

**Smagulova K.K., Matkerimova R.A.**

Candidate of Philosophy, Al-Farabi Kazakh national university, Kazakhstan, Almaty  
e-mail: sgulshat72@mail.ru, +77013268649

## **KAZAKHSTAN AND CHINA: FOREIGN POLITICAL PRIORITIES OF KAZAKHSTAN AND THE RELEVANCE OF CHINA**

In article is considered the main directions of foreign policy of Kazakhstan and a role of China in foreign policy of our republic. The article is devoted to the experience of China's policy in the fields of international economy and collective security within such organizations, as Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Chinese foreign policy concept in current era of globalization is sustainable enough for it to become the world's second superpower, which directions form the basis of its promotion. Also, we can see the analysis of the methods which are used by Chinese government in such directions like USA, EU, Russia and the evolution of Chinese political, economic and financial relations with major powers of today.

**Key words:** international relations, foreign policy, cooperation, strategic partnership, political relations, collective security.

Смағұлова К.К., Маткеримова Р.А.

философия ғылымдарының кандидаты, әл-Фараби атындағы Қазақ ұлттық университеті,  
Қазақстан, Алматы қ., e-mail: sgulshat72@mail.ru, тел.: +77013268649

### **Қазақстан және Қытай: Қазақстанның сыртқы саяси басымдықтары және Қытаймен қарым-қатынас**

Аталмыш мақалада Қазақстан сыртқы саясатының негізгі бағыттары мен республикамыздың сыртқы саясатындағы Қытайдың рөлі қарастырылады. Берілген мақалада әлемдік қауымдастық қарым-қатынасындағы Қытай саясатының тәжірибесі және оның экономика саласындағы және Шанхай Ынтымақтастық Ұйымы сияқты одақтың аясындағы, аумақтық қауіпсіздіктегі іс-әрекеті жалпылама қарастырылған. Қазіргі таңдағы жаһандану үрдісіндегі, Қытайдың әлемдегі екінші ұлы держава ретінде дамуының негізгі бағыттарын анықтайтын, сыртқы саясатының тұрақты концепциясы қарастырылған. Сонымен қатар, АҚШ, ЕО және Ресеймен жүргізілетін сыртқы саясаттағы әдістері, сондай-ақ басты державалармен саяси-экономикалық және қаржылық қарым-қатынастарының кеңеюі сарапталды.

**Түйін сөздер:** халықаралық қатынастар, сыртқы саясат, бірлестік, стратегиялық серіктестік, саяси байланыстар, аймақтық қауіпсіздік.

Смағұлова К.К., Маткеримова Р.А.

кандидат философских наук, Казахский национальный университет  
им. Аль-Фараби, Казахстан, Алматы, e-mail: sgulshat72@mail.ru, тел. : +77013268649

### **Казахстан и Китай: внешние политические приоритеты Казахстана и отношение Китая**

В статье рассматриваются основные направления внешней политики Казахстана и роль Китая во внешней политике нашей республики. В данной статье обобщен опыт политики Китая в отношении мирового сообщества и его деятельность в сфере экономики и региональной безопасности в рамках таких сообществ, как Шанхайская Организация Сотрудничества. Рассмотрена концепция китайской внешней политики в нынешнюю эпоху глобализации, достаточно устойчивую, чтобы стать второй сверхдержавой в мире, направления которой лежат в основе ее продвижения. Также, анализируются методы ведения внешней политики в таких направлениях, как США, ЕС, Россия и расширение политических, экономических и финансовых связей с влиятельными державами.

**Ключевые слова:** международные отношения, внешняя политика, сотрудничество, стратегическое партнерство, политические связи, региональная безопасность.

## Introduction

Since the Independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan our country has been playing a significant role in the international community, worldwide economy and political space. Having presented many international initiatives, Kazakhstan has been leading a multi-vector policy. Our country became an active actor of foreign relations nowadays and is a dynamic participant in solving global and regional problems collectively.

Our leader N. Nazarbayev has once again determined key directions of Kazakhstan's foreign policy in his message to Kazakh people called "Kazakhstan-2015" strategy – new political direction of a formed state": "Our priorities will not change – development of the cooperation with our neighbors – Russia, China, Central Asian states, as well as the USA, European Union and Asian countries. We will improve the Customs Union and Common economic space. Our short-term goal is to establish the Eurasian economic union. Thus, we state that any issues will be solved by consensus" (1).

As we noticed, as the main priorities of Kazakhstani foreign policy were, first of all, mentioned our neighbors – Russia and China. This priority has never changed and will stay as so. Because the relations with international community are always realized through neighboring countries. And it's essential that in the sphere of regional security the security built with neighboring states is the most important part. That's why our Northern neighbor Russia and our Eastern friend China are the key actors in Kazakh foreign politics. Also, in his message our President emphasized the importance of renovating the foreign policy as well as the domestic policy to make them suitable for countering new threats to national security in Central Asia. In this regard, leader of the nation mentioned the following as the priorities of renovating our foreign policy: strengthening regional and national security, active development of economic and trade diplomacy, increasing international partnerships in cultural-humanitarian, scientific-educational and other spheres, reinforcing the protection of citizens by law, protecting their individual, family and professional interests abroad.

### The role of Kazakhstan in world economy and political space

The primary goal for Kazakhstan is an effective integration into the world economy, strengthening of Kazakhstan's position on external market and joining the top world exporters of energy

and products of its processing by the means of introduction of advanced technologies of production and provision of energy independence of the country. The economy of the country is actively aspiring for participation in international division of labor, international investment cooperation and international commodity turnover. For an effective participation of state in the given process it is necessary to keep in mind not only current state at the world markets, modern tendencies and main aspects of development of world economy but also be able to forecast important changes in the world economic processes on the bases of prospective analysis. In the conditions of an open economy a strategic aim of integration of Kazakhstan into the world economy must be raising of competitiveness of its economy. Competitiveness of production must contribute not only to export but also to successful competition with foreign suppliers of domestic market. Not only rich natural resource and relatively cheap qualified labour but also literate and scientific-technical potential should be viewed as a pre-condition of raising competitiveness of the national economy.

It's the prudent and farsighted politics of our leader that made our country a competent and famous participant of international community. The proof of that could be examples of Kazakhstan's heading OSCE in 2010, OIC in 2011-2012, SCO in 2010-2011, launching of the 7 winter Asian games in Kazakhstan and our country's selection as a host for "EXPO-2017" international specialized exhibition (2).

What is the difference between Kazakhstan and the other Central Asian countries? Our president has an additional legal status—that of being 'the leader of the nation,' a status he received in 2010. If N. Nazarbayev leaves his presidential position, he becomes a senator for life. He also has powerful levers of influence, for example, an attempt on his life would be equal to an act of terrorism. At the same time, the first president is immune to detention, arrest, or any responsibilities vis-à-vis the law for any action he committed during his presidential terms. It is a certain legal guarantee for the future.

People's Republic of China is one of the most rapidly developing countries of our time. It's the first worldwide by population (more than 1 billion 300 million people) and third by territory (9.6 million square kilometers).

It's been more than 20 years since Kazakhstan established diplomatic relations with its Eastern neighbor – China. PRC was in the list of countries which recognized the independence of our country immediately from the first days. It is absolutely

reasonable to say that the bilateral relations, based on peaceful neighborhood and mutual benefit principles, has nowadays reached a significantly high level. A sustainable law basis was founded and issues that seemed hard to solve at first were resolved through peaceful negotiations. The cooperation that has started as a simple trade partnership has transformed into a strategic partnership of a highest importance.

An important area of bilateral cooperation in the foreseeable future is cooperation in the nuclear field. In the context of China's intentions to build on its territory 23 nuclear reactors, the unprecedented contract on supplying 25 thousand tons of uranium from the RK to the PRC has obtained a particularly importance. China has played a significant role in the modernization of the Kazakh steel industry.

China can play a significant role in strengthening the role of Kazakhstan as an influential player in the global food market. In particular, Kazakhstan is interested in the usage of transit and transport potential of China for the supplying of agricultural products to China and other Asia-Pacific countries. Thus, China and Kazakhstan share common interests in the economics and politics field. Kazakhstan supplies hydrocarbons so necessary for China and it is ready to become the trade bridge between China and the Western Europe. It is necessary to note, that in the context of the global financial crisis, China has become the largest creditor and the investor for Kazakhstan, bypassing both Russia and the countries of the West. At the same time the part of Kazakhstan's elite, which has been not connected to oil-and-gas sector, they suspecting the PRC in latent intensions concerning Kazakhstan's resources (including land). The Chinese migration to Kazakhstan is a subject of special concern for Kazakhstan's experts.

#### **China's foreign policy: main directions in the development of relations with Central Asian countries**

China's foreign policy has recently been portrayed as increasingly assertive. This assessment is primarily based on both its foreign policy rhetoric and actions. While China does not seem to have significantly increased its military spending recently,<sup>2</sup> the fear of a greater assertiveness has revived the perception of China as a threatening or destabilising force in the 21st century. China's assertiveness in its foreign policy discourse is probably best exemplified by the content and wording of the first ever White Paper on Military Strategy ('the Military Strategy') that was released in May 2015.

The Military Strategy portrays China as a power under numerous – traditional and non-traditional – threats globally but also more particularly in its close neighbourhood.<sup>3</sup> While a direct reference is made to threats originating from 'hegemonism, power politics and neo-interventionism', Beijing also indirectly shows its growing concern vis-à-vis the U.S. 'rebalancing strategy', more particularly in Asia. In this context, China affirms its readiness to build up the necessary strategic and military capacity 'to safeguard its national unification, territorial integrity and development interests'.

Chinese foreign policy also appoints the relations on various fields with Central Asian republics, and most importantly our country, as a priority direction. Chinese Ambassador to Kazakhstan on the foreign political concepts of China: "Since the very establishment, People's Republic of China has never started any wars first, has never struggled for military expansion, moreover, it follows the five principles of peaceful co-existence in developing the connections with other countries. Chinese development not only never destructed and never threatened in any way the development of Central Asian states, but also has always been trying to form a sustainable external environment and huge possibilities for helping it. We aren't evolving the cooperation to make an influence sphere in Central Asia. We aren't developing the SCO to form a military bloc; we aren't going to transform SCO to any kind of unity of NATO or the Warsaw Pact organization. We are improving our relations in order to ensure the peace, security and economic development together with the countries of our region. China will keep on developing its economic relations with Central Asia, and especially with Kazakhstan. In 2011 the goods turnover between China and Kazakhstan amounted 24.7 billion USD. Parties have pointed a target to risen this category to 40 billion USD until 2015. The geographic location is very convenient and the level of cooperation is strong enough for that" (3).

Economic presence and interest of China in Kazakhstan have considerably increased recently. In general, the main economic interests of China in Kazakhstan are:

1. Obtaining the access to oil and gas sources in order of ensuring China's energy security. In recent years, the growth of Chinese economy has increased domestic energy demand, therefore, sharply increased the import volume of oil and petroleum products. Growing Chinese economy, in particular, its western areas demand new energy sources which can be imported from Kazakhstan on mutually advantageous conditions.

2. Use of transport-communication potential of Kazakhstan for promotion of the Chinese goods on the western markets.

3. Enhancement of bilateral trade, the development of Kazakhstan's consumer market.

### **Strategic partnership between China and Kazakhstan**

Diplomatic relations between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Kazakhstan were established on 3 January 1992. In October 1993, took place the official visit of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev to China, during the meeting there was signed the first official document determined the principles of bilateral relations — «The Joint Declaration on the Principles of friendly relations between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the People's Republic of China.» Within 20 years were formed principles and legal basis of mutual relations development. There were signed about 200 documents on bilateral cooperation in political, economic spheres, and also in the security and cultural cooperation field.

The improvement of bilateral relations between China and Kazakhstan underscores these developments and might, in the short term, help consolidate the achievements of the largest Central Asian republic. Over the past few months, Chinese and Kazakh officials have met to discuss economic, political, cultural and security issues. In June, Hu Jintao and Nazarbaev talked about the details of the security partnership agreed upon in 2005 and signed an agreement for the "Development of an all-round Strategic Partnership", which includes a commitment to boost bilateral trade and increase meetings between high-ranking officials. At the moment the situation of Kazakh-Chinese relations could not look better: Nazarbaev and Hu Jintao seem to have a deep mutual understanding and the current Kazakh temporary presidency of the SCO will provide additional opportunities for the two presidents to meet and discuss aspects of bilateral cooperation. Chinese officials have expressed satisfaction for the current situation of trade relations and have praised the recent creation of a trade and business centre in Khorgos, at the border between Kazakhstan and China.

Kazakh and Chinese officials have excellent reasons for being happy also about the two countries' trade relations, which have reached a volume of \$20 billion in 2011 (up from just \$8.3 billion in 2006), much larger than trade between Kazakhstan and Russia. The initial goal set by Kazakh and Chinese officials was to reach a trade volume of \$15 billion

by 2015, however this goal has been surpassed four years early as the value of bilateral trade is already \$5 billion above the planned level. Besides direct trade, Kazakhstan is also important for China as a transit country: among the issues recently discussed was also the improvement of railway connection between China and Kazakhstan and, from there, to Russia and Western Europe.

Economic and trade relations between China and Kazakhstan are developing on a basis of advanced contractual base, which includes more than 30 documents. The great value for progress in this sphere has an activity of the Kazakh-Chinese intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation. Furthermore, each visit of Kazakh and Chinese politicians to Astana and Beijing usually results to new arrangements in the sphere of trade. Kazakhstan remains the second (after Russia) largest trading partner of China among the CIS and East Europe countries. Bilateral trade over the years to maintains a positive dynamics. In 2002, bilateral trade amounted to 1.955 billion dollars. For the six months of 2012 — \$ 8,73 billion. Kazakhstan's exports — \$6,144 billion, while imports from China accounts \$2,586 billion. The main Kazakhstan's export positions to China is compounded by a raw products group: crude oil, copper and copper alloys, ferroalloys and non-ferrous metals, scrap metal, fertilizer, raw leather, cotton and wool. China exports to Kazakhstan computers and hardware, railway and tram cars, heavy technique, coke, chemicals, consumer goods and food products. The huge share of Sino-Kazakh trade is compounded by the trade with PRC's Xinjiang. Kazakhstan is main trading partner of XUAR. Xinjiang's exports to Kazakhstan for the past 20 years, is a leader in foreign trade operations, occupying 70% of the total trade between China and Kazakhstan. The bilateral trade volume has grown from \$ 30 million in 1992 up to \$ 8,73 billion for the first six months of 2012. In the foreseeable future the importance of this region will grow, especially in the context of «strong center — strong province» strategy and the State program «XUAR-2015

One of the most important elements of the Kazakh-Chinese dialogue is cooperation in the energy sphere. In the Kazakhstan's hydrocarbons market China is represented by the largest power companies: CNPC, Sinopec, CITIC. The oil volume which is produced in the Republic of Kazakhstan with the participation of Chinese companies constitutes about 45 million tons, more than 50% of the total annual oil production. Currently there continuing construction/reconstruction of Atyrau

refinery (with participation Sinopec), Shymkent refinery (with participation of the CNPC), Aktau plastics plant and Moinak hydro-power station. In Aktau bitumen plant is constructing with the share of Chinese capital, the factory will satisfy the growing demand during building the transport corridor «Western China — Western Europe» (4).

The rapid development of Chinese-Kazakh strategic partnership was influenced by political dialogue of the highest level, effective business relations and personal friendship of two countries' leaders. Head of China Hu Jintao has visited Kazakhstan 7 times and N.Nazarbayev has been to China with official visits and as a participant of international conferences for 17 times. That kind of an often meetings is a rare thing in international experience, and it also emphasizes the importance of the heads of states in the development of bilateral relations.

As a result of the President Nazarbayev's state visit to PRC in February 2011 a mutual communique was signed. This document once again pointed out that Kazakhstani-Chinese relations are developing rapidly and effectively: "Parties agree that during latest years Kazakh-Chinese strategic partnership connections have been undergoing a stable development. Bilateral relations at highest and high level are becoming closer, the level of mutual understanding and trust is rising non-stop, trade-economic, energy, humanitarian, security spheres, also cooperation on international and regional problems are deepening". According to the fourth article of the document, parties were satisfied with the measures undertaken right on time to tackle the world financial crisis together.

### **Regional security issues within the framework the international community**

The intellectual roots of regional security studies can be traced to the geopolitical writings of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, although the definition of critical regions and the source of that criticality have changed over time. During the Cold War, regional security and stability were defined largely in terms of the place that a region occupied in the strategic calculation of the United States or the Soviet Union. The contemporary preoccupation with regional security reflects a confluence of the continuing relevance of traditional geostrategic calculations and the emergence of new security challenges that have redefined the content and scope of order in the contemporary international system. The rising salience of regional security and regional security orders across every dimension of interaction

has generated a surprisingly large number of formal international arrangements that vary in scope, complexity, and strength.

The relevant issue of today – regional security has never been replaced from the agenda of the heads of states' meetings. Drugs and weapons trafficking, illegal migration, as well as the international terrorism, religious extremism and national separatism problems keep worried not only Kazakhstan and China, but almost all members of international community. For the solution of these problems, parties have been improving their relationships in the framework of Shanghai Cooperation Organization that was established in 2001. Apart from Kazakhstan and China, Russia, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are the members of the SCO. The arising interest of other countries in SCO demonstrates its importance and effectiveness, the relevance of its principles. Nowadays SCO consists of 6 member-states, 4 observers (India, Pakistan, Iran, Mongolia) and 2 dialogue-partners (Belarus, Sri-Lanka). Kazakhstan and China shares the cooperation in the SCO not only in political sphere, but also trade-economic and cultural-humanitarian.

The stable periodic visits of Kazakhstan's and Chinese presidents, the signing of agreements on strategically important objects for both, but especially Kazakhstan, have been a push towards the development of bilateral relations to the level of the strategic partnership. In particular, realization of such infrastructure projects like building the modern types of railways, automobile roads, oil and gas tubes, big amounts of credits for the construction of energetic infrastructure have deepened the mutual cooperation. Equally distributing the rights to procession of its oil production sites between Western, Chinese and Russian investors, Kazakhstan tried to balance its interests. But the world financial crisis gave China the opportunity not only to process its oil sector, but also to strengthen its influence on other spheres of economy. Apparently, the rapid activeness of Chinese companies in Kazakhstan is a good thing to help diversifying our economy, but Kazakh people view the rising influence of Chinese in our country with suspicion.

During the SCO summit held on 6 June 2012 Chinese Head of state Hu Jintao and President N. Nazarbayev had a conversation. Hu Jintao made some proposals for deepening their diverse strategic partnership: "Firstly, strengthening mutual political trust, improving connections on different levels, securing both countries' strategic security and development interests. Secondly, widening business

cooperation, motivating bilateral production relations, opening new directions of partnership, deepening energy cooperation, developing the atomic energy, solar energy, wind energy spheres, renew bordering points, updating their infrastructure, widening mutual investment. Thirdly, widening humanitarian connections, improving cooperation in culture, education, travelling and medicine. Fourth - deepening security cooperation, effectively countering drug trafficking, organized transnational crime, improving systematic and information security. Fifth – developing multilateral cooperation, strengthening relations in the frameworks of UN, SCO, CICA, forming a convenient environment for two countries' development according to the concept based on mutual trust, mutual efficiency, equality and partnership (5).

One of the latest and most important occasions in China was the decision of XVIII meeting of Chinese Communist party, held on 8 November 2012, about replacement of the leadership and transferring of it to the fifth generation representatives. The post of the Head of PRC and Secretary General of Chinese Communist Party which changes each 10 years was given to former deputy Head of China – Xi Jinping. According to Russian scholar S.G. Luzyanin, the great importance of Chinese leadership will continue to exist. It's essential that despite many changes in development of "socialism with Chinese features" model, the main direction of the Party will remain. Those include: powerful state; leadership role of Chinese ComParty; binds between successors of the leadership in realization of reforms and development strategy

The Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China both have important stakes in Central Asia's present and future. Both have had expe- 91 vol.36:1 winter 2012 kazakhstan and central asian security rience fighting against extremist elements: be it in Chechnya where Russia waged two mostly unsuccessful wars against local rebels and a coalition of Islamist guerilla fighters, or in the province of Xinjiang, where China is still confronted with the problem of secessionism. Both countries understand the limits of multilateral action, but still tend to coordinate their actions within the framework of regional organizations initiated to deal with terrorism, extremism, separatism, and collective security. The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), founded in 2002 on the basis of the 1992 Tashkent Treaty, is the main international forum for former

Soviet republics to discuss their mutual interests on a wide range of security issues. Dominated by Russia, 25 the CSTO was founded "to strengthen peace and international and regional security and stability, and to ensure the collective defense of the independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the member States, in the attainment of which the member States shall give priority to political measures."<sup>26</sup> Russia's military capabilities and the history of its engagement in Tajikistan during the 1992-1997 civil war (when it secured the Tajik-Afghan border) make it a preponderant partner in ensuring a well-functioning mechanism of regional security based on shared goals of peace and territorial integrity (6).

It is quite confirmed that the new Chinese leadership will continue the position which was held until today in the foreign policy. Even though main issues are resolved, there are still many problems that haven't been regulated. The most outstanding one of them – is transboundary rivers question. There were some declarative documents generally coordinating this issue, but there was no concrete decision on it. But it's vital to mention that last few years this problem's regulation process has moved forward quite far. That was caused by the work of mutual Kazakhstani-Chinese commission on usage and defense of transboundary rivers, formed on the basis of bilateral agreement. Though the basic agreement defining the normative status of those rivers hasn't been reached yet.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, it is essential that People's Republic of China will remain one of the main priorities of our foreign political concept. Both sides are interested in that. Kazakhstani-Chinese relations haven't lost their development rapidity even in the conditions of latest financial crisis. We can divide the 20 years of cooperation into first ten years of building the normative basis, defining main priorities and basic directions of bilateral partnership and last ten years of raising the cooperation to the higher quality level, solving urgent issues and transforming the economic spheres of strategic importance into the main object of cooperation. Nowadays, huge economic projects started up, the development of non-resource economic spheres is coming up; all of that shows us the sustainability of Kazakhstani-Chinese relations future development. Mutual trust and interest will always remain as the strongest foundation for bilateral connections.

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