President in the early 1990s saw him moving decisively towards a non-nuclear future. They also saw how he followed the voice of people of Kazakhstan faced with the arguments of those who believed that nuclear weapons should remain part of the strategic, diplomatic and economic power of independent Kazakhstan.

In his book “The Era of Independence”, the First President of Kazakhstan noted the following regarding the closure of the Semipalatinsk test site and the removal of all nuclear weapons from the territory of Kazakhstan: “Kazakhstan has clearly confirmed that peace and security are guaranteed not with nuclear weapons, but without them” [3, p. 490].

And Kazakhstan has not just closed its test facilities and removed all nuclear weapons it has completely destroyed equipment and infrastructure. Subsequently, Kazakhstan became an uncompromising fighter in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, our country’s policy regarding the nuclear legacy gave it, as one Western observer noted, ‘impeccable moral authority’ in this area.

According to international media, “N. Nazarbayev played a key role in the process of nuclear disarmament not only of Kazakhstan, but also inspired other former Soviet republics to further denuclearization, thereby turning Central Asia into a region free of nuclear weapons” [4].

Nursultan Nazarbayev mentions the signing of the Semipalatinsk Treaty on the establishment of a Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in 2006 in his speech at the international conference “From the prohibition of nuclear tests to a nuclear-weapon-

free world” in the capital of Kazakhstan in 2012: “All its participants – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – received security guarantees in 2015 from the five powers of the nuclear club, documented in a special protocol. Thus, taking into account the Budapest Memorandum signed by the Nuclear Powers in 1994, our country has double security guarantees” [5].

The list of political leaders who appraised highly the initiatives of the First President of Kazakhstan says it all. Former US President Barack Obama called the First President “one of the most exemplary world leaders” [6]. President Bill Clinton had previously stressed that “Kazakhstan sets an example for the whole world at the most crucial moment of international efforts to promote nonproliferation.” He also noted the “great courage, foresight and true leadership of N. Nazarbayev” [7].

Former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon paid tribute to Kazakhstan and its President during a visit to the Semipalatinsk test site: “President Nazarbayev demonstrated exceptional leadership by closing this nuclear test site and getting rid of nuclear weapons in Kazakhstan,” and: “Today this place is a symbol of disarmament and hope for the future. The movement towards a world free of nuclear weapons is one of the main priorities of the United Nations and the most burning desire of mankind. Here in Semey, I call on all nuclear-weapon states to follow the example of Kazakhstan” [8].

When the Soviet Union collapsed, the First President faced huge challenges in the foreign policy sphere and a lot of questions to which he had to find answers. He had to think beyond the existing intellectual boundaries, old prejudices, and then lead his country on a new path, creating a new identity for Kazakhstan.

As N. Nazarbayev noted, “The main difficulty in forming a foreign policy course was that the country gained sovereignty not in a calm, stable environment, but in absolutely new geopolitical situation. Under these conditions it was necessary to accurately announce the position of the country in international processes directly or indirectly affecting the interests of Kazakhstan” [2, p. 88].

It is difficult to imagine the scale of the tasks facing the First President when it came to promoting Kazakhstan's interests abroad. In Soviet times, the Kazakhstan had neither experience nor traditions in international affairs, there were no embassies, nor a full-fledged Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In general, Kazakhstan did not have an international identity, and N. Nazarbayev and his team started from scratch with foreign capital cities both in the West and in the East, which mostly considered Kazakhstan as an out-of-nowhere country.

The primary task was to define a new foreign policy reflecting the key national interests of Kazakhstan, and it was this principle that emphasized all the reflections of the First President in this area. Driven by the determination to rid the country of nuclear weapons, N. A. Nazarbayev determined that this would be a foreign policy based on the rejection of war and commitment to the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes. This would consolidate the inviolability of national borders and the desire to bring Kazakhstan as a key player both economically and politically on the world stage.

The positive course that the First President set for Kazakhstan in the context of nuclear disarmament has brought benefits in the development of the new independent country. This helped to announce the country's new multi-vector foreign policy and its amazing

success in attracting the investments needed to develop its huge hydrocarbon reserves. And this has helped Kazakhstan to establish reliable and consistent relations, especially with China, the Russian Federation, the EU and the USA.

The First President himself described his strategy as follows: “The core of Kazakhstan’s foreign policy, in my opinion, should have been multi-vector nature – the desire to interact with everyone who, like us, is open to an equal, constructive, fruitful and mutually beneficial dialogue. I believed and believe that to become a modern, strong country, Kazakhstan needed to make friends, not look for enemies in international affairs” [1, p. 168].

The rejection of offensive nuclear weapons gave Kazakhstan, under the leadership of the First President, a well-deserved right of voice in peacekeeping efforts.

This was confirmed by the international initiatives of the President of Kazakhstan, which not only ensured the recognition of the country and laid the foundation of trust in Kazakhstan as a new member of the world community, but also made and continues to make a significant contribution to strengthening regional and global security and stability.

Our country took part in the settlement of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh, Kazakhstan sent peacekeeping forces to Western Sahara, Cote d’Ivoire, Liberia, Haiti, Lebanon and Afghanistan.

Kazakhstan provided a platform for holding rounds of negotiations on Syria and acted as a mediator in reducing tensions between the West and Iran because of Tehran’s possible program to create nuclear weapons, as well as in restoring relations between Moscow and Kiev in resolving the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

Moreover, our country became a member in number of international organizations aimed at promoting peace and stability, both in Central Asia and beyond, and has become a valuable and active Member of the United Nations.



President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N. A. Nazarbayev takes part in the G20 Summit, Hangzhou, September 4, 2016.
Archive of the press service of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan

In current situation of political tension, the likelihood of nuclear escalation, the growth of new technologies and the weakening of the arms control treaty system, the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan continues to make an enduring, wise and outstanding contribution to the fate of independent Kazakhstan.

In his new status as the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Chairman of the Security Council, N. Nazarbayev, continues to be a firm supporter and an active participant in the global non-proliferation and reduction of the nuclear threat.

Urging other countries to follow the example of our country in building a world in which the threat of nuclear weapons will become the history, in 2019, N. Nazarbayev came up with the idea of creating a new international platform – the Global Alliance of Leaders for a Nuclear-Free World.

Speaking at the 5th meeting of the Astana Club in the capital of Kazakhstan in November 2019, the First President put forward this idea and also called for strengthening the legal framework for non-proliferation. “We have repeatedly talked about the need to stop the erosion of existing agreements on nuclear disarmament,” – he told the gathered diplomats, politicians, businessmen and scientists. “In advance of the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons next year, we should again think about the need to universalize the main provisions of this document. I believe that it is necessary to stiffen the international responsibility for withdrawal from the Treaty through relevant resolutions at the level of the UN Security Council” [9].

As a global politician and diplomat with an exceptional strategic vision of the future, the First President continues his work on bringing the partner countries closer together on the way to a new format of cooperation in the Greater Eurasia that overcomes old contradictions. He appealed to countries and world leaders to rally around the idea of a “Greater Eurasia” and to realize the potential that the “supercontinent” has.

His concept of building a new geopolitical structure “Greater Eurasia” is based on the idea of the need to form a unifying agenda through the political trust and systemic economic dialogue.



President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N. A. Nazarbayev attends the Summit on Combating Violent Extremism, New York September 30, 2015. Archive of the press service of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Based on our country's considerable experience in resolving issues at the regional level, world political scientists suggest that the Conference on Interaction and Cooperation in Central Asia (CICA) – Another significant initiative of N. Nazarbayev on the creation of a pan-Asian security structure – can play an active role in uniting the efforts of the Central Asian countries in order to promote peace, security and stability in Afghanistan and in the world [10].

Next year, the CICA will cross the 30-year milestone of its development. For less than three decades, the idea of the First President of Kazakhstan, presented by him to the international community from the rostrum of the UN in 1992, has found its realization as an effective forum with the participation of 27 countries occupying over 90% of the territory of the Asian continent with more than half of the population of our planet and accounting for two-thirds of global economic growth [11].

However, Asia is currently the epicenter of global international relations not only in terms of its economic potential, but also in terms of the degree of influence on world politics. It is obvious that without strengthening trust and cooperation between Asian countries, it is difficult to achieve any progress in solving global and regional security problems both at the regional and global level. Creating conditions for dialogue is an important step towards solving pressing issues and problems. The CICA has shown that it can perform this function [12].

The results of the first Summit of the forum, held in 2002 in Kazakhstan, indicate the relevance of the idea of convening a Forum. It would not be an exaggeration to note this event as extraordinary both internationally and regionally: it was at this historic event that the Presidents of Pakistan and India met for the first time, despite the difficult relations between the both countries due to territorial disputes [13].

In current geopolitical situation, where consolidation of efforts, primarily at the regional level, is becoming very important, experts are increasingly expressing the idea of a large unrealized potential of the Forum and the need for its further adaptation to the realities of the modern world.

The mandate of the Forum covers the entire Asian continent, which is an obvious advantage of the CICA over other regional structures in Asia, and opens a window of opportunity to strengthen this structure.

The leaders and high representatives of the countries, mainly from Asia, different in their historical and cultural traditions, political and economic orientation, gather at the same CICA negotiating table. In the region covered by the CICA, there are such large pockets of areas of acute instability as the Middle East and South Asia. The participants of the Forum are India and Pakistan, the acute confrontation between which is currently causing deep concern in the world [14].

The forum is particularly relevant due to the current international background in connection with the situation in Afghanistan and the withdrawal of US troops from the country.

In this context, within the framework of Kazakhstan's chairmanship, it is necessary to continue purposeful work on further strengthening the CICA's potential and completing its transformation into an effective platform for cooperation and dialogue in order to prevent new challenges and threats in Asia.



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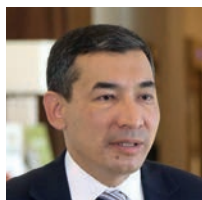
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CENTRAL ASIAN VECTOR OF KAZAKHSTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY: ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES, PROSPECTS



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■ **Abstract.** The article describes the foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the place and role of Central Asian and Eurasian regionalism in its strategy. Internal and external factors, analyzes the processes influencing the formation of Kazakhstan's foreign policy priorities and speeches of the Presidents and official documents giving an idea of the stages of formation.

■ **Keywords:** Kazakhstan, Central Asia, foreign policy, regional cooperation, security.

■ **Introduction.** Kazakhstan's cooperation with Central Asian countries on a bilateral basis and in a multilateral format has passed a thorny, but eventful path, covering the

entire thirty-year period of independence. A lot of significant events have happened during this time. Kazakhstan, together with other regional neighbors, has undergone through a difficult stage of political transit and overcome a number of economic crises.

The regional countries have also undergone a complex and contradictory evolution, due, among other things, to their geopolitical position and multi-level development, indefinite border, economic and environmental problems. As you know, in the book “The Great Chessboard”, the American geopolitician Zbigniew Brzezinski predicted Central Asia to become an extremely unstable zone of Eurasia [1].

Then, this gave rise to many discussions in the expert community. Despite the fact that the geopolitical competition in the Asian part of former Soviet Union remained permanently tense, and major powers tirelessly promoted their strategic interests and presence here, the situation in the region did not slip into open rivalry and confrontation.

The joint efforts of the countries of the region have played an important role in the relatively stable development of Central Asia. The conflictogenic situation on a significant part of the outer perimeter, cross-country problems regarding borders, water and energy distribution, and urgent solutions to the tasks of strengthening stateness together required balanced approaches from the political elites of the new Central Asian states.

The purpose of the study is to analyze Kazakhstan’s activity in the Central Asian region on a number of tracks – trade and economic, security and international policy. In this context, the foreign policy activities of the Kazakh Government aimed at strengthening relations with Central Asian neighbors are of interest, which is reflected in the works of a number of domestic and foreign researchers. Opinions on the role of Central Asian regionalism in Kazakhstan’s foreign policy strategy and Kazakhstan’s place in the system of regional relations are quite diverse.

S.D. Primbetov, a well-known Kazakh diplomat and scientist directly involved in the process of regional cooperation, reasonably believes that the initial impulse for regional cooperation and further integration initiatives was the agreement concluded in 1993 between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan on deepening economic integration for the period 1994-2000. In fact, it opened the way to larger agreements, to which other countries began to join. Thus, two large regional states became the founders of Central Asian cooperation [2].

At the same time, a number of researchers also noted the existing differences in the approaches of countries. For example, the French researcher Marlene Laruelle draws attention to the nature of the demarcation in Central Asia and highlights one of the reasons for the divergent views on the idea of regionalism. Kazakhstan’s Eurasian concept, where Central Asia acts as a bridge between the West and the East, is aimed at the dynamic nature of Asian modernity. This position bears little resemblance to “Uzbek Turanism”, a more conservative position based on ethno-cultural and civilizational values [3].

Much has been said about the discrepancies and symbolic rivalry between Nur-Sultan and Tashkent, but, for the most part, such an approach was unproductive and

often artificial. During the period of increasing isolationist approaches in Uzbekistan, indeed, the topic of Central Asian regionalism has been reduced in Kazakhstan's political discourse. In this regard, there is an idea that Kazakhstan has changed its orientation from the Central Asian vector towards rapprochement with Russia and Belarus. However, with the emergence of a new opportunity, Central Asian regionalism has become relevant again.

So in the analytical report "Kazakhstan: Tested by Transition", prepared in 2019. Annette Bohr for the British Chatham House, examines Kazakhstan's relations with other Central Asian countries through the prism of Eurasian integration. In her opinion, Kazakhstan used the Eurasian platform to develop regional ideas, while maintaining a convenient position as a bridge between Russia and the rest of Central Asia.

Today, according to the author, Kazakhstan's strategy has noticeably evolved towards the Central Asian vector. Annette Bohr identifies five factors: the rise of national identity, the departure from Russia, the search for a new economic model, reforms in Uzbekistan and the deepening of regional trade. Combined with these reasons, Kazakhstan has become more clearly identified as an integral part of Central Asia, and not just an intermediary between other Central Asian states and Russia. The result was a tangible and growing trend towards cooperation within the entire Central Asian region [4].

A relatively new point of view is claimed by a group of researchers from the Central Asian countries. They prepared the report "Regionalization in Central Asia in 2019. Strategy of Kazakhstan", and noted that the idea of a regional framework of interaction for the region has proved viable and, in continuation of discussions on this topic, they propose a format of soft regionalism, without creating formal frameworks and official institutions. With such a nature of relations, the field for interaction is noticeably expanded due to the active participation of various civil structures in international cooperation [5].

Currently, interest in the topic is fueled by the strengthening of Central Asian cooperation, which, of course, was given an impetus by the current format of consultative meetings of the leaders of the five countries. This vector of development of events was due to the relatively stable development of the Central Asian countries, the involvement of major external players, including those in the C5+ formats, as well as the constant interest of Kazakhstan and the active position of Uzbekistan in matters of regional cooperation.

At the same time, Kazakhstan is not just a regional mediator, but also a proactive entity in search of integrated solutions to common problems. At the current stage, the country's participation in the processes of regional cooperation is in a special dynamic.

BETWEEN THE CENTRAL ASIAN AND EURASIAN VECTOR

The formation of Kazakhstan's foreign policy priorities in the initial period of independence was due to the realities in which all post-Soviet countries were after

the disappearance of the bipolar international system. The epoch marked, reflected in the famous essay by Francis Fukuyama, inspired reformist politicians to build new sovereign states [6]. But they faced new and difficult challenges and tasks. Despite the relatively high socio-cultural level of the newly independent States, the effectiveness of the economic mechanisms of the former command system has been exhausted. It was necessary to introduce cardinal and multiple transformations in order to transform the economy to market conditions and prevent a sharp drop in the standard of living of the population.

However, as it is known the transit period contained objective costs. The economy was steadily falling, businesses were closing, and there was an increase in unemployment. In these conditions, each of the new states sought for themselves those principles and methods of modernization that could most optimally transform the structure in relation to both internal and external challenges.

Kazakhstan, which has a long common border with Russia, close industrial ties, a combined transport and energy network, could not but be influenced by radical changes in the economy of its northern neighbor. Reforms on liberalization, pricing, privatization and other anti-crisis measures were carried out almost on the same wave. Kyrgyzstan was also involved in the same cycle of events.

At the same time, Uzbekistan, due to a number of internal and external reasons, has failed to implement such drastic changes. Tashkent, in choosing between dynamics and stability, took the second principle as the basis for development.

In Tajikistan, as it is known, under the influence of the liberalization of public life that took place throughout the former Soviet Union, internal political processes took on a radical character and led to a civil war. Due to the prevailing circumstances and protracted negotiations on a peaceful settlement of the situation, Dushanbe was able to independently determine the Central Asian agenda for itself only by 1998. This direction was relevant for Tajikistan, as it could lead the country out of the geopolitical impasse, become an important factor in stabilization, accelerate economic development and unlock the potential of hydropower [7].

Turkmenistan, having rich reserves of natural gas, could count on accelerated modernization following the example of a number of countries in the Middle East. This could also be facilitated by the policy of positive neutrality, a principle first proclaimed by the Turkmen Government in July 1992 at the summit of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in Helsinki. Then, in December 1995, the neutral status of the country was fixed at the UN level.

However, during the early days of its independence, Ashgabat faced problems with gas supplies to Ukraine and the Baltic States, as financial transactions were unregulated and unstable. Also, contradictions have escalated between the Turkmen side and the Russian Gazprom. The Russian company used its monopoly position in the gas transportation sector and dictated terms and prices.

Only by 1999, the intensity of disagreements between the parties decreased. The path that Ashgabat travelled has become important in terms of the formation of the political

regime, since the country, which experienced enormous difficulties in exporting gas during this period, experienced a deep socio-economic crisis, due to which state subsidies and directive allocation of resources became a fundamental factor for the centralization of power.

Thus, already at the starting positions, it was possible to notice the multi-level and multi-character process of the formation of the Central Asian states. Nevertheless, even during the period of rapid fragmentation of the entire union infrastructure and institutional weakness of the CIS, the Kazakh Government kept the doors for economic cooperation always open.

The First President of Kazakhstan N.A. Nazarbayev was one of the first to talk about the benefits of economic integration. In order to preserve industrial potential and production ties, in 1994 he initiated the idea of creating the Eurasian Union (EAU). The cooperation of the Central Asian countries did not seem problematic at that time and looked as an important step towards a larger-scale trans-regional cooperation.

In 1994, N.A. Nazarbayev noted “registration of the Central Asian Union can be considered as one of the stages of the practical implementation of the Eurasian Union project” [8]. Two years later, in his speech, the First President of Kazakhstan drew attention to “the process of forming integration “cores” on a regional basis, in particular in Central Asia.” “This is an integration node within a large subsystem of the CIS,” he clarified [9].

His vision was that groups of countries similar in type of economic transformations and in terms of living standards would become effective in cooperation. It is they who will be able to form geographically local centers with a single market, with free movement of goods, capital and labor, and create a centripetal force for two-speed and multi-tiered integration.

The main idea of Eurasian integration was the formation of an economically self-sufficient space between the Greater Europe and Asia, formed by the joint efforts of the new independent states. Otherwise, the divided countries in this space could become resource colonies for developed Western and/or Eastern countries.

In the mid-1990s, the trilateral association of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and the Customs Union of Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus could simultaneously claim the role of unifying nodes. Kazakhstan looked as a natural bridge between these associations, which was the result of significant foreign policy efforts.

It is significant that in the first Message of the President of Kazakhstan “On situation in the country and the main directions of domestic and foreign policy for 1997”, one of the main results of Kazakhstan's foreign policy activities over five years of independent development was the initiation of the creation and strengthening of the CIS and the Central Asian Union. According to the priority level, the vectors of the CIS, Russia, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, Central Asia, the USA, the European Union and China were noted.

CENTRAL ASIAN VECTOR

The Central Asian vector of Kazakhstan's foreign policy remained both strategically important and at the same time quite complex. The key reasons for this are not only geographical proximity and similarity of political, economic and socio-cultural parameters. And it's not even that the Central Asian countries simultaneously started as an independent subject of international relations. In many ways, the difficulties were caused by the problems of nation-building and identity, the alignment of foreign policy priorities by the countries of the region, the influence of the geopolitical environment and emerging global trends.

The region is surrounded by major powers. It is the geopolitical environment that creates the conditions for formation of a common regional subjectivity. For each of the parties, a foreign policy tilt towards a conditional center of power contains significant risks of loss of geopolitical balance, and hence loss of stability.

In this respect, the situation is fundamentally different from the development of the Baltic States and the South Caucasus. The Baltic States have decisively changed their direction and have fully integrated into European structures. The Karabakh conflict had a great influence on the development of events in the South Caucasus region, defining a pro-Russian line in the policy of Armenia, and a pro-Turkish line in Azerbaijan. In Georgia, since the presidency of M. Saakashvili, a pro-Western orientation has prevailed.

In contrast, the foreign policy concepts of the Central Asian countries are kept in moderate tones. They reflect such definitions as multi-vector, multilateralism, pragmatism, bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, non-alignment and neutrality. Even following the volatile international geopolitical conjuncture, the governments of the countries of the region could not afford to deviate significantly from the declared principles.

Traditional values and modernization aspirations are closely intertwined in Central Asian societies. In these conditions, the predominant growth of certain trends and factors could become a source of serious internal shocks.

This was largely due to the civil war in Tajikistan and a series of dramatic revolutions in Kyrgyzstan. Therefore, it is logical that the evolution of the foreign policy approaches of the Central Asian countries was formed under the influence of contradictory internal processes. At the same time, socio-economic development required a comprehensive expansion of international trade and investment.

The growing connection with the outside world, along with internal factors, have created relatively similar conditions for the development of regional cooperation for the five countries. At the same time, the relationship developed in different forms at different stages.

During the early days of independence, the countries' cooperation was stimulated by the alarming economic and political processes, after the collapse of the Union. It is significant that the first consultative meeting of the five leaders of the regional countries

took place on December 13, 1991. Then the five Central Asian leaders worked out a common approach and adopted a statement that influenced the vector of further development before of the summit in Almaty on December 21, 1991, when the CIS was created.

Of course, the interpersonal relationships of their leaders played an important role. The approximately equal starting positions of the newly independent states and the mental closeness of their leaders created a relatively trusting atmosphere at subsequent meetings. At a meeting in Tashkent in January 1993, the Central Asian presidents for the first time attempted to coordinate regional policy taking into account the economic specialization of the five countries.

A year later, in 1994, the Presidents of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan signed an agreement for creation of single economic space, which Kyrgyzstan then joined. Later, on March 26, 1998, Tajikistan decided to join the organization. The association aimed at creating conditions for free movement of goods, services, capital, labor and was supposed to ensure a coordinated settlement, budget, tax, price, customs and currency policy of the member States.

This period is important for Central Asian cooperation. Although the growing divergence in economic priorities was constantly reflected at the level of interstate interaction, in general, political will and efforts restrained negative centripetal processes in the region.

At the initial stage, the leaders of the Central Asian countries were able to give the ideas of regional integration a certain value and perspective, to make them an important part of the political discourse. In addition, common approaches were developed to such problems as the ecological catastrophe of the Aral Sea, the nuclear-free status of the region, the military-political conflict in Afghanistan and the nature of new cross-border threats and challenges.

The next stage in development of relations between the Central Asian countries, since the turn of the new century, has been influenced by both internal national and regional problems, as well as increased interest in the region on the part of world and regional powers. Differences in the speed and direction of economic reforms, Kyrgyzstan's accession to the WTO in December 1998 indicated differences in the development strategies of national economies. In the future, this led to the suspension of further coordinated actions to develop common principles of customs and tax policy.

As the Central Asian market opened up widely to China, Turkey and other major producers of consumer products, the contradictions only intensified. The strengthening of border and customs control by Uzbekistan and formation of a common customs territory within the framework of the Customs Union of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia were only retaliatory measures to protect domestic production, but they did not eliminate the root of the problems.

The share of mutual trade in export-import operations of the Central Asian countries began to decrease every year, barriers to the movement of goods and services increased.

At the summit of the Central Asian Economic Union (CAEC) in Almaty in January 2001, the accumulated contradictions between its participants became apparent.

There have been tangible changes in international politics as well. The beginning of the 21st century was marked by the intensification of the fight against international terrorism, and, as a result, the United States and NATO countries have deployed military bases in a number of Central Asian countries. Despite the fact that the invasion of Western coalition into Afghanistan was supported by the international community, the era of geopolitical maneuvering between powers has begun for the region.

As you know, the events surrounding the closure of foreign military bases in Uzbek Karshi-Khanabad and Kyrgyz Manas testified to the intensity of the US rivalry with Russia and China for influence in the region. Although Moscow and Beijing did not officially oppose Washington and Brussels conducting anti-terrorist operations on Afghan territory, Tashkent and Bishkek felt the consequences of their hidden confrontation quite painfully.

In these conditions, Kazakhstan's foreign policy was adapted to global changes. The Central Asian agenda is shaded by global challenges, the war in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the spread of the threat of international terrorism. All this was reflected in the foreign policy concepts of 2001 and 2005, where priorities were set: the Russian Federation, China, the USA, the EU, Central Asia and the Islamic world.

Nevertheless, Kazakhstan did not give up hope for deepening regional cooperation in Central Asia. In his annual Address in February 2005, the Kazakh leader N.A. Nazarbayev initiates the creation of the Union of Central Asian States (UCAS). The leitmotif of the foreign policy block of the document was the call of the Kazakh leader to the southern neighbors for further integration as a way to stability, progress of the region, economic and military-political independence. N.A. Nazarbayev noted that “the agreement for eternal friendship between Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan can serve as a solid basis for such an association. I do not exclude other countries in the region. We have common economic interests, cultural and historical roots, language, religion, environmental problems, external threat. The architects of the construction of the European Union could only dream of such prerequisites. We need to move towards close economic integration, move towards a common market and a common currency” [10].

At the same time, since the second half of the 2000s, there has been a pause in regional cooperation, obviously due to the need to stabilize the situation in the region. To a certain extent, the Kazakh Government has also revised the strategy with a focus on ensuring stability and security, as well as creating a favorable foreign economic and foreign policy environment in Central Asia. Kazakhstan has defined the protection of its national interests on the world stage, including through the prism of protecting and promoting the common interests of the countries of the region.

During its leadership in OSCE in 2010, and in 2011 in OIC and being non-permanent member of UN Security Council from 2017 to 2018, Kazakhstan represented the entire region and purposefully defended the common interests of the Central Asian states.

Thus, in the “Path to Europe” program for 2009–2011, in the section “Priorities of the Representation of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the OSCE”, an important task was to use the potential and tools of the OSCE in the process of building a secure, stable and prosperous Central Asia, increasing the attractiveness of the region, including economic attractiveness [11].

In addition, in his program article “The fate and prospects of the OSCE” N.A. Nazarbayev emphasized that “due to a number of geographical, historical and economic circumstances, it is the states of Central Asia that have a huge trade and transit potential – a vast and promising region that can become a stable and secure bridge between the countries of the West and the East” [12].

At the 38th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers in Astana in 2011, the OIC Action Plan for Cooperation with Central Asia was adopted for the first time under the Kazakh leadership. This project provided for organization's support and cooperation in stimulating trade operations, investments, and the implementation of industrial projects of mutual interest both for the region and for the countries of the Muslim community. The community of Muslim countries supported the creation of a special OIC program for Central Asia. [13]

Speaking on the results of Kazakhstan's leadership in the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member in 2017-2018, Kazakh Foreign Minister B.B. Atamkulov also stressed that Kazakh diplomats were guided by the need for a harmonious combination of interests of all countries in the region, building a model of a regional zone of peace, security, cooperation and development. At the same time, Kazakhstan proposed to direct international efforts to the economic stabilization of Afghanistan with the active role of the Central Asian states. The head of the Kazakh Foreign Ministry noted that “delivering common interests of Central Asia in the Security Council, regular consultations on topical issues on the agenda of this body were highly appreciated by our neighbors in the region. We are confident that our approach has contributed to the rapprochement of fraternal states, deepening mutual understanding and respect,” he concluded [14].

Since the beginning of the 2010s, the regional security agenda has significantly expanded and gained scale, including due to Kazakhstan's proactive participation in international structures. This is reflected in the Concept of Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy for 2014-2020. Its first and main priority is the interest in the politically stable, economically sustainable and secure development of Central Asia. The document states that Kazakhstan intends to make comprehensive efforts to ensure regional stability and security, to counter new challenges and threats, including those emanating from neighboring territories. In addition, the desire of our country to develop intraregional integration in order to reduce the conflict potential, solve socio-economic problems, decouple the node of water-energy and other contradictions was noted. The long-term goal was to transform the region into a single integrated subject of international politics and economics [15].

Then the concept defines Eurasian economic integration as a priority as one of the ways to promote the country to a stable position in the system of international economic relations. However, there is a reservation that the fundamental principles include the inviolability of political sovereignty, the economic feasibility of decisions taken, phasing, pragmatism and mutual benefit, equal representation of the parties in all integration bodies and consensus at all levels of integration interaction. At the same time, Russia and China are highlighted in the country priorities as key partners, followed by our southern neighbors [15].

Accordingly, despite a number of failures of previous stages, current regional cooperation between the five countries in the form of consultative meetings of Presidents has its own background and platform. And although the agenda does not differ much from agenda within the framework of previous structures, the five-sided format of meeting without non-regional actors, foresight in approaches and the desire of Central Asian countries to take into account regional peculiarities and new global trends becomes fundamental.

NEW DYNAMICS

The starting point of the new stage of cooperation of Central Asian countries is a consultative meeting in a five-sided format in Astana in March 2018. This event was preceded by important changes in Uzbekistan and the beginning of economic reforms there. The new Uzbek Government has demonstrated determination in solving problems on a mutually acceptable basis with all its neighbors and distant partners. This has significantly improved Tashkent's relations with Bishkek and Dushanbe in many ways and, in general, significantly improved the situation in the region.

Despite the fact that the multilateral meeting in Astana in March 2018 was largely a trial, it became a key moment for regional cooperation. Without coming into conflict with non-regional players, the countries discussed common problems. It is symbolic that the event itself was timed to coincide with the spring holiday Nauryz, which already provided a complimentary atmosphere. Although the Turkmen President G. Berdymukhamedov was absent from the meeting, but Ashgabat delegated the Chairman of the Mejlis of Turkmenistan A. Nurberdiyeva. Therefore, the working format has become the most suitable for the Astana meeting.

It is also important that Uzbekistan, inspired by the successful holding of the Astana meeting, has energetically activated its diplomatic resources for further continuation and deepening of the regional dialogue. The Uzbek Government sets itself quite ambitious and pragmatic tasks, including the formation of a large interregional hub of Central and South Asia.

To this end, Tashkent implements railway and automobile infrastructure projects both in the country and in the Afghan border areas. At the same time, given the complex military-political situation in Afghanistan, the high conflict potential between India

and Pakistan, as well as the rigid pragmatism of the political elites and the business environment of South Asian countries, it is fundamentally important for the Uzbek Government to maintain not only a capacious transit potential in the northern direction, but also to receive a reliable support from Central Asian neighbors.

In this regard, Tashkent has launched a number of major international initiatives to strengthen regional and interregional ties. Among them was the holding of the second consultative meeting of the Presidents of Central Asian States in Tashkent in November 2019. In August 2021, with the active assistance of the Uzbek Government, the third consultative meeting of the President of the countries of the region was effectively held in Turkmenistan.

The Central Asian forums at the highest political level in Nur-Sultan, Tashkent and Avaza were the result of the trend towards close cooperation between the countries. At the same time, the new stage of regional cooperation is characterized by a relatively high adaptability to current conditions. There is no strict binding to the regulations and formalized dates. At the same time, the Presidents of the five countries interact fairly close on topical issues. This is confirmed by their actions related to countering the consequences of the pandemic and assisting Kyrgyzstan in the fall of 2020 to overcome the internal political crisis.

The dialogue between the Presidents of the five countries is taking place in a constructive way, because of complex of accumulated pressing issues within the region and the increasing pressure from the geopolitical environment. Circumstances are pushing us to form an integrated approach that will allow us to respond promptly to force majeure events and to stop their consequences in the future within the region.

Despite the continuation of the discussion of the already traditional problems: increase in trade and economic turnover, distribution of water and energy resources, development of international transport communications, tourism, etc, new tangible risks have arisen for the participants of cooperation:

- the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic has created a large-scale threat to public health, which necessitated the coordinated actions of sanitary and border services, health systems, and the unification of scientific potential;
- the economic crisis, due to sanitary and epidemiological restrictions and the closure of borders, has put forward the task of establishing intensive trade exchange within the region, as well as the safe movement of labor;
- the climate agenda dictated by transboundary technogenic hazards has actualized regional environmental, water and energy issues, as well as measures to decarbonize economies;
- the situation in Afghanistan and the impending humanitarian catastrophe on its territory requires coordinated actions by all countries of the region in the field of international security and assistance to the population of the neighboring country.

Under the current conditions, Kazakhstan's foreign policy continues to remain

flexible and pragmatic. For Nur-Sultan, the activation of Tashkent in the region is beneficial, since the thesis of the formation of integration “cores” between countries similar in type of economic transformations and in terms of living standards remains relevant.

In this regard, economic reforms in the neighboring country are perceived in an exceptionally positive way. New opportunities are opening up to further strengthen the multifaceted relations between the two major countries of the region. In a short period of time, the parties began to implement a roadmap for expanding and deepening cooperation, developing cross-border cooperation, building new roads and opening flights. Among the major initiatives is creation of the International Center for Trade and Economic Cooperation (ICTES) “Central Asia” on the border of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. This project has a very large regional perspective. ICTES will give an impetus to the development of trade and economic ties throughout the region, interregional infrastructure and trade projects will receive a new impetus. It is significant that Kazakhstan is one of the three key foreign trade partners of Uzbekistan with a share of over 10%. In turn, the share of Uzbekistan in the total volume of Kazakhstan’s foreign trade amounted to about 3.5%. At the same time, bilateral relations with Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan are developing.

The updated foreign policy Concept for 2020–2030 clearly outlined Nur-Sultan’s line to consolidate leading positions in Central Asia as a responsible and key element in the system of geopolitical and geo-economic coordinates [16]. This strategy was confirmed in the Message of the President K. Tokayev to the people of Kazakhstan in September 2021 [17]. Thus, the Central Asian vector of Kazakhstan’s foreign policy remains in demand both in the country and is supported by its southern neighbors.

■ **Conclusion.** A common opinion that Kazakhstan’s foreign policy is an alternative between the Central Asian and Eurasian development vector is wrong. As noted above, the unification of the Central Asian countries at the initial stage of independence was seen by the Kazakh Government as a necessary component of a larger trans-regional integration.

The idea itself was caused by those challenges when, with the severance of ties, new states began to rapidly lose their industrial potential and economic self-sufficiency, turning into raw materials appendages of developed countries of West and East. Kazakhstan suggested that post-Soviet countries should stop this threatening trend by joint efforts. This issue is still relevant today.

At the same time, regional cooperation was useful and remains useful in modern conditions. For the entire thirty-year period of independence, despite economic imbalances, national protectionism, uncontrolled re-export of goods, territorial and border disputes, inter-ethnic conflicts, imbalance in the distribution of water and energy resources, the Central Asian countries have prevented direct and open interstate clashes.

Kazakhstan has invested all its diplomatic efforts in a compromise scenario in the region. Development of regional relations has always been in priority in official speeches and documents on foreign policy. Kazakhstan showed flexibility in its approaches, insisting somewhere on a joint solution of regional problems, somewhere withstood a pause. Central Asian regionalism adapted to Nur-Sultan's strategy under the influence of the emerging geopolitical conditions.

Despite high expectations and skepticism among some experts regarding the development of Central Asia, the region has not lost its identity for the world community. Its stable development created conditions for the preservation of regional potential, which was reflected in the approaches of global and regional powers, which began to establish C5+ interaction formats with the five countries. This also shows the consistent foreign policy strategy of Kazakhstan in the region, as well as the common position of all Central Asian countries.

Currently, Afghanistan poses fundamentally new tasks for Central Asian cooperation. The Presidents of the countries in the region stand for the economic rehabilitation of the neighboring country, which implies active joint assistance to state-building there.



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