

Main vectors of Kazakhstan's foreign policy

The formulation of conceptual basis and principles of Kazakhstan's foreign policy was started shortly after Kazakhstan gained its independence on December 16th 1991. It was based on the understanding that Kazakhstan is a large country located both in Europe and Asia; its interests are multifaceted and there is no bias towards one continent or another. Its geographical location has helped define the priorities of Kazakhstan's foreign policy and has influenced the many directions of its diplomatic activity. The first President of the independent Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev has clearly determined the main strategy of Kazakhstan's diplomacy - creating and maintaining favourable conditions for the steady development of the country on the basis of political and economic reforms.

The nature of these transformations inside the country determined the main priorities of the country's foreign policy; its impartial character and its desire for full involvement in international and regional events. At that time the Government of the Republic had to make key decisions in military, political and economic areas and also decisions on democratic reforms and on the establishment of a new state governing system. These decisions had to be made to help integrate Kazakhstan smoothly into the world community. Kazakhstan's foreign policy is in general harmony with the global political trend towards liberalisation.

Analysis of the main achievements in the independent development of Kazakhstan during the last 20 years, has shown that one of the most important decisions made at that time was to gain the status of a non-nuclear state and to pursue the policy of non-proliferation. Kazakhstan set an example of high responsibility in respect of the current and future generations, convincingly demonstrating, that it is not the nuclear arsenals, but a peaceful foreign policy, internal stability, sustainable economic and political development that in fact ensure the real security. Sir Winston Churchill once said that «generals always prepare for the last war». Kazakhstan was preparing for a new world — the nuclear weapon-free world and thus naturally became a vivid example of mankind's increased responsibility in the face of the threat of total destruction. At the Proliferation Security Initiative 5th Anniversary Conference on May 28, 2008 Kazakhstan's Deputy Foreign Minister Mr. Nurlan Ermekbayev has once again confirmed the country's commitments to the further strengthening of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Kazakhstan successfully develops good relations with United States, Russia, China, Central Asian countries and many other European and Asian countries. By strengthening friendly relations with its neighbours, Kazakhstan has built a “security belt” around its borders. The main achievement of the last 16 years has been the absence of conflicts or confrontations between Kazakhstan and any other country. Favourable external conditions have been created for the sustainable development of independent Kazakhstan and for its political and economic interests in general.

By 2008 Kazakhstan has established diplomatic relations with 140 countries and formed a practical contractual, legal framework for its relations with them. Over 1600 international and inter-governmental contracts and agreements have been signed by Kazakhstan. Republic has become a member of nearly 70 international political and economic organizations. At present there are about 80 diplomatic and consular stations worldwide that are representing Kazakhstan abroad.

Kazakhstan has established active co-operation with main regional organizations of North America, Europe and Asian - with OSCE, ECO, OIC, SCO, ASEAN and others.

Considering the geographical location of Kazakhstan in Eurasia, an active participation of the country in global and regional affairs and events is obviously the necessary requirement for the strengthening of its independence.

Thus during the 20 years of Kazakhstan's independence its foreign policy has become an integral part of state policy. The country has found ways for correlating its own national interests with the interests of other countries.