

TALUK, CHUNG, ZHULDYZ SARAMBAYEV,  
FERREZ CHABAL (eds.)

**ON THE ASIAN AND  
EUROPEAN ORIGINS  
OF LEGAL AND  
POLITICAL SYSTEMS**

VIEWS FROM KOREA,  
KAZAKHSTAN AND FRANCE



PETER LANG

## **THE EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE MULTI-VECTOR FOREIGN POLICY OF KAZAKHSTAN**

### **Introduction**

After gaining its independence Kazakhstan had faced the task of developing its long-term foreign policy strategy. The peaceful international course of the Republic determined its guidelines and reflected its adherence to modern international legal principles.

These are the key principles of the foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan: balance and multi-vector policy. The principle of multi-vector foreign policy is a feature born out of objective circumstances of our state. The geopolitical location at the crossroads of Asia and Europe; economic and military-political interests, as well as the existing hydrocarbon and industrial potential, all determine the place of Kazakhstan within the system of international relations as adequate regional power and provide a multi-vector character in its foreign policy.

### **The origins of multi-vector foreign policy of Kazakhstan.**

For the first time the multi-vector nature of Kazakhstan's foreign policy was determined on 2 December 1991, when N. Nazarbayev noted that Kazakhstan should become a bridge between Europe and Asia. Multi-vector policy as pragmatically pointed by N. Nazarbayev, with regard to the foreign policy is the development of friendly and predictable relations with all the countries that play a significant role in the world affairs<sup>1</sup>.

During the first stage of its development, Kazakhstan has solved the important tasks; provided the geopolitical recognition and geopolitical awareness of the young republic. Having received recognition from the international community, the Republic of Kazakhstan demonstrates important foreign policy initiatives. At the same time Kazakhstan sought to establish and strengthen relationship with the leading countries of the world and to participate in international political, military and economic organizations for the purposes of its own economic development.

The multi-vector nature of Kazakhstan's foreign policy was called upon to ensure an independent and free in its choice foreign policy of the young state. President N. Nazarbayev has repeatedly confirmed that "in due time, the multi-vector nature of the country's international policy was correctly defined, the distinctive feature of which is a balanced and equal attitude simultaneously with different important centers of power and the main world and regional players. The future of Kazakhstan - and in Asia, and in Europe, and in the East, and in the West. Carrying out precisely such a policy will allow to exclude any manifestations of the security

---

<sup>1</sup> N. Nazarbayev's press conference. December 2, 1991 // URL: [www.akorda.kz](http://www.akorda.kz)

threat of Kazakhstan. We will be able to strengthen favorable external conditions for economic and political reforms in our country<sup>1</sup>.

Developed in 1990-s, the concept called The Eurasian bridge was transformed into a doctrine of the «multi-vector diplomacy of Kazakhstan» providing new opportunities for fruitful partnerships, both with the West and the East. It also marked geographic, cultural, historical and civilizational affiliation of Kazakhstan to both Europe and Asia. As part of this concept, President N. Nazarbayev delivered a series of very interesting integration projects, the implementation of which led Kazakhstan to the level of the leading Central Asian state.

The beginning of the new century coincided with the emergence of new trends in Kazakhstan's foreign policy: political pragmatism aimed at strengthening and development of the foundations of the independence and the sovereignty of our country. The outlines the foreign policy started emerging more prominently.

Subsequently (until the middle of the first decade of the 21st century), the need for obtaining a basic international resource that could provide them with economic "survival" came first among tactical priorities. The changing geopolitical situation in the region and in the world as a whole required the RK to adopt concrete and thoughtful decisions that would, first of all, preserve the subjectivity of the state and protect its national interests, and minimize emerging risks and threats.

In different periods of the history of independent Kazakhstan, some or other vectors become the dominant ones for foreign policy. However, the art of diplomacy is exactly what is needed to maintain a balance, a kind of "middle line", and to minimize the damage from foreign policy distortions in favor of one of the most powerful and profitable vector at the moment.

In the new environment of geopolitical and geo-economic changes, the country's leadership had to look for the new forms of interaction with regional and global powers to preserve the multi-vector nature of its foreign policy. It is shaped not only by foreign policy mechanisms; in many ways it depends on the domestic political situation, public views and is subject to the mixture of interethnic and political crises.

The changes taking place in the world connected with the development of new technologies and the process of globalization, the emergence of planetary threats, the formation of a new economic design, the deepening and diversification of international cooperation at the regional level - all this forces us to make adjustments to the foreign policy of our state, requires a rapid and flexible response, development and implementation of new approaches at solving urgent international problems. These and other factors explain the launch of Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy Concept for 2014-2020<sup>2</sup>.

This concept reiterates that the priorities in Kazakhstan's foreign policy remain unchanged: active, versatile and balanced foreign policy capable of meeting challenges of the 21st century and aimed at securing long-term national interests. In the context of globalization and regionalization, Kazakhstan continues its foreign

---

<sup>1</sup> Nazarbayev N. To strengthen the international positions of Kazakhstan // URL: [www.president.kz](http://www.president.kz).

<sup>2</sup> Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy Concept for 2014-2020 // URL: <http://mfa.gov.kz/index.php/ru/>

policy based on the principles of pragmatism and multi-vectorism, which is the foundation of the country's foreign policy activity.

In the foreign policy concept of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2014-2020 the principle of multi-vectorism, is preserved as the basis of the foreign policy of the RK, develops towards a balance, pragmatism, mutual benefit, firm upholding of the national interests of the country. In this regard, Kazakhstan applies equally to the countries of the near-term circle, as well as to other subjects of international law. The concept preserves continuity with previous foreign policy documents, generalizes the experience of the past years, contains proven positions and goals and, naturally, outlines new tasks.

### **Some aspects of the economic diplomacy of Kazakhstan.**

Another distinctive feature of the new Concept, that has great internal significance, is the focus on conducting an active economic diplomacy. Taking into account today's realities, the economization of foreign policy, foreign policy strategy of the Republic of Kazakhstan requires modernization and promotion of national interests on the principles of pragmatism. The main thing here is assistance in the development of the national economy, which is an integral part of the world economy and to a considerable extent, experiences its positive or negative impact<sup>1</sup>.

The question of the pragmatism of the country's foreign policy is being updated against the backdrop of an acute geopolitical confrontation in the world, the deterioration of the global economic environment, the active formation of a new trade and economic world order through the formation of large blocks around competing global centers. Thus, for the economic development of the Republic of Kazakhstan, it is important to search for optimal ways of interfacing geo-economic projects with the participation of our strategic partners.

Firstly, it is the policy of broad integration in Eurasia implemented through the establishment of an open and sustainable multilateral partnership within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). As the Head of State underlined, «The Eurasian Economic Union is seen as an open economic community organically integrated into the world economic system as a reliable bridge between Europe and growing Asia»<sup>2</sup>.

At the turn of the new stage of social and economic modernization, the priority task for Kazakhstan in the development of the national transport and communications is to ensure its competitiveness in the global services market and accordingly to boost the growth of trade flows through the territory of the Republic.

In 2012 President of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbayev announced about the launch of a large-scale project «New Silk Road». The program «Nurly Zhol – Path to Future»

---

<sup>1</sup> New tasks of the Head of state of activization of an economic component of the Kazakhstan diplomacy // <http://mfa.gov.kz/index.php/ru/blog-ministra-1/73-zapisi-ministra/5824>

<sup>2</sup> Nazarbayev N. Address to heads of states of EEU // URL: <http://www.kazpravda.kz/articles/strategiya-2050/>

envisages the growth of the country's export potential; necessity to continue building a logistics hub in the east and the sea infrastructure in the west of the country<sup>1</sup>.

According to Kazakh experts, today there are three competing geopolitical projects in Central Asia: American «New Silk Road», Russian «Eurasian Union» and Chinese «Economic belt on the Silk Road». All three projects emerged almost simultaneously, and were driven by the policy change of the origin countries towards Central Asia<sup>2</sup>.

China and Russia offered their vision of the development of transport routes in the region: within the EEU and the Economic Belt; each of them has its own conceptual foundation as well as number of advantages and disadvantages. One can agree with the opinion of Kazakhstani experts, like Konstantin Syroezhkin that one of the main issues of the EEU is difference in viewing the ultimate goals of the Eurasian integration<sup>3</sup>.

Kazakhstan, like other Central Asian countries, deems it important to participate in the implementation of the Chinese initiative on Economic belt and to efficiently exploit new emerging opportunities and advantages for the regional cooperation, also pursuing minimizing of possible risks and threats. Chinese Economic belt and the new economic policy of Kazakhstan «Nurly Zhol» complement each other in terms of their content as they are aimed at the development of infrastructure, particularly transport and communications.

The implementation and integration of these two strategies would allow solving several tasks at once: development of production capacities in Kazakhstan with the involvement of Chinese companies; access to the organizations in the Asia-Pacific region, like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and Trans-Pacific Partnership (TTP). Directions of Economic Belt and «Nurly Zhol» are not only found, but gained real outlines in the form of specific projects; most importantly they all have a solid funding.

The practical implementation of the initiative of the Chinese «Economic Belt» can lead to the formation of the new global economy around Eurasia, where the main link becomes Central Asia. In particular, a strategically important place will be Kazakhstan. Unfortunately, nothing can be said about the EEU neither in terms of the investment nor in terms of specific large-scale projects. Kazakhstan has to carefully balance the fact of being one of the EEU founders and active members with the fact of being involved into Chinese Economic Belt and «Nurly Zhol» without entering into any kind of confrontation with Russia, and upsetting Russian-Kazakh relationship.

Taking into account the energy resource potential of Central Asia, the United States demonstrate great deal of interest in the development of transport infrastructure of the region to the west (Euro Asian corridor, East-West route). The US «New Silk

---

<sup>1</sup> Address of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Peoples of Kazakhstan. Nurly Zhol – Path to Future // URL: <http://www.kazpravda.kz/articles/view/>

<sup>2</sup> Syroezhkin K. Geopolitical projects from Central Asia and a role of Kazakhstan // URL: <http://bit.ly/29G07NO>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Road» strategy might provide a significant economic growth and trade to Afghanistan's neighbors, including all Central Asian countries, believe some American analysts. At the same time «New Silk Road» lacks both the content and the funding.

Kazakhstani experts rightly point out that our state «has built equal, pragmatic and balanced relations with all major players on the world stage and with all its neighbors. In addition to this, the Republic has no border and territorial disputes that exist between some other states of Central Asia»<sup>1</sup>.

### **Global players.**

According to the Foreign Policy Concept, Kazakhstan will strive to develop an intra-regional integration within Central Asia to reduce the conflict potential, to solve social and economic problems and other challenges. The transformation of the region into common integrated subject of international politics and economy appears as promising target<sup>2</sup>.

*Russia.* Given the positive and negative trends in the Central Asian politics of Russia, Kazakhstani politicians and experts need to develop new approaches to further development of the Russian aspect in Kazakhstan's foreign policy. Kazakhstan should also maintain the acquired distance with the Russian Federation, so that by developing an economic integration Astana manages to avoid becoming a second-rate partner to Moscow.

*China* is our reliable partner with whom we have constant dialogue across all areas of mutual interest. Trade and economic relations of Kazakhstan with China bear sustained, beneficial and dynamic character based on the strong foundation of cooperation between the two countries gathered over previous years. Chinese leadership for its part consider Kazakhstan as a major and long-term trade and economic partner in Central Asia. Moreover, Kazakhstan has the largest economy in the region and makes up over 70% of trade turnover with China among the countries of Central Asia<sup>3</sup>.

One of the threats for Kazakhstan may become inability to preserve the raw material orientation of the national economy, as investment projects of Chinese companies are primarily linked to oil and natural gas. In the context of a weakening role for Russia and weak cooperation ties within the region, China continues its offensive strategy in Central Asia. Kazakhstan should use this steady trend and formulate common interests and defend its national interests in cooperation with the new regional superpower.

*USA.* The American regional initiative «C5+1» can become the basis for the search of new opportunities for cooperation between Kazakhstan and the US. In order to maintain the balance of its multi-vector foreign policy, Kazakhstan should consolidate its position as a key partner of Washington in Central Asia by developing

---

<sup>1</sup> Akimbekov S.M. Future of Eurasia: a look from Kazakhstan. Ch.2 // URL: <http://365info.kz/2015/11/budushhee-evrazii-vzglyad-iz-kazahstana-chast-2/>

<sup>2</sup> Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy Concept for 2014-2020 // <http://mfa.gov.kz/index.php/ru/>

<sup>3</sup> Idrissov A. Economic belt on the Silk Road and Eurasian integration: competition or new opportunities? // URL: <http://ru.ictsd.org/bridges-news>

a security partnership within the framework of «C5 + 1»<sup>1</sup>. The new regional policy of the USA testifies that Washington is not ready to refuse influence in the region and, in the light of the Syrian and Afghan crises, will build up both the economic and military-political presence in Central Asia.

### **European vector.**

*European Union.* European direction is one of the most important in Kazakhstan's foreign policy. The prospect and the need to develop relations with the European Union for Kazakhstan are determined by the role and place of the European Union in European and world politics, economy and culture. Kazakhstan's cooperation with European countries developed both bilaterally and multilaterally in cooperation with the European Union.

EU is one of the largest trade and investment partner of Kazakhstan - the share of EU countries accounted for over 40% of foreign trade turnover of Kazakhstan<sup>2</sup>. Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and Kazakhstan emerged as the new stage of reinforced cooperation<sup>3</sup>.

### **Asian vector.**

Kazakhstan clearly sees itself as an integral part of the Asian continent and is interested in economic and political cooperation with Asian countries. Kazakhstan initiates important events in the field of Asian security, for example it was Astana who suggested establishing Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) that has every opportunity to become a prime mechanism of collective security in Asia. Moreover, Kazakhstan by participating in different regional and international organizations attempts to provide Central Asian and Eurasian interests. Kazakhstan gives particular attention to SCO that can be regarded as the most dynamic and perspective organization in the Post-Soviet region. Kazakhstan's government also supports stabilization of political situation in Afghanistan and the reconstruction of its economy. In line with its pragmatic diplomacy and policy Kazakhstan is considering the extension of cooperation with ASEAN.

The Asian region, and in particular its eastern part, has become the most dynamic in the modern world. In these conditions, Kazakhstan's commitment as an Asian state to the concept of a multipolar world and the consolidation of bilateral relations with the countries of this region meets its national interests. The problem is that «many Asian countries do not perceive Kazakhstan and Central Asia as part of

---

<sup>1</sup> See. Starr S.F., Kukeyeva F. etc. Looking forward: Kazakhstan and the United States. – Washington: Johns Hopkins University, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Silk Road Studies program, 2014

<sup>2</sup> Realities confirmed validity of multivector foreign policy of Kazakhstan – the MFA // URL: [http://www.inform.kz/ru/realii-podtverdili-obosnovannost-mnogovektornoy-vneshney-politiki-kazahstana-mid\\_a2927586](http://www.inform.kz/ru/realii-podtverdili-obosnovannost-mnogovektornoy-vneshney-politiki-kazahstana-mid_a2927586)

<sup>3</sup> Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and Kazakhstan // URL: <http://www.inform.kz/rus/article/2899577>

the Asia-Pacific Region»<sup>1</sup>. This issue is relevant for the development of the «Asian vector» of Kazakhstan's foreign policy. At the same time, the deepening of Kazakhstan's activities in the Asian region can go well and overlap with foreign policy initiatives of other countries in the APR region. Kazakhstan's relations in the Asian direction are generally heterogeneous. It seems important to «pursue the Asian foreign policy of Kazakhstan in line with the principle of «soft regionalism»<sup>2</sup>.

*India* occupies an important place in the multi-vector foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan's interest in India is determined by the place and role of this country in the modern world. Currently India is one of the rising and the most dynamic economies in the world also being one of the main global centres of influence. Kazakhstan and India both being the countries with the multinational and multi-confessional societies share the common values and the common approaches about the key international issues, including regional security<sup>3</sup>.

*Republic of Korea*. Current stage of relations between Kazakhstan and South Korea might be regarded as transformative stage between the two countries as approaching higher level: a strategic partnership. Active multi-vector diplomacy of the Kazakhstan in Asian region might work in line with the new policy of Korea, since Korea similar to Kazakhstan also takes advantage of its geopolitical location among the world's powers. Currently with the forthcoming 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between Republic of Korea and Kazakhstan, our aim is to construct an efficient project and implement it. It will be then when two countries will be able to create a new paradigm of partnership.

### **International security and cooperation with multilateral structures**

Kazakhstan consistently supports the implementation and improvement of principles of multilateral structures.

The priority issues of Kazakhstan's foreign policy are the issues of the strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and destruction of nuclear weapons. Our country has made its peacekeeping contribution to the development of global nuclear disarmament process, limitation of the spread of weapons of mass destruction. As a nation, creating a global precedent for the voluntary renunciation of nuclear weapons and closing the nuclear test polygon, Kazakhstan will continue to pursue an active policy to strengthen the international regime of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in modern world. That is why our country has received assurances of non-aggression, independence and territorial integrity from the nuclear powers, including US and Russia.

The antinuclear policy of Kazakhstan has helped in the establishment of positive relations with the world community; it has received guarantees of security enabling it to pursue internal political reforms independently with the aim to strengthening of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Bainazarova E. Asian vector of development of RK: synergy of the East and West // <http://2010-2013.iwep.kz/index.php?newsid=327>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Baizakova K. The Development of the India's Role in Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy // India – Central Asia Dialogue II. 17-18 June 2013. – Delhi, 2014. – P. 108



statehood without outside intervention, in other words it took full advantage of the “confidence” it enjoys from the world powers.

Since its independence Kazakhstan proved to be an effective, consistent and reliable member of the UN system. Special priority is given to strengthening cooperation with the organization in the fields of economy, environment, social development, international development, human rights, combating terrorism, organized crime and drug trafficking.

Kazakhstan joined at the UN as a state that takes an active position on the most actual international problems of our time, which is at the forefront of the movement for nuclear disarmament. The election of Kazakhstan as the non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2017-2018 will make contribution to the global agenda of international security

Kazakhstan considers peacekeeping activities as an important part of policy to strengthen collective security in accordance with the decisions of the UN Security Council and the universally recognized norms of international law. Peacekeeping brigade «Kazbrig» was created on the basis of a peacekeeping battalion KazBat in 2006 and it is the main peacekeeping component of the armed forces of Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan peacekeeping battalion was included in the staff of «blue helmets» of UN.

Participation of Kazakhstan in the *OSCE* as consultative and multilateral forum on preventive diplomacy is one of the elements of Kazakhstan’s involvement into the European security structures that in effect contributes to maintaining stability in Eurasia. In this turn, president N. Nazarbayev noted that Kazakhstan is a staunch supporter of closer cooperation with the OSCE - one of the most influential international organizations<sup>1</sup>.

The official position of Kazakhstan concerning the *CSTO* is that this system of collective security, despite all the problems and difficulties is a real basis for shaping regional security system, so further measures should be taken to increase the effectiveness of this organization.

Kazakhstan supports additional security guarantees, both within CIS and Central Asia. It is not a coincidence that Kazakhstan has taken the initiative to establish a new cooperation structure in Asia called *Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia* (CICA) that takes special place in its foreign policy priorities system.

The issue of participation in the *SCO* is one of the key questions of Kazakhstan’s multi-vector foreign policy since it might become the effective tool to achieve a number of the geopolitical purposes.

Kazakhstan’s partnership with the *NATO* is reasonable to preserve political balance. Cooperation of Kazakhstan with the NATO is a prominent aspect of strengthening of regional security. It covers a wide spectrum of areas, including the

---

<sup>1</sup> Speech of the President the Republic of Kazakhstan N. A. Nazarbaeva on enhanced board the MFA of Kazakhstan 07.06.2005 // Diplomatic courier. - 2005. - №2(4). - C.191

reform of sector of defense and security, military operative interoperability of NATO armed forces and Kazakhstan, civil emergency planning and scientific cooperation<sup>1</sup>.

The analysis of Kazakhstan's participation in regional associations has allowed to reveal the trends testifying that the combination of cooperation on a number of issues on bilateral (the RK - the USA, the RK - the EU countries) and multilateral (within certain programs of the EU, OSCE and NATO) basis has the greatest value for the Republic of Kazakhstan.

In accordance with the Foreign Policy Concept Kazakhstan acknowledging its responsibility and the role in the region will exert every effort to provide regional stability and security and take actions against new challenges and threats. Kazakhstan prefers non-military security measures that primarily include political, diplomatic, legal, economic, humanitarian, advocacy and other measures.

This defines the following tasks:

- Relations and integration processes enhancement on the basis of mutually beneficial cooperation, mutual understanding and confidence-building measures implementation as well as military transparency among friendly countries, among Central Asian countries in particular;

- Increase in activity to establish international mechanisms of armed conflicts and aggression prevention;

- Confidence-building measures, renunciation of military force to resolve interstate conflicts, peaceful settlement of international disputes;

- economic ties expansion and deepening of cooperation with the world democratic and industrialized nations;

- Global assistance in strengthening non-proliferation weapons of mass destruction regimes and arms control.

- and lastly, international community support of the state with the assistance and cooperation of international institutions and forums.

In Kazakhstan there is a clear understanding of the importance of Afghanistan to preserve regional security in Central Asia, and our country holds an active position on Afghanistan's stabilization. Kazakhstan supports all peace initiatives and processes of conflict settlement in Afghanistan and regularly confirms its obligations to support the global partnership for assistance to Afghanistan.

Thus, by analyzing Kazakhstan's participation in the international security maintenance, it can be stated that Kazakhstan has been making a real and positive contribution to strengthening global and regional security. Kazakhstan's contribution to global and regional security provision has been recognized by the UN and international community.

### **To summarize the experience of multi-vector policy**

To summarize the experience of multi-vector policy as a foreign policy doctrine of the Republic of Kazakhstan, one should highlight two positive features.

---

<sup>1</sup> Baizakova K. Importance of the Cooperation With NATO in the Multi-Vector Foreign Policy of Kazakhstan // Азия Еуропа. – 2017. - №15. – P. 60

First, it is an opportunity to build flexible political alliances and at some point even integrational structures, like the EEU and Customs Union. Multi-vector policy provides Kazakhstan's membership in international organizations worldwide, both from the East (OIC) and the West (OSCE). To take part both in the post-Soviet structures (CIS, EAEC, CSTO), and the EU program «Eastern Partnership». Use in its policy various regional security systems: the NATO Partnership for Peace program and the SCO.

Let us note the uniqueness of the experience of the multi-vector foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan - this is the preservation of the distance in relations with partners. For example, within the framework of integration with the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan manages to maintain a distance allowing cooperation on the principles of equality and mutual understanding.

Secondly adhering to the multi-vector policy is one of the most efficient ways to preserve the stability of the regime: a way to redistribute risks among different baskets. If one of the vectors (Western) carries qualitative assessments of the political regime, but at the same time is the main donor, then links in other directions can seriously influence and support the local elite without an ideological context. Participants in the third vectors in general may look or seem not to be interested players, but with potentially profitable projects (China and Asian countries).

The multi-vector nature of the Republic of Kazakhstan meant and means a certain diplomatic style, an advantageous method of foreign policy, following which the national interests formulated by the ruling elite are most fully realized. This practice was established gradually, by trial and error.

It should also be taken into account that the practice of multi-vector policy is formed not only through foreign policy mechanisms, in many ways, it depends on the domestic political situation, public sentiments, and on inter-ethnic and inter-religious harmony. Therefore, investigating the practice of multi-vector approach, one can face both a stable multi-vector system and its more mobile part.

Researching the practice of multi-vector policy, one has to face both a stable multi-vector system and a more unstable system subject to crises. A number of factors have raised the risks for the implementation of the principles of multi-vector policy in the foreign policy strategy of the Republic of Kazakhstan:

- the presence of significant storage of energy resources and also other various types of minerals, including strategic,
- logistic and communicative opportunities,
- irreversibility of the processes of involvement of Kazakhstan to the global economic processes and integrative projects,
- social-economic situation in the country and neighboring countries
- deterioration of ecological situation.
- the growing threat of terrorism, religious extremism.
- the intensifying rivalry between the great powers in Central Asia within the so-called «The New Great Game».

That is, it should be recognized that, along with positive results, multi-vectorism carries certain dangers. The main problem is the danger of becoming an object of an external game. This is so-called "a new big game" of the leading regional and world

states for the resources and now the transit potential of Central Asia. American experts, associate any activation of China, Russia and the United States with the start of a new big game.

Together with the strengths of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the emerging opportunities, there are a number of risks that require an adequate response. First of all, it is narrowing of the space for maneuvering within the framework of a multi-vector policy in the process of developing the geopolitical struggle in Central Asia between global players: China, the US and Russia. Nevertheless, Kazakhstan follows a multi-vector policy even in conditions of narrowing of the space for maneuvering. This is evidenced by the behavior of the RK in the course of the Ukrainian crisis. Of course, at this stage the tasks within the framework of multi-vector policy have become much more complicated for Kazakhstan and the risks associated with such a policy are increasing. At the same time, in our conditions, another approach is not acceptable.

Therefore, opening the streams of a wide range of foreign policy ties in various directions, it is necessary to retain the initiative of decision-making. Consequently, Kazakhstan needs to develop foreign policy mechanisms in order not only to preserve and strengthen its sovereignty and protect its national interests, but also to act as equal players in the international arena.

Increasingly, there is a criticism of multi-vectorality in expert and political circles. In our opinion, we can talk about a certain crisis of multi-vector policy. First of all, this is due to the question of the limits of multi-vector. Is it possible for a long time in a changing world to maintain equal relations with all major players, preserving its own subjectivity and protecting national interest.

Russian experts question the ability to retain Kazakhstan's strong foreign policy positions in contemporary political realities<sup>1</sup>. As a basis for such assumptions, Kazakhstan's initiatives to strengthen strategic cooperation with the US, EU, PRC, aspiration of Astana to be simultaneously a military ally of the CSTO and NATO are cited, which often causes a contradiction of the interests of the parties. However, the crisis does not mean that a multi-vector policy has exhausted itself or ceased to function at all. It just became much more difficult to implement.

The established practice of conducting a multi-vector foreign policy raises many questions among politicians and experts:

- Are there any generally accepted criteria's for a multi-vector foreign policy?
- Is the multi-vector nature of the Republic of Kazakhstan burdened with any conflict potential?
- Is the multi-vectorality of the Republic of Kazakhstan subordinated to any one priority task?
- Does multi-vector tend to equipoise and equidistance to maintain balance?
- Does it have the characteristics of a discrete multi-vector?
- what is considered stable, and what is its moving part of multi-vector?

---

<sup>1</sup> Tsinker A. Multivector policy: Kazakhstan cut // Экспертный Центр ICES // <http://www.contur.kz/node/609>

- What are the main concepts of the multi-vector foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan?

The answer to these and other questions will allow to predict the future of the Kazakhstan version of the multi-vector policy.

Multi-vector means a constant and comprehensive study of the situation with the subsequent choice of the only correct step. Today, for Kazakhstan, the main thing is to strengthen all means of political and economic independence. And this is possible mainly due to active foreign policy activity, progressive and dynamic development. The position of Kazakhstan is such that it is necessary to actively and comprehensively cooperate with all neighbors, not getting too close to either of them. Therefore, multi-vector and integration at the current stage of development are not at all synonymous.

In our opinion, we should not talk about «the fact that multi-vectority has exhausted itself, but that it has passed from a quantitative measurement to a qualitative one»<sup>1</sup>. Today, not only the basic principles of Kazakhstan's foreign policy remain, but its evolution also takes place, allowing constructive relations with partners and influencing the participants of the New Great Game.

In the foreign policy documents of the Republic of Kazakhstan, our own state priorities are placed at the forefront, and all relevant players will be allocated the appropriate place. The implementation of these tasks requires maintaining the geopolitical balance in the region, building constructive relations with global powers.

But the foundation of relations with other states should be a solid economic base, mutually beneficial trade and economic relations, attracting investments, and increasing political dialogue, both at the bilateral and multilateral levels. It is necessary to build relationships, guided by pragmatism and not overestimate the role of ideology.

## **Conclusion**

The multi-vector foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan has been proving its effectiveness for 25 years already, including in ensuring regional and global security. At the same time, the changing geopolitical and geo-economic realities require the RK and the countries of Central Asia to respond to traditional and non-traditional risks, challenges and threats that are key to their development, stability and security.

Today Kazakhstan is interesting to the world not only for oil, uranium and hydrocarbons, but also as a regional leader, a responsible partner and a reliable neighbor. Today's high international prestige of Kazakhstan – it is a direct result of our internal achievements, a consistent policy of peace, and such major international initiatives like the renunciation of nuclear weapons, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, holding the Congress of World Religions, participation in defeating against terrorism and in peacekeeping missions

---

<sup>1</sup> Kukeyeva F.T. Multivector foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan: prospects of development // Evolution of conceptual bases and practice of multivector foreign policy of Kazakhstan. – Almaty, 2017. – P.13

in Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Iraq, initiation of intermediary negotiations, in particular on the Syrian crisis

It should be recalled that the multi-vector policy is not a rigid, once and for all established dogmatic form. Twenty five years ago the world was different, Kazakhstan had very different opportunities, goals and tasks. The world and the environment of Kazakhstan are changing. The priorities of the major players in world politics are changing. Globalization and the crisis changed not only the alignment of forces in the world, but also generated new global trends.

Thus, the dynamics of changes in the geopolitical environment of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the growing pressure of Central Asian challenges to Kazakhstan and the evolution of the strategic interests of the world's leading actors require further modernization of the theory and practice of a multi-vector foreign policy, its correlation with changes in the foreign policy environment and new dimensions of regional and global security.

Kazakhstan kept its own line all the time, and this gave us serious advantages. Preserving the multi-vector nature of foreign policy is a key factor that provides Kazakhstan with the opportunity to develop<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the multi-vector nature of foreign policy positions itself as an objective necessity, which during the existence of independent Kazakhstan has brought a lot of positive things to the worthy entry into the world community.

One of its results can be considered that Kazakhstan is a successful regional state, the initiator and engine of integration processes in the region, as well as an active participant in regional and global structures. The current triumph of Kazakhstan is the result of a multi-vector foreign policy, from which our country has never deviated.

---

<sup>1</sup> Akimbekov S.M. Future of Eurasia: a look from Kazakhstan. Ch.2 // URL: [http:// 365info.kz/2015/11/budushhee-evrazii-vzglyad-iz-kazahstana-chast-2](http://365info.kz/2015/11/budushhee-evrazii-vzglyad-iz-kazahstana-chast-2)