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Assembly of People of Kazakhstan as a unifying institution of Kazakhstan's society

The article discusses the role of Assembly of People of Kazakhstan in domestic and external policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The role of social and political activity of Assembly in the course of positive development of ethno-political tendencies in Kazakhstan is shown. The structure and a legal status of Assembly of People of Kazakhstan as a constitutional body in the Republic of Kazakhstan is revealed. The article shows the positive function of this institution in establishment and approval of Kazakhstan's model of inter-ethnic tolerance and social consent.

Key words: Assembly of People of Kazakhstan (APK), the Structure of the APK, Session of the APK, National Unity Doctrine, kazakhstan's model of inter-ethnic tolerance and social consent.

The country celebrated the 20th anniversary of Assembly of People of Kazakhstan (APK), which was established March 1, 1995. Presidential Decree 2015 declared the Year of the APK. In order to strengthen the scientific and expert and analytical support of the state ethnic policy works Center for the Interethnic and Interconfessional Studies at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic Kazakhstan. According to a recent poll conducted by the Centre, 97.5% of Kazakhstanis believe that the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan represents the interests of all the people, 79.6% believe that Kazakhstan has created all the conditions for the development of traditions, languages, cultures, 84% reported regular social-economic opportunities of all ethnic groups. We are confident in the security and stability of our country 82% of the population [1].

Cultural and religious concord and national unity are indispensable in strategic goals of Kazakhstan social and political modernization.

Today there is no necessity to prove that the cornerstone is the unity of the people. Kazakh proverb says «Life is where there is the unity». Exactly this unity is driving life force of state development. Our country confidently moves forward without setbacks because of interpersonal and inter-ethnic conflicts' aggravation provoking political and economical collapse of any state. Unfortunately, there are a lot of such examples on international scene. Creating the conditions for communication, interaction of institutions of civil society with state institutions in formation of inter-ethnic and interfaith dialogue, tolerant attitude towards each other underpin achievements of Kazakhstan including spiritual foundations of unity and consolidation of the people, particularly in difficult periods of turmoil. Herewith distinctive feature of Kazakh model is endeavour of all ethnic groups to construct multiplicity combination policy in whole.

Basic principles of state national policy are equal rights for all national and confessional (religious) groups' representatives and formation of favorable conditions for all confessions' activity. Owing to this in Kazakhstan during more than twenty years there was no political mass collision motivated by ethnic or religious disagreements.

It is possible to say without exaggeration that first legislative acts of independent Kazakhstan created legal framework which is based on civic and political unity of all citizens that provides equality of rights and freedoms (liberties) of all irrespective of ethnicity or religion. Experience of inter-ethnic policy which is implemented in Kazakhstan was highly evaluated by world community and has attracted interest of countries with similar multi-ethnic population.

In international community Kazakhstan has obtained recognition as a country which conducts policy aimed at guaranteeing tolerance, interfaith and intercultural consent of all nationalities living in Kazakhstan and representing the people of Kazakhstan. The people who are actively building modern and competitive secular state. Kazakhstan is interested in broadening and deepening of so-called dialogue of civilizations, has always supported and expressed willingness to take the initiative aimed to closer understanding between East and West on key problems of modern world order.

In the first years of independence very complex connected with spiritual life, social well-being of community, the revival of national consciousness processes took place. And just then, in early 90-ies of the last

century Kazakhstan's President N.A.Nazarbayev having rethought a lot in our history, in order to save our main property — friendship of peoples, on 1st forum of peoples of Kazakhstan suggested the need for transfer of this forum on permanent basis. And on 1st March 1995 on socio-political scene of Republic there appeared a new institution in the field of national policy — Assembly of Peoples of Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan became the first country among the countries-members of CIS where a unique institution was founded – Assembly of people of Kazakhstan. This institution has greatly contributed to the establishment and approval of Kazakhstan's model of multi-ethnic society which is aimed to strengthening of inter-ethnic and interfaith consent. Assembly of people of Kazakhstan since its formation played great role in strengthening of peace and consent between peoples living in Kazakhstan. But in recent years its role in society has become more appreciable.

In May 2007 Parliament of Kazakhstan adopted series of constitutional amendments which significantly changed the role of all representative branch of the government. One of the most important innovations of constitutional reform — increasing the number of deputies Parliament Mazhilis to 107 people, 9 of whom are elected by Assembly of People of Kazakhstan. This step, of course, raised the role of Assembly to a higher level. Besides, introduction of special seats for Assembly by increasing number of deputies made it possible to represent in Parliament the largest ethnic groups living in the territory of Kazakhstan.

Attention should be paid to the fact that amendments adopted in Constitution are about Assembly of people of, not about Assembly of Peoples of Kazakhstan. As it is known, until that time we had the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan, established by the Decree of the President. And it is important on a question of principle, because our Constitution begins with the words «We, the people of Kazakhstan...» We are united (unified) people of country. But our nation is diverse in its ethnic composition. This arouse (formed, turned out) historically. And this amendment brought out everything into line with Constitution. Besides it should be meant that all these years Assembly is headed by President N.A.Nazarbayev. And this initially highlighted exceptional importance of that body. Moreover, in constitutional law of Kazakhstan «About first President of the Republic of Kazakhstan» adopted on 20th July 2000, in Article 1 Paragraph 2, determining status of the First President of the Republic, it is pointed out that First president of Republic, by virtue of his historical mission, has lifelong right to be at the head of Assembly. This is determines its special high status.

The legal status of the Assembly defined the special Law «About the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan» [2], «Statute of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan» [3], which regulates the procedure for the formation, structure and controls, defined objectives, main tasks, activities of the authority of the APK, and features of the organization of interaction with the public bodies and public associations, mechanisms for participation in the development and implementation of state policy in the sphere of interethnic relations.

Assembly of people of Kazakhstan — establishment without formation of legal entity, composed by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, promoting development of state implementation of national policies. According to law [2], Assembly is aimed to guarantee interethnic consent in the Republic of Kazakhstan in the process of forming Kazakh civil identity and competitive nation on the basis of Kazakhstan patriotism, civil inner(spiritual)-cultural unity of people of Kazakhstan considering consolidating role of Kazakh people.

The main tasks of Assembly are:

- guaranteeing effective cooperation between state bodies and institutions of civil society in the field of interethnic relations, creating favorable conditions for further strengthening of interethnic consent and tolerance in society;
- strengthening the unity of people supporting and developing society consensus on fundamental value of Kazakhstani people;
- rendering assistance to state bodies in counteraction to manifestation of extremism and radicalism in society and aspirations aimed at limitation of rights and freedoms (liberties) of person and citizen;
- forming political legal culture of citizens leaning at democratic norms;
- guaranteeing integration of efforts of ethno cultural and other public unions in order to attain objects and tasks of Assembly;
- revival, preservation and development of national cultures, languages and traditions of people of Kazakhstan.

Principles of Assembly's activity are:

- a) priority of rights and freedoms (liberties) of person and citizen;
- b) priority of interests of people and state;

- c) equality of rights and freedoms (liberties) of person and citizen irrespective of his race, nationality, language, attitude to religion, persuasion or another circumstances;
- d) equality of rights and personal responsibility of Assembly members for activity in its structure;
- e) publicity.

Principal directions of Assembly's activity are:

- assistance in elaboration and realization of state national policy;
- assistance to formation of Kazakhstan patriotism;
- development of state language and other national languages of people of Kazakhstan;
- improvement of regional policy in interethnic field;
- participation in elaboration and realization of plans and events in the field of demography and migration;
- propaganda of Kazakhstan's model of interethnic and interfaith consent in the country and abroad;
- implementation of educational and publishing activity aimed at achieving interethnic consent;
- monitoring the state of interethnic relations, including in the field of application state language and other languages of people of Kazakhstan;
- participation in socio-political expertise of bills concerning state national policy;
- support of Kazakh diaspora in foreign countries in the matters of preservation and development of native language, culture and national traditions, strengthening ties with historical native land;
- production of recommendations and realization of practical measures on regulation of disagreements and disputes, avoiding conflicts in the field of interethnic relations and participation in their resolution;
- methodical, organizational and legal assistance to ethno-cultural associations; conducting seminars, conferences, engaging in other activities that provide a dialogue of state bodies with public associations on issues of interethnic relations;
- interaction with civil society institutions and international organizations on issues of guaranteeing interethnic and interfaith consent;
- rendering assistance in developing ties of other ethnic groups of Kazakhstan with their historical native land;
- other activities that promote interethnic consent and don't contradict legislation of Republic of Kazakhstan.

The highest authority is the Assembly session, which passes by the President of the country. Session of Assembly — meeting of members is convened by President of Republic of Kazakhstan as required but not less than once a year. All its decisions are binding for consideration by public authorities and civil society institutions. The Assembly of People of Kazakhstan — a constitutional body. One of the main features of the Assembly is the representation of the interests of ethnic groups in the highest legislative body — the Parliament of the country as a guaranteed representation. Assembly elects nine deputies of Mazhilis of the Parliament. Elected Assembly deputies represent its interests, as a set of interests of all the ethnic groups of the country.

The working body is the Secretariat of the Assembly of Peoples of Kazakhstan in the structure of the Presidential Administration as a separate department. This is and effectiveness, and efficiency of its participation in government and public relations. Also the structure of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan includes: Scientific-Expert Council of the APK; Club of journalists and experts on ethnic relations in the APK; Public Fund «Fund of the APK»; Methodical center of innovative technologies of language training «Tildaryn»; Association of Entrepreneurs of the APK.

In all regions functioning The House of Friendship, which are located in regions with a multiethnic composition of the population. In Almaty city there is a «House of Friendship», in Astana — The Palace of Peace and Accord, which is built on the instructions of the Head of country. It hosts the annual session of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan, Congresses of World and Traditional Religions, landmark events. Besides Kazakh and Russian theaters, the country has four national theaters — Uzbek, Uighur, Korean and German.

Operates 88 schools where teaching is conducted entirely in Uzbek, Tajik, Uighur and Ukrainian languages. In 108 schools the languages of 22 ethnic groups of Kazakhstan are taught as a separate subject. In addition, there are 195 specialized linguistic centers, where not only children but also adults can learn languages of 30 ethnic groups.

A special place in the field of ethno-cultural relations in the Republic of Kazakhstan devoted to supporting the development of information and communication resources of ethno-cultural associations. In the information field are actively working for more than 35 ethnic newspapers and magazines. The largest ethnic 6 national newspapers operate under government support. Newspapers and magazines are available for 11 different languages, radio programs — on 8, and TV shows on the 7 languages.

On 23rd October 2008 was held XIV Session of the Assembly of people of Kazakhstan with the agenda: «The strength of the country is in unity». At the forum were discussed issues of further development of unique basis of interethnic and international consent. Particularly, the President proposed to develop a doctrine of national unity for inclusion it in the Strategic Plan of the country's development until 2020 year.

On 6th March 2009 President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev in his address to the people of Kazakhstan «Through crisis to renewal and development» appealed to the Assembly of people of Kazakhstan, all political forces: «now, not on words, but on deeds is verified, who is really thinking of people, who — not. Let's join together to overcome the most severe crisis in the history of the planet» [4].

Kazakhstan, on whose territory peacefully coexist representatives of more than 130 ethnic groups and nationalities, 3088 religious associations, representing 17 confessions, is ideally suited for carrying out Congress of World Religions. It has been over ten years since the convening of I congress of the 2003 inter-religious summit demonstrates to the world the true vocation of all religions, a common moral and ethical principles, their enormous peacekeeping and humanitarian capacities. Subsequent for the I Congress of inter-faith summits in 2006, 2009 and 2012 proved that, more than ever, it is important to show the spiritual foundations and moral potential of all religions. It is necessary to prevent the appeals of prevalence of immoral about the clash of civilizations and religions, expressed in contrasting beliefs, further politicization of theological disputes and discredit one another in the name of religion. Our country is doing everything to make this an important platform of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions has become the core of cooperation spiritual hierarchy and politicians in the name of the return of the priority of moral values and humanistic ideals in the bosom of the human community, to combat extremism and terrorism.

June 10–11, 2015 in the capital of Kazakhstan was held V Congress of leaders of world and traditional religions, for participation in which invited 112 delegations from 44 countries. The uniqueness of the current Astana interreligious summit — in its key themes — «The dialogue of religious leaders and politicians in the name of peace and development». The fact that for the first time in the interactive platform of the Congress gathered religious and political leaders, who are united by an understanding of the integrity of the peace and a sense of community to the globalization of conflicts and their transformation into turmoil the world order.

In 2010, Kazakhstan presided in OSCE. The fact that among the CIS countries Kazakhstan presided in such authoritative international organization shows that policy of our President is far-sighted, balanced, well-founded, well-reasoned.

On 26th October 2009 XV Session of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan with agenda: «National unity — our strategic choice» took place [5]. The President shared his vision of the processes, which should lead out activity of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan to a new level, having pointed at necessity of working out integral action program of state and society on a whole range of interethnic and interfaith relations.

Nursultan Nazarbayev in his speech in order to strengthen the capacity of interethnic consent, suggested to implement a number of measures in following directions: first of all develop civil identity, tolerance in society of Kazakhstan through system of education and upbringing, correct lighting of the topic of ethnic relations in the mass media, raising the legal culture of Kazakhstan's people. It is intended to work out conceptual proposals for the development of ethno- and multicultural education in accordance with specificity of Kazakhstan society. Proposal to introduce optional course «Basics of Tolerance» in schools and higher educational institutions seems quite valuable.

At session it was stated that a condition for stability of Kazakhstan society is creating conditions for free development of native language, cultural heritage and traditions of all ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan.

April 23, 2015 held XXII Session of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan «Mangilik Yel: one nation, one destiny» [6]. President N.A. Nazarbayev noted that all the initiatives, including the «Strategy – 2050», the new industrialization program «Nurly Zhol», Five people's reform, «Mangilik Yel», are designed for many years to come on the session, and is able to run them only a powerful national movement.

An important component of national unity is an interreligious consent in our society. Principles of legal equality and dialogue of religions are stable in Kazakhstan. Simultaneously state will oppose the activities of pseudo-religious groups. It will also require active position of all religious associations of country.

The strength of national unity is directly related to improving the performance of the Assembly of Peoples of Kazakhstan and all ethno-cultural associations. First of all, it is necessary to strengthen coordinating role of Secretariat of Assembly of people of Kazakhstan, create Council of Elders attached to the Assembly. Scientific-expert Council of Assembly should work actively. It is necessary to establish a grant for scientists, carrying out applied researches on issues of interethnic relations.

April 10, 2015 at the Palace of Independence held the Youth Forum «with the Leaders of the nation — to new victories» with the participation of President Nursultan Nazarbayev [7]. The forum was attended by over 2000 people from all regions of the country: the activists of the youth wing «Jas Otan» of «Nur Otan», youth maslikhats, entrepreneurs, scientists, famous athletes and leaders of the largest youth organizations.

The Unity National Doctrine of Kazakhstan approved by the Administration of the President and sent to the Government of 29 April 2010 [8]. The Doctrine is the basis for the creation of an integrated system of legal, socio-economic, political, public and administrative measures aimed at strengthening the unity of the people, development of democracy and dialogue among cultures and civilizations. In accordance with the Strategic Plan of Development of Kazakhstan till 2020 the Doctrine will be the main tool for the consolidation of the Kazakhstan society.

The establishment of Assembly became logical extension of domestic and external policy of Kazakhstan and its leader since independence. Kazakhstan originally headed for construction of modern, secular state committed to the ideals of peace, tolerance and constructive dialogue. Establishment of Assembly of people of Kazakhstan became institutionalized field of interethnic relations in republic, a kind of public diplomacy body. Assembly was created as a principally new institution of civil society which did not have at that time analogues, both in a previous Soviet epoch, and in world modern practice. Now it can be said with confidence that owing to Assembly it was possible to avoid politization of interethnic relations, direct available at that time potential for conflict in constructive course.

The largest modern politicians, spiritual leaders and representatives of non-governmental organizations provide the highest rating the experience of Kazakhstan on strengthening of interethnic and interreligious harmony. During 23 years of independence in the country there formed Kazakhstan's model of multiethnic society between representatives of over 130 ethnic group and nationalities living in republic.

During his 20-year activities of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan has become a full-fledged body of popular sovereignty. The ability of the APK to consolidate Kazakhs around the ideas of peace and reconciliation is a key factor in the formation of civic national identity needed to multinational Kazakhstan.

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Д.К.Рүстембекова

Қазақстан халқы Ассамблеясы қазақстандық қоғамды біріктіруші институт ретінде

Мақалада Қазақстан Республикасының ішкі және сыртқы саясатындағы Қазақстан халқы Ассамблеясының рөлі қарастырылды. Қазақстанда этносаяси үрдістердің позитивті даму процесінде Ассамблеяның қоғамдық-саяси қызметінің рөлі көрсетілген. Қазақстан халқы Ассамблеясының Қазақстан Республикасында конституциялық орган ретіндегі құрылымы және құқықтық мәртебесі анықталды. Бұл институттың этносаралық толеранттылық және қоғамдық келісімнің қазақстандық моделінің қалыптасуы және нығаюындағы позитивтік функциясы баяндалды.

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Ассамблея народа Казахстана как объединяющий институт казахстанского общества

В статье рассматривается роль Ассамблеи народа Казахстана во внутренней и внешней политике Республики Казахстан. Показана общественно-политическая деятельность Ассамблеи в процессе позитивного развития этнополитических тенденций в Казахстане. Раскрываются структура и правовой статус Ассамблеи как конституционного органа. Освещается позитивная функция этого института в становлении и утверждении казахстанской модели межэтнической толерантности и общественного согласия.

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