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*Т.С. Özer \*<sup>1</sup>*

*<sup>1</sup>Master's Student of the Department of Public Administration and International Relations,  
Khoja Akhmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University.  
E-mail:aidarbek.amirbek@gmail.com*

## INTEGRATION PROCESS AND EURASIANISM IN KAZAKHSTAN FOREIGN POLICY

### *Abstract*

The Republic of Kazakhstan, which gained its independence with the collapse of the bipolar world order, faced many economic and national security problems. Since the first day of its independence, it has tried to solve these problems with integration movements. On the one hand, Kazakhstan pioneered the establishment of some organizations in order to implement its own foreign policy objectives in the region, on the other hand, it actively participated in the organizations established based on keeping Russia and China on an equal footing. Thus, the balanced multi-dimensional foreign policy of Kazakhstan in order to survive as an independent state was also reflected in the regional integration movements. In the research, the integration process in Kazakhstan's foreign policy will be examined and some important problems in the context of national security will be discussed.

**Keywords:** Foreign Policy, Integration, Eurasianism, Actor, Diplomacy, National Security, Eurasian Economic Union.

*Т.С. Өзер \*<sup>1</sup>*

*<sup>1</sup>Қ.А. Ясауи атындағы Халықаралық қазақ-түрік университеті,  
Мемлекеттік басқару және халықаралық қатынастар кафедрасының магистранты.  
E-mail:aidarbek.amirbek@gmail.com*

## ЕУРАЗИЯШЫЛДЫҚ АҒЫМЫ ЖӘНЕ ҚАЗАҚСТАН РЕСПУБЛИКАСЫНЫҢ ЕУРАЗИЯДАҒЫ ИНТЕГРАЦИЯЛЫҚ ҮДЕРІСТЕРДЕГІ РӨЛІ

### *Аңдатпа*

Биполярлық әлемдік тәртіптің ыдырауымен тәуелсіздік алған Қазақстан Республикасы экономика мен ұлттық қауіпсіздік саласында көптеген мәселелерге тап болды. Тәуелсіздіктің алғашқы күнінен бастап интеграциялық қозғалыстардың көмегімен бұл мәселелерді шешуге тырысты. Бір жағынан, Қазақстан аймақта өзінің сыртқы саяси міндеттерін жүзеге асыру үшін бірқатар ұйымдарды құрудың бастамашысы болса, екінші жағынан, Ресей мен Қытай арасындағы күштер тепе-теңдігін сақтау негізінде құрылған ұйымдарға белсенді түрде қатысты. Осылайша, Қазақстанның тәуелсіз мемлекет ретінде күшеюге бағытталған теңгерімді көпқырлы сыртқы саясаты аймақтық интеграциялық қозғалыстарда көрініс тапты. Мақалада Қазақстанның сыртқы саясатындағы интеграциялық үдерістерді зерттеп, ұлттық қауіпсіздік контекстіндегі кейбір маңызды мәселелер зерттелді.

**Түйін сөздер:** Сыртқы саясат, интеграция, Еуразияшылдық, актор, дипломатия, ұлттық қауіпсіздік, Еуразиялық экономикалық одақ.

*Т.С. Өзер \*<sup>1</sup>*

*<sup>1</sup>Международный казахско-турецкий университет имени Ходжи  
Ахмеда Ясауи, Магистрант кафедры Государственного управление и международные отношения.  
E-mail:aidarbek.amirbek@gmail.com*

## ЕВРАЗИЙСТВО И РОЛЬ РЕСПУБЛИКИ КАЗАХСТАН В ИНТЕГРАЦИОННЫХ ПРОЦЕССАХ В ЕВРАЗИИ

*Аннотация*

Республика Казахстан, получившая независимость с распадом биполярного миропорядка, столкнулась с множеством проблем в области экономики и национальной безопасности. С первого дня своей независимости она пыталась решить эти проблемы с помощью интеграционных движений. С одной стороны, Казахстан был инициатором создания ряда организаций для реализации собственных внешнеполитических задач в регионе, с другой – активно участвовал в организациях, созданных на основе сохранения баланса сил России и Китая. Таким образом, взвешенная многоплановая внешняя политика Казахстана с целью выживания в качестве независимого государства нашла свое отражение и в региональных интеграционных движениях. В исследовании будут рассмотрены интеграционные процессы во внешней политике Казахстана и обсуждены некоторые важные проблемы в контексте национальной безопасности.

**Ключевые слова:** Внешняя политика, интеграция, Евразийство, актор, дипломатия, национальная безопасность, Евразийский экономический союз.

**Introduction.** Today, every state has to live by developing friendly relations with other states. The establishment of such relations has become the most important principle of international politics. Because XXI. In this century, states are more interdependent and more interlocked than in past centuries. Therefore, any turmoil that may occur in a state will inevitably affect other neighboring states. Being aware of this, the world states are trying to resolve conflicts or regional problems among themselves by coming together with integration movements within the framework of international cooperation. For this reason, we witness that they apply to regional cooperation and integration movements in all areas of the world.

On the other hand, no matter how diverse the direction and purpose of international cooperation based on integration movements, it cannot be ignored that states' political goals and interests are at the center of all integration movements. In this context, when we look at the practice, states try to provide their national security and interests, which they cannot provide alone, by combining with other states that share the same purpose and interest. In other words, integration movements have become an integral part of international politics.

When we look at the integration process in terms of Kazakhstan's foreign policy, we see that it plays an important role in both achieving economic goals and solving security problems. As a matter of fact, since the first day of independence, Kazakhstan has formed its foreign policy according to the strategy of "stability first and then politics" and has paid attention to participate in security-based integration movements in order to protect its stability and economic development from all kinds of threats from the external environment.

In addition, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, a political vacuum has emerged in the region and as a natural consequence of this, many factors that threaten regional stability and security have emerged. These are, respectively, water consumption and using regional rivers, supplying electricity needs, restructuring transportation and communication links, using regional states as transit, solving border problems of neighboring states, differences in the level of economic development of regional states, customs issues, difficulty in visa and border crossing permission. These are the undeveloped transportation infrastructure, the poor living of the people due to the weakness of the economy of some regional states, the spread of drugs, terrorism and fundamentalist movements, the collapse of agricultural production and industry, the continual brain drain in the region and many ecological issues. All these problems were problems that needed to be solved by cooperation and integration of Kazakhstan and neighboring countries. As a matter of fact, we can say that all of the organizations established with the initiative of Kazakhstan were established for either economic or security purposes and were dedicated to solving the problems we listed above.

Kazakhstan, which has attracted the attention of the great powers with its rich oil and natural gas deposits since the day it gained its independence, has experienced some security concerns, first of all, in order to strengthen its new independence. First of all, the fact that there is still a substantial Russian population in the country and the idea of keeping the former Soviet area under its control as a requirement of Russia's "near environment policy" after 1993 were the factors that hindered the development of Kazakhstan as an independent state. On the other hand, the fact that China, which is trying to get stronger day by day, has plans to influence the region has left Kazakhstan in a difficult situation to a certain extent. In addition to all these, with the collapse of the USSR, the USA's participation as an active player in the region, which aspired to establish a Washington-centered unipolar world order, caused more competition in the Eurasian region, of which Kazakhstan is also a part. However, despite the homogeneous turmoil in the region, Kazakhstan is able to overcome the problems of ensuring the security of the country. With a balanced foreign policy and integration initiatives aimed at regional stability, it has been able to strengthen and maintain its independence. Its multi-faceted foreign policy did not originate from the personal wish of the Founding President Nursultan Nazarbayev, but from the geographical location of the country

and the geopolitical reality. As a matter of fact, the President of Kazakhstan Kasomjomart Tokayev described the situation of Kazakhstan choosing a path other than a balanced and multi-faceted foreign policy as being stuck in a single country or region as a serious blow to the national interest, and such a thing is unacceptable. declared that [1]. In this context, while developing friendly and balanced relations with the countries around it and the leading political and economic powers of the world has gained importance, the main aim has been to ensure national security, which we associate with the existence of a nation.

In this framework, Kazakhstan, which has acted with the concern of protecting its national security since the day it declared its independence, first of all, under the roof of the CIS, the first regional organization established in the former Soviet field, and later on, with the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the military organization of the CIS. While guaranteeing the support of the member states of the organization in case of an attack, it also made its membership accepted by many existing international organizations. Here, it should be underlined that it is remarkable that the idea of Eurasianism, which we see as directly related to the efforts for the activation and functionalization of the CIS, was brought to the agenda again by the Founding President Nursultan Nazarbaev in the foreign political platform and kept on the agenda.

**1. Geopolitical Position of Central Asia and National Security of Kazakhstan.** There is no doubt that one of the most important elements taken into account in defining a state's situation with respect to foreign policy is its geographic location or geopolitical structure. Geography is one of the unchanging and continuous elements that affect the external behavior of the state. Although modern technology has changed the political and economic importance of geographical features to some extent, the limitations imposed by geopolitical reasons on foreign policy continue to exist to a large extent [2].

We can explain geopolitics as the word meaning of geography's orientation to politics and the development it has undergone until today, taking into account the elements and boundaries adopted as a result of these developments: By examining world geography with its geographical structure and universal values, it is possible to act in power and political level throughout the world, region and country. style research. Geopolitics is a science that evaluates the power of a nation, international community or a region for the purpose of determining foreign policy, examines and evaluates the power center of the world, which was under its influence, and the powers in the region [3].

The change in the international conjuncture that emerged with the end of the cold war, in other words, the disappearance of the cold war balance based on the bipolar structure, has led to the emergence of large geopolitical and geoeconomic gaps spread over the north-south transition and connection roads of the Rimland belt in the East-West direction. . In the words of Zbigniew Brzezinski, a chess game has begun to be played in which the global priority struggle over Eurasia will continue, and the geo-politics of which importance increased with the end of the Cold War, and states such as China, Russia and Iran, which acted on the anti-US hegemony in the region, came to the fore as the main actors of this game. and the Central Asian states formed the stage of this game [4].

Apart from the economic interest that determines the new geopolitical role of Central Asia, there are energy and fuel resources, above all Kazakhstan oil and Turkmenistan natural gas. The construction of pipelines in the south and east directions from the oil and gas transporting regions of Central Asia will inevitably lead to serious geoeconomic and geostrategic consequences. The geopolitical position of Central Asia as a bridge connecting the East to the West will not only attract the attention of foreign countries, but will also bring along security issues and problems of the Central Asian states.

Security and peace conditions in Central Asia consist of four separate geopolitical stages: a) National; b) Regional, stability and political developments of all states within the borders of the region; c) The peaceful relations of the subregion, Central Asian states with neighboring countries; d) A multipolar world formed in line with the latest developments in global science and technology [4].

How Kazakhstan's national security was shaped as it became a new geopolitical area based on the competition of powerful states in the Central Asian region. In this context, it is important to investigate Kazakhstan's national security problems and how these problems are reflected in domestic politics. Even if it is not expressed openly, the problem of the Russian minority, the issue that China will need a geography to accommodate its large population in the long run, and the US policy in Central Asia, in a more general framework, is aimed at gaining control over resources of strategic value among the great powers in the region. policies are at the forefront of the concerns about the territorial integrity and national security of Kazakhstan.

It is stated in the National Security Law of 1999 that national security is one of the main conditions for the development of Kazakhstan as an independent state [5]. In the said law, what national security means and what kind of elements it contains are discussed . According to the law, the national security of the Republic of

Kazakhstan means the state of protection of the national interests of the country from real and potential threats. The national interests of the Republic of Kazakhstan are “the harmonization of the political, economic-economic, social and other needs of the Republic of Kazakhstan; ensuring the protection of the constitutional rights of citizens, the values of the Kazakh society, the fundamental institutions of the state depends on their realization”. The elements constituting national interests are included in the 3rd article of the said law, accompanied by 10 separate titles. These elements mean a great deal in terms of national security and the existence of the state, both within themselves and in relation to each other, because the said interests include the interests related to the basic elements that make up the state. In addition to the use of force and attacks against Kazakhstan, it is ignored that there may be activities aimed at changing the constitutional order, the unitary structure of the country, the territorial integrity of the country and the principle of inviolability of borders, and as a matter of fact, these issues are included in the fifth article of the National Security Law as factors that threaten national security. they receive. In this framework, since the main/final goal is the security of the state, the power factor comes into play as an important tool in ensuring the security of the state. First of all, the Kazakhstan administration has set the goal of attracting significant foreign investment to the country and bringing the country to an economic level by insisting on the open market economy in line with the need to increase its economic power, which is an important and inseparable element of the national power . The development of economic opportunities has gained importance not only to increase the welfare of its people, but also to increase the capacity of the state and to ensure national security.

On the other hand, the issue of when military force can be used to protect national interests is discussed in the Military Doctrine adopted in 2000, thus, it is revealed with the Military Doctrine that in case of threatening national interests and attacking the country, military force can be used and all national resources can be mobilized. In the Kazakh Military Doctrine of 2000, military conflicts are defined in three ways. Accordingly, low-intensity conflicts may be aimed at creating political instability within the country, fueling ethnic and religious conflicts, forcing the state to make political concessions, and spreading separatist ideas. Medium-intensity conflicts against Kazakhstan, on the other hand, are aimed at the country's defense and economic potential; occupying or controlling a particular part of the land; conflicts aimed at forcing the state to make significant political, economic and other concessions. Medium-intensity conflicts are military conflicts between states that do not have strong economic and military potential. High-intensity conflicts, on the other hand, have deep-rooted military-political purposes and are military-economically strong interstate conflicts.

**2. Eurasianism and Founding President Nursultan Nazarbayev's Idea of Eurasianism.** XX. to the world of thought of the Eurasian approach. It is possible to say that it entered the beginning of the century. The biggest reason for the emergence of Eurasian thought is the debate on the Russian Empire whether the Empire is Western or Eastern. Eurasianism is a way of thinking that emerged with analyzes focusing on Eurasian geography as a result of dealing with various branches of science and bringing the studies in these disciplines to an interdisciplinary structure.

While making these analyzes, the differences between Western Europe and the Russian Empire were presented in a comparative way. Studies carried out to bring Eurasian thought to a scientific and intellectual structure XX. Although it emerged at the beginning of the century, it was not discussed much because it was seen as contrary to official policy during the USSR period. Eurasian thought, which came to the fore as a cultural, economic and political approach in the former USSR geography after the collapse of the USSR, transforms into a geoeconomic and geopolitical approach within the global, political and economic structure, in other words, within the international relations system, and especially in the Russian Federation, Belarus. It is effective as a way of thinking and social identity in determining foreign policy in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Academics and writers who turned Eurasianism into a theory within a theoretical structure are intellectuals who had to continue their studies outside of this country because of their conflict with the communist regime after the establishment of the USSR. Therefore, Eurasianism is an ideological, social and political movement created by intellectual Russian immigrants who fled the country as a result of the 1917 socialist revolution. We can see Nikolay Trubetskoy (1890-1938) , Peter Savitski (1895-1968) , Georgyi Vernadski (1887-1973) as the founders of Classical Eurasianism theory. Trubetskoi, Savitski and Vernadski stated that the Russian Empire is a special geographical and cultural area in the world and this is called Eurasia. While making this evaluation, the difference between the West and the Russian Empire, in other words Eurasia, was constantly emphasized. While expressing this difference, the difference of cultural structure, understanding of nation and state organization from the West was highlighted.

While the general trend in the Soviet period was against Eurasianism (in fact, there are also views that argue that the USSR was a full Eurasian empire), one of the Soviet thinkers, Lev Gumilyov, of Tatar origin, also made



important contributions to the thought of Eurasianism. Gumilyov argued that Turkish and Mongolian peoples are closer friends of Russia than the British and French in Eurasia, which is composed of Slavic, Turkish and Mongolian peoples, which he defines as "super ethnos". Gumilev opposes Eurocentrism and claims that every European dreams of making their own culture universal by eliminating other cultures. Gumilyov stated that Russia should prefer the Eurasian Union instead of an alliance with the West, and emphasized that the said union is traditionally opposed to Catholic Europe, the Muslim South and China. Gumilyov's views, which he put forward in his works in the 1950s and 60s, had a great repercussion in the new Russia in the 1990s and formed one of the intellectual resources of the New Eurasianism, one of the new Russian geopolitical approaches.

Eurasian thought emerged in the former Soviet Republics after the collapse of the Soviet Union, not only as a cultural and intellectual action, but also as a political phenomenon and a foreign policy perspective that analyzes the international relations system. It is seen that Russia is at the center of neo-Eurasian thought. While Neo-Eurasians, like Classical Eurasians, act from cultural and geographical integrity, they try to place Eurasian thought as a geostrategic and geopolitical element in Russian foreign policy and international relations system as a fact and theoretical structure. Neo-Eurasian thought seems to be a theoretical and political phenomenon in Russia and some other CIS countries.

One of the most important representatives of the new Eurasian thought in Russia is Aleksandr Dugin, the President of the "International Eurasian Movement" whose center is in Moscow. While Dugin had a theoretical impact on the intellectual and political life of Russia, the person who tried to put this into practice the most was Yevgeni Primakov, who was once the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Intellectuals such as Oljas Süleymenov in Kazakhstan and Cengiz Aytmatov in Kyrgyzstan made efforts to establish the Eurasian mentality in the geography of Central Asia and brought it to the political platform.

Neo-Eurasians define themselves as a social, philosophical, scientific, geopolitical and cultural movement that was born at the end of the 1980s and today finds support in Russian geopolitics, the state structure, political parties and military institutions. For neo-Eurasians, the geopolitical and geoeconomic gap in the international relations system after the USSR is controlled by Atlantic and Western European liberalism. While it is revealed that the means of the political and cultural hegemony of the USA all over the world are technological and economic, and that this poses a great threat to both the international relations system in general and the Eurasian geography, it is emphasized that Eurasian thought should be put into practice.

Neo-Eurasianism, adhering to the Eurasian tradition and accepting that Russia has a unique identity and geopolitical position, takes a stand against US hegemony. Neo-Eurasians argue that the international system should be structured in a multipolar model, and they also emphasize that the "near environment" is of primary importance among the areas that Russia should prioritize.

The most rooted version of the neo-Eurasian movement was developed on the axis of the philosopher Aleksandr Dugin's work. Dugin said, "To achieve an EU-like strategic integration in the CIS axis, to develop this integration in the axis of *Moscow - Tehran - New Delhi - Beijing*, to realize Russia's exit to the warm seas within the framework of peace and friendship relations, to give priority to relations with European countries on the Western axis, and with Japan in the Pacific. points as active cooperation. While neo-Eurasianism takes the main concepts of classical Eurasianism as its theoretical basis, the criticisms against the Roman-Germanic civilization in the classics turned to hostility towards the USA, and this hostility formed the essence of Dugin's thoughts. While the word Roman-Germanic is not included in Neo-Eurasianism, concepts such as Atlantean culture and Anglo-Saxon world are frequently used.

"International Eurasian Movement", at the center of the area defined as Eurasia, today's Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) It has geography. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, there was a strategic vacuum and social, economic and political thought structures parallel to Western European and Atlanticist thought centers were influential in this area [6].

Dugin states that the main reason for the problems experienced in today's Eurasian geography is these parallel mindsets. claims to be rooted in cohesion ideologies. Neo-Eurasians, like classical Eurasians, suggest that they do not have the same social and political background as the West, and suggest integration around Eurasian identity. While such an integration idea is being put forward, an effort is made to create a common Eurasian nation with a sense of "we", by emphasizing the special conditions of Eurasia, based on the common aspects among the peoples of Eurasia. However, at the same time, the "Atlantic and the West" are marginalized because the social, political and economic problems experienced today are actually caused by the adoption of Western ideas. At this point, we can conclude that those who adopt Eurasianism are trying to build the "Eurasian Nation" not only from an internal phenomenon, but also through the "other".

The continuous disruption of an integration process within the framework of the CIS has led Russia to lead the establishment of different and narrower regional organizations to establish the Eurasian Union. This project, carried out under the leadership of Russia, finds a practical place in the international relations system with the "Eurasian Economic Community" (AveT) and in the military dimension with the "Collective Security Treaty Organization" (CSTO). It would not be correct to perceive Eurasianism as a right-wing or left-wing mindset. We can define Eurasianism as a dialogue and cooperation of Orthodox Christianity, Islam and Shamanic culture in the greater Eurasian geography, which also emphasizes spiritual values. For the formation of an economic and political union in the depth of Eurasia, an integrated structure can be formed by combining the leftist thought with the values of the Eurasian society. At this point, Continental Europe, Turkey, Iran, China and Latin America are seen as important Rimland areas for the global appreciation of Eurasianism.

**Conclusion.** The time when the elements of the Eurasian approach peaked in official politics was between January 1996 and May 1999, when Yevgeni Primakov was first the Foreign Affairs and then the Prime Minister. The Primakov Doctrine, which dominated foreign policy in this period, was essentially based on the preventive role of Russia against the unipolar international order under the control of only one power. In Primakov's various speeches, interviews, articles and press conferences, he classified the post-Cold War era world as the USA, Russia (together with the CIS countries), the European Union, China, Japan, ASEAN and Latin America. Despite its de facto dominant role in Primakov's worldview, the United States is not considered the sole superpower. In Primakov's multipolar system model, there is an effort to dilute the international power of the USA. The model envisages forming a counterpole by taking Iran as a partner to the Russian-Chinese strategic cooperation. Primakov argued that this cooperation could challenge the USA in the Gulf and in the Taiwan Strait. Primakov, who wanted Central Asia and the Caucasus to remain under the influence of Russia, supported the integration of the CIS countries with Russia, the alliance with Belarus, and advocated Russia's use of force in the former Soviet space.

It is seen that the Eurasian approach was a serious focus in the foreign policy of the Vladimir Putin administration from 1999 to September 11, 2001. However, it has been observed that the Putin administration, which entered the process of cooperation with the USA in certain areas after 9/11, pushed this rhetoric into the background or at least paid attention not to use it frequently. However, it is seen that neo-Eurasian intellectuals in Russia frequently include elements such as a unipolar world and opposition to US hegemony.

On the other hand, it can be said that in the post-Soviet countries, the most official interest in the concept of Eurasia and the idea of integration in this geography is seen in Kazakhstan. This is understandable given the country's geographic location (almost the center of Eurasia) and population structure. On the other hand, it can be thought that the interdependence with Russia in terms of economy and raw materials, as well as transportation and communication lines, prompted the other rulers of the country, especially the Founding President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev, to pursue close integration policies with the northern neighbor. Of course, among the motives here are the inherited socio-cultural affinity and contacts between the country's elites, which plays an important role.

However, although it is declared that the Founding President Nursultan Nazarbayev knows the thoughts of classical Eurasians such as P.Savitski, G.Vernadski and L.Gumilev well, it can be perceived that the Eurasianism ideas he put forward include practical purposes rather than being inspired by the theoretical background of the Eurasianism movement; This can be seen from the statements made and statements made during the aforementioned period. The founding President-President Nursultan Nazarbayev's persistence in expressing his thoughts with his Elbaşı qualification makes him different from other Neo-Eurasian thinkers. Perhaps for this reason, A.Dugin, one of the influential names of Neo-Eurasianism, even though he described Nazarbayev's project as pragmatic economic "Eurasianism" before [7], he did not even hesitate to publish a book that praised him highly [8].

Generally speaking, the Kazakhstan administration under the leadership of Nursultan Nazarbayev has been in favor of pursuing a policy towards not severing relations with the Russian Federation and neighboring countries, but rather developing them, since the beginning of the collapse of the soviets. Initially, the idea of economic integration among CIS members played a dominant role [9]. It is estimated that Eurasianism will be more influential in Kazakhstan's foreign policy in the coming period.

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