**Extract**

The evolving conceptual foundations of Kazakhstan’s multi-vectoral foreign policy

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After gaining independence in 1991, Kazakhstan faced the task of developing its long-term foreign policy strategy. The peaceful international course of the country determined its guidelines and reflected its adherence to modern international legal principles.

The key principles of the foreign policy of Kazakhstan are encompassed in the balance and multi-vector policy. A multi-vector foreign policy is a feature born out of objective circumstances: the country’s geopolitical location at the crossroads of Asia and Europe, the economic and military-political interests at play, 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.

I. The origins of the multi-vector foreign policy of Kazakhstan

The nature of Kazakhstan’s foreign policy as “multi-vector” was first determined on 2 December 1991 when N. Nazarbayev noted that the country should become a bridge between Europe and Asia. A “multi-vector policy”, pragmatically, with regard to the foreign policy, is the development of friendly and predictable relations with all the countries that play a significant role in world affairs1.

During the first stage of its development, Kazakhstan focused on priority tasks and provided the geopolitical awareness of the young republic. Having received recognition from the international community,←109 | 110→ Kazakhstan demonstrated...