

ABSTRACT

of the dissertation submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the educational program "8D03105 – International Relations"

Nyshanbayev Nurbolat Kairatovich

"The Principle of Multi-Vector Policy in the Foreign Policy of the State in the Modern System of International Relations: in the example of the Republic of Kazakhstan"

General Information about the Dissertation. The dissertation presents a scientific and conceptual assessment of the concept of "multi-vector foreign policy" within the system of international relations, using the Republic of Kazakhstan as a case study. The research defines the theoretical and methodological foundations of the multi-vector foreign policy concept and reveals its role as a model of a state's foreign policy. The study analyzes the role of multi-vector foreign policy in international relations through the example of Kazakhstan, taking into account international institutions, the status of regional vectors, and the concept of the balance of power in the region. It also scientifically examines the adaptation of Kazakhstan's multi-vector policy to regional and global geopolitical changes, as well as the prospects and challenges of this diplomatic strategy.

Relevance of the Research Topic. The concept of Kazakhstan's multi-vector foreign policy has gained particular strategic importance for middle powers in the context of intensifying geopolitical rivalry among leading global powers. Amid globalization, the strategy of multi-vector diplomacy allows middle powers to enhance their influence and effectively safeguard national interests. The relevance of the study lies in the need to assess the effectiveness of Kazakhstan's foreign policy amid global and regional challenges and to identify ways for its further development. The dissertation provides both theoretical and practical analysis of Kazakhstan's multi-vector foreign policy and offers scientific and practical recommendations aimed at strengthening the country's position on the international stage. At the same time, the urgent need for comprehensive and in-depth studies to improve the effectiveness of Kazakhstan's multi-vector diplomacy and further enhance its international authority in the face of new geopolitical realities is emphasized. This dissertation contributes to addressing the academic gap in the existing literature on this topic.

The subject of this dissertation research is the content of the multi-vector foreign policy strategy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, its implementation features, and its role in the modern system of international relations.

The object of the dissertation research is the multi-vector foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan and its place in the modern system of international relations.

The goal of the dissertation research is to analyze the multi-vector foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan and determine its place in the

modern system of international relations.

As part of the research, the following tasks are to be carried out:

- To study the significance and role of multi-vector policy in the theory of international relations;
- To analyze the history of the development of Kazakhstan's multi-vector policy strategy and its main priorities;
- To assess the effectiveness of the policy through an analysis of Kazakhstan's key international partnerships and negotiations;
- To determine the impact of Kazakhstan's interaction with European and Asian economic blocs on the national economy;
- To analyze the contribution of Kazakhstan's multi-vector policy to regional and global security;
- To determine the effectiveness of Kazakhstan's foreign policy strategies in supporting and advancing national interests;
- Based on the research findings, to develop strategic recommendations for further improvement of the foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Chronological Framework of the Research. After gaining independence, the Republic of Kazakhstan developed an independent foreign policy strategy. The country's foreign policy course was officially announced for the first time in 1992, marking the beginning of the formation of the concept of multi-vector foreign policy in the national academic discourse. The chronological scope of the research covers the period from 1992 to 2022.

Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of the Dissertation. The research is based on classical and contemporary theories in the field of international relations. These theories provide a deeper understanding of the nature, content, and implementation features of multi-vector foreign policy within the international system. The theoretical framework of the study includes the geopolitical concept, neorealism, the balance of power theory, the theory of interdependence, and the concept of securitization. Neorealism and the balance of power theory help explain the behavior of states striving for survival and security in an anarchic international system. Drawing on Kenneth Waltz's structural realism and John Mearsheimer's offensive realism, Kazakhstan's multi-vector policy is viewed as a conscious strategic choice aimed at strengthening the country's sovereignty and security by maintaining balance among global and regional powers.

The methodological foundation of the research is based on mixed methods. This approach combines qualitative and quantitative methods, enabling a comprehensive exploration of the topic. The dissertation employs comparative methods, historical-retrospective analysis, discourse analysis, and content analysis in processing empirical materials. These methods allowed for the examination of the evolution of Kazakhstan's multi-vector foreign policy, its strategic directions, and factors influencing its effectiveness.

The institutional approach enabled the analysis of Kazakhstan's cooperation with international organizations, particularly the UN, SCO, OSCE, and EAEU, while the systemic approach focused on exploring the interrelation

between foreign policy and internal and external factors. The dissertation also applies a comparative regional analysis to identify similarities and differences between Kazakhstan's foreign policy strategies and those of other Central Asian countries such as Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan. This revealed that Kazakhstan's model stands out at the regional level and that its experience with multi-vector diplomacy can serve as an example for other states.

Special attention in the study is given to multilateral negotiations conducted within the framework of treaty obligations, principles of neutrality, sovereignty, border issues, and international commitments, which are considered the normative foundation of Kazakhstan's foreign policy.

Scientific Novelty of the Research. The scientific novelty of the research findings is defined by the following aspects:

- The theoretical foundations of the concept of multi-vector foreign policy and its place in international relations theory are reconsidered from a new perspective;
- The specific features of the development of Kazakhstan's multi-vector policy as a middle power strategy are analyzed;
- For the first time, a comprehensive analysis of the strategy for balancing geopolitical, economic, cultural, and digital dimensions of Kazakhstan's foreign policy has been conducted;
- The impact of Kazakhstan's initiatives on regional security and economic integration is evaluated, including its diplomatic efforts within the frameworks of CICA, the Astana Process, and nuclear disarmament;
- The advantages of Kazakhstan's neutral and pragmatic foreign policy stance as a response to global challenges are substantiated at both theoretical and practical levels;
- Kazakhstan's interaction with international organizations (UN, OSCE, SCO, EAEU, Organization of Turkic States) is considered an institutional mechanism of multi-vector policy, with new scholarly insights presented;
- The research offers a new perspective on Kazakhstan's role in the international system through an in-depth analysis of various aspects of its multi-vector foreign policy.

Theoretical and Practical Significance of the Research. The scientific results of this dissertation, aimed at studying the causes and potential consequences of the multi-vector policy, hold significant practical value for the Administration of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as domestic universities and research institutes. The research can contribute to strengthening the scientific foundations of Kazakhstan's multi-vector foreign policy, developing concrete recommendations, enhancing the conceptual framework of the country's foreign policy strategy, and evaluating its potential future directions.

The obtained scientific results and empirical data can be used in undergraduate and graduate educational programs in the fields of "Oriental Studies," "Regional Studies," "International Relations," and "Political

Science" in universities across the Republic of Kazakhstan. The dissertation also contributes to the expansion of academic research in the theory of international relations and Kazakhstan's leadership in regional and global politics.

Key Provisions of the Dissertation Submitted for Defense

1. Multi-vector foreign policy is a strategic choice of Kazakhstan as an established middle power in the modern system of international relations, aimed at building balanced relations with global and regional actors. This policy is regarded as an instrument for ensuring external security and protecting the sovereign interests of the state amid international political and economic crises. Thanks to this approach, Kazakhstan has succeeded in establishing pragmatic and balanced relations with major powers such as Russia, China, the European Union, the United States, and others.

2. Kazakhstan's geopolitical position is one of the key factors shaping the content of its multi-vector policy. Located at the heart of the Eurasian space, Kazakhstan has become a strategic hub for economic, transport-logistics, and energy linkages along the "West–East" and "North–South" corridors. This has enabled the country to take a central role in international transport corridors and transcontinental infrastructure initiatives, enhancing its transit and investment potential.

3. Multi-vector policy functions not only as a mechanism for ensuring external security but also as a tool for strengthening internal political stability and geopolitical autonomy. Kazakhstan, rather than remaining outside the rivalry of great powers, has pursued dialogue and partnership among them and consistently defended its national interests. This balancing strategy has contributed to domestic political stability and strengthened the country's international reputation.

4. The multi-vector foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan is implemented as a means of overcoming various political and economic crises on the global stage. This strategy has allowed Kazakhstan to establish stable and balanced relations with key regional and global powers, including Russia, China, and Western countries.

5. Through its multi-vector foreign policy, Kazakhstan has established close cooperation with international organizations and effectively integrated into the global economy and international legal system. The country actively participates in organizations such as the UN, OSCE, SCO, EAEU, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and others, gaining substantial experience in multilateral diplomacy. This has strengthened Kazakhstan's diplomatic standing and increased its participation in regional and global initiatives.

6. Theoretical and empirical study of multi-vector policy makes a significant contribution to the development of international relations theory, particularly in explaining the phenomenon of middle powers. Kazakhstan's experience demonstrates that multi-vector policy is a viable strategy under conditions of structural anarchy. The research offers a reassessment of

theoretical concepts and proposes new methodological approaches in the discipline of international relations.

Scientific and Practical Significance of the Research. The dissertation provides a comprehensive justification of the effectiveness of Kazakhstan's multi-vector policy as a tool for countering global crises. It presents an in-depth analysis of the strategic importance of the country's transit and investment potential, as well as its geopolitical position. The role of multi-vector diplomacy in strengthening external security and internal stability is clearly demonstrated. The research explores Kazakhstan's pathways of integration into the global economy through international organizations and offers concrete recommendations. This work contributes to the development of international relations theory and offers a new perspective for future academic research.

Doctoral Candidate's Publications. The research was conducted in accordance with the principles of academic integrity and scientific ethics. Based on the results of the study, 12 scientific articles were published: 7 articles in domestic journals recommended by the Committee for Quality Assurance in the Field of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 3 articles in journals indexed in the Scopus database, and 2 articles in the proceedings of international scientific and practical conferences.

Structure of the Dissertation Research. The structure of the dissertation consists of an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, a list of references, and appendices. The total volume of the dissertation is 180 pages.