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KAZAKHSTAN'S MULTI-VECTOR FOREIGN POLICY IN THE CONTEXT OF GREAT
POWER GROWING CONFLICT

MA thesis

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I have prepared this thesis independently. All the views of other authors, as well as data from literary sources and elsewhere, have been cited.

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Abstract

This study attempts to examine Kazakhstan's multi-vector policy in the context of the growing conflict between Great Powers. Scholars who have researched the strategies of multi-vector diplomacy emphasize that Kazakhstan's policy of diversifying its partnerships aimed at balancing the impact and interests of these Great Powers and preventing the creation of highly asymmetric relationships with them.

The objective of the Thesis is to analyze the feasibility of Kazakhstan's traditional approach to engaging Great Powers such as Russia, the EU, China, and the United States in cooperation, given the recent conflicts. Specifically, the thesis focuses on two strategies of Kazakh multi-vector diplomacy addressing its Great Power partners - indirect balancing and omni-enmeshment - and measures change in partnerships in the areas of trade, FDI, and security. Using a Mixed Method approach, this research will identify whether the compositional balance of power or the methods and strategies targeting to maintain it, have been disrupted from 2014 to 2022.

Research findings aims to enrich the knowledge on the multi-vector approach of Middle Power, its sustainability and adaptability in the frame of growing conflict between its key Great Power partners.

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Introduction

Following the USSR-collapse in 1991, the Republic of Kazakhstan faced challenges of economic reconstruction and the establishment of new governance institutions. In addition to these complications, the newly independent nation also aimed to establish a partnership with a wide range of states to diminish its reliance on the former Soviet Center - Moscow. Since the first days of its statehood, Republic of Kazakhstan adopted a multi-vector approach of foreign policy that aimed to diversify its relationships and balance the Major Powers composition in the cooperation on economic development, trade, and regional security.

The foreign policy of Kazakhstan has been influenced by the geopolitical transformations on Eurasian space, primarily driven by the strategic confrontation between the EU and the US in one hand, and Russia on the other, stemming from the war in Ukraine. Additionally, the ongoing disputes on Intellectual property rights within the technology market between the USA and China have become an additional factor on the contemporary economic and security engine of Central Asia.

Research puzzle. The research attempts to investigate how Kazakhstan's foreign policy of multivectorism has been affected by the growing conflict among its key partnering Great Powers – the EU, Russia, the US, and China. Specifically, the study aims to examine how Kazakhstan keeps balance in its relations with these Powers in the field of economic development, trade, and regional security cooperation over the period of 2014-2023. The study will also identify if there are changes in the Powers' composition in the key dimensions of the Kazakh multi-vector approach, shaping the question whether there are revisions of foreign policy priorities due to the securitization of international relations in Eurasia. Overall, the research puzzle seeks to identify the challenges and opportunities that Kazakhstan faces in navigating the complex geopolitical landscape of Great Power competition and how it can enhance its strategic partnerships to achieve its foreign policy goals.

Topic relevance. The academic relevance of the research of Kazakh multivectorism in the frame of Great Power competition lies in the fact that Kazakhstan is a key player in the Central Asian region and has strategic significance for many Great Powers due to its abundant natural resources, geostrategic location, and transportation corridors. Kazakhstan's multi-vector approaches serve as an example of how Middle states can navigate the complex geopolitical landscape of Great Power confrontations while maintaining their strategic autonomy and national interests.

Studying the Kazakh multivectorism in the frame of Great Power competition can provide insights into the challenges and opportunities that other Middle Powers face in the global trends of securitization of international relations in conditions where the old-fashioned cooperation format is not efficient. Furthermore, conducting research based on Power-oriented international relations theory, this study enriches the alternative to «classical» in academic bandwagoning and balancing patterns of the Small and Middle Powers. Application of indirect balancing and omni-enmeshment strategies as models for the multi-vector approach may offer a more advantageous cooperation option in managing Middle Power relations with Major Powers. Through studying the adaptability and alteration of this approach in the context of the Great Powers conflict, it is expected to gain knowledge on the viability of multi-vector strategies of Small and Middle Powers.

Republic of Kazakhstan is suitable case for examining the resistance or adaptation of its multi-vector strategies in response to Great Powers conflict. Landlocked between partnering China and Russia and engaged deeply the EU and US in its trade and FDI sector, Kazakhstan shows the interconnectivity with four Great Powers.

There are several **objectives of the Thesis**, guided the process and structure of research:

- Identification of the intentional restructure of the partnership mechanisms or priorities related to the Great Powers engagement.
- Tracing the reactive trade and investment market compositional and quantitative indicators fluctuations caused by Kazakh economic, logistic and energy field interconnectivity with Russia.
- Tracing the performance of the selected Great Powers in Kazakh and Central Asian security landscape during securitization of political cooperations in Eurasian space.

Overall, objective of the Thesis is to bridge the knowledge gap in the field of multi-vector strategies of Middle Power amidst the growing conflict among Great Powers. It intends to achieve this by presenting a case study of Kazakhstan's foreign policy as an emerging Middle Power. Therefore, the key **research question** is:

«How does the escalation of the Great Powers conflict impact the multi-vector policy of ~~the~~ Middle Powers? »

Theoretical expectations. This research explores Kazakhstan's multi-vector policy aims to create and manage a mutually beneficial partnership with Great Power states, applying two strategies – indirect balancing and omni-enmeshment. However, according to Goh (2008), the omni-enmeshment strategy is «the process of engaging with a state so as to draw it into

deep involvement into international or regional society, enveloping it in a web of sustained exchanges and relationships, with the long-term aim of integration» [Goh, 2008, p.121] In frame of contemporary conflicts between the Great Powers, the simultaneous involvement regarding cooperation or common agenda-setting international initiatives is hard to realize. Moreover, anti-Russian economic and resource export sanctions posed by the EU and the USA could affect the Kazakh crude export and foreign trade opportunities, since two actors utilize the common pipelines, seaports, and air/on-land logistic roads. Such tendencies also limit the options for balancing and enmeshing the maneuvers of Kazakhstan. Therefore, the following **Hypotheses** will be explained:

H1.: «Escalation of conflict between the Great Powers forced their partner- Middle Power to revise its traditional tools and instruments of the multi-vector foreign relations-building. »

H2.: «Kazakh pragmatism and neutrality in foreign policy could gain from EU-Russia tensions, making the Kazakh market an alternative to the EU exporters for Russia and replacing Russian gas and oil suppliers for European buyers. »

H3.: «High connectivity with Russia in the field of crude mining and its export logistics will affect the FDI attractiveness of Kazakh energy industry for investors from EU and the US»

H4.: «To avoid the increase of Russian military dominance in Central Asia, Kazakhstan will push the omni-enmeshment strategies in regional cooperation, strategically diversifying and balancing Russian dominance throughout bilateral and multilateral security partnerships with third parties. »

Methodology and data used. The primary objective of this research is to explore Kazakhstan's multi-vector foreign policy strategies in response to the increasing conflict among its partnering Great Powers from 2014 to 2022. To achieve this, research design will use a mixed approach consisting of the following steps:

1. Collection of the information on restrictive measures, bans, decrease of diplomatic institutions and dialogue-cutting acts to create timelines of the conflict intensification leading to the break-up of Inter-Powers' relations.

2. Via qualitative analysis of Kazakhstan's official statements and documents defining, planning, and describing its foreign policy activities in the period of 2014-2022, comparison of the Great Powers-related narratives over the period will be implemented. Based on the collected narratives, the timeline will include the intentional shifts in the regular multi-vector patterns.

3. Collection of data on bilateral trade (commodity turnover, export and import indicators) and oil market FDI composition and value over the period of 2014-2022 to conduct quantitative analysis of the emerging trends and changes.

4. We will measure the dynamics in regional security initiatives and cooperation using qualitative analysis of the composition and types of cooperation and agreements between Kazakhstan and Great Powers. The analysis will focus on changes in the implementation of multi-vector strategy components such as indirect balancing or omni-enmeshment strategies towards Great Powers' engagement in regional military and security issues.

5. The findings and collected data will be presented in the separate Chapters. The final discussion in response to the research question will be based on evaluating and examining of the identified trends and changes in the Conclusion section. The officially proclaimed foreign policy narratives will support the idea that Kazakhstan stays consistent with traditional diplomatic approach, despite the geopolitical confrontations, and counterarguments regarding intentional changes to the partnership trajectory will be addressed. The justification or limitation of the Hypothesis will be provided. Additionally, observations and findings not directly related to the research question will be separately collected and reflected in the last subchapter.

Based on the research design and objectives, the following **structure of the thesis** is built.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of Kazakhstan's foreign policy since 1991, highlighting the country's multi-vector approach consists of the indirect balancing and omni-enmeshment strategies in relation to partner states. Additionally, the chapter explains the theoretical frame and methods used in the study, outlining the deductive approach and mixed research methods employed.

Chapter 2 analyzes Kazakhstan's foreign policy priorities and strategies over the period of growing Great Powers conflict. The chapter begins with a context analysis of Kazakhstan's National Security Strategies and President's Addresses to the Nation, exploring the country's policy priorities and delving into an analysis of the key themes and narratives that underpin Kazakhstan's foreign policy in the period of 2014-2023. Finally, the chapter compares Kazakhstan's strategy-building narratives over the period of geopolitical shifts in Eurasia, examining how its policies have evolved in response to changing global and regional political dynamics.

Chapter 3 focuses on tracing Kazakhstan's indirect balancing in the areas of foreign trade and direct investments. The chapter starts with an overview of the Great Powers' role in

Kazakhstan's foreign trade and FDI attraction, including China, Russia, the EU, and the US. The chapter then proceeds to analyze compositional and quantitative changes in Kazakhstan's foreign economic area, with a focus on key sectors such as oil and gas.

Chapter 4 examines Central Asian regional security in Kazakhstan's foreign policy. The chapter begins by identifying Kazakhstan's role in military and security cooperation, while subsequently examining the initiatives in Central Asia, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). The chapter then proceeds to analyze the indirect balancing of the Great Powers in the military arena, focusing on their involvement in the SCO, CSTO, and NATO. Finally, the chapter discusses Kazakhstan's efforts to pursue security omni-enmeshment through the institutionalization of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA).

Chapter 5 presents the conclusion, summarizing the research findings and discussing Hypothesis examination.

I. Kazakhstan's Multi-Vector Policy through the lens of Powers-oriented studies

This Chapter aims to review the theoretical foundation of further research and Methods have been used. Split into four subchapters, it first discusses the understanding of multivectorism in diplomacy and foreign policy studies, specifying the collection of meanings which define the phenomenon of Kazakh multivectorism. In the second subchapter we focus on the strategies of multivectorism addressing the relations building and management with Great Powers. Posing the foundational question inspiring this research, we turn the third subchapter and present the Methods applied in the frame of the conducted research, shortly discussing the rationale behind our choice.

1.1 Kazakhstani multivectorism phenomenon in contemporary IR studies.

Multi-vector foreign policy as a phenomenon occurred in academia and applied in policy area after the USSR-collapse. The announcement of the multivectorism mostly was made to deliver the will of fresh-made sovereign states to develop partnership behind the borders of the former socialist bloc. The wide application of «multivectorism» in the rhetoric of the leaders of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and other states since the 1990s to some degree discredited the definition of «multivectorism». The vague range of meanings are blurred the frames of the definition. Therefore, we first specify the collection of meanings and approaches currently circulating in the context of Kazakh multivectorism studies.

Scholars tend to assess the Kazakh multivectorism as the tool to deal with Great Powers' regional ambitions, interests and potential threat. From this perspective, the Kazakh multi-vector policy is mostly geostrategic outcome of the need to balance the neighboring Powers influence on state politics and security. (Hanks, 2011; Diyarbakırlıoğlu & Yiğit, 2014; Clarke, 2015; Vanderhill, et al. 2020; Kazantsev et al 2021)

Another approach equates Kazakh multivectorism with the diversification of partnership beyond its immediate neighbors (Kassenova, 2017). Following this approach, multivectorism is observed with the strong orientation on benefits of new economic and diplomatic opportunities.

Hansen (2015) and Lukin (2019) focus on the regional aspects of the concept, emphasizing the use of multi-vector approach to achieve the regional leadership and secure the state's sovereignty in Eurasian engagements such as SCI, SCO and EAEU.

There is also an academic tradition to observe Kazakhstan's external affairs in frame of Central Asian regional perspective (Tsygankov, 2015, Lukin 2019). Performing the multivectorism as the common feature of Central Asian regional diplomacy tradition. However, we rather agree with Laruelle (2018) and Vanderhill et al (2020) point that the academic tradition to perform the post-Soviet Central Asian space as the unity of similar states is irrelevant since Central Asian states «differ in terms of their resources, population size and composition, level of economic development, strategies and goals» [Vanderhill et al, 2020, p. 976] Moreover, Kazakhstan specifically differs as the « economic engine» of the region, producing more than 50% of Central Asian GDP, and is therefore in a different category from any of its much poorer neighbors» [Laruelle, 2018, p. 400]¹. Thus, foreign affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan should be observed separately, not from the regional perspective.

According to Hanks (2009), Kazakhstan multi-vector foreign policy² is based on a practical and non-ideological approach and aims to achieve economic and political gains by cooperating with a broad range of international actors. It only considers the potential costs and benefits to Kazakhstan as an inter-state actor. Despite some points, that it is the «rhetorical façade», (Ambrosio & Lange, 2014) and the former Soviet Centre – Russia is the most dominant influencer in the Kazakh political decisions, we claim on the lack of clientelist nature in Russo-Kazakhstan relations for the past decades. As evidence of the independence of Kazakhstan's foreign policy course, it is usually cited as an example the deny recognizing Crimea as a part of Russia and the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia from Georgia, the rejection of an initiatives of Abkhazia to become the member of EAEU and the decision do not to join Russian counter-sanctioning policy (Kazantsev et al, 2021)

Geography plays a crucial role in discussions about Kazakhstan's role in the international relations system. From the early days of its independence, two narratives have emerged regarding the country's unique location connecting Europe and Asia, and the need to foster economic ties and friendly relations with all neighboring states, as reflected in Nazarbayev's speeches (Ambrosio & Lanch, 2014). These narratives have shaped the trajectory of the country's multi-vector policy for the past 30 years.

¹ The composition has not changed dramatically over time. In 2021 annual Kazakh GDP is performing over 55% of the entire Central Asian amount. (“The Economy of Central Asia: A Fresh Perspective,” 2022)

² Here and after the terms "multi-vector policy," "multi-vector diplomacy," and "multivectorism" are used interchangeably in this study and refer to Kazakhstan's external policy.

In a study conducted by Idan and Shuffer (2011), the authors conclude that Kazakhstan's geographical limitations, including its lack of access to the sea, its transcontinental location, its diverse neighboring states, and its desire to achieve true independence from the former Soviet center, have all contributed to the formation of the country's current diplomatic patterns. Since the country's prosperity was primarily based on oil distribution, its lack of seaports and its reliance on the only pipeline to Russia in the 1990s compelled the newly formed government to expand its natural resource consumer market to achieve true independence (Idan & Shuffer, 2011). Kassen (2018), developing geographical approach, theoretically enriches the idea that geographical conditions facilitate to the multidimensional orientation of Kazakh foreign policy. However, for Kassen, Kazakh foreign policy is more complex: it is ruled by the logic of «exit strategy» – managing the different type of geographical and economic limitations throughout its alleviation by interstate and regional cooperation, using the soft power and multi-vector diplomacies.

Thus, the group of scholars argue that limitations of landlocked location and opportunities given by its transcontinental position form two vital areas of Kazakhstan foreign policy management – the permanent threat of neighboring Great Powers hegemonic interests and the lack of access to global maritime trade routes (Hanks, 2009; Idan & Shuffer, 2011 and Kassen, 2018). Consequently all scholars above agree that the political factor – the threat of the dependance or pressure from the former Soviet center – was originally the dominant driving force to choose the multi-vector strategy. Since the academic attempts to approach the drivers of the Kazakh foreign policy nature are predominantly based on the geostrategic and security-related logic, the use of the pro-realist and Powers-oriented theories of International Relations is entrenched scholar practice.

Today IR realists school performing the different hierarchies and classifications of the Powers, as well as defining the motives and policy-making patterns of states depends on their status. There is the lack of one commonly-accepted tradition to classify the states in Power hierarchy, so Kazakh foreign policy research is usually developed via the Secondary-Major Powers model (Ikenberry, G., 2001; Goh, 2008, Klatt & Wassenberg, 2017) or hierarchy are originated in frame of Joordan's classification (2003) and improved by Oosterveld & Torossian (2019) in their report on International Peace and Security and Societal Stability for Hague Centre for Strategic Studies. Latter was chosen for implication in this research since its relevance for up-to-date IR systems and solid methodological selection and classification criteria.

Thus, this research is conducted in frame of the realist paradigm, utilizing the Oosterveld & Torossian (2019) hierarchy of Powers. Thus, Republic of Kazakhstan is identified as the Emerging Middle Power and, in frame of the external relations, strives to regional leadership and Exemplifies its readiness to reform global issues. Contemporary IR realist approach Of Kazakh multivectorism strategies toward Great Powers offers to explore as the combinations of the of «omni-enmeshment» and «complex/indirect balancing» strategies. (Vanderhill et al, 2020; Bakhtiyarova & Ali Avcu, 2022b) In this research we continue to follow this line and would like to fill the gaps in the knowledge of the strategies adaptability in frame of the current geopolitical challenges.

The first component – omni-enmeshment strategy – performs the «enmeshing» or tying the competitor Powers in the different forms of cooperation under the umbrella of common goals persuasion in the Central Asian region and, particularly, in Kazakhstan. (Vanderhill et al, 2020)

The second component – complex or indirect balancing – the tactic of diversification the composition of Great Powers - partner in different areas to balance their impact and avoid the overwhelming role of any actor in specific area of cooperation (Goh, 2008). The next subchapter focuses on the research methods applied to measure changes of omni-enmeshment and indirect balancing strategies' indicators over the period of Great Powers' conflict.

1.2 Mixed Methods implication to measure Kazakhstani multi-vector policy.

Since the changes of foreign policy approach could appear in a reactive manner on the latest phases of the inter-Powers conflict escalation, measurable changes can be identified in period of 2022-2023. Moreover, the reactive changes at the moment of study can occur on the level of strategy building, but not on the matter of policy practices and decisions. Considering such complexity, the changes over the selected period will be traced on the matters of strategy-defining narratives and on the level of foreign policy practices. Components on both matters could demonstrates *how* the previous foreign policy practices are revising, therefore the choice of Mixed Method is justified.

Research design. Research will be conducted following the Convergent Design (One-Phase Design) for the Process Tracing of the multi-vector strategies towards selected Great Powers. Therefore, at the start we define the period of the processes to study and create the timeline of the processes and shifts of inter-Powers conflict escalation. Then we start the collecting and analyzing of Qualitative and Quantitative data on Kazakh multivectorism in the

areas of its application. Merging the collected results, we turn to interpretation of results and comparison via the inter-Powers conflict timeline to provide side-by-side comparison analysis of findings in the Discussion section. The research concludes by the bringing together numeric and textual database into conclusional interpretation and sum-up of findings.

Research limitations. The study of Kazakh foreign policy in this research is limited by choice of four areas of changes trace – the qualitative measures of cooperation with Great Powers in trade, FDI in mining and quarrying area and quantitative analysis of the strategy-building and security cooperation. The choice of such justified by the orientation of the traditional key areas of partners diversification. However, despite the focus on the main investment attraction sector consisting more than 80% of entire investments in Kazakhstan, research exclude an opportunity to create more exact and fuller picture of changes in the investment attraction area over the period of 2014-2022. The another significant area of investment attraction – infrastructure building – illustrative to indicate the changes could have place in Kazakh -Chinese relations, since Chinese primacy in the sector Ameyaw-Brobbe& Amable, 2023) Since the primer investor in Kazakh infrastructure building is China, we cannot say that it ever been the sector of multi-vector strategy application.

The dataset is used for quantitative analysis has been gathered only from Official site of Bureau of National Statistics of the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan (stat.gov.kz) and Database of National Bank of Kazakhstan (nationalbank.kz) that presence the data of governmental institutions, however, it should be mention that

The use of Mixed Methods could cause the inconsistency of interpretation of final analysis. In this research the analysis of Qualitative and Quantitative measures is not merged to get the findings in specific area of measures. An integration of the analysis of the narratives was done with the purpose to use it as supplementary tool helps to interpret the nature of measured changes, identifying if they caused by intentional political decision of Kazakhstan or by reactive in the terms of fast-changing reactions.

The limitation of the tracing period is also challenge. The increase of the tensions between Great Powers and the final shift to securitization of the selected Great Powers relations happened in the period of 2021-2022. Reactive rapid shifts in cooperation mechanisms in area of trade and energy sector could be identified in this period or even later. Therefore, the process of conflict development is analyzed and the moments of critical turns and shifts are identified to guide the analysis of data and measures.

1.3 Great Powers. Understanding of Great Powers conflict and process tracing of its development over time

The choice of the Kazakhstan as the Middle Power case based of several factors discussed above.

First, Kazakh clear-set and open-declared multi-vector foreign policy agenda, developing since 1993 (Ambrosio et al, 2014) Second, the geographic location of the state next to two Great Powers – China and Russia, providing the different types of hegemonic policies in their neighborhood and targeting Kazakhstan. Third, the location in the post-Soviet space, as the current battlefield of the Great Powers interests makes the case that deliberation is more relevant to the «Great Powers competition/conflict» context. Last, but not least, the linguistic skills of the researcher – ability to analyze Russian and Kazakh written materials (two official languages of the Republic of Kazakhstan) broadens the opportunity to work with all topics - related documents and data.

Almost all works on Kazakh multivectorism in one voice include Russia, China and «West» in the list of key players in Central Asia. Recently published research (Chavasse, 2019; Insebayeva, 2020; Bakhtiyarova & Avcu, 2022) also discusses the same actors, noting the growing importance of the pan-Turkic flows additionally.

To check if the changes in regional geopolitics affect the Kazakh multi-vector patterns in address to its partnering Great Powers, it is decided to observe the dynamics of Kazakh cooperation with Russia, China, EU and the USA. Despite the existing tradition to combine the EU and the USA in one the term – «West» (Hanks, 2009; Ambrosio et al 2014; Vanderhill et al, 2020; Bakhtiyarova & Avcu, 2022) we utilize only exact names of IR actors and decline the appropriateness of the use «West» for this research.

Nevertheless, the use of the term labelling united European and American influence in Central Asia is not groundless: both actors are in the orbit of Kazakh foreign policy priorities. However, the fields of partnership with the «Western» actors are different: Kazakh-US relations are developed on the basis of FDI attraction and NATO-related context, meanwhile, the significant increase of the Kazakh-European cooperation has been seen in the trade area. This research argues on the need to separate observation of the USA- and EU-oriented vectors of the Kazakh foreign policy.

The need to include the EU in the Great Powers selection is also debated due to several reasons. The first one is the dynamics over the global influence of the IR players. Since the EU got its «legislative body» in its foreign affairs after Lisbon Treaty (2007/9), it also has been

included in the ranking of the international actors and has shown dominative economic potential over existing Great Powers. Despite some observers view that the EU as a community of Middle Power states (Yilmaz, 2017), the ranking and evaluation of the EU as the Great/Major Powers in IR is also widespread practice. (Spiegeleire, 2016; Cordesman, 2022). The second argument is that the official declaration of the EU, separated from the European states, as the main vector of Kazakh foreign policy (On the Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2020-2030, 2020). Third, the interest of this research is including the existence of the political clash between selected Powers. In the light of such conditions, including the EU, strategically opposing to Russia, is reasonable.

In this research, the definition of the Great Powers conflict is used for identification the processes of the between-Powers relations development, characterized by the progressive rejection of the previously founded diplomatic dialogues and partnership-supporting institutions, leading to the securitization of interstate relations.

Tracing the conflict development by analysis of the use of restrictive measures and cuts of diplomatic institutions in the period of 2014-2022, three long-term and consistently developing processes of relations' deterioration between the EU and Russia, the USA and Russia, and the USA and China are analyzed. Although some scholars attempt to group together the political confrontations between the EU-Russia and the US-Russia, characterizing them as tensions between the West and Russia, we argue that these conflicts developed in parallel but in different dynamics, particularly in the period prior to the escalation of the Russo-Ukrainian War in February 2022, and therefore should be analyzed separately.

Data on the USA-Russian and USA-Chinese sanctions were collected from the official website of the Department of State – by collecting data from the «Sanctions» and «Press-Release» section. Data on the EU-Russian sanctions and restrictive measures were gathered from the official website of The European Council and the Council of European Union – Sections «Press release» and «EU restrictive measures against Russia over Ukraine». Databases of the anti-Russian sanctions created by the independent journalists of Current Time TV channel– Section «All US And EU Sanctions Against Russia Since 2014» and detailed dataset of the U.S.-China Relations in period of 1949 – 2023 published by the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) Think Tank were also used.

EU-Russian conflict. EU restrictive measures in address to Russia started from the decline of annual EU- Russia forum and posing targeted sanctions on individuals and entities in 2014. The target of sanctions was the actors involved in existing political, economic, financial, and military support of Russian governance in Crimea and Sevastopol. Later, the

agencies are involved in military activities in Donbass and Eastern Ukraine territories were included in the list.

There are no sanctions lifted during the period of March 2014- February 2022, but the scope of restrictive measures was limited to cause the breakup of cooperation. Prefer to follow the principles of «selected engagement» and operate in frame of Five Guidance Principles of 2016, the EU-Russian relations held based on beneficial trade and energy cooperation. The all-out securitization of relations was done only after the full-scale military invasion into Ukraine. Since February 2022 restrictive measures type, target group and the sanctions’ breadth have been significantly modified. Instead of targeted sanctions on individuals and entities, the packaged sanctions oriented to sectoral damage of the state wealth. Furthermore, the intensity of sanctions and speed of its implementation raised in geometrical progression – 10 packages of broad-area targeting sanctions were implemented in a period of February 2022- February 2023. (Fig.1)

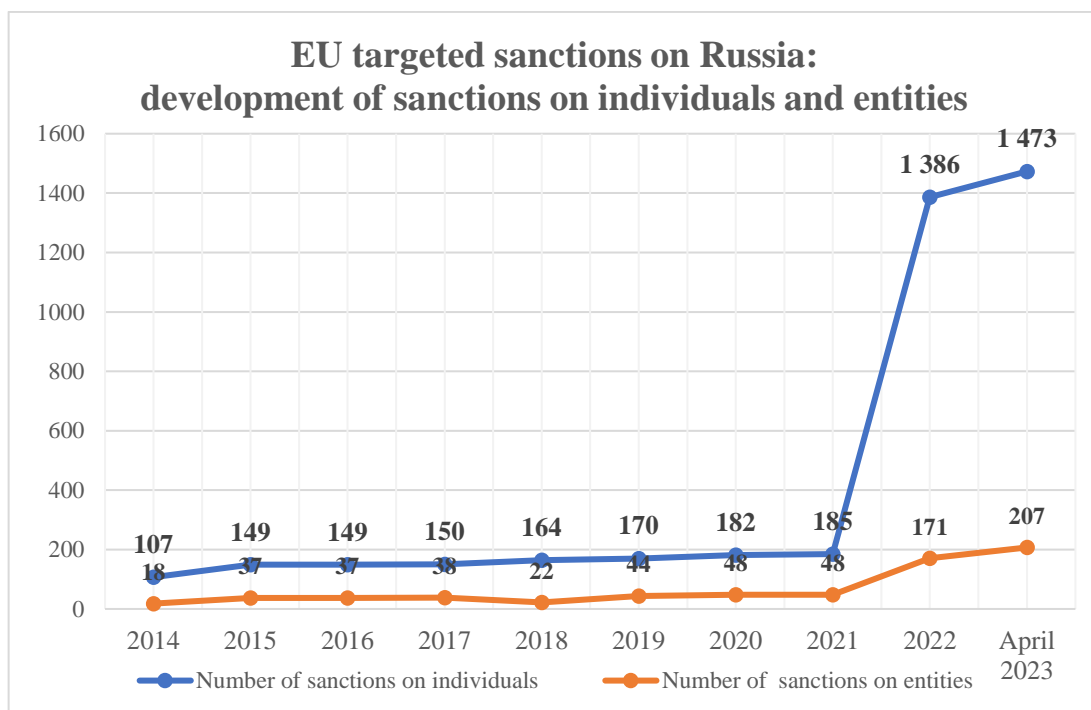


Figure1. Intensity of EU individuals and entities sanctioning in address to Russia.

USA-Russian conflict. In case of the USA-Russian relations, restrictive measures had the multidimensional nature from the early start, targeting not only individuals and entities responsible for the intervention but also limiting the financial sector and oil export via restrictions of state-owned banks and major oil suppliers. Besides the disagreement over the actions in Ukraine, the USA-Russian tensions significantly increased in the period of 2018-2021 due to the scandals with massive cyber-attacks, USA elections’ intervention, the Scripals and Navalny poisoning, WMD proliferation and conflict in Syria. An implication of the

Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) targeting over 210 Putin's courtiers and totality of the president administration and the expulsion of the 60 diplomats in 2018 have already been symbolizing the end of cooperation between states. Sanctions imposed against Russian aggression in Ukraine later, therefore, damaged already highly limited business and trade channels between states and mainly crushed Russian financial sector.

USA-Chinese conflict. The third case of Great Powers conflict is the USA-Chinese trade war and political disputes. Conflict had started in 2018 due to USA claims on Huawei technological supremacy and Chinese high-tech thievery. From the beginning of the confrontation, bans and trade tariffs targeting the Chinese export were implemented intensively. The disputes over Covid -2019 and New Beijing National Security Law supported an increasing wave of restrictions in July 2020. Biden administration continued the ban-posing, sanctioning and diplomatic boycotts practices.

All three cases demonstrate an exacerbation of Great Powers' competition. Over the tracing period of 2014-2022, there has been a similar tendency towards growing conflict, characterized by an increasing number of mutual restrictions and bans, the breakup of diplomatic institutions, and a shift towards the security and military field. To argue the last point, we will clarify, that the military equipment supporting Ukraine by the EU countries and the USA, in fact, illustrates the indirect weaponized clash between them and Russia. The Biden administration's push to collectively respond to «threats from China, such as its nuclear weapons development and military modernization», which was included in a NATO communiqué in June 2021, also illustrates the securitization of the USA-Chinese confrontation. It is the first-time case, when the USA uses the military alliance agenda for bilateral economic relations management.

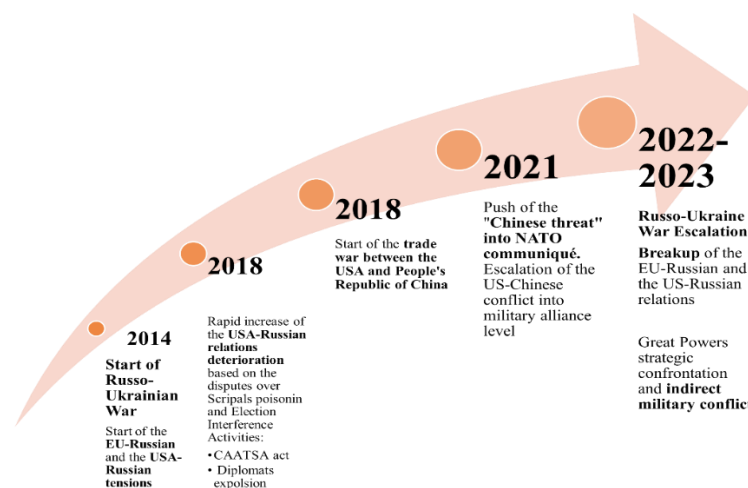


Figure 2. The Great Powers growing tensions in dates.

1.4 Measuring the multi-vector strategies in address to Great Power partners.

Two strategies addressing Great Powers in frame of Kazakh multivectorism are measured over the period of 2014-2022. Tracing the changes, the regular omni-enmeshment and indirect balancing strategies implication patterns, the compositional, quantitative and qualitative changes in Kazakh partnership development are expected to see.

Since the key Kazakhstan vectors are targeting the Great Powers' engagement in the economic cooperation, metal and energy resources production and export and regional security cooperation (Kassen, 2018; Vanderhil et al, 2020; Bakhtiyarova & Avcu, 2022), this research attempts to see the changes in these fields. This section discusses in detail the indicators and methods applied to measure the changes in Kazakhstan's cooperation with the selected Great Power partners.

Narrative-analysis of strategy-building and policy priorities. Collecting the foreign strategy-defining legal acts and speeches of the Kazakhstan's Government published and introduced in the period of 2014-2022, the sources for Qualitative analysis was collected (Appendix 1. List of sources for Qualitative analysis) The list includes the long-term state development plans, such as «Strategy 2025» and «Strategy-2050», the Concepts on Foreign Policy published in 2014 and 2020, the annual Addresses of President to Nation. Collecting the VIVO-, Descriptive and Process Codes and building the dataset of the narratives related to foreign policy priorities, policies towards selected states and the Kazakhstan's attitude to the global policy, IR system and engine, and Kazakhstan role and mission on the Global Stage, the dataset was built. The thematical analysis of the Kazakh attitude and priority towards Great Powers-oriented policies in the period of 2014-2022 based on findings comparison over the period of 2014 -2022 Is discussed in the separate Chapter and utilized for the final Discussion.

Quantitative analysis on commodity turnover and FDI in crude extraction and production field. The primacy of the economic interests and income over any political context was formulated from the early years of Kazakhstani independence and called the policies of «pragmatism». The business approach of the orientation on quantitatively measurable benefits is also illustrated in the choice of key fields of Kazakh multivectorism – trade relations and FDI attraction.

For this research we are tracing the trade throughout of the Great Powers composition in the annual commodity turnover, export and import rates and the monetary value indicators with every partner. Tracing the trends, the final analysis will identify if the geopolitical shifts cause the reactionary changes in Kazakhstan foreign trade with Great Power partners.

The Investment Attraction is another cornerstone of the Kazakhstan's economic development, which is financing the key budget income – crude export. Since the high cost of the extraction, production and export of crude oil, the Kazakh policy was oriented to attract foreign investors. The mechanism of the FDI attraction for crude market development is still the vital area impacts the country's budget. Despite the fact of the orientation on the diversification of investments type and new strategy of re-orientation on FDI attraction in non-energy sectors, the FDI in mining and quarrying sector as one of the key fields of indirect balancing in the period of 2014-2022. Therefore, in the case of trade, we collected the value of FDI and composition of the FDI donors over years and analysed the identified trends.

All the data to measure the trade and FDI attraction in the oil industry was gathered from the Kazakhstan state's Statistic Centre and Kazakhstan's National Banks reports. Data was collected in Excel and created the visual illustration of the indicator change, implementing the linear trend line calculation and depicting it on the diagrams, the analysis of both variables are conducted in Chapter 3.

Security cooperation. Bilateral, multilateral, and regional security-related dialogues, agreements, and organizations of Kazakhstan with the chosen Great Power states will be collected based on the official website of Kazakhstan Foreign Affairs Ministry. Prevalent data on interstate cooperation and its legislative basis is open and available in the «Direction» section. Section «Kazakhstan in global and security issues» gives the full range of data about the regional security integration projects and, therefore, also going to be used for the data gathering. Providing the contextual analysis of the Charters and Agreements of such initiatives the ones with cooperative security nature will be selected to monitor.

Providing the contextual analysis of the organization websites and comparing the growth/decline of number of such initiatives with the specified countries, we are expecting to see the changes in regular practices of legislative or institutional binding Great Powers with common regional security agenda over the Global policy polarization on the Eurasian space.

Findings are presented, discussed, and structured in the final table, in Chapter 4.

II. Qualitative analysis of Kazakh strategy-building

2.1 Kazakhstan's foreign policy in the period of 2014-2022

This Chapter of the Thesis is performing the meanings embedded in the label «multi-vector» and analyses the narratives used by the Kazakh Government to legitimize its foreign policy motives and actions. Collecting the narratives related to the Kazakh leader's appropriation of international relations and system, its players, and the perception of the Kazakh place on the Global Stage, we sum up the key points defining the ideational ground of its diplomacy.

The key ideological message runs overall political speeches and strategic acts – the story of the achieving *independence and sovereignty* by the Kazakh state. Contextually it is shown as a great gift and achievement, in some sense twisting the fact that Kazakhstan gained sovereignty because of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Moreover, the context of Independence is always accompanied by the idea of threats to Kazakhstan's sovereignty. Every Address to Nation starts by emphasizing the role of «statehood» of Kazakhstan and finishes by repeating the significant value of its Independence. The word «independence» is always written with a capital letter. As the core concept of Kazakhstan's statehood and almost sacrificed narrative, it supports another fundamental concept defining internal and external policy development.

In the field of foreign policies, the understanding of the global processes is also related to the main task of Kazakhstan's government to keep and save the «Independence» of Kazakhstan and support its sovereignty. (Strategy «Kazakhstan-2050», 2012) Mostly embedding the political values and ambitions of the Kazakhstan Republic in the frame of a realist World engine, the state authorities defined Kazakhstan as the «Middle state» that could save its independence and reach the «the limited place in the sun» [Strategy «Kazakhstan-2025», 2020] via *international authority* and *regional leadership*.

All the Presidential Addresses to The Nation from 2014 to 2022 include the reflection on the position of Kazakhstan in global rankings published by the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, or other international financial institutions in any field and prior areas of state development. Reminding rather than the economic report on the achievements of the state in global political and economic competition, they measure the progress via numeric results and comparative assessment of Kazakhstani leadership within the Central Asian neighbors, among CIS, EEU, Post-Soviet countries or in Eurasian space.

Considering Kazakhstan as the Middle Power, the Kazakh government linked the political ambitions of Kazakhstan to its economic and financial prosperity, since it sees this as the only way of the achieving *international legitimization and stature* without the threat to its political independence and sovereignty (Tokayev, 2020). Setting the ground for a «pragmatic» and «profit-oriented» policy of relations-building in the national strategy «Kazakhstan-2030» in 1997 (Kazakhstan-2030, 1997), Kazakhstani leaders still follow the same logic in the next long-term priorities defining document – «Kazakhstan -2050». The pragmatic approach narrative is defined by placing businesses, and financial and economic prosperity in the first place among other indicators of prosperity.

Not only navigating the principle of the business-friendly and business-boosting orientation of policy priorities but also the implementation of *a business-like mindset in governing principles* and procedures are regularly mentioned in the speeches over the entire periods of narrative collection. (Nazarbayev, 2012; Tokayev, 2020)

Taking the position of building foreign policy on pragmatic and economic benefits criteria, Kazakhstan following its traditional «open-door policies» (Shayakhmetov, 2022) and emphasizing its *political neutrality*. It is linked to the ambition to become the cultural bridge and logistic hub, geographically *mediating* between European and Asian countries, and politically mediating in international relations and the global stage.

The role of the middle, the mediating point on the global political, economic, and geographical map is not only a priority but a self-defining narrative that is actively proclaimed by the Kazakh officials. Therefore, the use of such words, as bridge and hub are increasing over the tracing period. This idea is also instrumentalized to support the idea of Kazakh's statehood and independence, as well as to gain *international authority and recognition*. The idea of «political prestige» and the need to «legitimize the Kazakh regional *leadership*» is usually performed as the vital priority in the context of states' competition for economic gains and attractiveness for external partners.

The multi-vector approach stays coupled with the pragmatism principal primacy in foreign policy-building. Setting the goal to enter the top 30 most developed countries in the World in the Strategy «Kazakhstan – 2050» already in 2012, the way to its achievement is paved by the increase of the economic indicators and the standards of living. Therefore, the focus of foreign policy stays on the diverse partnership with countries for the sake to create *a stable and predictable beneficial partnership*, where is also «*economic gain is defining political* ».

2.2 Narratives over Great Powers confrontation - context shift and priorities resistance

The priorities of the multi-vector approach in foreign policy building and narratives addressing selected Great Powers have not been changing over the period of the Great Powers' growing tensions. However, several shifts could be identified compare the context and narratives of Kazakhstan's foreign policy and global political changes.

The most prominent is a shift to the *security and geopolitical terminology* in the global challenges related narratives. The use of narratives on external threats caused by global challenges, such as the financial crisis and global oil market fall have also been a part of the regular practices of Kazakh leaders to call the nation to unite the efforts for national purposes and aims. However, since 2020, the context of the regional security and «*geostrategic*» threats were widened and deepened significantly. Such narratives as the «*risks for medium and small states*», «*new factors influencing geopolitics and geo-economics*», «*tightening of trade and currency wars*», «*the pick of Cold War*» and «*sanctions standoff*» are increased the repeat of the claim of Kazakhstan's respect to state sovereignty, loyalty to international law and UN principles and values. (Tokayev, 2022)

This tendency is also linked to the increase of economic and security integration-related narratives. Compare the texts of the Concepts on Foreign Policy of Kazakhstan issued on March 9, 2014, before the confrontation initial start and published in 2020, the context of the partnership development and push of the cooperation within the regional security and economic integration projects has been increased, including the regional integration cooperations out of the Eurasia and not including Kazakhstan, such as the ASEAN, League of Arab States and the Council for the Arab States of the Gulf. (Tokayev, 2020)

Addressing the Great Power partnership is quantitatively decreased, meanwhile, the initiatives on behalf of the Central Asian dialogues and C5+ formats and cooperation are increased. The separate and new vector over regional security in Central Asia – CICA – turns to the security organization are also circulating over the last speeches on foreign policy and give the ground for further detailed discussions on the separate Chapter on Kazakhstan's policies over regional security. (Tokayev, 2022)

The traditional fields of the economic and investments attracting sectors are stays in priority, however, they are modified following Kazakhstan plan of modernization and economic development. Three key changes related to this field – the *diversification of investments* in Kazakhstan, the change reorientation of the investments attraction area out of the raw materials and energy sectors to the economic sectors are related to services and

technology production, and in the long-term goal of the *switch from the resources-export dependence*. (Nazarbayev, 2018)

The Great Powers' conflict development is also assumed as a beneficial factor considering the increasing interest in Kazakhstan's *logistic and financial hubs*. (Tokayev, 2020)

Analyzing the official response of the Kazakh leaders to the Great Powers growing tensions, the first addressing of the geopolitical shifts sounds in the Concept on Foreign policy for 2020-2030, published in 2020. It does not change the officially stated approach towards Great Powers, but the narrative towards the bilateral partnership with the selected Powers – China, EU, Russia, and the USA becomes quantitatively less, meanwhile the narratives on the will to create partnership within and with regional cooperations increase.

The conflict between the Great Powers was evaluated in a negative attitude, from the perspective of the threat to the international system and global stability. Even before the pick of the Great Powers' conflict escalation in 2022, the official Kazakh position was extremely negative, equating the security on the Eurasian landscape in 2020 with the most dramatic periods of the Cold War. (Tokayev, 2020) However, the Kazakh leaders are not silent about the perspectives to utilize the end of the Great Powers cooperation as the opportunity to realize its ambitions to become the economic crossroad between Europe and China via offering the politically neutral financial and logistic services.(Concept on Foreign Policy, 2020) It is noteworthy that Kazakhstan keeps its neutrality over conflict in Ukraine and evaluates the situation only from the perspectives of regional security and the state's economic advantages and disadvantages.

III. Tracing Kazakhstan achievements in indirect balancing in Foreign Trade and Direct Investment attraction

Diversification of the economically beneficial partnership – the cornerstone of the Kazakh multivectorism from the early beginning of the 1990-s. Despite the new strategy with a focus on high-technology production and non-resource-oriented export development, Kazakhstan still relies heavily on exports of oil, gas, and minerals to generate revenue and drive economic growth. (Nazarbayev, 2018) Therefore, an increase in trade and investments are vital targets for Kazakh foreign policy.

One of the key objectives of Kazakhstan's foreign policy is to attract foreign investment and establish strong economic ties with other countries. The government has implemented several initiatives to create a favorable investment climate, such as tax incentives, streamlined procedures for obtaining permits, and the establishment of special economic zones. (Cooper& Schulz, 2023) Membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO), the establishment of the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC), and the participants in several economic integration cooperation in Eurasia also aims to attract foreign investment and promote trade and economic cooperation with other countries.

This Chapter focuses on two areas highly crucially consisting of Great Powers' involvement – foreign trade and Foreign Direct Investments in the energy field, tracing the quantitative and compositional changes in the period of 2014-2022. The analysis seeks to identify if the previously entrenched tools have been modified or limited in response to the geopolitical shifts in Eurasia.

3.1 Analysis of compositional and qualitative changes in Kazakhstan's foreign trade with Great Powers

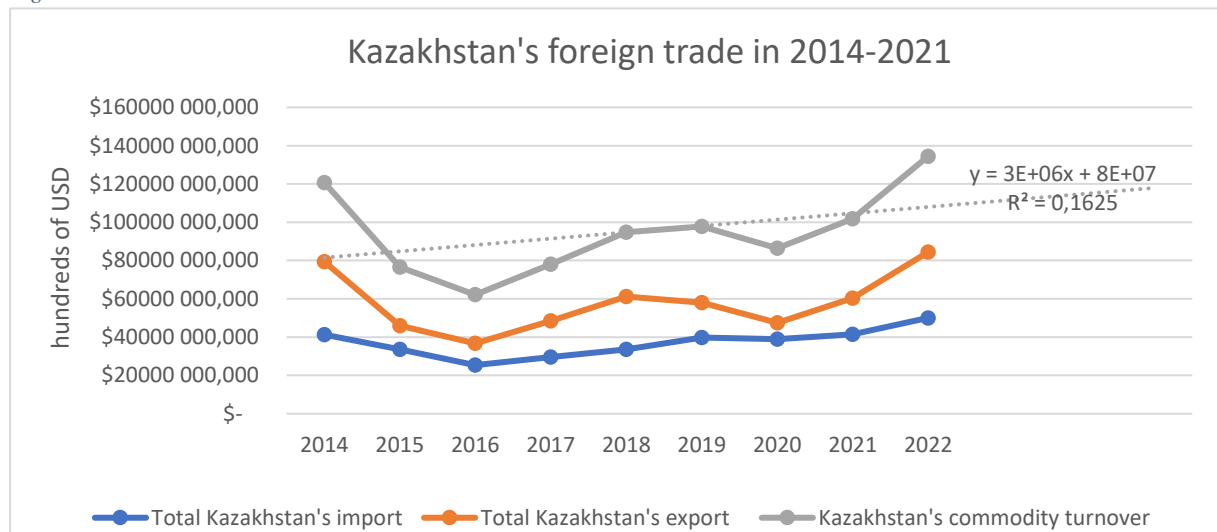
Despite the challenges met by Kazakhstan's foreign trade for the last decade, the period of 2014-2022 is finished by the expressive recovery of the commodity turnover with a visible trend of further growth. Mostly consisting of export than import rate, the changes in Kazakhstan's commodity turnover dynamics in the tracing period had been reactively evolving in hands with export transformation. (Figure 3)

Three Eurasian Great Powers – Russia, China, and the EU play a key role in foreign trade consistency. Composed 74,8 % of total commodity turnover at the start of the tracing

period – 2014, the role of the Eurasian Great Powers' participation in Kazakhstan's foreign trade stays significant in 2022 as well – 68,52% of total trade.

An analysis below attempts to identify the linkages of sharp changes in regular foreign trade trends with the Great Powers' confrontation. Taking for ground the decline in the period of 2019-2020 primarily reflects the consequences of the COVID-2019 caused Global Economic regression, the further analysis focuses on the periods of the foreign trade decreases in 2014-2016, its reanimation in 2016-2019 and sharp growth in 2020-2022, with the particular attention on the post-February dynamics.

Figure 3



Decline in Kazakhstan's export in 2014-2016. Despite the popular rhetoric of the Russian key role in Kazakhstan's foreign economics (Contessi, 2015; Chavasse, 2018) it is important to emphasize that in-fact income to Kazakhstan's budget highly depends on trade with the EU countries. The decline in 53,7% of the entire export directly reflected the dramatic cut in 57, 9% of Kazakhstan's export to the EU countries.

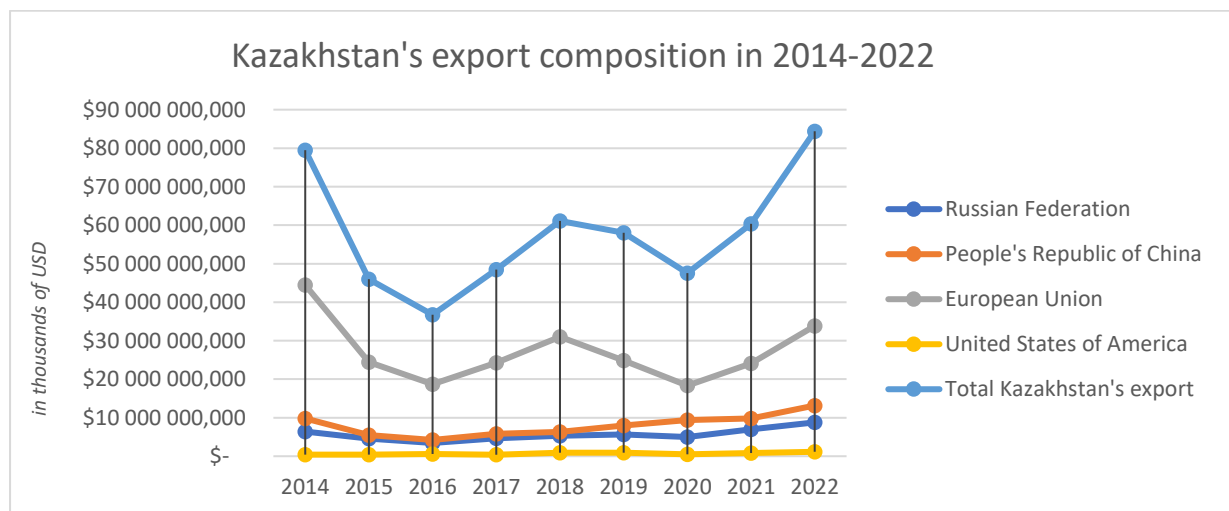


Figure 4

The fall in prices for metals and oil production in 2013 affected the foreign trade income in 2014. Minerals and metals performed about 90% of total Kazakhstan's export in 2013-2014, and the dominant position in the range of export products to the EU - more than 80% percent of export value.

The Brent decreases from the mid-2014 to 2016 became one of the most crucial in the history of modern economic development, achieving an overall 70% cut in oil prices in the Global Market (World Bank, 2018) Negative effect on the energy-export based commodity turnover between Kazakhstan and EU is depicted the statistical decline. However, the amount of exported energy resources became even bigger, than it was before. A slight decline in export with China and Russia also had the roots in the Oil Price Collapse (World Bank, 2018)

The first years of confrontation between the EU and Russia did not affect Kazakhstan's regular trade turnover with Great Powers, which has been transformed in the matters of monetary values, but not in the field of commodity composition and amount.

However, the risks of sanctions that could mirror Kazakhstan's export were widely discussed in the business and political area. The reason of such based on the oil transportation methods. Landlocked Kazakhstan uses the Caspian pipelines that are physically laid on the territory of Russia and 24 % legally belong to the Russian oil-production companies. (Caspian Pipeline Consortium, n.d.) In 2014 Tengizchevroil LLP – a joint venture engaged in the development, production, and marketing of oil products announced that the company had started to create an alternative logistic track, including an option to cooperate with China. At the same time, he also mentioned the restart of the utilization of The Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan pipeline. (Kononenko, 2014)

Coupling stronger with the Eurasian market in the frame of the EAEU, Kazakhstan created a wider net of potential alternative markets for its commodity. Russian-led Union could perform risks to Kazakhstan's economic stability due to the ruble decline in response to the sanctions. However, the comparatively limited EU sanctioning policy from 2014 to 2021 did not perform damage the use of Caspian pipelines and Russian stakeholders-included Kazakhstani companies.

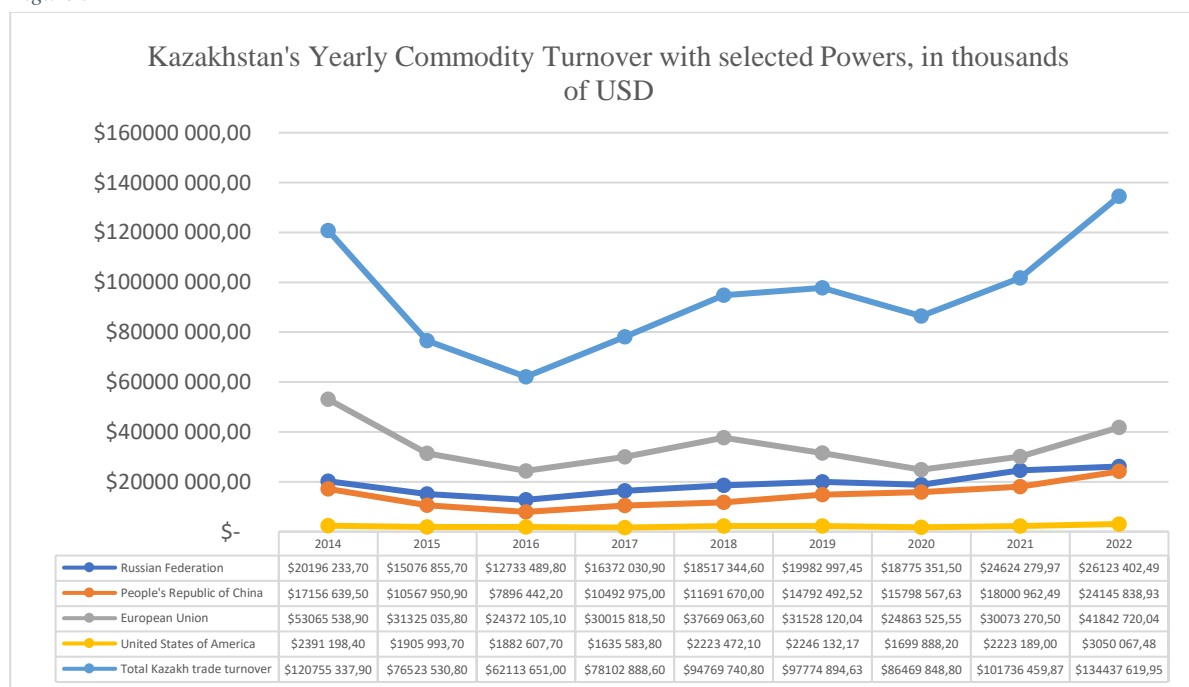
Sensitive to global oil prices, the Kazakh economic decline stopped with the start of the Brent price increase. The slow recovery of the oil market during the period of 2016-2018 almost directly impacted the amount of export income to Kazakhstan. The slow but consistent trend in the EU-Kazakhstan's trade had grown with the overall commodity turnover value. (Fig.4)

Against tremendous odds posed by the Covid-2019 aftermath, Kazakhstan’s foreign economic start to fast-developing recover. In 1,5 years, it crosses the level of 2014 and continues the fast-moving increase in 2022 despite the negative prognoses for a post-February period of 2022. The growth of 1,5 times in 2 years was caused by a set of reasons, included not only the Brent value effect but also the quantity of oil extraction and trade. An ambitious project launched by Tengizchevroil LLC in 2019 with the purpose to increase the production of hydrocarbons for the external market should achieve the pick in 2023-2024. (Monetary & Dept, 2022)

However, the export market of Kazakh oil producers today is diversified by several new buyers. Even though the commodity turnover rate and value with the EU are still increasing when measured in USD, the EU's share of the total Kazakh export market is declining over time. At the same time, the Chinese role in the Kazakh economy has also decreased since 2020, while Russia's share has remained relatively stable throughout the entire period from 2014 to 2022.

2020-2022- intensive growth of the economic indicators. In hands with the long-term Brent prices growth, the increase of oil production became the foundation for the Kazakhstan’s commodity turnover boost. Despite the fall of Brent in the middle of 2022, the positive dynamic of foreign trade is still resistant. The period after the culminative relations turn to conflict between three chosen Powers-EU, Russia and the USA can be count since the start of the Russian invasion into Ukraine in February 2022.

Figure 5



Intensive rounds of different types of sanctions posed by the EU and the USA in 2022-2023 targeted to weaken the Russian economic. Coupled with Russia, all ruble-sensitive economics should be under the indirect hit. Kazakhstan, as the active player in the EEU, also was predicted to face the challenge due to the dependence on the Russian economic activity. (Blum, 2022) However, Kazakhstan’s commodity turnover value shows the increase even despite the negative price trends in energy resources market.

Post- February 2022 trends are staying positively stable – commodity turnover volume keeps growing until the January 2023. (Figure 4) Steadily follows the trends started already in 2020, the Kazakhstani foreign trade sector compositionally restructured the share of economic partnership with Great Power states, except the case of China has maintained its position despite the shifts on Eurasian space in 2014-2023. Comparing the overall composition of the Kazakh commodity turnover before and after the tracing period, the trend of shifts from indirect balancing of Great Powers attendance to the overall diversification trade partnerships. In the Chapter Conclusion we will continue the discussion the current Kazakhstani policies of alternation of Great Power markets by the new players.

Figure 1

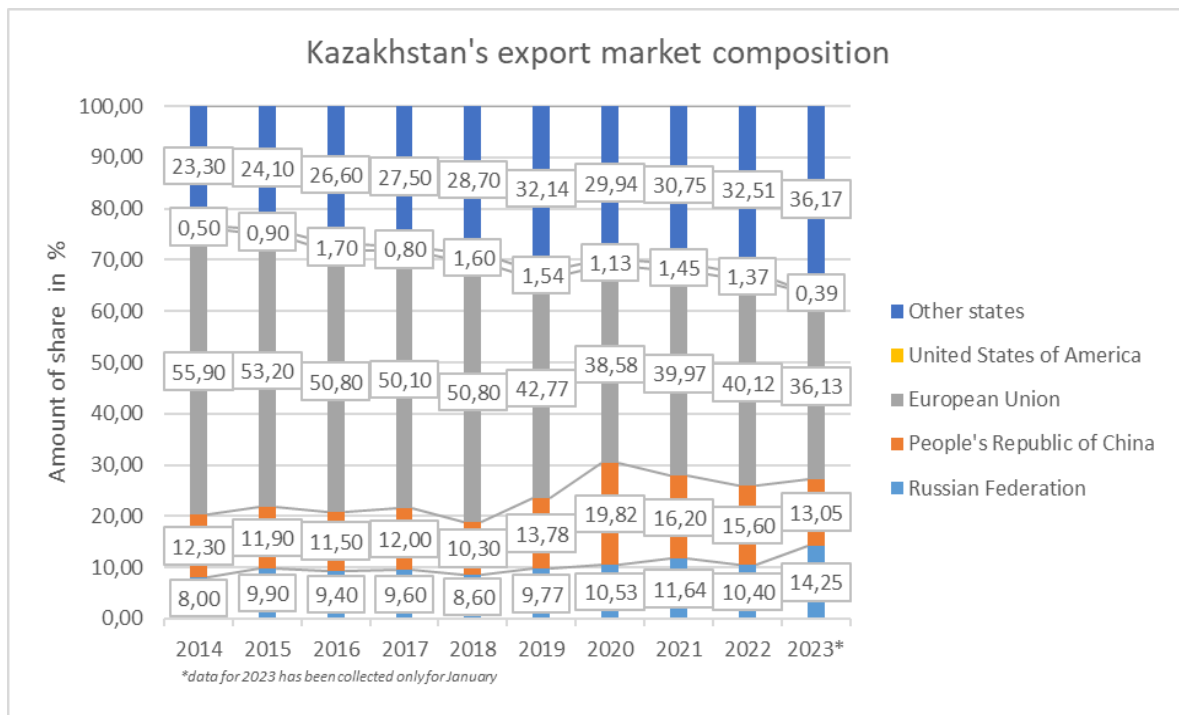
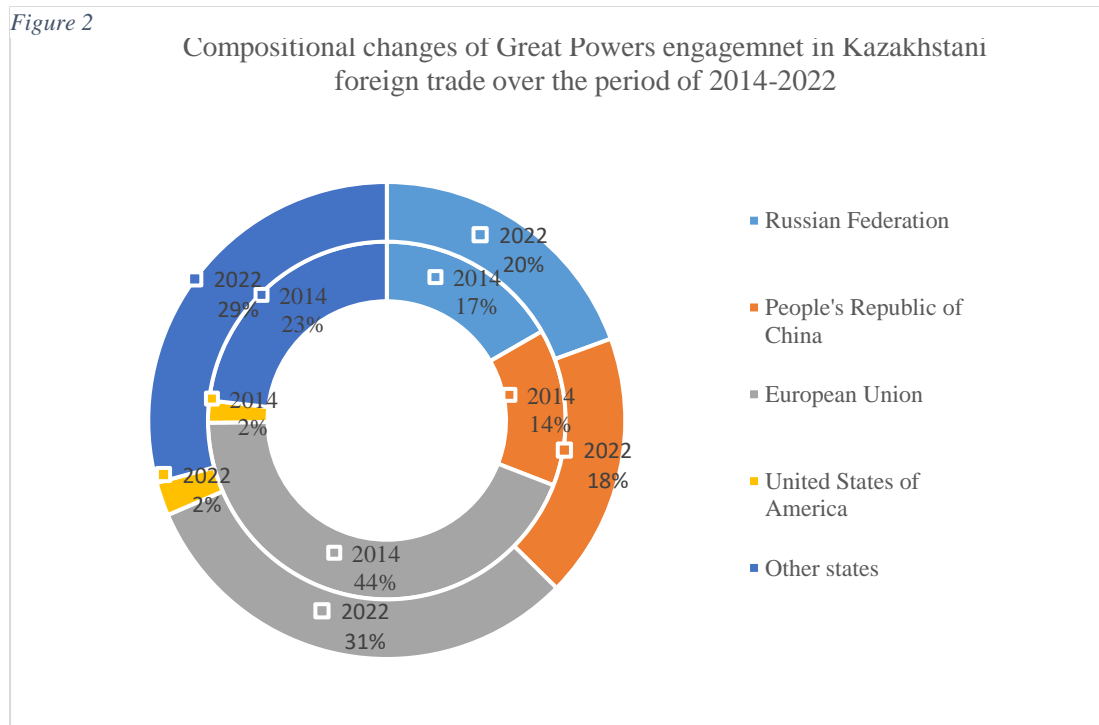


Figure 2



3.2 Targeting the Great Powers engagement in energy sector: the changes in FDI attraction vector

Foreign Direct Investment have become the driver for multi-vector policy development of Kazakh economic relations with foreign partners since the early 1990-s. Kazakh economic, strongly depended on partnership with Moscow due to the closed economic system in frame of Soviet bloc, had been challenged in frame of the need to reorganize its export market. For the rich in energy resources and metal but landlocked Kazakhstan, the Foreign Direct Investment became the fastest way to build new pipelines and diversify its energy resources market. Budget- and time-consuming processes of crude extraction, production and distribution in Kazakhstan based on the attraction of Foreign Direct Investments.

However, in light of the strengthening sanctioning policies, the Kazakh oil market also had the risk to be targeted by secondary sanctions. The majority of Kazakh oil production and exporting companies have the sanctioned Russian stakeholders share, as well as utilize the Caspian pipeline landed on the Russian territories. Considering the existing risks for the Kazakh energy sector, this chapter seeks to identify changes in this area of multi-vector strategy implication, tracing the trends in volume and compositional changes of Foreign Direct Investment attraction in the key economic sector – crude extraction and distribution.

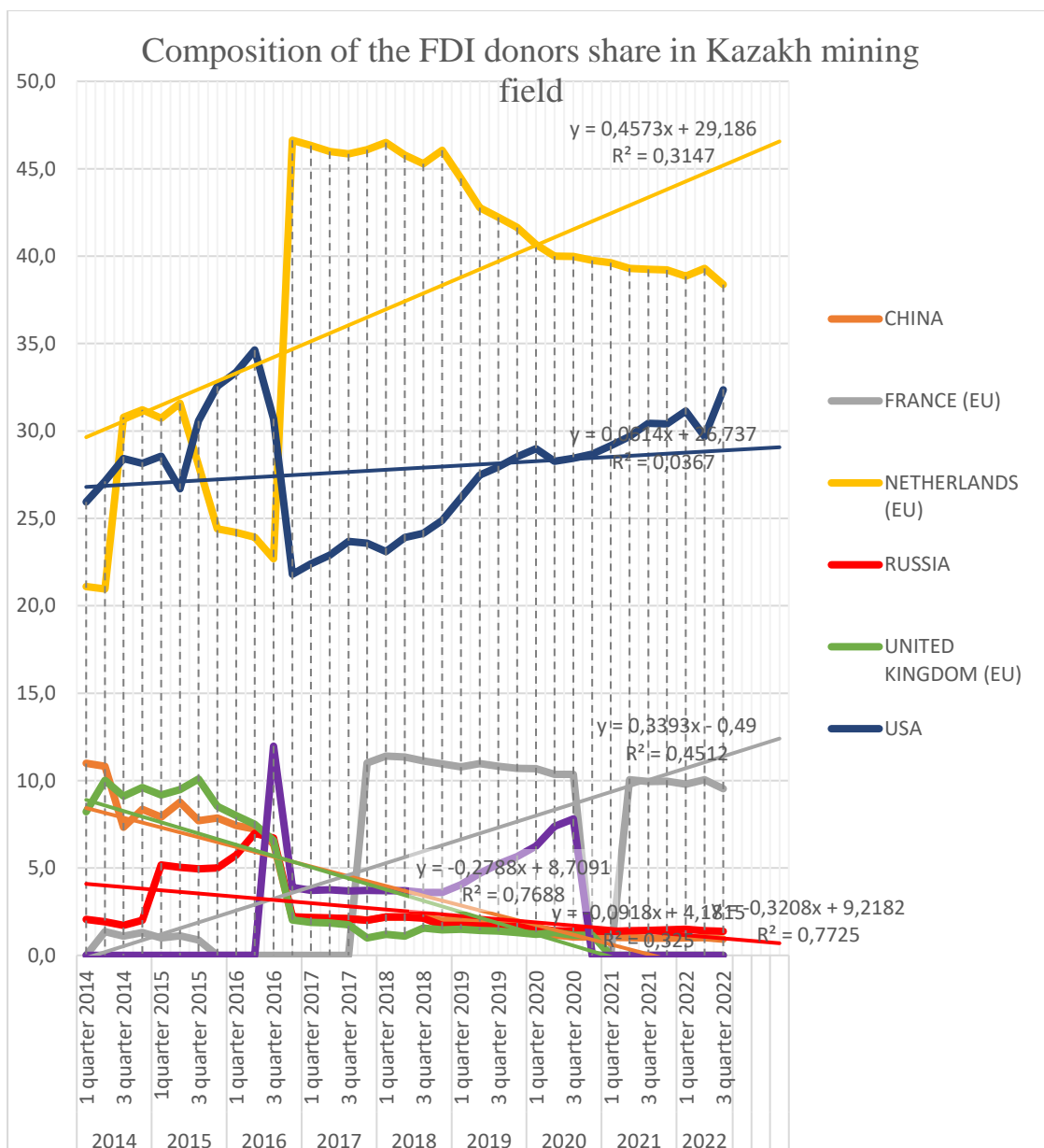


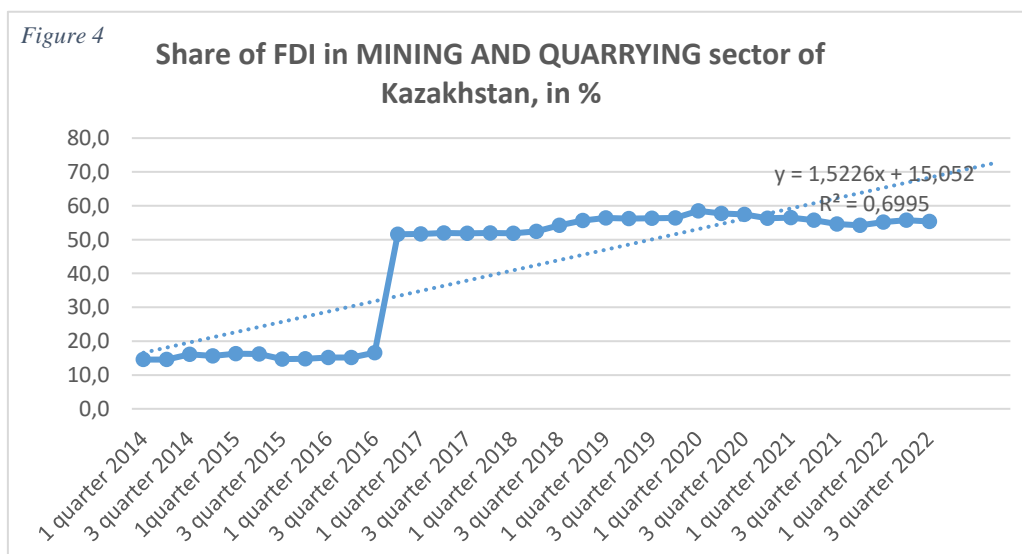
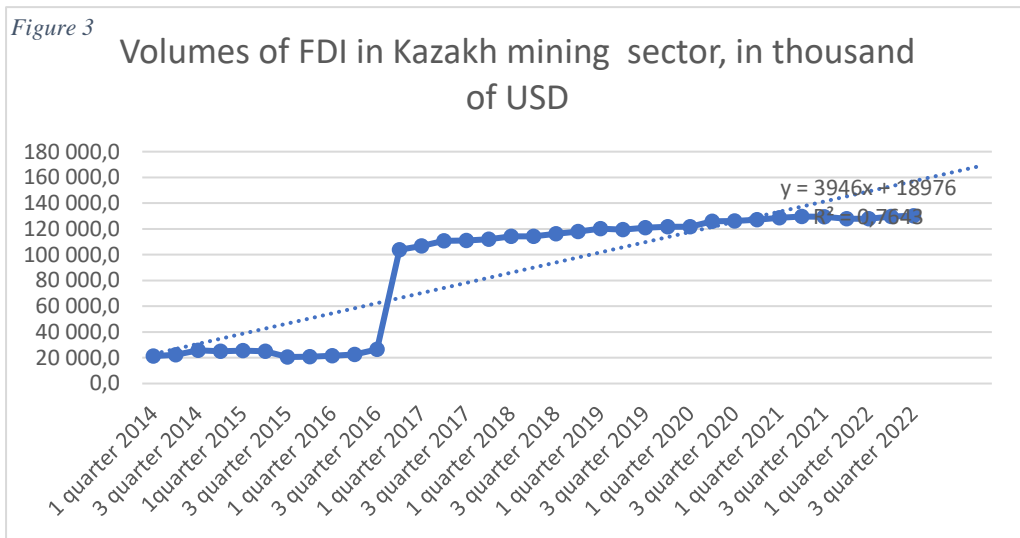
Table 1

Kazakhstan's crude mining and quarrying sector stay attractive for FDI donors despite its high connectivity with Russia. Giants of Kazakh crude mining – TengizChevroil, Karachaganak Petroleum Operating (KPO), North Caspian Operating Company (NCOC), and AktobeMunaiGas are performing joint ventures with the diversified composition of private and governmental companies originating from different countries. (Kubaeva & Central Asian Bureau for Analytical Reports [CABAR], 2020) Two of them – TengizChevroil, and Karachaganak Petroleum Operating (KPO) – still stay under the risk of sanctions since their affiliation with Russian-sanctioned companies – Gazprom Neft, LUKOIL, and Rosneft.

Sharp growth in 2016 is not an unexpected or surprising shift, but the logical outcome of the Brent price reanimation and positive prognoses for the hydrocarbon market prices.

However, the puzzling question is the stability of indicators **in the period of 2016-2022**, despite the oil prices instability. Two leaders of the Kazakh crude sector's FDI – the Netherlands and the USA are acting differently. Meanwhile, the Dutch companies are cutting their share in the Kazakh mining field, the USA ExxonMobil, Chevron, and Shell increasing their investments in long-term mining projects (Fakhrutdinov, A.,2023) This trend has the compensatory effect for the Kazakh oil market, and, at the same me, illustrates the benefits of its multi-vector approach in practice.

Russian and Chinese investments in the crude mining area had been always comparatively lower, but their engagement became almost three times less, than it was before 2014. Therefore, the strategy of indirect balancing of Great Powers composition in FDI attraction in the crude mining field, despite its crucial importance for the Kazakh budget (70% of export income), is quite asymmetrically balanced and highly depends on the partnership with the US and the EU.



IV. Multivectorism as the mechanism and tool for regional security management

4.1 Kazakhstan in the net of security and military cooperation

Regional security is another traditional dimension of Kazakh multi-vector strategy implication. Located in the volatile Central Asian region, which was infamous for the spread of extremism, terrorism, and transnational crime in the 1990-s – early 2000-s, Kazakhstan aimed to fight regional threats by engaging the diversity of players under the common security agenda.

Since the early years of its independence, the push strategy of the Great Powers' engagement in the Central Asian security agenda had notable success. During the period of the late 1990-s – early 2000-s, the newly established and sovereign states started to create and improve mechanisms of regional security cooperation, and Kazakhstan had been situated in the net of bilateral and multilateral agreements targeting different types of local and global security issues (Contessi, 2015)

The geography of the Republic security partnership spread behind the space of the Eurasian continent and engaged NATO in the orbit of Kazakhstan foreign policy in 1995. (Starr, 2022) Therefore, in parallel with the building of a common security system with former Soviet Republics, Kazakhstan put its efforts to direct the net of cooperation towards the «Western» vector – the NATO alliance.

Therefore, the map of the security cooperations and partnerships of Kazakhstan is broad and covers all selected Great Powers. Including military, defense, and security cooperations, regional dialogues, and multi-national forums – the Kazakh diplomatic approach keeps the highly diversified typology of partnerships. (*Table 5*)

Pro-realist IR theories presents Kazakh multivectorism in the security field in favor of a zero-sum game or geopolitical logic, assessing the implication of the multivectorism not only with the purpose to stabilize regional security but also with the motive to manage the contractionary interests of Great Powers. (Bakhtiyarova & Avcu, 2022) Therefore the Kazakh multi-vector strategies in the security area also imply the strategies of enmeshing states in cooperation or balancing their military and strategic presence in Central Asia (Kazantsev et al, 2021)

In the frame of the research puzzle, this Chapter addresses the Great Powers' engagement in military and security partnership with Kazakhstan and evaluates the implication

of the state-level omni-enmeshing and indirect balancing approaches towards selected actors in the period of 2014-2022. Collecting the data on Kazakhstan's participation in security organizations and agreements with Great Powers, and comparing their composition, functions, and activities, an analysis will focus on the de-facto presence of selected Powers in the region, as well as discuss the qualitative aspect – of the format of cooperation and the prospects its development and stability, considering the changes in recent years.

Existing research of the Central Asian security system concludes the Russian dominance over the other Great Powers in the region. The only military alliance including Kazakhstan is CSTO, informally led by Russia. Discussions over the cohesion inside of the organization in recent years, connected with the decline in support of Kyrgyzstan and Armenia in the period of mass anti-regime protests and the lack of solidarity of alliance members regarding the situation in Ukraine (Buranelli, 2022). raises questions over the unity and effectivity of alliance. However, tracing the Kazakh activity in the frame of the alliance, the role of the CSTO in the Kazakh security system, and the development of coordination of collective military forces seems to be significant.

Kazakhstan declares its active position within the CSTO framework and its contribution to the development of joint military forces. The creation of the Collective Rapid Reaction Force (CRRF) in 2009 and the development of the Collective Air Forces in 2015 are attributed to the initial proposals of Nursultan Nazarbayev. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2019) Moreover, Kazakhstan is the state, which is experienced the mechanisms of military support of alliance in practice during the mass protests in January 2022. This act was impressive not only in terms of the actions of collective security mechanisms but also interpreted as Moscow's willingness to support the regime under the leadership of the new President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. The decision to deploy CSTO troops in Kazakhstan was taken by the CSTO chair at the moment – Armenia, so the assessment of the Russian influence, in this case, cannot be done unequivocally. However, what is noteworthy for the research puzzle – the position of Kazakhstan in the frame of the CSTO has not changed over the period of Russian confrontation with «Western» players. Cooperation with Russia also conducts in a frame of the expanding SCO, the geography of which is widened to Southern Asia, embedding India and Pakistan. Therefore, Russia keeps the major player in the Kazakhstan security partnerships.

The existence of the NATO-Kazakhstan partnership is assumed as the vector directed to balance Russian and Chinese performance in the Kazakh security landscape. (Chavasse, 2018)Over the past decade, the American presence in Central Asia has declined, while the

activities within organizations such as the CSTO and SCO have increased. Two reasons for such – the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan and the shift of the security focus of NATO to Southeast Asia are interrelated. (Shukurov, 2021). It is, in some sense, a paradoxical outcome of the USA-Chinese confrontation, forced to mobilize the focus of the alliance in the Southeast Asian partnership and reducing the military performance in Central Asia. (Shukurov, 2021) An attempt to recreate the NATO military basis in the region ended up on the Putin-Biden discussions in 2021 (Gordon, 2021)

Evaluation of the Great Powers' role in the Kazakh security field could be done from different perspectives. More Kazakhstan's military cooperation mechanisms, there is the weak indirect balancing strategy implications – partnership with NATO, joint peacekeeping practices, and military assistance in the doctrinal field limiting the Russian military hegemony via the CSTO alliance. NATO's presence in the Kazakh security landscape in the frame of the indirect balancing strategy is not seeking to create the classic balance of Powers, but to create a visible alteration existence to signalize the existing limits and borders for a dominant player (Goh, 2008)

Reviewing the regional security composition, the **consolidation of the Chinese-Russian Powers** in the frame of the SCO and CICA stays stable over the years, creating the solidarity and unity of the two regional Powers. Moreover, the last works on the Chinese Power performance in Central Asia and the regional leadership shared the similar view that China never had an interest in security domination or hegemony and prefer the way of economic influence and dominance throughout the BRI initiatives and bilateral cooperation. The role of the EU, as the single actor out of NATO, is also limited in a frame of normative, financial, and educational support for stabilizing the borders management (BOMCA) and creating an effective mechanism for drug traffic control. (CADAP)

Therefore, evaluating the multi-vector strategies implication in the field of bilateral and regional security cooperations and partnerships over the period of 2014-2022, the change in the Powers' presence has not been dramatical. There is a clear trend of the polarization of Powers, where the EU and USA engagement is separated from Russia and China's alienation in the security field. Staying in the area of Russian military influence and interests, Kazakhstan attempts to keep balancing elements of the NATO partnership, which is weakened due to the NATO troops' withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021.

4.2 Reflection over the realist rationale behind the Kazakhstan security-related goals

Kazakhstan announces a wide range of goals related to its role in the global security system – to become the regional leader, to legitimize its neutrality and «civilizational bridge» image in the field of international mediation, to achieve international prestige via active peacekeeping and denuclearization assistance. (Nazarbayev, 2018) Together with the purpose to become the regional and global financial and logistic hub, (Tokayev, 2020) the set of such goals is illustrating the main political ambition of Kazakhstan - to become a significant and essential player in international security and economic system.

The realist logic interprets such an attempt as the way to become an important element of the international security system, the sovereignty of independence which is in the interests of all international players. Therefore, the integration of the global international system is another mechanism of the securitization of Kazakh statehood from the hegemonic interests.

This logic of «getting such importance on the Global Stage to be too costly to lose» has never been openly announced or discussed in political speeches, but the common thread running through all speeches is the necessity of acquiring political weight in the international system.

The achievements in the posed aim via finishing the Establishment of the IAEA Low Enriched Uranium Bank in Oskemen in 2019, mediation in the establishment of de-escalation zones in Syria in 2017, negotiations conducted in the border disputes between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in 2020, and peacekeeping in Lebanon (UNIFIL), in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in South Sudan (UNMISS) demonstrates the sustainability of set goals despite trends of polarization in the global security system (Shukurov, 2021)

Omni-enmeshment of the regional major players under Kazakh leadership. The decrease of the Russian losses in military, economic, and financial areas during the period of full-scale war in Ukraine, the status of Russian regional dominance was damaged as well. An initiative to transform the CICA cooperation based in Astana into a full-fledged multifunctional organization that could alternate the SCO and CSTO due to the similarity of security and military purposes seems like the use of the strategic balance in Eurasia. Astana's Statement on CICA Transformation during the Sixth Meeting of the CICA Summit in October 2022 announced the «transformation of CICA into a full-fledged regional international organization». [CICA, 2022]

CICA transformation performs the higher diversification of the security partnership of the region, gives the leadership position to the founder – of Kazakhstan, and formalizes the

Turkish presence in the Central Asian security landscape. Since the plan was in the early beginning of its realization, it is quite difficult to evaluate the potential of the organization to become a strong and functional regional unit. However, such a step signalizes the Kazakh ambitions in Eurasia and creation of the new ways to approach the Great Powers' engagement in the regional security system.

Table 2. Kazakhstan engagement in regional security cooperations.

KAZAKHSTAN INVOLVED SECURITY AND DEFENCE COOPERATION	Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)	North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)	The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)	International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)	EU-Central Asia High Level Political and Security Dialogue	The Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA)
Type of cooperation	Political, economic, international security and defense organization	Political and military alliance	Intergovernmental military cooperation	Global Organization within the UN	Security-oriented intergovernmental organization	Annual high-level meetings	Multi-national forum (in the process of turning to security organization status)
Status	Membership	Partnership	Membership	Membership	Membership	Partnership	Membership
Legal foundation of Kazakhstan performance	Agreement on strengthening of measures of trust in military area around border (1996) Agreement on mutual reduction of armed forces around border (1997) SCO Charter (2002)	Document of the Partnership for Peace (PFP) (1994) In 2022, based on PFP, nest programs are held: An individual plan of action of partnership (IPAP) Process of planning and analysis (PAP) Individual Program of Partnership (IPP) Concept of operative potential (COP).	Based on the Collective Security Treaty (1992)	The Agreement between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the IAEA (S. Tereshchenko-K. Bliks) <i>(Ratified in 1995)</i>	The Helsinki Accords (1975) Paris Charter (1990) <i>(Signed and ratified by Kazakhstan in 1992)</i>	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with CA countries EU strategies towards CA	Declaration on the Principles Guiding Relations between the CICA Member States (1999)
Period of participation	since 2001	since 1994	since 2002	since 1994	since 1992	since 2004	since 1999
Number of members	8 member states	NATO (31) + Kazakhstan	6 member states	186 signed/ 177 ratified	57 members	EU (27) +CA (5)	28 members
Selected Powers in Composition	Russian Federation, People's Republic of China,	USA & 22 EU countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain)	Russian Federation	Russian Federation, 15 EU countries (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Romania Slovakia, Spain, and Sweden)	Russian Federation, EU, USA	EU	Russian Federation, People's Republic of China

<p>Functions and activities in the period of 2014-2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintaining peace, stability, and safety in the region development of economic and humanitarian cooperation. joint anti-terrorist exercises conducting joint operations on the external and internal border control Annual RATS International Scientific and Practical Conferences holding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of transparency in processes of military planning and formation of the military budget ensuring democratic control over Armed forces maintenance of potential and fighting capacity of forces for entering of its contribution into operations under the aegis of the United Nations and/or under the direction of NATO joint planning of educational combat training and carrying out doctrines to increase ability to carry out peacekeeping and humanitarian, operations. creation of forces which are capable to cooperate with forces of NATO in the long term. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rapid Reaction Force (CRRF) collective arm forces establishment and systematic development Collective air forces peacekeeping forces joint exercises special purpose units of law enforcement bodies and special services, emergency situations agencies practice of combat coordination mechanisms on a scheduled basis Member States carry out various joint military exercises of operational and preventive operations to counter drug trafficking, illegal migration and crimes «Channel», «Illegal» and «PROXY». 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical cooperation program – national projects in the field of nuclear knowledge management Establishment of the department of nuclear medicine in No 2 East Kazakhstan oncological center Support of modernization and transfer from the BWR to low enriched uranium fuel and support of radio-environmental monitoring. Establishment of the IAEA Low Enriched Uranium Bank Completing denuclearization processes Kazakhstan participates in implementation of almost 50 regional and interregional projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The OSCE Programme Office in Astana works on security issues, including arms control. border management. the fight against terrorism; trafficking in human beings, arms and drugs. focus on economic and environmental topics; human rights and rule of law issues; and media freedom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the EU Strategy priorities for Central Asia and coordination of EU projects realization and its further perspectives. In the area of security, two projects are run: CADAP and BOMCA BOMCA- The Border Management Programme in Central Asia is aimed at increasing security and stability in the region by fostering sustainable economic development through integrated border management. The current phase will also support cross-border cooperation and seek to improve living conditions for people residing in the border areas of Central Asia. CADAP - Central Asia Drug Action Program - is an initiative of the European Union to promote the development of effective drug demand reduction policies in Central Asian countries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinated implications of measures in military-political, economic, environmental field. development of secure and effective systems of transportation corridors; combating illicit drugs; natural disaster management; information technology; energy security development of small and medium enterprises; tourism, agriculture, finance and sustainable development.
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V. Conclusion

Aiming to identify the impact of the Great Powers confrontation on the traditional Kazakhstani multi-vector approach, this research traced changes in strategies towards the Great Powers from the perspective of indirect balancing and omni-enmeshment.

Inspired by question of «*How does the escalation of the Great Powers conflict impact the multi-vector policy of the Middle Powers?*» research performs the case study of the Kazakhstan multivectorism, analyzing the quantitative changes in the field of trade and investment attraction and qualitative changes in long-term policy-defining strategies and regional security landscape. Results of measures and analysis outlines will be discussed in frame discussing the Hypothesis justifications.

Narrative analysis on foreign policy priorities and principles over the period of 2012-2022. The cornerstone of the Kazakh multivectorism – pragmatic approach of the relationship building oriented only in criteria of mutually beneficial cooperation is letting Kazakhstan to stay out of the political and strategic quarrels between its partners.

Out of any ideological or value-oriented logic in foreign policy conduct, Kazakhstan claims the need to respect international law and contribute to the functionality of the UN in maintaining global peace, security, and development. Therefore, Kazakhstan assesses the Great Powers confrontation as challenge for global stability and Kazakhstani prosperity. The pragmatism of the Kazakh policy in practice is not just a rhetorical façade utilized to create room for leverage between threats and perspectives, but it is the fundamental guiding principle reflecting the technocratic mindset of the current Kazakhstan government. It realizes in the will to cooperate in economic, financial, infrastructural and security areas, but the negative attitude towards the potential external influence or assistance in case of the Kazakh internal institutions-development or social policies.

Solidarity in such a position became a factor in the comparatively more successful dynamic of the Chinese vector in Kazakhstan foreign policy. Kazakhstan's Concept on Foreign Policy issued in 2020 prioritizes only relations with China in favor of a comprehensive strategic partnership, meanwhile the relation with other partners is fragmented to cooperation in sectoral format. (Concept on Foreign Policy, 2020)

The narratives on the security and economic challenges grown by the polarization of the international system began to be widely used in political rhetoric before the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and the imposition of hard-sanctions regime. The increase of the narratives related to the implication of different types of diplomacy («*parlamentskaya*» «*gumanitarnaya*», «*torgovaya*», «*narodnaya*») reflects the state will to activate all peaceful cooperative mechanisms against the backdrop of the Great Powers' shift to diplomacy channels cut.

The mention of policies and priorities over Great Powers has been reduced. The number of narratives related to interaction through regional and global organizations contextually prevail over bilateral approaches. Therefore, addressing the question of the changes of Kazakh multi-vector approaches towards Great Powers in the period of 2014-2022, we could say that the *Hypothesis 1*:

« *Escalation of conflict between the Great Powers forced their partner- Middle Power to revise its traditional tools and instruments of the multi-vector foreign relations-building.* »

is not justified. However, we should add that even if the tools of diversification and balancing of foreign partners stays the same, there is the turn to politization of the «pragmatic» and countable, income-oriented logic. The narratives over diplomacy, security and stability, as well as the need in Central Asia cooperation and «regional leadership responsibility» are increasing since 2020 demonstrates the change of the drivers and motives of the multi-vector approach.

Indirect balancing of Great Powers in economic cooperation with Kazakhstan: FDI and trade dynamics. The role of the Great Powers, as the key trade partners, are still the same – Russia, China and the EU stay the three major trade partners of Kazakhstan. As the quantitative measures shows, compositionally, collective share of these three trade partners declined only for 6.4%. The Powers balancing dynamic has been shifted considerably. The dynamics of economic relations between the European Union and Kazakhstan have shown regular fluctuations, and by 2022, the trade turnover had decreased by 15% compared to its pre-war level. Contrary to the EU, another two Great Powers – Russia and China – shows stable increasing demand in trade with Kazakhstan. *Hypothesis 2*:

«*Kazakh pragmatism and neutrality in foreign policy could gain from EU-Russia tensions, making Kazakh market alternative of the EU exporters for Russia and replacing Russian gas and oil suppliers for European buyers.* »

is justified partially.

The correlation is explained by the fact that the EU has not yet stopped buying energy resources from Russia and start alternate the export of crude from Middle East. Compositional decrease of the Kazakh export to EU market is not connected with decrease on demand or alternating the Kazakh goods and services by different, but the overall increase of the Kazakh foreign trade with new players.

While the share of the American market in Kazakh trade turnover is extremely small, it is key to investment issues in Kazakhstan's main product and the basis of its exports – energy resources. This research is limited to a review of direct investments in the crude mining and quarrying sector, as this category currently accounts for more than 80% of all investments in Kazakhstan. The United States and the Netherlands are donors of more than two-thirds of all investments in energy sources extraction. In the first quarter of 2017 two sharp changes happen – Netherlands cut their direct investments meanwhile the USA company increased. Thus, the *Hypothesis 3*:

«High connectivity with Russia in the field of crude mining and its export logistics will affect the FDI attractiveness of Kazakh energy industry for investors from EU and The US.» is not justified. Indicators change over time shows the contrary dynamic – the overall FDI sum of the USA and Netherlands are increased in 8,5 and 8,7 times consequently.

According to the Kazakh attraction of Great Powers in the investment fields, the USA and Netherlands keep playing a vital role in investments in energy sources and metals extraction area of Kazakhstan. The field of FDI is also engaging Russian and Chinese investments, but their input is minor, and during the period of 2014-2022 the sum of their investments decreased almost twice and in total performing less than 5% of the compositions of FDI in Kazakh mining and quarrying sector.

Regional security – another key dimension of Kazakh foreign policy. The analysis of the Kazakhstan-included bilateral and multilateral partnerships and cooperation in military and defense justifies illustrates that the regional security vector of Kazakh foreign policy stays the most imbalanced area from the perspectives of Great Powers composition. The changes in the period of 2014- 2022 shows the geographical expansion of SCO and military development of the CSTO which is usually accepted contrary to the NATO alliance. Bilateral partnership of Kazakhstan with NATO stays the only indirect balancing element of Russian military primacy in Central Asia during the period of the Great Powers conflict development. However, the Kazakh declaration of the CICA forum transformation into the full-fledged organization in 2020 supports the idea of the Kazakh multivectorism realization via implications of indirect balancing or omni-enmeshment strategies in the vital field of foreign policies.

The initiative of the reorganization of the 28 members including a forum to the organization for political, security and economic coordination and development with the central office in Astana could be assessed as the tool of the regional leadership legitimization. As CICA has official agreements with all active security organizations in Central Asia, it will be the geographically biggest and the most wide-ranging organization in frame of the scope of issues and cooperation areas among all existing organizations in Eurasia, except OSCE. However, the OSCE mechanisms does not function in terms of the security dialogue support and cooperation and effect Kazakh security via support in local level, dealing with issues related to the economics, environment, human rights, media freedom and rule of law issues.

In frame of the research concept on the Kazakh multivectorism realizes throughout of the indirect balancing and omni-enmeshment strategies addressing Great Powers, the CICA transformation could enmesh the ready-to-cooperate regional Powers under the common regional agenda. Therefore, it attempts to balance the Chinese and Russian influence by the presence of Turkey, India, and Israel, justifying the *Hypothesis 4*:

∴ «To avoid the increase of Russian military dominance in Central Asia, Kazakhstan will push the omni-enmeshment strategies in regional cooperation, strategically diversifying and balancing Russian dominance throughout bilateral and multilateral security partnerships with third parties. »

Nazarbayev was the first one advocating the need of the CIS and pushing an idea on Eurasian economic integration in 1990-s and offering the creation of the Rapid Reaction Force (CRRF), collective arm forces, and collective air forces in the frame of the CSTO. Promotion of the different type of cooperation mechanisms of the regional level is also a traditional pattern of Kazakhstan's foreign policy. There are already existing similar cooperative mechanisms in Eurasia targeting the same area of issues. Creating an analogical, but bigger organization with central office in Astana could be interpreted as tool of legitimatizing the status of Kazakhstan leadership in the region.

Besides the findings directly addressing the Hypothesis, there are a couple of outcomes which could enrich the understanding of the Great Powers balancing in the Kazakh foreign policy.

The sectoral domination of each selected Great Power in specific area of Kazakh foreign policy. During the period of 2014-2022, the European Union continued to represent Kazakhstan's largest trading partner, Russia remained the most influential leader in the field of regional security, and European and American businesses lead direct investment of the Kazakh crude mining field. While this study does not examine investments in infrastructure and the development of logistics routes, recent analytics indicate China's dominant role due to its policy of localizing Chinese production in Kazakhstan and implementing the Silk Road transportation route through Kazakhstan.

However, the scale of engagement of Major Powers has changed. Chinese involvement in Kazakhstan's foreign trade is gradually increasing despite the global economic market fluctuations due to global oil price shocks and the economic downturn during the COVID-2019 pandemic period. Russia maintains its key positions in regional security, as do Dutch and American direct investments in the mining and quarrying industry. Meanwhile the EU-Kazakhstan relations demonstrate a high sensitivity to the global market challenges.

Recommendations for further research. Recent geopolitical shifts in Eurasia have reignited the interest of international relations scholars in researching Central Asian states and the regional landscape through a realist lens. As the long-term confrontation between Kazakhstan's key partners evolves into a political, economic, and strategic clash, this ongoing process has potential to affect the traditional policies of Secondary Powers. However, the thesis did not address the development of Eurasian economic integration organizations during the selected period, which could serve as a starting point for tracing changes caused by sanctions and potential shifts in the export market for traditional partners, including Kazakhstan.

Kazakh's long-term priorities outlined in Strategies «Kazakhstan-2025» and Kazakhstan-2050 aim to concentrate efforts on developing infrastructure, logistics, and high-tech industries. As China is a key investor in these sectors, its presence and influence in Kazakhstan will likely increase. Further research could narrow its focus to examine the limits and perspectives of multi-vector tools employed in these newly prioritized areas.

The regional cooperation initiatives within the C5+ format have undergone significant shifts, which have caught the attention of researchers due to their potential implications for Kazakhstan's foreign policy. The C5+ format has traditionally been a key platform for Kazakhstan's dialogue with the European Union, and it has also become a new tool for maintaining relations with the United States since 2019. Mention of this format of cooperation has increased since 2018, possibly due to the new leadership in Uzbekistan under Shavkat Mirziyoyev, who is more open to regional integration. Future studies may explore the prospects for the development of Kazakhstan's foreign policy through C5+ and the extent to which integration with neighboring countries contributes to strengthening and diversifying Kazakhstan's diplomatic relations.

Recent publications on Kazakhstan's multivector policy have highlighted Turkey as a new direction for cultural cooperation, but attention to narratives about specific countries has not necessarily increased. Future research on Kazakhstan's multivector policy could examine the ideas of pan-Turkism and confirm or refute Turkey's growing role in Kazakhstan's politics.

The frequent references to other Asian states, such as Singapore and Malaysia, in Kazakhstan's official documents and the use of long-term goal-setting strategies similar to China's and Singapore's official strategies («Kazakhstan-2025» and «Kazakhstan -2050») - suggest the possibility of Kazakhstan seeking to copy and apply the diplomatic and political patterns of its Southeast Asian neighbors.

The transformation of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) under the leadership of Kazakhstan is another potential area of research. Invitation of new players in the Central Asian security landscape has the perspective of diversification of Russian strategic primacy in the region. The processes of CICA institutionalization and the perspective of stronger cooperation between Kazakhstan and Southeast Asian states, Turkey and Israel also could become the new area of further research.

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