

Kazakhstan's Multi-Vector Diplomacy : The Making and Development of the Soft Balancing Policy of Kazakhstan vis-?-vis Russia

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論 文 内 容 の 要 旨

Although reviews on Central Asian security and geopolitics exist in general, research specifically focusing on Kazakhstan's foreign policy is scarce. Several researchers have examined Kazakhstan's multi-vector foreign policy, but never argued in detail about how the tools (methods) used in the multi-vector policy have been employed in order to protect Kazakhstan's national interests when dealing with Russia. This study discusses the soft-balancing approach Kazakhstan has taken as a means of not only decreasing their dependence on Russia, but also as an attempt to persuade Russia to act in accordance with Kazakhstan's interests.

Soft-balancing occurs when weaker states decide that the dominance and influence of a stronger state is undesirable. Unable to embark on a hard-balancing strategy, such as the use of military intervention to intimidate the other side, they instead use soft-balancing to delay, frustrate and undermine aggressive behavior of stronger states in order to protect their own interests. In the case of Kazakhstan's conduct towards Russia, an economic soft balancing policy has been adopted to safeguard their energy sector, which is of crucial importance for Kazakhstan's economic development. As the source of Kazakhstan's development has been huge energy resources, a situation similar to Russia, they have attempted to protect their national interests and stay ahead in the competition by exploring new energy markets.

The Introduction discusses Kazakhstan's perception of Russia and the scholarly discourse surrounding Kazakhstan's multi-vector foreign policy, which has been constructed vis-à-vis Russia in search of economic independence. A new theoretical framework called soft balancing has also been adopted as a main tool of analysis in this thesis.

Chapter One will then describe the formation and development of Kazakhstan's contemporary foreign policy and the multifaceted relations between Russia and Kazakhstan during the period from 1991 to 2016.

Chapter Two looks at disagreements between Kazakhstan and Russia and the emergence of soft balancing. There will be a specific focus on the tensions that have arisen regarding the transportation of Kazakhstani oil to the international market and the application of an inclusive institutional balancing policy by Kazakhstan vis-à-vis Russia in order to protect their

energy security. However, ultimately this balancing policy failed and did not have the intended economic soft balancing effect.

Chapter Three describes how Kazakhstan skillfully uses the geopolitical power of China in the implementation of its economic soft balancing vis-à-vis Russia. Research shows that the energy cooperation between Kazakhstan and China was the trump card not only in the reduction of Russian influence, but also in bringing additional economic benefits to Kazakhstan through the diversification of its oil routes.

Chapter Four argues how a country, such as Italy, can be a major player in advancing the development of future Kazakhstan-EU energy relations and the case of the Kashagan oil field will be discussed to highlight this point. Italy may be crucial in helping Kazakhstan expand its energy routes to the EU, and specifically help provide transportation paths that avoid Russian territory. Given Russia's tumultuous relationship with the EU, as well as the various contentious issues that exist between Russia and its regional neighbors, an agreement between Kazakhstan and Italy has the potential to be extremely beneficial to both sides.

Chapter Five examines the economic cooperation between Kazakhstan and Japan and how this cooperation is useful for Kazakhstan in its soft-balancing strategy towards Russia. It analyzes bilateral relations and the various stages of development in their relationship. The chapter highlights how Kazakhstan has used Official Development Assistance (ODA) from Japan to promote stability and prosperity in Central Asia, as well as the various benefits to be gained by Japan in this cooperation. Kazakhstan, rich in uranium and rare metals, which are the materials that Japan needs for internal consumption, can supply the requisite levels of these materials needed, helping to establish Kazakhstan as a reliable partner in Central Asia.

The Conclusion discusses the findings in relation to existing literature on Kazakhstan's foreign policy and will show how the strategy of soft-balancing has been skillfully employed by Kazakhstan in its foreign policy towards Russia. Some suggestions will also be made for future research on Kazakhstan, and more broadly into the politics of post-Soviet Central Asia.