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Republic of Kazakhstan at the dawn of independence: socio-political aspect

Today all over the world they recognize the state success of Kazakhstan. They are surprised at the dramatic changes achieved during the presidency of Nursultan Nazarbayev. Foreign mass media and Russian experts are increasingly calling the Republic of Kazakhstan a «new leopard» in the center of Asia. The Central Asian leopard is a direct analogy with the «Asian tigers». Such a comparison of Kazakhstan with these states-leaders, skillfully combining advanced Western technology with traditional oriental values, is quite logical and appropriate. But many outside observers have at times a deceptive impression of Kazakhstan's easy victory. At the beginning of the democratic path, two decades ago, the situation in the newly independent Kazakhstan was extremely difficult. Thus, the Kazakh SSR occupied a modest twelfth place in the rating of the economic development of the union republics. The incompetent economy, the empty Soviet treasury and an undeveloped political system completed the bleak picture of a low modernization start.

Keywords: Republic of Kazakhstan, President, history, government, relationship, world, policy, foreign

President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbayev was born on July 6, 1940 in the village of Chemolgan, Kaskelen district, Alma-Ata region. At the end of high school, he was engaged in construction of the Karaganda Combine the largest in the country. Working and studying the most complicated metallurgical business in Dneprodzerzhinsk, Ukraine, as well as at the factory-technical school in Temirtau, N.A. Nazarbayev became a professional metallurgist of bottling machines and mining blast furnace, mastered many related professions, having firsthand experience of the work collective, cares and needs of people.

Deep knowledge of production problems, adherence to principles in defending their own views on their solution, and high authority in the team contributed to the fact that N.A. Nazarbayev for 10 years (1969-1979) was a party leader at the plant in the city of Temirtau and Karaganda region. In 1979, N.A. Nazarbayev was elected Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, who dealt with economy and industry, and in 1984 is confirmed as Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Kazakhstan. At the age of 44 N.A. Nazarbayev headed the government. Due to the sense of new, progressive consistency and firmness in the implementation of state administration he did a lot for the development of the economy of the republic. However, stagnant phenomena in the economy dictated the need to address acute problems. Nursultan Nazarbayev took a courageous decision to put them first, to revive the socio-political life of the society in the conditions of the announced restructuring.

N.A. Nazarbayev understood that a stagnant economy was fraught with dangerous consequences. The December events of 1986 were dramatic. This was the country's first democratic speech by citizens who resisted for many years the policy of ignoring the will of the people by the leadership of the former Union. However, the speech was recognized as a manifestation of nationalism, troops were thrown out against the demonstrators. In the future, thanks to the efforts of N.A. Nazarbayev, then a generally recognized leader of the republic, this stigma was removed from the people of Kazakhstan, all the illegally injured participants in the December 1986 events were rehabilitated.

In May 1989, N.A. Nazarbayev was elected the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, from February to April he was also the Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Republic. In April 1990, Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbayev was elected the President of Kazakhstan by the Supreme Council.

The processes that led to the collapse of the USSR had a protracted character. N.A. Nazarbayev harshly assessed the indecisiveness, half-hearted actions carried out during the restructuring, which exacerbated the situation, and made efforts to reform and renew the Union as a single Eurasian state-territorial formation. This confirms his active participation in the Novoogarevsky Process as one of the developers of the new union treaty, which was to be signed on August 20, 1991.

However, the day before, on August 19, there was an event that went down in history as a putsch. In the beginning of December 1991, the Belovezhskaya meeting was held. The unity of the peoples

who inhabited the former Soviet Union was rudely destroyed. And as a really thinking politician, who understood the great importance of the common destiny of the Eurasian peoples, N.A. Nazarbayev did not participate in this meeting.

The choice for Kazakhstan was determined, its independence was proclaimed. The day of December 16, 1991 became the Independence Day of the country. But the political situation remained difficult.

December 21, 1991 in Almaty the heads of the states decided to establish the Commonwealth of Independent States with the participation of 11 former union republics. At the same time, important agreements on cooperation in the defense sphere were signed. Significantly, this was a historical event on the initiative of N.A. Nazarbayev that happened in Kazakhstan.

On December 1, 1991 Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbayev became the first popularly elected President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which was supported by 98.7% of the country's population. In 1995, in a nationwide referendum, the presidential powers of N.A. Nazarbayev was extended until December 2000. In the elections held on an alternative basis in 1999, N.A. Nazarbayev was again elected the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The most complicated problems of socioeconomic and political transformation of society demanded maximum tension, political will, the highest degree of state approach, the ability to see the future, to calculate the consequences of the undertaken actions a few steps forward. Economic and political reforms in Kazakhstan, carried out under the leadership and with the direct participation of N.A. Nazarbayev as a politician, scientist and strategist in the historically short period of the development of an independent state has generally positive results. Since 1997, the country has seen economic growth. In the first half of 2000, GDP growth exceeded 9%, industrial production - 16, agriculture - 5, investment - 30%. The average wage in May was \$ 100, remaining the highest in the CIS [1].

The development and implementation of a long-term strategy for the transformation of society required the reliance on science, its potential capabilities, which formed the basis for the most important decisions of political, economic and social problems, which was reflected in the published N.A. Nazarbayev's monographs: «The strategy of formation and development of Kazakhstan as a sovereign state», «On the threshold of the XXI century», «Strategy of resource saving and transition to the market», «Market and socioeconomic development». Eurasian Union: ideas, practice, prospects.

Nursultan Nazarbayev is a Doctor of Economics, Professor, Full Member of the National Academy of Sciences of Kazakhstan, Academician of the Academy of Social Sciences of the Russian Federation, Honorary Doctor of the Russian Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Russian Federation, Honorary Professor of Moscow State University, Kazakh State National University, Honorary Member of the Academy of Sciences of Belarus.

Different people were the first persons of the newly independent states that emerged on the site of the Soviet Union. Nursultan Nazarbayev, of course, stands out among them as a shining mountain peak. It is sufficient to say that N.A. Nazarbayev is one of the few successful political leaders in the post-Soviet space who invariably holds the post of President from the moment of gaining independence by the state. But to say only this, means nothing to say. The thing is not only how long Nursultan Nazarbayev directs the state, but how effectively he does it.

As a legacy from the Soviet era, Nursultan Nazarbayev inherited a degrading raw material economy, aggravated social problems, increased external threats due to the collapse of the union state, the emergence of conflict zones around the perimeter of Kazakhstan's borders. The young independent state faced a complex of extremely difficult tasks.

Then, in the early 1990s, experts predicted a short life for an independent Kazakhstan. Drawing analogies with other CIS countries, they expected instability growth in Kazakhstan. Strong ethnic and regional heterogeneity seemed to leave Kazakhstan little chance of peaceful development.

Civil wars were going on in Azerbaijan and Tajikistan. Georgia was shaken by a permanent revolution. It was uneasy in neighboring Uzbekistan. Conflicts broke out between Moldova and Transnistria, Georgia and Abkhazia, Georgia and South Ossetia. The real war blazed between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In Russia itself, there were bloody clashes: the political crisis in Moscow ended with shooting from tanks in the parliament, and in the North Caucasus a huge abscess was opened, which hardly heals to this day. Already in the 2000s, the situation in neighboring Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine was shaken.

How in such conditions, Kazakhstan, with its exceptionally diverse ethnic and confessional population, has become a real island of stability in the CIS open spaces? It's a miracle that political scientists are puzzling about and historians who are studying this period (the turn of the XX-XI centuries) will say the same.

But, no matter how they explained this phenomenon, they will always be forced to note the decisive role of the First President of Kazakhstan in diverting from the young state those threats that virtually none of the CIS states have passed and which, at first, it seemed, could not be avoided by Kazakhstan [2].

Of course, some may say that the reason for the state success of the Republic of Kazakhstan is oil and gas. Kazakhstan is stable by the fact that it has rich hydrocarbon deposits, in the development of which many influential countries of the world are interested. However, oil wealth can become not only a blessing, but also a curse. In the modern world, oil is not only an instrument of stabilization, but also an apple of discord. Recall the periodic battles of the insurgency in Nigeria - they are due to all the same oil. Oil-producing Azerbaijan went through a civil war.

Thus, «black gold» will never strengthen the state itself. We need the appropriate political will. Only if it is available, raw materials can become a factor that strengthens the state. And all the time, beginning with the very first steps towards sovereignty as part of the USSR, the source of this firm political will was the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev.

The main secret of Kazakhstan's success is that at the dawn of independence the state was headed by one of the most perspicacious politicians of our time. The first President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, sensitively caught the directions of changes in the late Soviet Union, the needs and aspirations of the Kazakh people and began to build a young state in accordance with this. The wisdom of the leader, his gift of political foresight and the ability to skilfully guide spontaneous processes into a channel of constructive change allowed Kazakhstan to go through a difficult period of inevitable transformation without losses and shocks that marked the emergence of other independent states in the expanses of the former Union [3].

Kazakhstan became the first union republic to establish the post of President. It was an extremely far-sighted step. On April 24, 1990, the new Supreme Council of Kazakhstan, first elected on a democratic basis in the course of alternative elections, on the first day of its work adopted the Law «On the establishment of the post of President of the Kazakh SSR and introduction of amendments and additions to the Constitution (Basic Law) of the Kazakh SSR» and elected Nursultan Nazarbayev to this post.

Establishment of the presidency in Kazakhstan was dictated by the pressing needs of stabilizing the political system in the conditions of the transition period. When creating the institute of presidency, the specificity of the Kazakh mentality was fully taken into account. It is the presence of personified higher state power headed by such authoritative and outstanding personality as Nursultan Abishevich that became the decisive prerequisite for successful political transit of the republic to the stage of an independent state. The young Kazakhstani statehood underwent a serious test on the days of the attempted takeover in Moscow on August 19-21, 1991. In a complex, dynamically changing environment, in the conditions of information chaos, N.A. Nazarbayev showed high qualities of a solid state leader, driven solely by responsibility for the fate of the country and the people. The balanced, precise steps of Nursultan Abishevich helped Kazakhstan to overcome those troubled days without detriment to national security and public peace. From the test, Kazakhstan came out strong. N.A. Nazarbayev acted in those days as a recognized leader of the nation. On the first day of the Moscow takeover, when the nature of the events was still unclear, he made a televised address in which he called on the people of Kazakhstan to observe peace and order. The next day, on August 20, 1991, Nursultan Nazarbayev issued a new statement in which he gave a clear political and legal assessment of the attempted takeover: the declaration of a state of emergency is not in accordance with the Constitution, decrees and other documents of the Emergency Committee are null and void on the sovereignty of the republics. In this situation N.A. Nazarbayev acted as a genuine guarantor of the Constitution and sovereignty of Kazakhstan, a democratically elected head of the republic, acting in the interests of the people and completely on the basis of legality. The moral and legal strength of Nursultan Abishevich's words in those days was attached to the institution of presidential power. The firm position of the President of Kazakhstan played an important role in eliminating the attempt of an unconstitutional takeover in Moscow [4].

The Institute of Presidency in Kazakhstan became the pivot on which the new statehood was built in conditions of the dying and destruction of the Soviet system. The strength and presence at the head of the state of such a person as Nursultan Nazarbayev, to a decisive degree ensured the success of the formation of sovereign Kazakhstan. The special adequacy of the first head of the independent Republic of Kazakhstan helped to the solution of those issues that the history set for the young state and become the pledge of all successful state construction of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The President faced complex challenges. The raw orientation of the economy of Kazakhstan, the pressure from outside, the difficulties of transition to market relations - all this required a balanced approach to taking responsible decisions, a large state mind and subtle political intuition. Nursultan Nazarbayev is en-

dowed with all these qualities to a high degree. And the powers of the president allowed them to be implemented as effectively as possible for the benefit of Kazakhstan.

One of the tasks facing Kazakhstan was connected with international recognition and settlement of issues related to the «Soviet legacy». It was important for Kazakhstan to secure its part of the property of the Soviet Union, without which the young state could not adequately ensure its security and its economic interests in the early stages of its existence. These are armaments, a transport park, communications facilities.

It was necessary to resolve the issue of the former all-Union property. All these issues had to be resolved in a complex. And they are under the leadership of N.A. Nazarbayev was successfully solved.

Only the President could have sufficient authority, that in the period of the existence of the USSR, to issue the most important state acts that provided real sovereignty of Kazakhstan. Thus, on August 29, 1991, N.A. Nazarbayev signed a decree to close the nuclear test site near Semipalatinsk (now Semei). On October 25, 1991, the Presidential Decrees formed the Security Council and the State Defense Committee of the Republic. Earlier, the President issued decrees «On the transition of state enterprises and organizations of Union subordination to the jurisdiction of the Kazakh SSR» and «On the creation of the gold and diamond fund of the Kazakh SSR». They summed up the material foundation for the state independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan [5].

On December 10, 1991 Nursultan Nazarbayev signed the Law of the Republic adopted by the Supreme Council on changing the name of the state. The new official name came to replace the Kazakh SSR - the Republic of Kazakhstan. On December 16, 1991, the President signed the Constitutional Law, in accordance with which the full state independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan was proclaimed. On March 2, 1992 Kazakhstan became a full member of the United Nations .

In the history of Kazakhstan a new era has begun. And quite rightly it will always be associated with the name of the First President of the Republic N.A. Nazarbayev. The success of the state building of independent Kazakhstan is attended by both personal and institutional aspects. And one is inconceivable without the other. Personality is connected with the qualities of Nursultan Nazarbayev, who turned out to be the most suitable person in this position. Now, it is even impossible and frightening to imagine what could happen if there was no such leader as Nursultan Abishevich in that crucial period in the Kazakh political elite. And it should always be remembered that he, with his political foresight, was the first to understand that Kazakhstan can not do without the institution of the presidency, that without it the process of gaining independence will be much more difficult [6].

Today all over the world they recognize the state success of Kazakhstan. They are surprised at the dramatic changes achieved during the presidency of Nursultan Nazarbayev. Foreign mass media and Russian experts are increasingly calling the Republic of Kazakhstan a «new leopard» in the center of Asia. The Central Asian leopard is a direct analogy with the «Asian tigers». So it is customary to name a group of the most dynamic countries of the Asia-Pacific region, which amazed the whole world with a record pace of modernization. Such a comparison of Kazakhstan with these states-leaders, skillfully combining advanced Western technology with traditional oriental values, is quite logical and appropriate. But many outside observers have at times a deceptive impression of Kazakhstan's easy victory. They say that an enchanting modernizing leap was given without any difficulty to all Kazakhstanis and especially to their First President. Of course, this is not so!

One should not think that a young independent country, even if it is so rich in natural resources as Kazakhstan, was born without suffering, «with a golden spoon in the mouth». Let's recall that at the beginning of the democratic path, two decades ago, the situation in the newly independent Kazakhstan was extremely difficult. Thus, the Kazakh SSR occupied a modest twelfth place in the rating of the economic development of the union republics. The incompetent economy, the empty Soviet treasury and an undeveloped political system completed the bleak picture of a low modernization start.

In his message to the people of Kazakhstan, announced at the joint session of the chambers of the Parliament of the Republic in February 2005, Nursultan Nazarbayev, without any embellishment, spoke about the difficulties he had experienced: «How did we begin? Not long ago, the history of the nineties of the last century, when our life changed dramatically when Kazakhstan gained independence, it was special years in the heat of emotions and emotions, the socio-economic and political situation was simply critical» [7].

The first years of independence Nursultan Nazarbayev himself extremely honestly calls the time of survival. «It was a difficult time», the Kazakh Leader says.- «We survived then». And this is a completely frank and accurate assessment. How did it happen that the disintegration of the USSR was the most painful for the Central Asian republics? And, especially, for Kazakhstan? What is the reason? The fact is that their republi-

can economies, which were planned in the Soviet times, were not self-sufficient. To put it bluntly, the Central Asian economies were created from the very beginning as a modest raw material appendage of the entire vast Soviet Union. Kazakhstan and the Central Asian republics were to give to the big country grain and cotton, ore and metal. In exchange for scheduled ordering, they brought everything they needed from all parts of the country, from cars and rockets to nails and matches.

But what should independent Kazakhstan do with its smelted metal after the destruction of the Union? Moreover, most of the large enterprises of KazSSR and the huge defense complex on the territory of the republic were managed directly from Moscow. The collapse of the USSR caused a break in economic ties between the former republics and led to the collapse of the unified financial system of the state. In the early 1990s, hundreds of major city-forming enterprises in Kazakhstan were abandoned. They lost funding and leadership. An already critical financial situation was aggravated by the growing financial and economic chaos that began in the very first weeks after the collapse of the USSR. By January 1992, prices for all goods had grown by an average of 4 times. And they continued to grow wildly. Accordingly, the savings of Soviet citizens were completely burned. The circulating assets of enterprises were depreciated and turned into dust [8].

In a frank conversation with the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev with pain in his voice spoke about the difficulties of that terrible time: «In the early 90's we experienced a difficult period in Kazakhstan, when we simply did not pay pensions - the treasury did not have money. Imagine, simply did not pay salaries for teachers, doctors - for 5-6 months there was a delay, did not pay even to the army and police!» This emotional, hard-won evaluation of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan is confirmed by dry statistics. In 1994, industrial production in Kazakhstan fell by half compared to 1990. And the volume of agricultural production fell almost a third. The annual rate of inflation was in 1992-1994 and reached fantastic figures - 1500-1800%. So, inflation in 1992 put a kind of «anti-record» - about three thousand sixty one percent! According to most indicators, the economic situation in Kazakhstan in 1992-1996 was much worse than in Russia.

Especially the situation was alarming in the industrial - northern and north-eastern regions of Kazakhstan. In the «dashing nineties» industrial complex of the north of the country experienced a real production and social collapse. Overnight, the familiar and well-adjusted industrial world could become a prehistoric chaos for millions of citizens.

But even in the most difficult time of the recent post-Soviet history, when many politicians dropped their hands, Nursultan Nazarbayev did not lose his temper. The President of Kazakhstan firmly believed in the happy future of his Motherland. He fully trusted the restraint and natural stamina of his beloved people. And this mutual indestructible belief in the forces of the First President and the entire multinational Kazakh people was able to remove from Kazakhstan a terrible tragedy [9].

In fact, at that time Kazakhstan, which had just received its independence, stood on the brink of a humanitarian disaster. What the first President of the Republic of Kazakhstan did during all difficult historical starts is simply invaluable. Quite frankly, Nursultan Nazarbayev saved his people from a big and terrible calamity.

It was believed that Kazakhstan would quickly become one of the poorest countries in the third world. They said, a few years this Central Asian country would still be able to hold out on the sale of raw materials and Soviet reserves of strength. But soon there will be an alleged imminent industrial and infrastructural collapse. Fortunately, all these apocalyptic predictions did not come true. And this was gained by the Kazakhstani not due to the changeable luck but due to the sober calculation and unbreakable will of the First President of the RK.

It is no longer necessary to paint all the difficulties, troubles and hardships that hit Kazakhstan in the first years of its independence. None can say better than Nursultan Nazarbayev: «In the years of Independence we have experienced worse times». In 1991 together with its independence Kazakhstan received a fragment of the agonizing, collapsed economy, hyperinflation, unemployment, shortages of food and essential goods. We had a 50 percent decline in industry, GDP fell by 60 percent, agricultural production by 70 percent. Work decreased by several times [10].

Despite all the difficulties, we resolutely and resolutely overcame those difficulties. «But the more difficult the initial start of Kazakhstan was, the more impressive are the state successes achieved by the country under the leadership of Nursultan Nazarbayev. Judge for yourself - during the first stage of market transformations, a sound foundation was laid in the new economy of Kazakhstan. It is enough to look only at the main achievements of the first stage of the Kazakhstani reforms, which can be conditionally determined from 1992 to 1997. These include: the introduction of the national and the filling of the national market with

goods. At that difficult time Kazakhstan entered the world community and joined the international financial institutions. This was a difficult but necessary departure from the principles of the command economy, and, last but not least, it was possible to maintain the stability of the socio-political situation in the country after the collapse of the USSR. After such accomplishments, the name of Nursultan Nazarbayev is forever written down in gold letters in the history of the Kazakh people.

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Г.Т. Едгина, Х. Абу Таам

Қазақстан Республикасы алғашқы тәуелсіздік жылдарында: әлеуметтік-саяси тұрғы

Бүгінде бүкіл әлем Қазақстан Республикасы мемлекеттің жеткен жетістіктеріне бас иіп танданады. Елбасы Нұрсұлтан Назарбаевтың мемлекетті басқару кезіндегі көптеген өзгерістерге қолжеткізгендігі таң қалдырады. Шетелдік бұқаралық ақпарат және ресейлік сарапшылар тұрғысынан Қазақстан Республикасы Орталық Азияның «Жаңа барысы» деген жиі естіледі. Ортаазиялық барыс — бұл «Азиялық жолбарысқа» тікелей ұқсастық. Қазақстанды осы көшбасшы мемлекеттермен салыстыру, жетілдірілген батыс технологиясын дәстүрлі шығыстық құндылықтарға байланыстыру әбден қисынды және орынды. Бірақ көптеген бөгде байқаушыларда «Қазақстанның жеңісі жеңіл болды» деген теріс ойлар қалыптасты. Демократиялық жолдың басында, екі онжылдық бұрын, жаңа ғана тәуелсіздік алған Қазақстанда жағдай өте ауыр болды. Мәселен, Қазақ КСР-ы экономикалық даму жағынан одақтас Республикалар арасында тек он екінші орында орналасқан еді. Экономиканың әлсіздігі, Кеңес қазынасының құлдырауы, дамымаған саяси жүйе — осылардың барлығы модернизацияның төменгі буынын аяқтады.

Кілт сөздер: Қазақстан Республикасы, Президент, тарих, мемлекет, қарым-қатынас, әлем, саясат, шетелдік.

Г.Т. Едгина, Х. Абу Таам

Республика Казахстан на заре независимости: социально-политический аспект

В статье отмечено, что сегодня во всем мире признают государственный успех Казахстана, удивляются разительным переменам, достигнутым за время президентства Нурсултана Назарбаева. Подчеркнуто, что зарубежные масс-медиа и российские эксперты все чаще называют Республику Казахстан «новым барсом» в центре Азии. Центральноазиатский барс — это прямая аналогия с «азиатскими тиграми». Такое сравнение Казахстана с этими государствами-лидерами, умело сочетающими передовую западную технологию с традиционными восточными ценностями, вполне логично и уместно. Так как у многих сторонних наблюдателей складывается порой обманчивое впечатление легкой победы Казахстана, авторы показывают, что в начале демократического пути, два десятка лет назад, ситуация в только что получившем независимость Казахстане была крайне тяжелой. Выделены основные про-

блемы того периода в Казахской ССР, занимавшей скромное двенадцатое место в рейтинге экономического развития союзных республик. Решать проблемы мешали недееспособная экономика, пустая советская казна и неразвитая политическая система, что довершало безрадостную картину низкого модернизационного старта республики.

Ключевые слова: Республика Казахстан, Президент, история, правительство, отношения, мир, политика, иностранные.

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