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A Spinning Top?
Kazakhstan's Multivectorism with other middle power states

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Abstract: Research surrounding the Republic of Kazakhstan foreign policy often assumes the state's capture by or capitulation to foreign forces, which lead to further conclusions regarding the extent of Kazakhstan's sovereignty. Similar claims have also abounded in other research focused upon middle power states – namely, that they do not execute their foreign policy on an independent basis or from endogenous stakeholders. The present thesis instead argues that the Republic of Kazakhstan's continued use of multivectorism between its partners, large and small, by identifying strategies commonly used with major powers in its treatment of middle and smaller powers. The study period covers the period of Kazakhstan's independent foreign policy from independence to roughly 2005, and it examines aspects of how its multivector strategy was used and evolved during that time. Through examination and coding of archival materials drawn from the National Archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan, multivectorism is demonstrated to be a prevailing force for the country's foreign policy and not a bellwether technique deployed against greater powers.

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To my wife, Liana, and my parents, James and Denise, always

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Kazakhstan's foreign policy and its relationship with other countries present an intriguing subject of analysis for scholars in the field of Central Asian studies and international relations. The country's unique position within the region gives rise to a range of challenges that have far-reaching implications for its development and strategic decision-making. These challenges stem from its geographical location, sandwiched between powerful neighboring states, as it could potentially lead to vulnerabilities and, plausibly, to a defensive posture. Additionally, the aftermath of the Soviet Union's dissolution left Kazakhstan and its neighboring countries grappling with weakened leadership structures and interdependencies, further complicating its historical trajectory.

Adding to the complexity is Kazakhstan's status as a major carbon exporter. This characteristic, in combination with Republic of Kazakhstan's geography and post-Soviet heritage, are commonly associated with conservative leadership and resistance to reform, and they together influence the country's decision-making processes. In this context, the concept of multivectorism emerges as a significant aspect of Kazakhstan's foreign policy approach. While multivectorism is often discussed in relation to its engagement with major powers, it is essential to examine Kazakhstan's interactions with middle powers during the early years of its independence, as these engagements also shaped its strategic outlook and international decision-making framework.

Understanding Kazakhstan's engagement with middle powers allows for a deeper comprehension of the factors influencing its foreign policy decisions and sheds light on its nuanced approach to multivectorism. By exploring the dynamics of Kazakhstan's relationships with middle powers, we gain insights into the country's strategies for navigating the complex web of international relations. This analysis provides valuable perspectives on the challenges faced by Kazakhstan and the strategies it employs to maintain a diversified and independent foreign policy.

Examining the intricacies of Kazakhstan's foreign policy and its interactions with middle powers contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the country's position within the global arena. It offers valuable insights into the motivations and aspirations that shape Kazakhstan's diplomatic engagements, shedding light on its efforts to balance various interests and maximize its agency in international affairs. By delving into these complexities, we gain a deeper appreciation for the dynamics of Kazakhstan's foreign policy and its significance in the broader context of Central Asia and international relations theory, which allows us to investigate how Kazakhstan related to other middle powers from independence to 2005, and how the strategy evolved during its early years.

Chapter 2: Middle Powers and Multivectorism

The middle power is a contested subject between specialist disciplines. Military power, a classic aspect of 20th century geopolitics, is recognized as one of many areas that signally define state power. In contemporary parlance and literature, however, the middle power may draw upon numerous forms of contextual strength in order to embolden their claims to influence in the international system. The “middle power,” while rhetorically simple, is thus difficult to conceptualize in a manner that fits all parties’ needs. Such designations, when adopted in world institutions, have legitimated privileges to a motley group of states whose power and authority do not reliably accord with one another, let alone the expectations of the order’s major powers. Indeed, the concept is so flexible and malleable that it may even be called circular in its search to self-represent the odd condition, with one commentator noting that “a country’s middle power status is determined by middle power behaviours, and middle power behaviours by middle power status.”¹ This is to say that investigators’ questions frequently both define and answer their definition of middle powers, but they do not establish initial or final proofs widely accepted by all. Therefore, what constitutes a middle power (MP)? Why explicitly is Kazakhstan regarded as a middle power, and how does this matter in relation to multivector strategies?

A quick history of the MP

As a conceptual form and geopolitical reality, middle powers have a pedigree that stretches prior to the 19th century. During the 16th century, second order powers to great states were held to exist in two classes. The dominant class of these early MPs worked as stakeholders for their powerful partners. They also worked as occasional raiders, lieutenants, or intermediaries with their patrons’ mutual adversaries. However, by the 18th century, international law still did not take MPs

¹ Jeong, “Critical Realism: A Better Way to Think about Middle Powers.”

into consideration; instead, they were disregarded, as their powers and titles could not register at the level of greater royals. However, 'middle power' appeared by name within the writings of Clausewitz, and the notion denoted actors which separated larger competitors with their rooted sovereigns and respective military powers.²

Consequently, middle powers were regarded early on as bridge-building and peacekeeping diplomats. But invariably, such roles were not the only options, and they could project influence from a variety of internal sources and define themselves to their own needs automatically. The contemporary study of MPs began during 1960s as a means to understand the actions of smaller states. There, study remained confined to solving local, regional issues and advancing international foreign policy ideas, but multilateralist integration efforts occurring in the real world compelled the field to change yet again.³

By the 1980s, Canada and Australia sought recognition of responsibilities, powers, and changes which had accumulated since the conclusion of World War II. The 'minor' status once endured by the world's smaller states had eroded and it was no longer tenable for major powers to ignore changes underway within the international system.⁴ Instead, states began demanding recognition according broadly to 1) their level of raw state capacity, 2) their level of activism and their quality of behaviors in global affairs, or 3) their position in global political economy, and their concomitant capabilities.⁵ These post-war upstarts and frequent clients of US power became, according to critical reviews, 'traditional' middle powers and grew in number. But they were soon

² Wight, *Power Politics*; Holbraad, *Middle Powers in International Politics*, 13–19, 23.

³ Holbraad, *Middle Powers in International Politics*, 2; Cox and Sinclair, *Approaches to World Order*, 505–8.

⁴ "Those who concentrate exclusively on the interrelations of the great powers enjoy the obvious advantages of dealing with the chief actors but are in danger of taking a too Olympian view of international politics," in Holbraad, *Middle Powers in International Politics*, 3, 23; Cooper, Higgott, and Richard Nossal, *Relocating Middle Powers: Australia and Canada in a Changing World Order*, chap. 1.

⁵ Jordaan, "The Concept of a Middle Power in International Relations"; Ping, *Middle Power Statecraft: Indonesia, Malaysia and the Asia-Pacific*, 66–72; Stairs, "Of Medium Powers and Middling Roles," 275; Cox and Sinclair, *Approaches to World Order*, 244; Flermes and Nolte, "Introduction"; Efsthathopoulos, "Reinterpreting India's Rise through the Middle Power Prism."

followed by non-‘traditional’ post-colonial newcomers from Europe’s former imperial and colonial realms only twenty years later.⁶

Realism

In the neo-realist camp, the emphasis of international politics invariably remains bound up with that of self-interested building of state capacity for jealous competition in a state of international anarchy. There, states’ overriding goal is to gain power and secure stability while building security through overt dominance or via agreements. For the middle power, strength and security are not positive sum: the international space reorganizes its power centers into many centers or blocs, or around one or two powers respectively, and the MP must find means to exist by balancing or bandwagoning within such a competitive environment.

Moreover, all states working in the pursuit of maximization of power, whether great or small, possess leadership who work tirelessly as calculators of state power.⁷ Historical change, then, summarily occurs as a series of changes corresponding to the reorganization and leakage of national power from one sovereign state to another: anarchy produces the forms of power’s erosion as well as its willful structuring. In this structuralist posture, the realist ideal lends to change in form but not of contents: anarchy becomes history and anarchy becomes the organizing theory itself.⁸

For middle powers, state capacity is a determinant which is also circumscribed for both their region and the wider system.⁹ This reality forces MPs to solve power and security differences with larger states, or risk practical usurpation. Strategies which attack the problem, thus, gain crucial importance for the long-term preservation of state. According to changes in the contemporary

⁶ Neufeld, “Hegemony and Foreign Policy Analysis: The Case of Canada as Middle Power,” 8–10; Cooper, Higgott, and Richard Nossal, *Relocating Middle Powers: Australia and Canada in a Changing World Order*, chap. 2.

⁷ Teschke, *The Myth of 1648: Class, Geopolitics, and the Making of Modern International Relations*; Rosenberg, *The Empire of Civil Society: A Critique of the Realist Theory of International Relations*; Cox, “On Thinking about Future World Order (1976).”

⁸ Wight, *Power Politics*; Ashley, “The Poverty of Neorealism.”

⁹ Wight, *Power Politics*, 295–301.

international system, raw military power and national aggrandizement are not the only means of achieving objectives, however, as MPs within realism may also perceive manipulation of institutions to be the best and easiest means reaching aspects of their goals. In very basic terms, a pragmatist approach, or ‘practical realism,’ may also match the needs of its user and register adaptations to altered circumstances and needs, but the overriding restrictor of the practice remains the given state’s capacity for action.¹⁰

Liberalism

By contrast, within liberalism, “a middle-power is a state whose leaders consider that it cannot act alone effectively but may be able to have a systemic impact in a small group or through an international institution.”¹¹ In this fashion, liberalism perceives middle power action as concerned with deliberate associations oriented toward preservation of internal institutions and social preferences, and sometimes internal democracy, amid world influences and pressures. Action in collective organizations then becomes the means by which middle powers’ leadership preserve their preferences and the institutions which generate them. Middle powers which may be isolated in their own environments thus gain room to drive outwards, cooperate, and relate with other middle powers in line with their interests. This self-selection of partners provides more bases of foreign support for the middle power’s proposals, both domestic and international. Middle power solidarity therefore reinforces liberal institutions and paves the path for ongoing issue- and value-based works.¹²

¹⁰ Trood, “Australian Diplomatic Practice: Methods and Theory,” 101; Holbraad, *Middle Powers in International Politics*; Ungerer, “The ‘Middle Power’ Concept in Australian Foreign Policy”; Cooper, Higgott, and Richard Nossal, *Relocating Middle Powers: Australia and Canada in a Changing World Order*; Neufeld, “Hegemony and Foreign Policy Analysis: The Case of Canada as Middle Power.”

¹¹ Cooper, “Niche Diplomacy: A Conceptual Overview,” 8.

¹² Cooper, Higgott, and Richard Nossal, *Relocating Middle Powers: Australia and Canada in a Changing World Order*, 22–24; Cooper, Higgott, and Richard Nossal, 50–82.

Such actions premise themselves on the idea that international collaborations follow middle powers' possession of common international interests. The community and rootedness which forms from such similarities becomes a reservoir for not only survival and daily function, but even growth within the international space. Energetic pursuit of cooperation and relationships based on common values, then, offers pathways for deepening middle powers' independent paths and their collective worldly footprint.¹³ Value-driven associations and action, following issues of self-declared importance, then follow.¹⁴

Positive issue- and group-based actions provide the next major criteria for identification of MPs, as middle powers are considered organically suited to responsible statecraft and lobbying in particular issue areas. With both idealistic and pragmatic inducement toward international engagements, zero-sum competitive pressures over regional and global strength recede in importance. Following individual goal setting and actions, MPs collectively build coalitions and entrepreneurial drive by virtue of their additive strengths and collective interests. In this vein of action, "the imaginative and energetic use of diplomatic capabilities ... [via] persuasion, coalition building, and the indirect approach" allow for the institutional construction of power in the international order. Initiative provides them constructive, positive input in their regions and iterates the mode of their sovereignty in a general 'game of skill.'¹⁵ Individual natural interests may align MPs along internationalist bases, but such multilateralism also prompts action in coalitions and – thus – toward global institutional reforms.¹⁶

¹³ Ikenberry, *A World Safe for Democracy*, xii.

¹⁴ Ungerer, "The 'Middle Power' Concept in Australian Foreign Policy," 539; Ruggie, "International Regimes, Transactions and Change-Embedded Liberalism in the Post-War Order."

¹⁵ Cooper, "Niche Diplomacy: A Conceptual Overview," 23–24; Ungerer, "The 'Middle Power' Concept in Australian Foreign Policy"; Cooper, "Testing Middle Power's Collective Action in a World of Diffuse Power."

¹⁶ Ungerer, "The 'Middle Power' Concept in Australian Foreign Policy"; Henrikson, "Middle Powers as Managers: International Mediation within, across and Outside Institutions," 46–72.

Through development of expertise and authority internationally around these value-based issues and niches, middle powers gain and secure outsized influence by virtue of their collaborative and positive-sum foreign policy actions. The middle power may successfully functionalize issues and their states' points of contact with the international world. As such, middle powers may also realize their strength grows not from themselves alone, but most effectively in groups which may together build global governance. Therefore, functionalism, or the politicization and execution-acquisition of power around specific points of international politics, has specifically provided the logical and formal underpinning of MP authority within multilateral environments by legitimizing issue-based expertise and niche authority in diplomatic circles. By deliberately operationalizing these specialty areas, MPs' enfranchise their institutional power into integrative policy vehicles.¹⁷

By consequence, MPs possess a number of characteristics which distinguish them as both they wish to be and as they may be viewed externally: they are both leader-managers and superintendents with positive ideas and contributions in a broader world system, as well as superintendents of a structured, worldwide US order, and they are semi-independent.¹⁸ MPs' oft-'straddling' quality – geographically or politically separating major powers – alongside their leader-manager qualities help them to develop regionalist, and often accommodationist, frameworks between strategic zones. Perceptions of MPs as exclusively neutral managers, however, stand on the dovish side of MP postures, as they may also instead choose instead open allegiances with one

¹⁷ Cooper, "Niche Diplomacy: A Conceptual Overview," 3–5; Mitrany, *A Working Peace System: An Argument for the Functional Development of International Organization*; Ruggie, "International Regimes, Transactions and Change-Embedded Liberalism in the Post-War Order."

¹⁸ Manicom and O'Neil, "China's Rise and Middle Power Democracies"; Henrikson, "Middle Powers as Managers: International Mediation within, across and Outside Institutions"; Panitch and Gindin, "Superintending Global Capital."

strategic bloc or another, or simply opt to exploit the competitor instead of choosing open allegiances with one the world hegemonic bloc.¹⁹

While institutionalism can prove a highly positive phenomenon, in-groups can form within international organizations that stratify which kinds of middle powers become influential. According to this thinking, 1980s and 1990s' Iraq was not only unpopular, but it was also not considered a middle power. Similarly, contemporary Iran is also not considered a middle power, despite possessing ample regional influence, wealth, population, and other normal indicators of capability. Meanwhile, other similarly ranking Arab oil-exporting Persian Gulf states are considered middle powers by virtue of their agreement to the US system at large.²⁰

The UK, Germany, Japan, South Korea, and Australia are middle powers and pillars of the present international order. Though they possess independent agency, they are not potential systemic challengers (e.g., the PRC, plus the Russian Federation), but they are also concrete US military clients – both occupied zones and massive staging and operating areas for global administration.²¹ In this regard, it is possible to witness priority differences between traditional and non-traditional middle powers: traditional middle powers, such as the United States' many post-war military and diplomatic client-allies, support and benefit from the current structure of the world order, where as other states were excluded from such historical deliberations and might possess different priorities. Non-traditional middle powers possess different structural positions in world

¹⁹ Beeson and Wang, "Australia, China, and the U.S. in an Era of Interdependence"; Mackerras, "China and the Australia-U.S. Relationship"; Jordaan, "The Concept of a Middle Power in International Relations."

²⁰ For conflicting basic realist indicators, Holbraad, *Middle Powers in International Politics*. See also Jordaan, "The Concept of a Middle Power in International Relations"; Cox, "Middlepowermanship, Japan, and Future World Order"; Pratt, *Middle Power Internationalism*; Chomsky, *Rogue States*. The concept of a 'rogue,' likewise refers to other noteworthy powers with some structural influence that is 'revisionist' against the 'world order.' Here, the opponents of American global dominance fill this roster, and the contemporary enemy today is the Russian Federation; the PRC, the primary target. See Dobbins, Shatz, and Wyne, *Russia Is a Rogue, Not a Peer; China Is a Peer, Not a Rogue*.

²¹ Ungerer, "The 'Middle Power' Concept in Australian Foreign Policy"; Van Der Westhuizen, "South Africa's Emergence as a Middle Power"; Manicom and O'Neil, "China's Rise and Middle Power Democracies"; Gindin and Panitch, *The Making of Global Capitalism*.

economy and production, and so they are not as inclined to behave like managers that have “an appearance” of “potency, neutrality, and authority.”²² Nonetheless, the role has proliferated since the 1980s, particularly in the vistas opened by the end of the Cold War for “a refined cluster of middle powers [to] upgrade [...] the intensity of their ideational and entrepreneurial roles.” Multilateral institutions, diplomatic and economic, solidify such gains and allow MPs to confront immediate weaknesses during confrontations with larger powers and disperse challenge costs into the future.²³

Gramscian

The Marxist school approaches many subjects, broadly speaking, mainly by way of two different methods: historicization and the materialist dialectic. In the case of the former, historicization entails a subject’s concretization and contextualization within the social relations of a given class society, those most related to the subject at hand, and the re-explication of how events reached the present. Marxist historicization is relatively limited in its scopes in that its subject, either now passed fixedly into history or into a definite phase during the (near) present, is interrogated by the definite events and circumstances which culminated in the emergence of the circumstance. As this subject is definite, but changing during study, the subject’s qualities are subject to a relatively closed analysis. The historical materialist dialectic meanwhile seeks to register the ongoing transformation of subjects under conflictual tension so as to assess and note qualitative transformations in kind that alter social relations and contributed to the evolutionary transformation

²² Henrikson, “Middle Powers as Managers: International Mediation within, across and Outside Institutions”; Lee, *Middle Powers and Commercial Diplomacy: British Influence at the Kennedy Trade Round*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press; Neufeld, “Hegemony and Foreign Policy Analysis: The Case of Canada as Middle Power,” 17.

²³ Cooper and Dal, “Positioning the Third Wave of Middle Power Diplomacy: Institutional Elevation, Practice Limitations.”

of historical structures. Consequently, the materialist dialectic is well adapted to environments facing complex change.²⁴

The Marxist approach most involved in the analysis of MPs generally follows theorists employing Antonio Gramsci's methods; it acknowledges the MP but moves quickly to historicize both the mainstream theorization of MPs and MPs themselves. The MP itself is then taken to be a highly contradictory entity: within a global ranking or typology, Japan, Canada, and Germany do not land in the middle, but their multilateralist behaviors 'locate' them in the middle by way of their functionalist self-development into a given hegemony – as do their contemporary contributions to the otherwise self-evident virtues and progress of international law that does make global interactions more predictable. And yet, they, alongside other powers outside of the Trilateral alliance, such as South Africa, Nigeria, Brazil, Malaysia, and even Singapore, also functionalize aspects of their actions and international sovereignty. Nonetheless, all are classed as "middle."²⁵

Like the liberal conception of MPs functionalist foreign policies, the broadly Gramscian literature on MPs also assumes a foreign policy-focused posture via its adaptations to 'dominant class theory,' wherein focus is heaped upon "the widely pervasive bias in policy towards the interests of the dominant class."²⁶ As an analysis rooted in comprehension of a single state's foreign policy, the dominant class model does not possess a global variant. For this, numerous debates fill the breach in their discussion of "the international" and of imperialism,²⁷ but the wider point of

²⁴ See Cox and Sinclair, *Approaches to World Order*, chaps. 5, 6; Cox, "On Thinking about Future World Order (1976)," 65–66.

²⁵ Cox, "Middlepowermanship, Japan, and Future World Order"; Cooper, Higgott, and Richard Nossal, *Relocating Middle Powers: Australia and Canada in a Changing World Order*, 22; Cooper, *Niche Diplomacy*, 6–7; Jordaan, "The Concept of a Middle Power in International Relations," 172.

²⁶ Here, the theory suggests that "the capital-owning class in any capitalist state is the dominant class and that the policies of the state reflect and perpetuate that dominance." See Pratt, "Dominant Class Theory and Canadian Foreign Policy: The Case of the Counter-Consensus"; Neufeld, "Hegemony and Foreign Policy Analysis: The Case of Canada as Middle Power."

²⁷ Within the Trotskyist paradigm, see Davidson, "The Necessity of Multiple Nation-States for Capital*"; Callinicos, "Does Capitalism Need the State System?"; Rosenberg, "Isaac Deutscher and the Lost History of International

importance here is that it likely can be connected to this domain via other contemporary research concerning the nature of the contemporary forms of capitalist accumulation regime, specifically via MP leaders' complicity with and accession to world capitalist production and to imperialism, as its global status quo supporters.²⁸

The middle power role and its relevance to Kazakhstan

Contemporary states and geopolitics draw upon a diverse set for its sources of power. While power dynamics today – as in all times – remain a central aspect of social and political life, sources of power derive especially from economic strength and historical circumstances. As this applies both to greater and lesser powers, weaker states must concentrate their efforts and specialize to overcome broad disparities with stronger powers. To do this, states frequently create niches which are then functionalized within their international dealings to catch still more authorities and capabilities.²⁹

Progressively, states which have managed such outcomes today possess greater strengths than those which have failed to do so. This signal foothold provides the grounds for the contemporary middle power; with it, such states have become centering leaders to their regions. They have also become their regions' most important specialists and multilateralists. By virtue of their substantial specializations, however, such states are able to upend traditional power dynamics and strategic games to include the plethora of alternative avenues available. The middle power, thus,

Relations”; Neufeld, *The Restructuring of International Relations Theory*. Discussions of imperialism in academic circles then cluster about Fred Halliday, “The Pertinence of Imperialism”; Magdoff, *Imperialism without Colonies*; Brenner, “What Is, and What Is Not, Imperialism?”; Harvey, *The New Imperialism*. For the revolutionary conception, see Lenin, *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism*.

²⁸ Gindin and Panitch, *The Making of Global Capitalism*; Yu, *China's Rise: Strength and Fragility*; Cooley, *Dictators without Borders: Power and Money in Central Asia*; Obermayer and Obermayer, *The Panama Papers*; Jordaan, “The Concept of a Middle Power in International Relations.”

²⁹ Cooper, *Niche Diplomacy*.

achieves greater respect by virtue of its numerous and game-changing sources of historical capacity.³⁰

Middle powers are not divorced from historical events, which means that the state and its leadership are wedded to an international economic and historical context which has structured their success and strengths. While state capacity is of interest when studying both MPs and states engaging in multivectorism, as they can host further relations and execute policies more robustly, the concern with exclusive domestic sovereignty that frequently follows from this realist criteria – leaving other concerns aside – is not of great use. Instead, the functionalist methods and capacities of these states, as well as the self-interested leaderships that employ them, establish immediate connections between the practitioner and the target of interest. The Republic of Kazakhstan (RK), therefore, fulfills the three major criterion here presented, matches many other profiles of MPs using different criterion,³¹ and is a famous user of multivectorism.³² Most notably, it must be reiterated that the interest in the MP-MP relations of Kazakhstan’s multivector foreign policy is noteworthy because it should tell us more about the policy as a whole, the differences in its execution between partners, and indicate possible options for other states.

For expediency, the present study defines middle powers as states which seek to engage positively and actively in international institutions and, further, possess such internal capacity and scope that they provide a centering role to their respective regions.³³

³⁰ Henrikson, “Middle Powers as Managers: International Mediation within, across and Outside Institutions”; Cooper, “Niche Diplomacy: A Conceptual Overview.”

³¹ Typical indicators of a state’s internal capacity are often vital in other assessments. These frequently include population, geographic area, military expenditure, GDP, GDP real growth, value of exports, gross national income per capita, trade as a percentage of GDP and life expectancy at birth. See Ping, *Middle Power Statecraft: Indonesia, Malaysia and the Asia-Pacific*, 66–72.

³² Hanks, “‘Multi-Vector Politics’ and Kazakhstan’s Emerging Role as a Geo-Strategic Player in Central Asia.”

³³ Efstathiopoulos, “Reinterpreting India’s Rise through the Middle Power Prism.”

Multivectorism considered: what is multivectorism?

Multivectorism is a concept that requires careful examination within the realm of international relations theory. It encompasses a strategic approach that emphasizes the pursuit of multiple vectors or avenues of engagement with other actors in the international system. They are frequently invited to work multiply upon projects of mutual and net interest. Via such a ‘strategy of inclusion,’³⁴ multivectorism represents a positive strategy that endures among smaller and middle power states that seek to work around and together with other smaller, middle, or greater powers. This strategy leverages multiple forces and draws in large competitors to entrench them within overlapping, positive-sum relations to stabilize the practitioner’s area while reconciling its neighbors with its international partners.³⁵

In general, the multivector approach is a widespread and long-term approach because it thrives upon practitioner adaptability, it affords the practitioner long-term flexibility, and its goals are amenable to both the domestic ruling class and its international partners. Foreign policy strategies analogous to multivectorism are widely practiced around the world, and literature suggests it is employed consciously within East and Southeast Asia, Eastern and Southern Europe, and Central Asia. Thus, the approach rings and entwines the postwar Trilateral alliance (US, Japan, Germany)³⁶ with the post-Stalinist strategic bloc forming between Russia and China.³⁷ The strategic and economic actors between these states – often MPs, often smaller states – experience various environments, which means that multivectorism’s diversifications consistently confront unique and

³⁴ Omelicheva and Du, “Kazakhstan’s Multi-Vectorism and Sino-Russian Relations,” 102.

³⁵ Goh, “Great Powers and Hierarchical Order in Southeast Asia,” 129; Vanderhill, Joireman, and Tulepbayeva, “Between the Bear and the Dragon,” 978.

³⁶ Kolko, *The Politics of War: The World and United States Foreign Policy 1943-1945*; Dower, *Embracing Defeat*; Hilderbrand, *Dumbarton Oaks: The Origins of the United Nations and the Search for Post-War Security*; Calder, “Securing Security through Prosperity”; Wertheim, *Tomorrow, the World: The Birth of U.S. Global Supremacy*.

³⁷ Gnedina, “‘Multi-Vector’ Foreign Policies in Europe”; Goh, “Great Powers and Hierarchical Order in Southeast Asia”; Vanderhill, Joireman, and Tulepbayeva, “Between the Bear and the Dragon”; Li, *The Rise of China and the Demise of the Capitalist World-Economy*.

evolving circumstances that are self-advanced, unique to states' local circumstances, and unique stratagems to those responses by major powers.³⁸

The widespread nature of multivectorism owes to its use of a practice referred to by some as “complex balancing,” which allows the MP to relieve domestic and international stakeholders’ anxieties by using a strategy of inclusion that considers and allows diverse sets of players to participate domestically and separately despite external differences so as to offset one another.³⁹ By creating a mutually beneficial platform and by carefully choosing and even ‘auctioning’ points for collaboration, multivectorism can stabilize an otherwise risky environment.⁴⁰ Notably, the multivector strategy across the former Soviet bloc coexists with a structural condition where such states and their leaderships – frequently hybrid, sometimes narrow, sometimes deeply entrenched – find themselves divided by their institutional weakness or by their split proximal historical and contemporary relationships with Russia, the former Soviet bloc at large, the PRC, and the Trilateral alliance.⁴¹

Many states of the former Soviet Union possessed circumstances to nest simultaneously between the Russian Federation and the United States in order to leverage their exclusive and collective state rights. Various, they were torn by the presence of Russian regional power while desirous of strategic balancing and profitable relations with the United States. In addition to building institutional ties with their immediate neighbors and western Europe – depending upon whether

³⁸ Nitoiu, “The Influence of External Actors on Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Space.”

³⁹ Vanderhill, Joireman, and Tulebayeva, “Between the Bear and the Dragon,” 991.

⁴⁰ Contessi, “Foreign and Security Policy Diversification in Eurasia: Issue Splitting, Co-Alignment, and Relational Power,” 301.

⁴¹ Hale, “Regime Cycles”; Way, “The Real Causes of the Color Revolution”; Ishchenko and Zhuravlev, “How Maidan Revolutions Reproduce and Intensify the Post-Soviet Crisis of Political Representation”; Minasyan, “Multivectorism in the Foreign Policy of Post-Soviet Eurasian States.”

they were located in eastern Europe or west and central Asia – multivectorism guided the decision of whether to cooperate, accommodate, bargain, or resist.⁴²

The long-term quality of multivectorism thus flows from the intense pressure and objective strategic conditions its practitioners face, and their long-term drive to create grounds for policies. In the case of Australasian and Indochinese states, action is not taken explicitly to hedge competitively against other regional players or even necessarily against the PRC or US. Instead, the emphasis also lay in ‘drawing in’ the opposing forces to interweave them within the region and raise the total costs for conflict to unacceptable levels. Between a complex of diplomatic and economic institution building, security accords, as well as arms purchases, SE Asian relations are “aimed at facilitating the transition to a certain kind of regional order.”⁴³

Therefore, a strategy of inclusion amidst unforgiving power dynamics also relies upon the state’s very specific niches and their use of domestic and international institutions as sources of power. Intrinsically, such a strategy of inclusion runs in multiple directions and makes ongoing connections in light of prior relationships and actions. This multi-directionality and skillful niche deployments are parcel to a larger situational and strategic flexibility.⁴⁴

Multivectorism directs such means toward a final transformation of the practitioner’s environment. To do so, multivectorism uses tools identified in middle power theory, as secondary powers’ valuable niches in technology, wealth, and issue areas are not developed simply for their own sake. In the case of multivectorism, its practitioners seek, broadly, to entrench, reconcile, transform, and stabilize their geopolitical neighborhood, own state, their neighbors, and their

⁴² Gnedina, “‘Multi-Vector’ Foreign Policies in Europe,” fig. 1; Minasyan, “Multivectorism in the Foreign Policy of Post-Soviet Eurasian States.”

⁴³ Goh, “Great Powers and Hierarchical Order in Southeast Asia,” 118.

⁴⁴ Cooper, “Niche Diplomacy: A Conceptual Overview.”

partners, near and afar.⁴⁵ The opposite policy vision, that of confrontation and revisionist attack upon the established order of states at large, is not an end which is pursued even tangentially, as it would invite isolation and difficulties.⁴⁶ While great finesse in diplomatic and niche domains is not always possible, pursuit of such specializations remains the preferred path for engaging external powers.⁴⁷ In sum, while failures in execution may destabilize and upend multivectorism, the strategy's transformative goals – successfully implemented – offer wide latitudes and possibilities to practitioners. Clearly, states see inducements to continue the practice.

However, does the strategy work for all – as it is best suited to highly developed, **but** smaller niche powers in cleft zones – and do states that employ the approach behave in the same ways? Multivector strategies are developed by states to navigate complex international relations and pursue their interests by engaging with multiple actors and maintaining diverse alliances. These strategies are shaped by the specific challenges and opportunities faced by each state within its regional and global context.

The uneven development of economy, institutions, and power among states and geographies in the contemporary world, however, means that many states find themselves balancing numerous internal priorities with their external circumstances. Economic growth, notably, represents a foundational interest of all contemporary states, but the form of development occurs alongside historically powerful actors. Sources of growth and power are thus diverse, which in practice indicates that the form and emphasis of multivectorism may differ across states due to their unique geopolitical positions, historical experiences, and resource endowments. For individual states seeking

⁴⁵ Goh, "Great Powers and Hierarchical Order in Southeast Asia," 121; Vanderhill, Joireman, and Tulepbayeva, "Between the Bear and the Dragon," 978.

⁴⁶ Day, *Leon Trotsky and the Politics of Economic Isolation*; Cox and Sinclair, *Approaches to World Order*.

⁴⁷ Henrikson, "Middle Powers as Managers: International Mediation within, across and Outside Institutions"; Jordaan, "The Concept of a Middle Power in International Relations."

solutions to their strategic dilemmas, regional circumstances and historical approaches will dictate certain capabilities, but specialty niches will afford leverage when including outside powers.⁴⁸

Theorizations of multivectorism confound the assumption that smaller states must balance or bandwagon against far greater powers, and they agree that multivectored players possess niche tools and institutions by which they may transform their partners.⁴⁹ Such theorizations also acknowledge that MPs using multivectorism exercise their powers, decisions, and associations to transform their environment. However, critical perspectives question the extent to which institutions truly enable smaller and middle states to overcome the structural constraints imposed by dominant powers. Liberal theories often highlight the potential of institutions to foster cooperation, mitigate, and undermine power asymmetries, but these very institutions can also perpetuate unequal power relations and serve the interests of dominant actors by corrupting the individual action and goals deployed by multivectored actors in the course of events.⁵⁰

In the context of multivectorism, institutions are viewed as tools that smaller states can utilize to advance their interests and maintain a certain degree of autonomy. However, critical perspectives underscore that these institutions are embedded within a global order that reflects the interests and power dynamics of major states. They can serve as mechanisms for the reproduction of hegemonic power and the perpetuation of unequal economic and political relations. This raises questions about the effectiveness of institutions in addressing the broader problems that multivectorism seeks to confront, such as the unequal distribution of resources, the dominance of

⁴⁸ Goh, "Great Powers and Hierarchical Order in Southeast Asia," 139.

⁴⁹ Vanderhill, Joireman, and Tulepbayeva, "Between the Bear and the Dragon"; Gnedina, "'Multi-Vector' Foreign Policies in Europe"; Cooper, "Niche Diplomacy: A Conceptual Overview."

⁵⁰ Henrikson, "Middle Powers as Managers: International Mediation within, across and Outside Institutions"; Neufeld, "Hegemony and Foreign Policy Analysis: The Case of Canada as Middle Power."

major powers, the persistence of global inequalities, and the transformation of regional and global spaces.⁵¹

Moreover, the emphasis on institutions in multivector theorization, and their integration with national priority, can divert attention from more structural issues rooted in the global capitalist system toward the potential for success by individual state-level practitioners. Marxist criticism of IR theory, like that of political economy, indicates that the strategies which compose multivectorism – while seeking to navigate and thrive within the existing order – do not fundamentally challenge the underlying dynamics of exploitation and domination. The focus upon using multiple, established institutions, overlapping sets of diverse actors, and functionalist niches can mask the structural constraints faced by smaller states, and they can understate the systemic barriers that hinder their similar development, net autonomy, or their possible aims to transform the existing order.⁵²

Within Kazakhstan's domestic transformation of its armed forces and military industrial complex, multivectorism has helped to yield mass indigenization of small arms (from prior reliance upon Russia) and other weaponry, as well as some vehicles, while also vastly diversifying Kazakhstan's arms dealers. The producer of war materiel, Kazakhstan Engineering, provides 50 percent of required materiel, but it mainly engages in import substitutions from suppliers such as South Africa, from whom they have reproduced a personnel carrier. But specialized materiel – particularly anti-armor, and -air weapons, surveillance equipment (including satellites), drones, and much else – remained provided by Russian suppliers until 2011. This situation was expected to change even prior to the seizure of Crimea by Russia, with Russian military sales to Kazakhstan

⁵¹ Cox, "On Thinking about Future World Order (1976)," 66–77.

⁵² Cox, "Middlepowermanship, Japan, and Future World Order," 823–35.

anticipated to drop from 60 percent between 2008-2011 to merely 33.7 percent, with France even previously anticipated to match Russian sales during 2012-2015.⁵³

Multivectorism as a practical tool for Kazakhstan

To such ends, the stress experienced by Kazakhstan is considerable. Whereas the American regional strategy – outlined above as one oriented toward ongoing military ties, market building, and encouragement of political and legal liberalization, and particularly regional initiative – is regarded positively in select global policy circles, the Russian presence is perceived negatively and is even openly declared ‘revisionist’ against the apparent perpetuity and legitimacy of global market and legal institutions founded by the US following its victories in World War II.⁵⁴ In a world of sovereigns and competing capitalisms – some more powerful than others – such claims frequently matter little where interests clash and code is deployed opportunistically, which means C Asia remains a hotbed of competing political economies and foreign policy strategies. Liberalism, today as in the past, stands not as the default method of development, but as the most powerful competitor of the conservative modernization and developmental regimes prevalent across Eurasia.⁵⁵ Thus, the format of Russian and many post-Soviet capitalists’ priorities and their methods of engagement – as within the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) – weigh upon Kazakhstan by virtue of proximity, intensity of engagement, and economy, and offer Kazakhstan consistent access to autocratic strategies versus liberal political economy that may well threaten fragmentation of the organizational and political stability of Kazakhstan’s plutocracy.⁵⁶

⁵³ Kurç, “The Puzzle”; Tanchum, “Kazakhstan’s Western Rebalancing: The Strategic Contours of Eurasian Connectivity,” 12. Between 2012-2015, Russian sales were anticipated to total US\$258 million while French sales reached US\$256 million.

⁵⁴ Tskhay and Costa Buranelli, “Accommodating Revisionism through Balancing Regionalism.”

⁵⁵ Lane, *The Capitalist Transformation of State Socialism*; McManus, *The Rise of Post-Modern Conservatism*.

⁵⁶ Obydenkova and Libman, *Authoritarian Regionalism in the World of International Organizations*; Libman and Obydenkova, “Regional International Organizations as a Strategy of Autocracy.”

By today Kazakhstan has many mixed projects in light of its foreign policy strategy. Its management of these overlapping policies provides overlapping sources of relations that intensify and continue the multivector approach. While specific review of individual aspects of the strategy will be scrutinized with greater intensity later on, for the present readers will find a general picture of the country's policies to date. For the present it may be said quite plainly that Kazakhstan has extensive relations with many states, and it has an extensive record of relations and work in numerous policy areas reflective of its growing interest in the strategy investment in the strategy and its capability for affecting it via niche powers.

Given such basic considerations, Kazakhstan's work in other large organizations interfaces its progress in national security, economic diversification, civil society, and political reforms to international scrutiny. By providing other countries the capacity to interact and interface with the Republic of Kazakhstan through group work, Kazakhstan gains the leverage of other international organizations whose obligations and interests can be nominally and practically tapped as a counterweight to other undesirable actions at a given moment or as extra force in a given situation.

Numerous groups and interests have entered the frame that indicate Kazakhstan is increasingly considered as a noteworthy collaborator, despite the picture remaining uneven and unclear. The country's membership and contribution of Central Asian priorities to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has been noteworthy given the 2010 capture of its rotating annual chair and ongoing works in the organization. Such collaboration is buffeted by parallel works in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), as Kazakhstan has also used the organization to smooth out border security issues and establish wider administrative and political solidarity on what SCO members agree to call "the three evils - terrorism, extremism, and separatism."

Kazakhstan's participation in such a Chinese project permits Kazakhstan to moderate its Russian vector, meanwhile, European and American involvement provide further leverage against both of Kazakhstan's eastern and northern borders.⁵⁷ Yet further, dueling membership and with the Eurasian Economic Union and involvement with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization split further easy impressions that Kazakhstan will work neatly with any single actor. In this fashion, sociality becomes the foil to perceived exclusivity, and memberships are used to play against responsibilities to groups and partners.⁵⁸

Notably, such issues refer, according to some, to membership in groups like the Eurasian Economic Union. There, Kazakhstan is unable to use Union pipelines for exclusive national benefit as it pursues sales in European markets, as such pipeline use is prioritized intra-Union markets.⁵⁹ Similarly, until recently, extensive reliance upon the Russian arms industry for materiel in the Kazakhstani military dampened Kazakhstan's desire for greater interoperability with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces, specifically as the United States waged war in Afghanistan. To resolve either question, Kazakhstan has been required to seek such relations independently, as group obligations place bars upon free riding upon common infrastructure for individual gain with external powers.

Even with such differences, Kazakhstan's "traditional partners," reaffirmed in 2014, represent those with whom Kazakhstan has possessed extensive relations and continues to share interests. These traditional partners – the United States, the European Union, the PRC, Russia, and Kazakhstan's Central Asian neighbors – meanwhile are also the same actors as named directly after independence as the areas of core interest to Kazakhstan.⁶⁰ But in the current moment, Kazakhstan's

⁵⁷ Vanderhill, Joireman, and Tulepbayeva, "Between the Bear and the Dragon," 987.

⁵⁸ Minasyan, "Multivectorism in the Foreign Policy of Post-Soviet Eurasian States."

⁵⁹ Kassen, "Understanding Foreign Policy Strategies of Kazakhstan."

⁶⁰ Tanchum, "Kazakhstan's Western Rebalancing: The Strategic Contours of Eurasian Connectivity."

relationship with the United States and the European Union specifically has grown. Since 2014, the relationship has notably accelerated as ideological pressure within the country and anxieties regarding Russia's capture and annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and its Black Sea port has demanded alternatives be developed and the country's foreign policy.

Such relations had existed previously and extensively within the oil sector and within numerous security ventures, as Kazakhstan notably chaired the OSCE, provided specific negotiation platforms of use to mediate conflict between Syria, Russia, the United States, and Arab powers during the Syrian civil war, as well as seeking interoperability with NATO and NATO forces via the Steppe Eagle program. Nonetheless, the relationship's growth owes to both sides increasing efforts to consort the other: Euroamerican activity has increased substantially since 2014 and the presence has become more durable with investments growing, exercises continuing, and top American diplomats and security making increasingly frequent visits.⁶¹

The Russian role has endured but has not made extensive headway since 2014, as then-new organizations launched by Kazakhstan, Russia, and Belarus have not increased their levels of (political) integration.⁶² While new outward signs of intimacy do not readily exist, formal erosions have yet to transpire. Following the invasion of Ukraine, old favor toward Russia still broadly holds despite aspects of the rhetorical relationship changing.⁶³ Central Asian relations also remain relatively flat, formally, while new interactions with the PRC have increased. China has specifically made extensive headway in its bilateral relationship with Kazakhstan, despite remaining a relatively minor actor in the overall investments present in the country. Indeed, great infrastructural influence has

⁶¹ Neafie, "No One Stole Anyone Else's Cheese": The Politics of Infrastructural Competition in Kazakhstan"; Lewis, "Blinken Holds Talks with Central Asian Leaders amid 'spillover' from Ukraine War"; Lee, "Pompeo, in Kazakhstan, Warns of China's Growing Reach."

⁶² Anceschi, *Analyzing Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy*, 137–50.

⁶³ De Haas, "Kazakhstan's Security Policy: Steady as She Goes?"; Ambrosio, "Belarus, Kazakhstan and Alliance Security Dilemmas in the Former Soviet Union: Intra-Alliance Threat and Entrapment After the Ukraine Crisis"; Arynov, "Is Kazakhstan's Multi-Vector Foreign Policy Threatened?"

been proffered, and the Kazakhstani government has even successfully leveraged its geographic position – and the PRC’s relative economic slide/decline – to bargain for investments and aid in sectors explicitly outside of carbon and transportation sectors.⁶⁴ Despite the intense stresses contemporary Kazakhstan has experienced – including the transition and aftermaths of Tokayev’s succession of Nazarbayev in 2019, the January 2022 political crackdown and thwarted coup attempt, and the ongoing soul-searching prompted by Russia’s calamitous war with Ukraine and NATO – Kazakhstan’s primary interests have not extensively wavered.⁶⁵

Kazakhstan’s basic outlets executed via multivectorism – diplomatic and economic diversification as well as initiative in existing relationships – continue to find strong bases in Kazakhstan’s national security doctrines, and the balance of relations with external partners continue to evince successes.⁶⁶ Kazakhstan’s escalating relations with Euroamerican actors have increased, as industrial and investment relations have escalated alongside active coordination organized by the United States in the US-Kazakhstan Business Council (2020), Central Asian Investment Partnership (2021), and the C5+1.⁶⁷ Additionally, energetic efforts to connect the country’s carbon reserves with European markets has entailed increasing practical relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey, with whom Kazakhstan must connect if it is to eventually develop the Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline and secure stable long-term revenues and profits.⁶⁸

Russian and Chinese relations, meanwhile, have undergone trades. The PRC has formally announced its intent to protect Kazakhstani sovereignty against interventions, which could represent a swap between Russia and the PRC, while Kazakhstani representatives – most notably President

⁶⁴ Anceschi, *Analysing Kazakhstan’s Foreign Policy*, 93–123; Neafie, “‘No One Stole Anyone Else’s Cheese’: The Politics of Infrastructural Competition in Kazakhstan”; Neafie, “Producing the Eurasian Land Bridge.”

⁶⁵ Ambrosio, “Belarus, Kazakhstan and Alliance Security Dilemmas in the Former Soviet Union: Intra-Alliance Threat and Entrapment After the Ukraine Crisis.”

⁶⁶ Kassen, “Understanding Foreign Policy Strategies of Kazakhstan,” 11.

⁶⁷ Neafie, “Producing the Eurasian Land Bridge,” 9, 11.

⁶⁸ Vanderhill, Joireman, and Tulepbayeva, “Between the Bear and the Dragon,” 991.

Tokayev – have announced both agnosticism and disagreement with Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.⁶⁹ However, such actions have not been sufficient for Kazakhstan to break relations or to exit any organizations in which it collaborates with Russia.⁷⁰

Moreover, Kazakhstan’s drive for independent policies is increasingly reflected in the state elite’s promotion of independent priorities and histories in the social and historical realms. The noted cultivation of a national historiography and, in 2014, its celebration with the opening of the National History Museum emphasizes a drive to separate Kazakh khanates and peoples from Russian Eurasianism.⁷¹ Such scholarly production’s sponsorship or appropriation by the state in favor of an overtly nationalist project has likewise provided crucial arms in the international ideological and cultural space and as an elite state political project.⁷²

Distinction of commonly named geostrategic concepts from Russian concepts has been an important venue where such distinctions are gathering importance. Most notably, “Eurasianism” and “multivectorism” are concepts which Kazakhstan and Russia use in common to differing extents. The distinctly Eurasia-centric focus of Kazakhstan’s and Nazarbayev’s iteration of Eurasianism, however, was so marked that Alexander Dugin, whose enthusiasm over Kazakhstan’s ‘authentic’ continentalist interests was effervescent, was personally enlisted by the Kazakhstani government to define and theorize Kazakhstan’s conception of the idea.⁷³ The distance and separation between Astana and Moscow, notably, has played a substantial role in generating the

⁶⁹ TASS, “China to Support Kazakhstan in Defending Independence, Sovereignty”; Scepanovic, “The Sheriff and the Banker? Russia and China in Central Asia”; Val, “Kazakhstan Does Not Support Either Russia or Ukraine - Ministry of Defense”; Bloomberg News and Mathieson, “Putin Gets Unexpected Pushback From Ally Over War in Ukraine.”

⁷⁰ Ambrosio, “Belarus, Kazakhstan and Alliance Security Dilemmas in the Former Soviet Union: Intra-Alliance Threat and Entrapment After the Ukraine Crisis.”

⁷¹ Anceschi, *Analysing Kazakhstan’s Foreign Policy*, 164–69; Laruelle, “Kazakhstan’s Dilemma on Eurasian and Central Asian Integrations.”

⁷² Kudaibergenova, “The Use and Abuse of Postcolonial Discourses in Post-Independent Kazakhstan”; Davidson, “From National Consciousness to Nation-States*.”

⁷³ Anceschi, *Analysing Kazakhstan’s Foreign Policy*, 42–48; Laruelle, “Kazakhstan’s Dilemma on Eurasian and Central Asian Integrations,” 397.

distinctness of Kazakhstan's geostrategic position and priorities. Geography has served a vital role in distinguishing Kazakhstani and Russian priorities, and Kazakhstan has progressively relied upon continental symbols and tropes derived from Kazakhs' historical nomadism to support its claims to continental and global interests.⁷⁴

Defense and employment of such unique ideological priorities has proven a recurring trend in Kazakhstan's anxious relations with the nationalist musings of Russian governmental officials. Following the seizure of Crimea by the Russian Federation, the leader of the state Duma and the emasculated Communist Party each postured about acquiring northern Kazakhstan. Elsewhere, Vladimir Putin's remarks regarding the heritage of the legal statehood of the Kazakhs – issued in the same atmosphere as that which later issued expansive claims regarding historical Ukraine's longtime subsumption within the Russian Empire and later formal independence – did not sit well in the Kazakhstani bureaucracy and prompted Nursultan Nazarbayev to threaten leaving their shared organization, the EAEU, if the issue was pressed.⁷⁵

Kazakhstan's regional, continental, and global perspectives provided it intrinsic motivations for ongoing collaboration and accommodation of partners in each sphere to better reach its diplomatic, economic, and geostrategic goals. This thrust labored to connect Kazakhstan's easterly connections with its other regional and international relationships, as the PRC was an obvious growth market and long-term source of value for Kazakhstani producers. As a state with the potential to coerce Kazakhstan, the PRC relationship activates and demonstrates multiple aspects of Kazakhstan's multivectorism.

⁷⁴ Laruelle, "Kazakhstan's Dilemma on Eurasian and Central Asian Integrations."

⁷⁵ Putin, "The Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians"; Najibullah, "Putin Downplays Kazakh Independence, Sparks Angry Reaction."

The Kazakhstan-PRC pipeline represents both a culmination of prior bilateral successes, but also an agreement with only one of many buyers and partners across East Asia to be tapped and only one of Kazakhstan's supporters. Multivectorism's capability to connect Kazakhstan with seemingly discordant players criss-crossing the continent thus represents a success for the state as well as a vital asset in the evolving recognition and desire for the state's sovereignty, options, and economic strategy at large.⁷⁶

Conclusion

The Republic of Kazakhstan works in Central Asia as a middle power state of peculiar properties and pursues its foreign affairs in a broadly unorthodox fashion. By using a self-aware, accommodationist foreign policy strategy known as multivectorism, Kazakhstan has relativized its state by an assertive mixture of functionalist tools through which it engages for state and national profit, as well as regional transformation. Middle and smaller powers house a substantial portion of the world's populations and governments, and the set which employs multivectorism – most notably Kazakhstan – is valuable externally because they are involved in productively mediating the affairs of competing and distrusting major powers. Internally, their management of each side entails the creation and pursuit of independent foreign policies that are not deterministically bound by the whims of their neighbors. Kazakhstan, notably, does not need to clearly align with either of its more powerful neighbors – Russia or China – and nor does it need do so with the United States or with Western European states.

Middle and smaller powers necessarily possess unique features against their much more powerful brethren on the international stage, but the particular details of the immediate post-Soviet situation and the early 2000s provide a unique window through which to examine independent

⁷⁶ Anceschi, *Analysing Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy*, 32–35; Cummings, "Eurasian Bridge or Murky Waters between East and West?"; Ambrosio and Lange, "Mapping Kazakhstan's Geopolitical Code." In the latter citation, Kazakhstan's sovereignty is regarded as an absolute red-line for state leadership, and increasing recognition of Kazakhstan leadership's irrevocability internationally is every bit as valuable to them as are potential enemies deterred from abusing the Republic.

Kazakhstan's early foreign policy record and the robustness of its claimed foreign policy strategy. For a critical foreign policy approach, Kazakhstan's relations with other small and middle power states are often overlooked in favor of Kazakhstan's relations with major powers which are today engaged in sharp competition. To more clearly divine Kazakhstan's foreign policy strategy and its goals, this period and Kazakhstan's relations with other middle powers are together anticipated to provide fruitful indicators that may inform subsequent periods in the practice's employment.

Chapter 3: Methodology

As a strategy, multivectorism is well documented in the empirical literature. Nonetheless, how can we scrutinize and assess the processes within the multivector strategy? Multivectorism posits specific behaviors that affect overall outcome differences in foreign policy, yet which alone, otherwise provide only special and powerful methods within an overall foreign policy toolkit. However, to test and demonstrate multivectorism as a whole, the strategy must be deconstructed. To such ends, the strategy's essential mechanical components must be postulated, their procedural and logical interconnections mapped and established, their anticipated residue or fingerprints operationalized and sought after in archival materials – and then scrutinized for conclusions. The processing of outcomes may permit identification of generalizations from individual cases to the extent it is actually possible in low quantity, context-rich, qualitative studies.

Process tracing⁷⁷

The above steps represent but a brief outline of a method known as process tracing. In brief, process tracing (PT) is a method in which a process's causes and outcomes are held in tension and the components of the process itself deconstructed to theorize and assess the process's most impactful and, indeed, causal aspects. Consequently, the deconstructed elements of a variable and its causal mechanics are critical to understanding the variable mechanistically and procedurally. This deconstruction allows the researcher to analytically operationalize and, following its comprehension, manipulate the process by which the variable works. The typical approach to locating mechanistic causality within a given process requires simple location of variables determined to have causal impact. However, this approach, if inadequately pursued, offers the danger of producing a simple descriptive dialogue. Theoretically, PT provides researchers with the means to sidestep this danger by demonstrating the variable's causality to the reader, to other researchers, or worse, to the

⁷⁷ Beach and Brun Pedersen, *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines*.

investigator(s) themselves. For the theory to have its own legs, process tracing procedurally identifies and traces the variables' residue, or "fingerprints," so as to confirm or reject the theory and its more broadly claimed causal agents.

Methodologically within process tracing, process tracing problematizes the self-explaining movement of the causal agent for working as merely a descriptive method; the manner in which causation occurs remains unknown. To overcome this, the causal agent, now regarded as a causal black box, becomes an item whose inner contours must be illuminated and identified with previously theorized causal mechanisms. The variable's suspected overall causality, as interrogated by PT, is granularized; analysis of the mechanistic components may then proceed offers the opportunity to test and demonstrate their causal impact.

Thus, after causal mechanisms are deconstructed from within a suspected causal agent or process, 'mechanistic evidence' may emerge from empirical materials with the potential to confirm the postulated relationships. This mechanistic evidence is elsewhere known as a mechanism's "fingerprints" or "residue." Following illumination, the value of a variable's mechanisms is assessed by "tracing" the movement of its causal mechanisms via the fingerprints which they leave in the empirical record. In general, PT may be executed to shallow (minimalist) or extensive (maximalist) ends, wherein the processes' causal mechanisms are broken down and pursued intensively after similarly exhaustive theoretical contextualization so as to find the shape of the fingerprints and demonstrate their causal impact. In general, process tracing offers a number of different routes with which to analyze research problems and orient itself about the black box which is to be mechanistically filled. Process tracing offers theory testing, theory building, and also outcome-explaining options to researchers. For this project, two primary directions are plausible. Theory

testing in process tracing derives from a larger corpus of literature and events which together support the previous existence of the causal variable, of the policy in question.

With the identification of quality case studies, generalizability becomes an increasingly feasible goal and aspect of PT-driven studies. This means that in theory-driven IR studies, chosen theories and families of cases can gain great significance by virtue of their prior relationships and their potential applicability.

PT Varieties, options, and differences

As a result, theory testing process tracing suggests that theory building for testing can occur only at a particular point of previously accumulated scholastic and theoretical development, after which it is necessary and possible to test the developed theory. As a result, it is possible to argue that theory testing process tracing offers a generative, case seeking approach that seeks to confirm a broader pattern identified by a developed, given theory. Research that in turn confirms a given variable's or policy's fingerprints then comes to hold the power to corroborate or deny the overall impact of the causal agent in question. As a relatively top down approach, theory testing possesses iron assumptions that distinguish it from its relevant flexible counterparts.

The second option, outcome explaining process tracing, is explicitly a case driven and case focused approach seeking causal mechanisms that explain a given historical outcome. This is to say that the causal agent, or the undefined black box for the present moment, may be generally known, as the researcher is not starting purely from scratch and does not require a fully fleshed theory in order to proceed. Instead, outcome explanation via process tracing concerns a search for mechanistic explanations of an event which has definitively passed, which is well known, and possesses a reasonably ample amount of documentary evidence from which to construct and analyze the overall process which brought history to pass as it did in that instance.

In this instance, as with the previous option of theory driven process tracing, only limited generalizations are possible, however in this case, they are even more narrow as they seek to explain not a broader phenomenon contemporary to the researcher, but only a specific case and as a kind of unique set.

Further, where within outcome explaining, the outcome is known, as are some of the variables which did likely contribute to the outcome, mainly the manner in which the outcome and variables blended and impacted one another are in question. In theory testing, where a variable and its causal mechanisms are postulated to have a strong presence and impact, theory building asks relatively blindly: what is the causal agent or the causal mechanisms creating the given outcome in question? Theory building explicitly requires that the researcher remains relatively unaware of the causal variable or mechanisms at work in their research and thus unaware of how to regard their data or the plausible outcomes which may help them triangulate their causal agent and its mechanisms.

Why PT is appropriate to this project

Process tracing is a particularly effective method for the external study of institutions' policies. As such process tracing offers a systematic methodological approach to the analysis of policies components have been and can be discerned but whose internal workings and interconnections are technically only known by those executing the policy in government in this case. When process tracing is applied to the research subject of the present study, it allows us to build from existing empirical and theoretical knowledge in order to construct the very tools of the study. By deconstructing the multivector strategy into its component parts, it is possible to locate and trace the occurrence of its causal mechanisms via the mechanistic evidence which it creates across time and in interaction with other forces. By successfully creating analytic categories or mechanisms that compose suspected causal variable, and by successfully identifying traces of those

mechanisms in the empirical record, it is then possible to assess and judge the implications of that data reflexively upon both the theories used to identify the causal mechanisms in the first place and thereby of the existing theoretical model in use. More importantly, it becomes possible to re-assess the value of the causal variable (multivectorism) at large in the course of larger events. In this case, process tracing offers the logical steps which will allow the reassessment of multivectorism as a foreign policy strategy, and it will also permit reassessment of Kazakhstan's strategy and create greater understanding of its differing approaches with its diverse partners and its own region.

Justifying PT as the method with which to proceed

Process tracing, in relation to the present study, will work very effectively for its simple tracing of conceptualized causal mechanics throughout a diverse range of policy documents. Their emergence within such documents, though, requires generalizations established to fully define each mechanic's most powerful traits, as well as the manner in which seemingly similar constellations of factors may yet yield different outcomes. PT's generalizations must be regular and reliable enough to comprehending such ends and then using those inputs to create reliably varied and distinct tools for assessing the decision making process underway.

PT's reliable comparison of mechanics to assess their degree and styles of agreement and disagreement, and their various iterations, further aids in differentiating and comprehending the actions of the object under study. In essence, PT bares extensive similarities to comparative historical analysis and content analysis, which have been used to fruitful effect elsewhere, but relies upon establishing throughways between differing cases or processes of interest and comparing their impact.⁷⁸ Examination of the extent of differences and agreements, reliant upon extensive examination of the differing circumstances of those events and situations persisting at respective moments and locations, may unveil the distinct procedural differences at work producing varying

⁷⁸ Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China*, 35–38.

social outcomes. Contrasts, as a rule, are more powerful in their unveiling of essential distinctions, but need be contextualized alongside their points of agreement. Reliance upon this ‘method of difference,’ by virtue this study’s initial selection of specific, exclusively defined categories, means that the subject prefigures sharp contrasts to emerge against other foreign policy strategies, state ‘types,’ and societies.

Why Kazakhstan as the multivector case?

In this case, the different and unique qualities of the Republic of Kazakhstan and its stated reliance upon multivectorism, are considered comparable with other “omni-enmeshed” situations, such as those in Southeast Asia, as are East European states’ multivectored relations, and highly reflective of “middle power” approaches. Kazakhstan’s intrinsic value in Central Asia as a middle power derives from its critical oil supplies, international administrative role and capacities, and its pivot power which exploits many of the fracture points and connective tissue binding its southern, eastern, northern, and western neighbors together. In particular, multivectorism is the strategy by which Kazakhstan relates to other states, exploits them, and attempts to transform them. To establish and test the power of multivectorism against such alternatives, PT can powerfully conceptualize, deconstruct, and test what is essential to multivectorism, as well as identify what circumstances that may be entirely unexplained by it.

Broadly speaking, middle powers have assumed a role of some importance among larger powers which are increasingly struggling to assert themselves vis a vis one another and the world’s dispersed powers. In reality, major states cannot always or completely dominate smaller players, despite their many potential agreements or the oft-overwhelming force of their greater power. By itself, this reality provides for the inverse reality of middle powers to effect themselves in the international space. The real strength of middle powers states derives from the procedural and

stakeholder agency assumed while effecting wider projects alone and with other partners, which thus raises the stakes of these states' inter-relationships and their strengths vis a vis their partners.

Multivectorism's importance as a strategy of middle powers is a cause for the method's ongoing scrutinization in this study, while Kazakhstan's case possesses sufficient unique qualities – given its geography, intentions, and socio-economic profile – to accentuate the value of multivectorism as a test subject. Theoretically, Kazakhstan is a special, self-announced case of multivectorism and evolving sovereign practice. The Kazakhstani administration's flexible management of its internal and international relationships gives pause for interest.

More generally, Kazakhstan's place in international political economy remains influential and important, given the many relationships it physically intersects, and given the stress the RF, the PRC, the US, and the EU all exert upon Kazakhstan in their competition over Central Asia and Eurasia at large. For comprehension of these meeting points, Kazakhstan and multivectorism interface with 'traditional' understandings of IR by realism and liberalism, as well as numerous critical approaches to produce coherent outcomes.

How do we use PT to assess Kazakhstan's multivectorism?

Establishing the choice method: How do we assess Kazakhstan's foreign policy?

Given the presence of a wide range of relevant and established theoretical literature, original theory building does not make sense for this project. Outcome explaining process tracing could plausibly work for this project were it structured appropriately. In this case, the present project could indeed ask how Kazakhstan's situation came to be and how Kazakhstan's foreign policy contributed to this state of affairs. However, for the purposes of the present study, which is focused upon Kazakhstan's foreign policy strategy specifically, this approach would be inappropriate. Additionally, the case of Kazakhstan, being critical and important, is examined in the context of its heavily scrutinized foreign policy strategy, multivectorism, which is considered to be crucial to the state's

foreign policy practice. As multivectorism, the causal variable of this study, is a fully formed research subject of its own, many theories already exist to further narrow our method of theorizing causal mechanisms. Therefore, our actual question and subject demands an approach which samples and tests from its prior theorizations that have noted a discrete style of politics partially repeating among other middle power states.

Theory testing, for the present project, works and is chosen in order to confirm, and or refine, a predicted model given numerous prior examples and instances of multivector-like policies, and its capability to accept challenging models that may break the established theorization and the postulated idea that multivectorism may explain Kazakhstan's actions. Process tracing, which asserts and evaluates a theory, in this case, affords higher understanding of Kazakhstan's foreign policy direction as a case of the recurring strategy of multivectorism for its ability to establish positive answers about prior, now testable, unknowns. Therefore, theory testing offers the ability to assert and argue for the value of multivectorism as a causal agent in Kazakhstan's foreign policy and its relationship with its peers.

For the method to proceed, conceptualization of multivectorism's procedural mechanics, those which compose the very indicators of multivectorism at large, is critical to assessing the strength of its individual components themselves. The sum of such efforts should resolve questions as to how Kazakhstan manages middle power-middle power relations with its peers, in light of its multivectorism. This internally comparative approach, at base, interrelates multivectorism's components while requiring reliable criteria for expected evidence to be registered or admitted as matching the needs of the project. When discussing evidence criteria, therefore, we ask what form this study's projected "fingerprints," or indicators, should assume, their relative weight, and the manner of their interrelation. This comparative analysis's method of establishing weights to different

components' agreement and disagreement underscores the importance of clarifying the meaning-qualities gathered and interpreted.

What indicators demonstrate multivectorism?

Mechanics that reflect the immense transformative force of individual states' political economy will serve as the major proxy of Kazakhstan's foreign relations, given the post-1980s generations' fixation within globalization and development metrics and greater prosperity, as well as their general force of political economy following the termination of the Cold War and the submergence of both climate change and capitalism as pressing issues requiring rectification. The frequent instrumentalization of economic tools by multivector strategies and the frequent gathering of strategic power, defined broadly, along this very vector, materially generative and transformative, offers several means for assessment.

Fingerprints are the procedural residue of the causal agent's causal mechanics. These indicators are the evidence of the causal agent's operation and causal influence upon a situation and the means by which the causal agent's movement is traced. The present study's indicators reflect the object of study – an economically focused, diversifying foreign policy strategy that expands the player's sovereignty – and thus should operationalize the causal variable at large by virtue of their action and presence. These codes follow the mechanics' description and arrive pragmatically in the form of various policy-related documents upon different topics. Exemplar fingerprints of each mechanic will follow the mechanic descriptions.

By consequence, we will first describe the primary indicators we will use to identify multivector politics immediately and then link each indicator's component causal mechanisms together in a three-columned table alongside descriptions so as to establish the questions, evidence, and metrics sought when determining the presence of a given, active indicator while reviewing gathered archival materials. The below mechanics, and their metrics, will capture the dynamic

atmosphere of multivector politics amidst major powers and evolving global events and allow evidence to be siloed according to regular standards consistently. After sorting and coding raw data, it is possible to assess the relative and cumulative purposes of the differing bundles of policies and mechanics which together build multivectorism, as well as those which are most important in distinguishing Kazakhstan's format of relations with middle powers and major powers.

As this study has already reviewed the numerous features and criticisms of realist- and liberal-informed conceptions of IR, their varying roles within identified mechanics will be heavily qualified, and the mechanics will operate under critically informed (below-detailed) assumptions. Functionalist mechanics that will be used will reflect the instrumentalist aspect of state activism for middle power multivectorism.

Theories and Categories of Multi-vectored Action

As with MPs' increasing appearance and increasing force in international affairs after the 1960s, multivector-like policies gained an increasing presence in cleft zones inhabited by MPs and separating strategic major power opponents from one another, specifically following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. There, multivector actors, while under pressure to accommodate their many neighbors and larger powers, found greater freedom than during the Cold War's bipolarity, and they consistently began to play actors off one another for profit and to create a new environment.⁷⁹ In the research literature, multivectorism's major theorizations additively emphasize elements that reflect the multivector state's international negotiation of its sovereignty and power,⁸⁰ its gathering

⁷⁹ "As various greater powers (US, EU, China, India and Russia) claim leadership positions and pursue competing interests on both a global and regional scales, smaller states do not only come under increasing pressures to accommodate the interests of a greater number of actors, but they also seize the opportunity to 'play them off each other and leverage whatever advantages they possess.'" Gnedina, "'Multi-Vector' Foreign Policies in Europe," 1009; Walton, *Geopolitics and the Great Powers in the Twenty-First Century: Multipolarity and the Revolution in Strategic Perspective*, 48.

⁸⁰ In the context of asymmetrical bargaining, negotiation analysis highlights that power is not just a tangible object or a one-time occurrence, but rather a capacity. They emphasize that power is not limited to the more dominant parties and can be demonstrated through the skills, tactics, and strategies employed by individual negotiators. This includes the use of maneuvering, cunning, and the art of negotiation. Morriss, *Power: A Philosophical Analysis*, 19; Keohane and Nye, "Power and Interdependence Revisited," 734.

of strategic dividends by exploiting major powers' advances,⁸¹ the avaricious rent seeking of its elites,⁸² the mixing and multiple non-alliance-based alignments of state, economy, and much else with external sources of power (broadly and critically understood),⁸³ as well as the multivector state's enmeshing, interleaving, and transforming of foreign partners with itself and with others via omnienmeshment.⁸⁴

Bargaining with local rule

The present indicator of multivectorism draws initially upon cases of Central Asian logics for bargaining relations and external access right to the country, though it attempts to generalize widely enough to involve the relative situations present in other MPs also using the approach.⁸⁵ To such ends, one manner in which multivectorism is noteworthy reflects how it compels foreign players to frame engagement constructively with the local sovereign, local concerns, and the local organization of power because, instrumentally, they are the best team available given potential the alternatives present and the default oligarchic organization present worldwide.

Consequently, four general rules pertain and flow from external collaboration with local rulers as the multivector state seeks strategic gains. Foundationally, multivector governments and elites will abide primarily by pragmatism in their foreign relations so as to negotiate for the highest returns for the state, themselves, their connections, and society at large. By working pragmatically, they entail the foreign actor to bargain with the conditions of local rule and provide material and

⁸¹ See Blank, "The Influence of External Actors in Central Asia," 281–302, esp. 293, 296..

⁸² Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules: The New Great Power Contest in Central Asia*, 9–27; Gnedina, "'Multi-Vector' Foreign Policies in Europe," 1010. "The notion of local rules casts light on some of the state-level goals typically pursued by the Central Asian neopatrimonial regimes and the methods they deploy. Moreover, it underscores the importance of the interplay between domestic and external forces in shaping foreign policy. However, regime preservation, rent seeking, or clientelism are among a variety of goals, which also include more traditionally Westphalian ones." Contessi, "Foreign and Security Policy Diversification in Eurasia: Issue Splitting, Co-Alignment, and Relational Power," 300.

⁸³ Contessi, "Foreign and Security Policy Diversification in Eurasia: Issue Splitting, Co-Alignment, and Relational Power."

⁸⁴ Vanderhill, Joireman, and Tulepbayeva, "Between the Bear and the Dragon."

⁸⁵ Yu, *La Chine - Un Capitalisme Bureaucratique Forces, Forces, et Faiblesses*; Ishchenko and Zhuravlev, "How Maidan Revolutions Reproduce and Intensify the Post-Soviet Crisis of Political Representation."

technical assistance. The legal government's actions thus also reflect the desires of the country's various elites which, in the case of negotiations, play the role of brokers, gatekeepers, and stakeholders whose concerns must be satisfied as pertaining to management of entire industries, sectors, questions, government policies and much else, including private graft charges for the privilege of external access, even as they may opt ultimately to free ride on their end of the deal.⁸⁶

But by bargaining economically and politically over the terms of access to the state, the very process of negotiation creates bargaining games that activate strategies best suited to weaker states accustomed to asymmetrical discussions, especially concerning major, great, super-power states. In this fashion, multivector states begin to regard their own power as “Neither a thing nor an event [, but] a capacity” whose organization is not free for the taking. As multivector states, “neither balance nor bandwagon [but] bargain with competing external actors over the terms of cooperation,” complex tactics are employed to, variously, borrow power from the stronger target, borrow power from third parties, borrow power from context, or by manipulating the factors of the negotiation process itself.⁸⁷

Multi- or co-aligning with niche and instrumental partners

In dialogue with realist theories, Contessi raises coalignment – and from this ‘issue splitting’ – as the major internal mechanisms which multivectorism employs to segregate issue areas and partners from one another to the profit of the multivector player. Multivector players can thereby engage in sovereignty-sharing and -taking from their partners.⁸⁸

Standard realist theory anticipates multivector states will either bandwagon or balance with more powerful states, but Contessi indicates that the post-Cold War, globalized environment of the

⁸⁶ Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules: The New Great Power Contest in Central Asia*; Gnedina, “‘Multi-Vector’ Foreign Policies in Europe.”

⁸⁷ Gnedina, “‘Multi-Vector’ Foreign Policies in Europe,” 1009–10; Zartman, *Negotiations and Conflict Management: Essays on Theory and Practice*, 112–14.

⁸⁸ Contessi, “Foreign and Security Policy Diversification in Eurasia: Issue Splitting, Co-Alignment, and Relational Power.”

21st century requires the basic formulae of realism to be dispersed by the number of alternative partners and action areas available to any given state.⁸⁹ Therefore, strict, singular alignment on entire sets of issues to patron states is no longer necessary; instead, states may choose – as in a market – upon which issues to seek partners and relations, with which states to seek relations and benefits, and therefore choose how to consider such different relationships on different issues simultaneously. The operative point of interest for states pursuing multivector relations is that they slice or split issues from one another, dependent upon the partner at hand, to receive the preferred policy outcome. As one might expect, many issues may entail multiple alignments in different directions on separate questions, which can mean, strictly speaking, a state may possess a wide variety of potential partners and patrons.

Transformation of the environment is an aspect of multivectorism, as well. As major states have interests in options that “leave the real sovereignty and autonomy of the target states diminished,” tracking of interests and issues across time remains a valuable goal: interactions cannot be one off, as possible by formal games theorized in other cases.⁹⁰ Consequently, multivectorism’s alignment mechanism aims toward transforming the environment while also insulating the state and its leadership from ideological pressure beyond; weakening its export partners’ bargaining leverage by diversification of its trade relations and targets; and finally, promotion of socioeconomic development in general.⁹¹

Multiple layering and enmeshing relations

Omnienmeshment, meanwhile, draws upon a diverse range of thought of a primarily critical nature vis a vis the structuralist categories of realist international relations theory. To the extent that states which are not major powers must respond to strategic actors, soft balancing has long been

⁸⁹ Neufeld, “Hegemony and Foreign Policy Analysis: The Case of Canada as Middle Power.”

⁹⁰ Blank, “The Influence of External Actors in Central Asia,” 293; Gnedina, “‘Multi-Vector’ Foreign Policies in Europe.”

⁹¹ Contessi, “Foreign and Security Policy Diversification in Eurasia: Issue Splitting, Co-Alignment, and Relational Power.”

considered a feasible option by which smaller states could feign agreement while persisting as normal. However, middle powers' experimentations have discovered numerous alternative stratagems apart from deference by which it is possible to interweave major powers and strategic powers into a "web of sustained relation."⁹² Thus the balancing / bandwagoning paradigm instead becomes an open question of how best to manage complex relations and complex balancing via the material forces of economic and legal entrenchments to acquire strategic dividends in an environment which is not always non-zero sum.

While omnienmeshment does account for multivector states' leadership and their potential for graft, the concept emphasizes that multivector politics are not only the realization of an internal politics or the protection of its sovereignty. In this case, the formal material connections of economic relations that compose complex balancing and enmeshed economic and legal relations are composed concretely, actively, and daily, and they can be selectively toggled so as to punish and favor particular actions. Moreover, given the very particular nature of multivector politics and the zones in which it gains favor, omnienmeshment can operationalize multivector players' frequent pivot geographies as a political bargaining point to be used in conjunction with enmeshment politics. With these aspects, multivector players may jolt the potential costs of external actors, or undercut them altogether, for any strategic infringements to remind them of the multivector player's instrumental importance.

Individual causal mechs	Categorization	Mechs' Definitions
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⁹² Goh, "Great Powers and Hierarchical Order in Southeast Asia."

Skirt commitments, free ride ⁹³	Bargaining with local rule	Following agreements of a bi- or multilateral character, multivector states may break protocol and skirt on their end of bargains so as to gain marginal profits incidentally or over time.
Prisoner's bargaining ⁹⁴	Bargaining	This game-like imminence of bargaining summons the limited number of formal positive decisions and tactics which may employed to bring results. The four following points are the primary varieties identified by Zartman (2008); each contain their own respective sub-genres of related actions, and may be found in Zartma, 2008, 112-114. Gnedina's game analysis indicates that clever bargaining tricks are not a universal and constant foil versus more powerful bargaining partners; consequently, the multivector player's posture may eventually fold under pressure, but continually evolving circumstances can also bring ongoing victories to the multivector player. 1. "Weaker parties try to borrow power from the stronger target itself." 2. "Weaker parties try to borrow power from various third parties and sources." 3. "Weaker parties try to borrow power from the context." 4. "Finally, weaker states gained sources for power by using the negotiation process itself and its evolution to make their moves at appropriate times."
Wedging ⁹⁵	Bargaining	Wedging is an aggressive form of bargaining that makes more coercive use of functionalist state powers so as to frustrate the advances of bargaining partners due to their intransigence, bully-like qualities, or unwillingness to soften their positions. It contains six components: 1. Internationalization of disputes 2. Threat of defection 3. Loyalty trading 4. Information asymmetries 5. Exploitation of geography-specific factors for favorable terms 6. Conditionality of domestic economic development via investment requirements for local firms

⁹³ Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules: The New Great Power Contest in Central Asia*.

⁹⁴ Gnedina, "Multi-Vector Foreign Policies in Europe"; Zartman, *Negotiations and Conflict Management: Essays on Theory and Practice*, 112–14.

⁹⁵ Gnedina, "Multi-Vector Foreign Policies in Europe."

Policy and asset auctioning, bargaining * ⁹⁶	Bargaining	This receptive or passive approach relies upon foreign initiative to launch discussions and identify points for collaboration which the multivector state may then decide to bargain over bilaterally with that party or to respond by launching an ‘auction’ to gather the most favorable outcomes
Policy and asset shopping * ⁹⁷	Co-alignment	This proactive approach prefigures negotiations via searches and comparisons for the most lucrative policy partner and is thus distinct from bargaining tactics used during negotiations and from approaches that rely upon foreign initiative. While auctioning could occur in the midst of wedging tactics, such confrontational tactics are not necessary in this approach.
Diversify foreign, economic, security relations for greater optionality ⁹⁸	Co-alignment	Diversification to avoid over-exposure to a single state in daily affairs or during negotiations of economic, political, and other domains is the ends desired; creative negotiation tactics cannot proceed effectively without such alternative tilts which pre-limit the influence of harsh bargaining partners.
Eschewing alliances; hedging against over-reliance ⁹⁹	Co-alignment	As a general rule, alliances solidify relations and guarantee commitments; to retain flexibility, multivector states avoid alliances in favor of other conditional issue-based alignment relationships that underscore the state’s preferential partners in specific domains.
Functionalist issue collaboration / selection and mock	Co-alignment	Market-like preference selection and seeking of relations with select actors according to their ability to provide specific goods and services on non-military and security-

⁹⁶ Contessi, “Foreign and Security Policy Diversification in Eurasia: Issue Splitting, Co-Alignment, and Relational Power.”

⁹⁷ Contessi.

⁹⁸ Contessi.

⁹⁹ Locoman, “Explaining Variations in International Alignments”; Contessi, “Foreign and Security Policy Diversification in Eurasia: Issue Splitting, Co-Alignment, and Relational Power”; Goh, “Great Powers and Hierarchical Order in Southeast Asia,” 121.

alignments, a la the former Third World; Patron shopping ¹⁰⁰		based questions.
External balancing ¹⁰¹	Co-alignment, omnienmeshment	This refers to external foreign policy coordination with other similarly disposed states against a unified major power and security threat
Loyalty trading ¹⁰²	Omnienmeshment	Loyalty trading bares similarities with some aspects of the 'bargaining' indicator, broadly defined, but the transactional character of loyalty trading specifically emphasizes the ongoing relations and intermeshing of mutually shared interests in pursuit of common goals; while strategic dividends may be gained, their quality is shared, international, and socialized beyond the exclusive benefits of the multivector player's borders.
Anchor local action within bi- and multilateral relations or precedent; 'Collective Sovereignty' ¹⁰³	Omnienmeshment	In the fashion of loyalty trading, the development of overlapping 'collective sovereignty' over select issues of shared administrative and governance interest also follows the dispersion and sharing of sovereign administration in non-Westphalian forms.
Local access requirements ¹⁰⁴	Omnienmeshment	Transformation of the national follows from successful development of economic and strategic circumstances provided by gatekeeping, and the common inclusiveness of the multivector player within domestic industries or sectors accentuates such interests.
Conditional sharing of industrial sectors, market access ¹⁰⁵	Omnienmeshment	Transformation of the national follows from successful development of economic and strategic circumstances provided by gatekeeping
Internal balancing ¹⁰⁶	Omnienmeshment	Internal balancing reflects aspects of traditional security concerns in that the state must martial resources domestically for state defense against a polarizing threat.

¹⁰⁰ Barnett and Levy, "Domestic Sources of Alliances and Alignments: The Case of Egypt, 1962–1973"; Contessi, "Foreign and Security Policy Diversification in Eurasia: Issue Splitting, Co-Alignment, and Relational Power"; David, "Explaining Third World Alignment"; Blank, "The Influence of External Actors in Central Asia"; Contessi, "Foreign Policy Diversification and Intercontinental Transport Corridors," 2018.

¹⁰¹ Pape, "Soft Balancing against the United States."

¹⁰² Vanderhill, Joireman, and Tulepbayeva, "Between the Bear and the Dragon."

¹⁰³ Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules: The New Great Power Contest in Central Asia*.

¹⁰⁴ Neafie, "No One Stole Anyone Else's Cheese": The Politics of Infrastructural Competition in Kazakhstan."

¹⁰⁵ Neafie; İpek, "The Role of Oil and Gas in Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy"; Contessi, "Foreign Policy Diversification and Intercontinental Transport Corridors," 2018.

¹⁰⁶ Pape, "Soft Balancing against the United States."

		However, internal reorganization in this case reflects the contextualized, non-individual state adaptations that accompany aspects of alignment politics.
Soft balancing ¹⁰⁷	Omnienmeshment	In the face of overwhelming power, minority states may retain an oppositionist character and policies via measures that combine non-military means to frustrate the unconditional, unilateral actions of the opponent while also raising the net costs for such actions - particularly in the domain / perspective / context of singular bilateral relations, as coordination of soft balancing practices may prove difficult to coordinate or institutionalize reliably or effectively. Between weaker, near-parity players, such tactics may also assemble passive, non-military means of conflict or contestation.
Regional leadership / manager / collaborator, uneven MP-ship ¹⁰⁸	Omnienmeshment	Initiative taker and builder of functional regional authorities and mechanistic roles in international institutions and regional politics.
Concretize int'l connections, self-instrumentalization through infrastructure ¹⁰⁹	Omnienmeshment	Development of infrastructure to materialize multivector states' physical connections, instrumental value, and enmeshed quality amidst numerous partners and relations.
Multilateralist, bilateralist, organizational, regionalist politics ¹¹⁰	Omnienmeshment	Engagement in group work multiplies the value-added and efficacy of multivector players' efforts to control its terms of engagement and the manner in which its region is being regulated and transformed according to its wishes. These can also be deployed to erect partial measures for modulation or reconciliation of administrative issues.

¹⁰⁷ Pape.

¹⁰⁸ Cooper, *Niche Diplomacy*; Jordaan, "The Concept of a Middle Power in International Relations"; Hadjiyiannis, "Regionalism and Multilateral Trade Liberalization with Asymmetric Countries"; Pratt, *Middle Power Internationalism: The North-South Dimension*; Cooper, Higgott, and Richard Nossal, *Relocating Middle Powers: Australia and Canada in a Changing World Order*.

¹⁰⁹ Neafie, "Producing the Eurasian Land Bridge."

¹¹⁰ Goh, "Great Powers and Hierarchical Order in Southeast Asia"; Henrikson, "Middle Powers as Managers: International Mediation within, across and Outside Institutions"; Beeson and Higgott, "The Changing Architecture of Politics in the Asia-Pacific."

Safeguard boundaries (sovereignty and national interests) ¹¹¹	Omnienmeshment	Efforts to retain national distinction reflect the multivector state's confused existence within, and exploitation of, the legal framework of a nation-state, market-reliant international system. The manners in which sovereignty may be defended vary widely, and so the diversity entails great regulation and observation of partners' relations with the multivector player.
Gatekeeping with national interest ¹¹²	Omnienmeshment, Bargaining	By delimiting the border and supremacy of the sovereign within the borders of the state, the multivector player uses the international law enshrining the nation-state system to decide upon entry and interaction of actors to reclarify its authority and discriminate in its foreign relations and in its preferences.
Capitalization upon pivot status ¹¹³	Omnienmeshment	Exploitation of geography to explicit influence- or power-gathering ends and in conjunction together with wider institutionalizing approaches.

Data collection

Data collection transpired in the National Archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan, located in Astana. The data consulted and gathered was focused within the work of ministries of external economic affairs, and the materials were concentrated in the ministries' work during the 1990s and early 2000s. Subject ministries and data were selected against others due to the international nature of the work concerned and for the heavy focus upon economic connections, which often make up so much of MP states' concerns. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was not consulted primarily on account of time restrictions. Additionally, its public accessibility was under heavy doubt as no archive was publicly advertised and no office for such matters could be located; security clearances, during an inverse scenario, would also likely have been required.

¹¹¹ Vanderhill, Joireman, and Tulepbayeva, "Between the Bear and the Dragon"; Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules: The New Great Power Contest in Central Asia*; Blank, "The Influence of External Actors in Central Asia."

¹¹² Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules: The New Great Power Contest in Central Asia*; Gnedina, "'Multi-Vector' Foreign Policies in Europe."

¹¹³ Neafie, "Producing the Eurasian Land Bridge."

Chapter 4: Kazakhstan's foreign relations with its neighbors

The Republic of Kazakhstan is a middle power in its regional domain and in the wider international space. Following independence from the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan possessed a unique perspective for its environment. To retain its effective sovereignty, it was necessary that Kazakhstan connect itself to partners near and abroad to progressively leverage and build its position alongside that of states whose politicking may seek to transform the state into a zone of pure rivalry and unadulterated contest – all at the expense of Kazakhstani leadership and its public. Kazakhstan's early multivectorism sought to connect its immediate Central Asian neighbors with its own 'venture outward' solution to its economic and foreign policy condition.

In the immediate terms entire post-Soviet environment, this entailed that Kazakhstan to seemingly fragment its attention in three directions. In the first, Kazakhstan worked upon regionalist programs, organizations, and related bilateral relationships; in the second, they focused upon post-Soviet politics with other members of the CIS to develop a partial continentalism; and in the third, they pursued internationalist extra-CIS, relationships. While in pursuit of economic and geostrategic transformation, Kazakhstan's multivector strategy labored to accumulate strategic dividends from its relationships so as to profit from engagements framed as mutually activities. Despite major troubles in the regionalist ventures of Kazakhstan's multivectorism, the country's domestic stakeholders witnessed adequate results elsewhere that re-affirmed the state's general heading. Self-selected regional and international stakeholders also approved, even as the parallel policy streams' simultaneity confused some of Kazakhstan's lesser partners and even some of its internal constituents.

Kazakhstan's partners, then, can be considered in three general groupings that may be considered as providing toward different sub-goals in an overarching strategy, as Kazakhstan's

multivector approach has expanded and solidified with time. Where previously obscured by Kazakhstan's post-Soviet weakness and poverty, the multivector approach has evolved and rooted into its longest-standing and largest stakeholders. Kazakhstan's current form of multivectorism includes relations with middle powers and great powers, but it passed through distinct stages where it fought for close relations with its Central Asian neighbors.

In the immediate post-Soviet environment, the long-term significance of Kazakhstan's regionalist aims towards its Central Asian neighbors was not immediately serious or valuable. Kazakhstan's internationalist paths – via multivectorism and within its Eurasianism – offered the possibility of anchoring Kazakhstan's success in the number and quality of its international relationships in addition to its local circumstances. Kazakhstani Eurasianism likewise sought to establish the country as a physical and ideological crossroads for the Eurasian landmass with imminent connections specifically to both East Asian and European players. Likewise, Kazakhstan's regionalist pathways sought a stable neighborhood capable of managing daily administrative needs and also capable of connecting with continental and globally oriented development.

Difficulties in common works: the troubles surrounding CIS

Kazakhstan specifically sought to transform its environment, and this naturally required involvement with its many neighbors. However, direct bilateral relationships were not the frequently the best model Kazakhstani leadership could envision; the bulk of Kazakhstan's early relations with other Central Asian states, therefore, took place within post-Soviet institutions, especially within the CIS. While relations often escaped the CIS and transpired within other organizations – such as those championed by Kazakhstan, as with the Eurasian Community, or within other summit platforms, as with Cholpon Ata – such efforts often ran aground in light of each state's differing motives and

individual interest in direct, profitable relationships with larger powers, autonomous niches, or singular dominance over the region.

Troubles connecting the regional to a wider bridgehead

The divergent options available to the Republic of Kazakhstan prompted the state to engage in negotiations with post-Soviet organizations.¹¹⁴ Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan's leader, proved a significant advocate for CIS integration and collaboration across the former Soviet Union. In line with his vision, Nazarbayev also suggested the establishment of a new organization, the Eurasian Community, in 1994 as a vehicle to effect regional and post-Soviet cooperation and integration. But during the tumultuous period following the Soviet Union's collapse, the Russian Federation's decision to terminate the Soviet ruble due to hyperinflation in June 1993 and replace it with a national Russian ruble amidst other issues also generated still more problems. It both frustrated Kazakhstani leadership's hopes for the CIS to function as an integrative successor organization and agitated them into more aggressive regionalist action.

CIS efforts represented a moment of ongoing connection via and even reliance upon previously Soviet lines of organization. The circumstances of Soviet collapse themselves brought great bitterness and alarm to the new situation. Production networks which previously provisioned Kazakhstan its livelihood were not globally outbound: in 1990, prior to independence, 91 percent of all exports were bound for other Union states and only 17 percent of imports were sourced from beyond the Soviet Union. Soviet dissolution disrupted these basic production networks and sales destinations and exposed Central Asia's and Kazakhstan's "profound" structural vulnerability to the newfound situation.¹¹⁵ During independence, such aspects continued, but with few administrative

¹¹⁴ Laruelle, "Kazakhstan's Dilemma on Eurasian and Central Asian Integrations."

¹¹⁵ Pomfret, *The Economies of Central Asia*, 50–60; Abazov, "Formation of the Non-State Sector and Privatization in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan," 343; Anceschi, *Analysing Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy*, 24n6-7. The new Central Asia was "profoundly" unprepared and "Lacked viable economies as well as state structures and ideologies capable of linking

renovations beyond late-Soviet deficiencies: by 1994, more than half of Kazakhstan's foreign trade transpired within the CIS, with 46.8 percent going to Russia; in 1995, all of Kazakhstani aluminum, chrome and iron ore was bound for Russia, while nearly all of Kazakhstan's industrial machinery arrived from Russia. More broadly, Kazakhstan still used the ruble and did not introduce a national currency, as many of its neighbors had already done.¹¹⁶

The potential and failure of the ruble zone made the ruble zone failure particularly impactful for Kazakhstan's evolving foreign policy, as they had gambled upon common group efforts proving a major solution to the problems facing the country and the entire post-Soviet region at large. With supranational integration considered so crucial to the survival of Kazakhstan, the Russian-oriented vector of Kazakhstan's CIS engagement became de-emphasized as it instead labored to rally its Central Asian neighbors to still another integrative project.¹¹⁷ The June 1993 conclusion of the Soviet ruble decisively punctuated the post-Soviet environment: Kazakhstan's CIS-oriented labors faced sharp limitations.

In 1994, in Moscow, President Nursultan Nazarbayev put forth a proposal for the establishment of a "Eurasian Community," building upon the principles he had outlined earlier in 1992 for the "Eurasian Union." Though political parity was intended to be foundational to the organization, by presenting this concept, Kazakhstan positioned itself as a proactive leader in the process of "Eurasian integration," despite facing limited enthusiasm from its Central Asian neighbors, who were already hesitant to join or work within the CIS.¹¹⁸ While the suggested Eurasian Community initiative went nowhere, action proceeded in other fora.

indigenous leaders to their societies," in Luong Jones, *The Transformation of Central Asia: States and Societies from Soviet Rule to Independence*, 11.

¹¹⁶ Brill Olcott, Åslund, and Garnett, *Getting It Wrong: Regional Cooperation in the Commonwealth of Independent States*, 116.

¹¹⁷ Anceschi, *Analysing Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy*, 16n14, 16; "Nazarbaev on Post-Soviet Integration 'from Below.'"

¹¹⁸ Anceschi, *Analysing Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy*, 16, 83.

From the mid- to late-1990s, the Cholpon Ata initiatives of 1994 and 1998 each proposed free trade zones to govern trade between independent Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan with the goal of eventually creating a customs zone. However, all states, including Kazakhstan, prioritized relationships with external Euroamerican and East Asian parties to internal market organization. Moreover, the regionalist drives even failed to create extra substance where it was already lacking: between 1994 and 1996 mutual trade actually fell 18 percent, and across the 1994 to 2000 period, mutual trade was cumulatively down 140 percent.¹¹⁹ Central Asian trade was moribund, while Kazakhstan's reliance upon Russian, Euroamerican, and East Asian connections experienced explosive transformation.¹²⁰

Despite such issues, Kazakhstan, together with Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Belarus, and Russia, finally formed the Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC) in Astana in 2000 (Uzbekistan was also briefly involved, between 2005 and 2008). The organization, which persisted until 2014, absorbed the existent responsibilities of the Cholpon Ata initiatives and followed Nazarbayev's policy lead. However, its inclusion of Russia and Belarus was an innovation of Kazakhstani provenance and reflected Kazakhstan's and Russia's rising oil fortunes. Cumulatively, such organizations conflicted decisively with alternative Central Asian regionalisms, originating principally from Uzbekistan. While Kazakhstan could not satisfy all parties, it still labored to include them in broader organizations despite Kazakhstan's greater success with Russian, Eurasian, and global partners.¹²¹

Kazakhstan's positive regionalism integrated Central Asia with an international approach, but its energetic pursuit also fundamentally differed from common cause with another equally devoted regional stakeholder, Uzbekistan. Accordingly, Kazakhstan's ongoing efforts again

¹¹⁹ Anceschi, 62.

¹²⁰ See also figure 3.1 and table 3.1 in Anceschi.

¹²¹ Anceschi, *Analysing Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy*, 57, 74; Burghart, "Great Game Changers?—The Changing Nature of Central Asian Energy"; Hanks, "Multi-Vector Politics' and Kazakhstan's Emerging Role as a Geo-Strategic Player in Central Asia"; Vanderhill, Joireman, and Tulepbayeva, "Between the Bear and the Dragon."

demonstrated its odd relationship to the post-Soviet space and how these interests were again mismatched with those of its Uzbek neighbors. Differences such as these weakened future potential for collaboration and problem solving, and divisions consistently added to these states' general weakness, especially as color revolutions struck Kyrgyzstan during the early 2000s twice and also struck Uzbekistan in 2005. Responses by regional governments to the events, especially to Uzbekistan's massacre in Andijan, led to Nazarbayev and the rest of the region disassociating from one another still further amidst Euroamerican pressure and despite shorter-term work to overcome the crisis.¹²²

Nonetheless, Kazakhstan's situation was one increasing success throughout the late 90s and early 2000s, thanks in large part to its increasingly marketable carbon reserves, meant that internationalist priorities governed its future and structured its willing accommodations of its neighbors, even as it worked aggressively to fold them into a larger internationally facing, diversified foreign policy program. Indeed, when weighing Kazakhstan's enduring diplomatic, trade, basic economic successes, as well as gains from local stability at this time – particularly in light of the still-disorganized, captive potential markets so near to home – its leadership was willing to accommodate such costs. But the unwillingness of Kazakhstan's neighbors to follow Kazakhstan into a simultaneously regionalist program that was highly solicitous of and committed to winning foreign engagement, while rejecting easy instrumentalization of their countries' or their sovereignty by those outsiders, also indicated that its long-standing engagements to re-orient Central Asia to a cooperatively pursued multivectorism had broadly failed.

¹²² Teles Fazendeiro, "Spirituality and Anti-Western Rhetoric in Uzbekistan in the Early 2000s."

Neighborly relations in Central Asia

The effort to enlist Central Asia via CIS programs into Kazakhstan's larger foreign policy vision possessed numerous hurdles. Most notably, Kazakhstan was not assisted by the reality of independence bestowing autonomous foreign policy priorities unique to each state's situation. Ongoing efforts to unite the region in common group works faced repeated setbacks owing to those states' intrinsic differences over matters of daily economic administration and common political rule of the region at large. Additionally, each state sought exclusive national growth and possessed ample reason to defect from collaborative developmental efforts in favor of relations and investment from Euroamerican sources and endorsement of locally specific ideological symbols.¹²³ In the immediate moments of the 1990s and afterwards, during the 21st century, such struggles persisted, and substantial Kazakh diplomacy did not manage to unite Central Asia's disparate new states.

All post-Soviet possess unique leaderships but also divergent state ideologies

Kazakhstan's efforts at enlisting its neighbors collided with Uzbekistan in a contentious competition for regional leadership. Additionally, the unique leaderships and policies of other states, such as Turkmenistan, posed challenges to Kazakhstan's attempts to sway them towards its goals. Uzbekistan, under the leadership of Islam Karimov, initially supported Central Asian cooperation while the state plausibly sat in control of the region after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Kazakhstani Eurasianism, in contrast, remained open to both Kazakhstani and Russian historical traditions, maintains openness to Europe, and aligns itself less decisively with Turkic, Central Asian, and Islamic traditions.¹²⁴

Uzbekistan's circumstances and leadership perceived exclusive regionalism and its own national leadership as the primary resolution to the fractured state of post-Soviet Central Asian

¹²³ Nomerovchenko, Kim, and Kang, "Foreign Policy Orientation of Independent Central Asian States."

¹²⁴ Laruelle, "Kazakhstan's Dilemma on Eurasian and Central Asian Integrations," 397.

politics. Islam Karimov, Uzbekistan's first and lifelong president, summoned historical imagery and allusions to Timurlane, historical Khanates, and Islam; by contrast, Nazarbayev and Kazakhstani leadership emphasized contemporary Kazakhstan's link to ancestral steppe riders, nomadism, and tangential proximity to Europe.¹²⁵ Additionally, Uzbekistan's regional interests, while they did include space for Euroamerican and East Asian investment, did not rely upon or desire extensive external connections – or desire inclusion of a Russian presence within its regionalism before the emergence of color revolutions. Uzbekistan's early presence in the CIS, for example, only occurred at Nazarbayev's extensive corraling prior to the Alma-Ata Declaration and later EAS discussions – one in which Georgia, for example, did not attend, and further avoided the CIS altogether for two years.¹²⁶

Uzbek and Kazakhstani relations found themselves in possession of diverging interests and conflicting positions. Their integrative visions (strict Central Asian regionalism, vs. a Eurasianist and globally oriented trade order), international goals (particularly, their willingness to instrumentalize and accommodate the RF), and historical-ideological reference points did not align. As a regional competitor to Uzbekistan and potential MP, Kazakhstan asserted common interests, but could not convince Karimov, even as Uzbekistan faced repeated setbacks with similarly sought Euroamerican partners. Following Uzbekistan's 2005 color revolution – one of several in Central Asia – a momentary rapprochement occurred wherein Nazarbayev supported the Karimov government's military crackdown against demonstrators and even extradited political opposition leaders. Kazakhstan, meanwhile, intensified its internationalist economic engagements and continued diversifying such connections to upgrade and transform its position in the region.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Nomerovchenko, Kim, and Kang, "Foreign Policy Orientation of Independent Central Asian States"; Laruelle, "Ideology of the 'Crossroads': Eurasianism from Suleimenov to Nazarbayev."

¹²⁶ Anceschi, *Analysing Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy*, 34.

¹²⁷ Sullivan, "State-Building in the Steppe: Challenges to Kazakhstan's Modernizing Aspirations."

Such belated actions between the two states were reflective of similarities in their political economy and their accompanying corruption.¹²⁸ However, such a rendezvous was not enough to win over Uzbekistan to altering its foreign policy approach to Kazakhstan's side long-term; Uzbekistan's cautious engagement within the CIS and CSTO (from which it withdrew in 2012) proceeded from its co-alignment with the RF over agreement concerning color revolutions. Nonetheless, Uzbekistan flipped sides in 2015 and began receiving direct military aid from the US government.¹²⁹ Similar non-commitment and unilateralism in Uzbek policy also characterized Uzbekistan's dismissals of organizations at large via its entries and later spontaneous exits from the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development, the EAEU, the CSTO, the Eurasian Economic Community, and the Central Asian Cooperation Organization (which was dissolved into the Eurasian Economic Community).¹³⁰

Meanwhile, Turkmen leadership and ideological production, notably, emphasized the rule of prior governments and figures that presided over prior 'golden ages' (altyn asyr) whose historical hallmarks were continuous neutrality and avoidance of fixed obligations. Reification of the policy has led Turkmenistan both to distancing from Central Asia at large and grandstanding domestically over the claimed achievements of the approach for the sake of its continuation.¹³¹ Kyrgyzstan, on the other hand, has experienced more political instability and has been more susceptible to external

¹²⁸ Yeager, "The CIA Made Me Do It"; Yessenova, "The Political Economy of Oil Privatization In Post-Soviet Kazakhstan."

¹²⁹ Kucera, "No Longer under Sanctions, Uzbekistan Gets 300 Armored Vehicles from U.S."

¹³⁰ Laruelle, "Kazakhstan's Dilemma on Eurasian and Central Asian Integrations"; Teles Fazendeiro, "Spirituality and Anti-Western Rhetoric in Uzbekistan in the Early 2000s"; Nomerovchenko, Kim, and Kang, "Foreign Policy Orientation of Independent Central Asian States," 401. The Organization for Democracy and Economic Development is also known as GUAM, after its members' names.

¹³¹ Denison, "The Art of the Impossible: Political Symbolism, and the Creation of National Identity and Collective Memory in Post-Soviet Turkmenistan," 1178; Kuru, "Between the State and Cultural Zones: Nation Building in Turkmenistan," 76; Anceschi, *Turkmenistan's Foreign Policy: Positive Neutrality and the Consolidation of the Turkmen Regime*, 143; Nomerovchenko, Kim, and Kang, "Foreign Policy Orientation of Independent Central Asian States."

influences. Tajikistan has focused on maintaining close ties with Russia due to historical, linguistic, and cultural factors, as well as economic interdependence.¹³²

Altogether, Central Asian states' specific leaderships, diverging regional goals, and statist ideological programs created circumstances where material, industrial capacity could continue, in a modified form, but the prevailing level of poverty and relative regional equality were free to engage in statecraft – carefully. In this fashion, Turkmen, Uzbek, and Kazakhstani institutional visions and strategies were free to clash. Central Asian states possessed sharply differing interests, and Kazakhstan would struggle to win over such a diverse range of interests to any of its programs.

Benefits to preferring relations with Russians, Euroamericans, and others

Simultaneously, Central Asia's independent states stood to gain greatly by focusing their attention upon relationships with powers external to the region. Russia possessed more resources and a larger consumer market, despite its poverty, and western Europe and the United States each possessed investment and administrative resources with which to aid the region's reform (not to mention their own markets). In this fashion, Central Asian states and leaderships stood to gain by posturing and bargaining with external powers ignore the region's problems and to transform their individual circumstances in the midst of the 1990s, as all post-Soviet states struggled to reform and recover from the Soviet Union's collapse.¹³³

A challenging environment

Neighborly relations were considered a necessary component of Kazakhstan's early foreign policy regime. Kazakhstan's opportunities with more distant and advanced partners, it was thought, were valuable, but a united Central Asia afforded more opportunities than one broken apart by

¹³² Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules: The New Great Power Contest in Central Asia*, 116–34; Hiro, *Inside Central Asia*, 310–57.

¹³³ Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules: The New Great Power Contest in Central Asia*; Cooley, *Dictators without Borders: Power and Money in Central Asia*.

competitive pressures. However, Kazakhstan's relationships with its neighbors existed amidst dozens of other competing post-Soviet priorities – domestically, via basic stabilization of the country's economic system (particularly via fire-sale privatizations of numerous state assets), recovery from hemorrhaging its population, transformation of its legal code and political regime, in addition to international chaos.

Kazakhstan's southern neighbors in Central Asia represented a nested element of the country's overall efforts to transform the region at large and relate it with international partners, and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) proved to be a forum where a very substantial amount of its relations with its neighbors unfolded.¹³⁴ Contradictions would emerge as Kazakhstan attempted to integrate and reconcile other states within its leadership. The early years of interaction – while both bilateral and multilateral in character – included many meetings within organizations whose memberships acted more from forced circumstance than mutual preference. Their basic differences would derive from respective national industrial prospects, ideological projects, and perceived power-leverage in the region.

Nazarbayev's seeming Soviet nostalgia and independent action

Nursultan Nazarbayev was one of the strongest proponents of CIS integration and collaboration after the Soviet Union's collapse. Soviet Kazakhstan was heavily interconnected into the closed production systems of the USSR, and the republic's primary buyers of goods were other Soviet republics. After the collapse, this would prove problematic. Soviet Kazakhstan between 1989-1991 did not embark upon the limited market and property reforms pursued in other republics, and the overall disruptions to the economy caused a 31 percent shrinkage in the national economy and between 1992-1995, while inflation peaked in 1994 at roughly 3,000 percent; by 1996, 60 percent of

¹³⁴ Anceschi, *Analyzing Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy*, 11.

the economy had likewise gone private. With a raucous independence, Nazarbayev encountered an environment in which he perceived re-integration with Kazakhstan's CIS and previously Soviet partners as the primary panacea to the country's overall situation.¹³⁵

This integration would not prove isolated to only CIS countries: instead, such efforts had in view states and regions beyond the CIS and Central Asia as part of the multivector vision, even as direct contacts remained relatively infrequent. Kazakhstan would pursue further projects in the service of this wider program, and one as an equal with other parties. The country could not stand still in the face of difficulties or resistance from its neighbors but continue moving.

Strategy on the Formation and Development of Kazakhstan as a Sovereign State, published in May 1992: regionalism in multivectorism?

In Kazakhstan's conception of and response to its circumstances, multivectorism appeared as a critical strategy for uniting the country's seemingly disparate foci. In May 1992, only six months after the foundation of Kazakhstan, multivectorism was announced and outlined with the intent of linking Kazakhstan's value with its geostrategic position and generating a stable environment for the country's development.¹³⁶ Kazakhstan's CIS unionist plans, thus, were part and parcel of its efforts at engaging its Central Asian neighbors into regionalist programs of common economic and sociopolitical reform. These efforts likewise were aimed squarely at future connections with external powers and sought to mobilize Central Asia to meet the new world market era as a unit.

The importance of Kazakhstan's geostrategic position was thought to bring obvious attention and leverage to the country, which at the time reinforced the perception in elite policy circles that Kazakhstan would emerge as an influential force in the region. In spite of this intent, this

¹³⁵ Anceschi, 14–15; Yilamu, *Neoliberalism and Post-Soviet Transition*, 101.

¹³⁶ Anceschi, *Analysing Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy*, 15; Vanderhill, Joireman, and Tulepbayeva, "Between the Bear and the Dragon," 977.

attempt to attach and transform different levels of actions and partners, via multivectorized enmeshing and co-aligning of Kazakhstan's manifold diplomatic and economic diversifications faced difficulties. Kazakhstan's regionalism required pliant Central Asian neighbors so as to prove successful, where world partners required less convincing.

Analysis

While much of the early 1990s was devoted explicitly to recovery from the Soviet collapse each country within Central Asia specifically saw that they had possibilities in connections with the outside world. In addition to Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan realized that their oil possessions would be of great desire and use to outside external consumers and Uzbekistan specifically understood that if it could capture the region at large politically that it could prove to be the economic kingmaker and political kingmaker of the region at large. Kazakhstan was also aware of this and being the largest state geographically and the second largest in terms of population and foreseeably among the largest economically in the region in light of its material resources and their potential to catch further roles more broadly. As a result, the region at large witnessed both cooperative pressure from Kazakhstani leadership as well as the pressure to fragment economically and politically so as pursue individual projects such as neutrality or politically minded collaboration for hegemony with external powers. For Kazakhstan's multivector foreign policy strategy, which came online progressively as the country's leadership grew to understand that the tentative option floated in 1992 was in fact a serious one, many fundamental distinctions between the region and Kazakhstan's future partners would flummox the positive efforts they attempted.

Neighbors sought direct external bilateral relationships for themselves

Despite Kazakhstan's efforts to unite the region toward broader political economic and administrative goals that could revitalize the entire region, the features that drove Kazakhstan's own

desirability with external powers had little tangible use or desire for its immediate neighbors. Central Asia was not a major industrial hub and therefore it could not use in ample quantity Kazakhstan's carbon resources, which meant many fewer purchases transpired between the countries. More directly, Kazakhstan had less value as an economic partner than as a simple neighbor, and in this regard Kazakhstan very clearly positioned and postured itself as a primary leader for the region, despite its appearance of even handedness.

Other states too sought to upend the situation where in Uzbekistan or Kazakhstan were likely to predominate in the region. In the immediate case of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan competition drove harder relations and produced fewer agreements of substance in effect for the region at large. While these differences even went up to the leadership level with Nazarbayev and Karimov personally disliking one another the broader projects the two men represented reflected the very real proliferation of ideological projects, autonomy, and independent state goals in the region that buffeted centralizing cooperative efforts. Without the political military economic strengths to impose itself outright in the region Kazakhstan was forced to rely on the specialties produced and refined by its multivector strategy. In this vein what went wrong?

Coalignment required assent to KZ's foreign policy and developmental projects

Strictly speaking, multivectorism's general intention is the transformation of the practitioner's region, but this entails that the practitioner successfully parlays with its targets via enmeshing or co-alignment strategies. The third option, engaging outsiders *to bargain* with the multivector player, is a far more passive approach, in that the external player only has one method to engage the tactic – namely, the external actor must initiate negotiations in pursuit of some goal in the multivector player's domain. Policy auctioning is the only available option, and it must be initiated by the outsider. Wedging, prisoner's bargaining, and free riding, meanwhile, are launched

specifically by the multivector player after previous or extended negotiations. However, in the context of larger self-organization and collective action projects— particularly during the 1990s and early 2000s – few of these tactics within ‘bargaining with local rule’ were relevant and employed by Kazakhstan with its neighbors, as foundational points for co-alignment were not identified owing to Central Asian states’ distinct methods of pursuing national interests.

Elsewhere, consequently, Kazakhstan’s aggressive campaigning to rally its Central Asian neighbors to extensive works in multilateral and developmental organizations should be seen as efforts to co-align and enmesh. Ideally, these members and groups would work synchronously toward a large agenda of Central Asian connectivity with the outside world and toward self-management. In particular, such ends require that Kazakhstan used *co-alignment* tactics: while outright mutual and external alliances were not desirable, as issues might demand flexible responses, general diversification of relations founded upon issue-based collaboration were tangibly desirable.¹³⁷

The essentials of collaboration which followed flowed from the implications of Kazakhstan's own modernization goals. The modernization of the state and economy is often considered crucial for multivectorism's success. Without the capacity to develop a diversified society and economy, the state may struggle to implement its foreign policy goals effectively. Discussions on promoting polyarchy and liberal reforms highlight the need for administrative transformation, but they also hint toward similar difficulties that may develop in foreign relations. Kazakhstan, in its pursuit of industrial and economic diversification through trade frequently emphasizes the importance of modernization in its foreign policy as ongoing gains are thought to be difficult without such upgrades.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Contessi, “Foreign Policy Diversification and Intercontinental Transport Corridors,” 2018.

¹³⁸ Sullivan, “Kazakhstan at a Crossroads.”

For powers outside of Kazakhstan's developmental project and goals, such interests fundamentally required co-alignment which agreed to the regional structure of economy and geostrategic importance which might follow from Kazakhstan's global politicking. With few agreements on such foundational questions found among Central Asian players – during the 1990s or since – Kazakhstani co-aligning efforts have gone unreciprocated and proven broadly unsuccessful.

Enmeshing required Kazakhstan already have lots to share for the idea to be more lucrative than direct bilateral relations

In similar fashion, omnienmeshment required Kazakhstan to already possess lucrative features at independence (and thereafter) to either entice its neighbors to take the initiative and find effective grounds for expanding relations or that Kazakhstan successfully convince them of the virtues of Kazakhstani institutions, programs, efforts, and fundamental leadership. Kazakhstan on its own could not provide substantial value-added to the region outside of its carbon wealth and diplomatic amenability to others' projects, but it could enhance its influence by pursuing issues of general importance to the entire region within which others may operate. By consequence, Central Asian returns from marginal engagement with Kazakhstan could and would possess increasing interest in Kazakhstan's future model of action and its future success in securing transit routes and carbon exports, but not during the 1990s and early 2000s when such developments remained tentative or in their infancy.¹³⁹

Silk Roads, East-West connections, and structural power

By virtue of the increasing importance of infrastructure within Kazakhstan's efforts to capture external attention, with oil and transit infrastructure, Kazakhstan captured increasing

¹³⁹ Contessi, "Foreign Policy Diversification and Intercontinental Transport Corridors," 2018; Vanderhill, Joireman, and Tulepbayeva, "Between the Bear and the Dragon."

structural power by sitting astride highly valued east-west routes. In the realm of pipeline politics, Kazakhstan's multiple memberships in post-Soviet organizations with heavy Russian presences, in Central Asian organizations that created general regional precedence, and heavy engagement with Euroamericans provided the country connections and leverage.

After independence, numerous pipelines routes were initially planned to diversify Kazakhstani oil from Russian pipes, but as existing Russian infrastructure was adequate to reach Europe, construction of an important route to the PRC was selected in 1997, with the first leg completed in 2003, and over the desires for another route favored aggressively by Azerbaijani and Euroamerican stakeholders.¹⁴⁰ Had earlier Chinese relations not proven more amicable – or border negotiations and security cooperation proven less productive since Kazakhstani independence – greater attention may have retained a westward facing perspective.

Similar rationales also abounded with proliferating railway lines. Details and leverage when engaging in route planning, shipping itineraries, logistical hubs and special economic zones, and freight partnership agreements allow Kazakhstan to build the region's transit priorities and its overall structure while using geography to mediate transfers between command capitalists and consumer production suppliers.¹⁴¹ The confluence of leverage in oil and production transit derives, principally, from Kazakhstan's capability of providing tangible service to external powers through "consortium diplomacy" that may be accessed or managed via co-alignment.¹⁴² The increasing connectivity and presence of economic crises connecting the PRC with western Europe specifically also meant that such powers would only become accessible as Chinese influence rose and buyers on both sides sought to shave costs even further.

¹⁴⁰ The proposed Azerbaijani option is known as the Trans-Caspian Oil Transport System. İpek, "The Role of Oil and Gas in Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy," 1187.

¹⁴¹ Neafie, "Producing the Eurasian Land Bridge: A Case Study of the Geoeconomic Contestation in Kazakhstan."

¹⁴² Contessi, "Foreign Policy Diversification and Intercontinental Transport Corridors," 2018, 765–79.

Conclusion

The emergence of Kazakhstan's multivector project following independence was hindered by challenges in engaging its Central Asian neighbors, who pursued their own plans and bilateral relationships, prioritizing individual wealth over regional cooperation; by the allure of foreign economic relationships; and by the frail dependency upon Soviet architecture which all post-Soviet states witnessed following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Where Kazakhstan's neighbors, possessing their own plans, resources, and strategic bases, often deferred from Kazakhstani initiatives to expand relations beyond basic diplomatic recognitions and cross border traffic, Kazakhstani oil was being prospected by Italians, Chinese, Russians, Americans, and the country's utility put to use in global production. Additionally, each country sought its own bilateral relationships and individual wealth at the expense of their neighbors.

At the time of independence, Kazakhstan lacked structural power and relied on pre-existing material structures that connected it to a now-defunct Soviet production network that directed all materials toward Russia for value-added processing. Its weak position gradually improved through time after reorientation of its industrial strengths and transit networks toward buyers and actors on the international stage, all while gradually reducing Kazakhstan's outright dependency upon the Russian Federation to points of pragmatic common interest. While Kazakhstan found more success in co-aligning with Russia than with Central Asia, via its credit and industrial support, as well as use of its oil infrastructure, such co-alignment did not occur in a vacuum.

Kazakhstan's attempts to foster Central Asian cooperation and common alignment of priorities were founded upon differing economic capabilities and the independent states' cross-threaded priorities. Without obvious greater common interests, or creation of them via consequent collaboration, Kazakhstan's odds of gaining basic negotiating successes with its immediate southern

neighbors, let alone gaining ground for ongoing manipulation of their interests by use of enmeshing and co-aligning tools, were bound to face greater difficulty than external industrial powers.

Kazakhstan's strategic engagement with external players occurred as its efforts in its own region faced challenges. Over time, Kazakhstan accumulated structural power through its ongoing successes, paving the way for revisiting relationships with its neighbors after the passage of time and significant events. The leverage gained through multivectorism was a relatively late development for Kazakhstan, but it contributed to the country's growing influence and opportunities for regional engagement.

Chapter 5: Kazakhstani-South Korean Relations

Middle power theory postulates that middle powers, in keeping with their namesake, are regional actors which take an entrepreneurial role in forming organizations and solving problems via multilateral organizations. They also seek to relate themselves to the international space and major powers through their highly specified interests and action spaces, which may draw upon their geographies, economic sectors, and diplomatic specializations. Like other states, Kazakhstan possesses a definite political geography that structures its preferences and the calculus of its ongoing decisions. But they also provide points of vulnerability to be overcome: in Kazakhstan's backyard, the PRC and Russia awaited and presented Kazakhstani leadership differing procedural issues and ideological worries.

With Eurasianism forming one aspect of Kazakhstan's approach, interconnection beyond the CIS became increasingly possible as Kazakhstan's oil industry came online.¹⁴³ Beyond the already high value the PRC brought to East Asia, other Pacific Rim players (notably South Korea, Japan, and Malaysia) are mentioned extensively in Nazarbayev's public addresses as both model actors for Kazakhstan's own economic circumstances and as cultural partners beyond Central Asia. The fully-fledged model of the 'developmental state' had already provided economic lift-off and retained the national culture; why couldn't they act as a guide to even later comers?¹⁴⁴

In this way, Nazarbayev and Kazakhstani leadership again distinguished themselves from their immediate southern neighbors. The most culturally and ideologically loaded of such events occurred with Nazarbayev's 2014 Atyrau speech wherein he made the ideological case for Kazakhstan's deeper historical connection to Mongolia and East Asia than with Central Asia and its

¹⁴³ İpek, "The Role of Oil and Gas in Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy."

¹⁴⁴ Ambrosio and Lange, "Mapping Kazakhstan's Geopolitical Code," 543, 552–55; Wade, *Governing the Market: Economic Theory and the Role of Government in East Asian Industrialization*.

many troubled *-stan* governments.¹⁴⁵ The declaration, which has often been suggested as a purely rhetorical gesture and was quickly papered over by Nazarbayev's staff, suggested both a divorce from Central Asian politics and the adoption of a new name to underscore the difference, *Qazaq Eli*, even highlighting much of the difficulty he faced in attempting regional collaboration. Despite the suggestion's isolation, the comments reflect clear indications by Kazakhstani leadership of its regard for different tiers of partners and its partial willingness to provide the ideological material for alternative actors, such as today's deeply troubled and isolated nats-pat movement, to potentially generate the basis for such future changes.¹⁴⁶

As we will see, Kazakhstan's bilateral relationship with South Korea occupies a particular niche and plane of focus. It may consequently be used fruitfully to test for the operative features of Kazakhstan's multivectorism. Of course, Kazakhstan's relations with South Korea are not all-encompassing and require further contextualization with other cases, but they provided Kazakhstan great instrumental economic value as well as strategic opportunities to transform itself domestically and via further international engagements.

Background

Kazakhstan's pursuit of upgraded connections, technology, money, and revenue led Kazakhstan to find partners who could agree with its interests. The multi-pronged path enabled by multivectorism induced Kazakhstan to find points of productive contact to orient relations and bring connections back to Kazakhstan's local circumstances and diplomatic standing. The drive successfully created a flurry of connections and initiative with Pacific Rim countries not found in Kazakhstan's relationships with its immediate geographical neighbors.

¹⁴⁵ Anceschi, *Analysing Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy*, 76–79.

¹⁴⁶ Laruelle and Peyrouse, "Central Asia Looking East: The Search for Asian Dynamism"; Laruelle, "Which Future for National-Patriots? The Landscape of Kazakh Nationalism."

The most important of Kazakhstan's work with middle powers, particularly in light of Kazakhstan's growing preference for economic and industrial diversification, has involved countries such as South Korea, Japan, Malaysia, and India and comprises a variety of inputs and uses. South Korea, for example, is an important energy and technology investor and supplier. Japan, on the other hand, provides donors, technical advice, and functionalist support, as well as commercial deals almost exclusively for Uzbekistan. Malaysia contributes technology and cultural support and affairs related to Islam, while India, which was impactful during the Soviet period, now has a low presence and mainly consolidates its northern positions against Pakistan. India thus today primarily offers Kazakhstan possibilities for future oil contracts.¹⁴⁷

In particular, however, South Korean relations with Kazakhstan have proven dynamic and possess many components that enrich the overall relationship. Among others, the two countries share diaspora issues, as Kazakhstan hosts a substantial number of South Koreans displaced by the events of the 20th century. Additionally, as of 2015, Seoul was the 7th largest commercial partner of the entire Central Asian region. Thus, South Korea's relations and integration and involvement in Central Asia are not limited to Kazakhstan, but it is deeply involved in them nonetheless. The Korean Consortium of the Caspian Oil Project acquired, among others, a 27 percent share in the Zhanaozen offshore oil block in Kazakhstan's share of the Caspian Sea.¹⁴⁸

In 2009, Astana and Seoul signed important energy and technological investment accords worth \$5 billion. Further bilateral relations had also consolidated following the beginning of the Balkhash power plant's construction in 2012 and the beginning of further Caspian Sea exploration and additional rare earth metal exploration within the country, as well as collaboration on high-speed

¹⁴⁷ Laruelle and Peyrouse, "Central Asia Looking East: The Search for Asian Dynamism."

¹⁴⁸ Peyrouse, "South Korea's Advances into Central Asia."

rail development.¹⁴⁹ Thus, in this strategic sector, South Korea follows only France, Germany, Russia, and Japan in Kazakhstan's rare earth metal market. Further connection with this, South Korea has received ample amounts of uranium from Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan since 2008, specifically via the Korean Electric Power Corporation. South Korea owns a 65% share in the Balkhash Power station via organizations known as KEPCO and Samsung C&T. Technological transfers have been arranged via numerous industrial collaborations. In this fashion, Hyundai, Samsung, and Korean rail have all worked with extensive involvement in the Kazakh market.¹⁵⁰

At the turn of the century, Kazakhstani-South Korean relations began to identify deeper causes for collaboration. The two sides had already worked through the establishment of basic trade relations and had traded ambassadors, and they now sought planes for mutual investments and work. The logistical and technological aspects of the relationship were only just beginning a series of high-value trades that denied the need for reliance upon major powers for mutual, bilateral relations and highlighted Kazakhstan's success in locating partners with whom it could engage in peer-level, high profit, and high-leverage relations to its domestic, regional, and international diplomatic benefit. In the section that proceeds, the special means by which Kazakhstan progressively engages South Korea *will be marked in italics and refer to practices identified and defined in Table 1 of Chapter 2*. Analysis these marked items and discussion of their implications will then follow.

The Archives

The relationship between Kazakhstan and South Korea is marked by many features of economic and technical cooperation of a mutual character. Kazakhstan offered South Korea direct relationships and contracts, while South Korea reciprocated and, in many cases, raised the stakes of cooperation. The aspects of their dealings were highly functionalist and even baldly so, with many

¹⁴⁹ Voloshin, "South Korea and Kazakhstan Consolidate Bilateral Cooperation."

¹⁵⁰ Voloshin.

mentioned organizations directly and their potential business efficacy in reaching Europe. As a result, the relationship between Kazakhstan and South Korea is of profound importance for the Kazakhstan Republic in its formative first decade.

In 2000, the state of Kazakhstani and South Korean relations were relatively subdued. During a joint meeting on trade and economic bilateral cooperation held in Seoul on August 23rd, 2000, Kazakhstani delegates listed Astana as a special economic zone and opportunity specifically for Korean investment. Moreover, the Kazakhstani delegates indicated their desire for South Korea to help Kazakhstan expand its oil development in the Caspian Sea. This was reciprocated by South Korea, as it offered to provide consumer electronics and information technology.¹⁵¹ By initially seeking to *diversify economic relations* with South Korean interests and by operationalizing its investment and technical support, Kazakhstan coaligned to begin relations amicably and to indicate its favor of a South Korean presence.

To build on this situation, in autumn 2001, South Korea opened a trade representative office in Almaty. The Korean company LG Electronics quickly followed, and it partnered with Kazakhtelecom OJSC while working from a joint contract to supply digital telecommunications products and IT services to both the city and region of Almaty. Mutual correspondence between the two countries accelerated. During a November 2001 conference stretching four days, Kazakhstan presented a proposal to the Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure for the Asian division of the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Kazakhstan's delegation was composed of two local firms alongside the assistance of the Kazakhstani Embassy; they together organized a presentation proposing a Northern Corridor of the Trans-Asian Railway, as well as the possibilities of transit and transport potential of Kazakhstan. Delegates from South Korea, Russia, the PRC signed memos of understanding and interest concerning the opportunity and corresponded a general desire for the

¹⁵¹ "Agreed Minutes of the 2nd Session," 25.

opportunity Kazakhstan presented in Central Asia.¹⁵² In this way, Kazakhstan took the initiative to create *regional leadership* in Central Asia by suggesting its territory be used to *concretize economic relations* through the physical construction of railways and installation of telecom equipment. If successful, the anchor dropped by Kazakhstan would help solidify this South Korean vector and expand its enmeshment among continental actors.

During June of the next year, South Korea's ambassador to the Kazakhstan informed them of South Korea's intention to participate in Kazakhstan's oil sector, especially in large volumes. South Korea's diplomat indicated that five leading South Korean business groups had united into a consortium and were already studying the production capabilities of Kazakhstan's oil sector.¹⁵³ Kazakhstan's Prime Minister soon thereafter expressed the Kazakhstani government's interest in additional South Korean participation within priority sectors of the Kazakhstani market. These specifically included agriculture, energy, petrochemical development, telecommunications, and oil technologies. In this instance, Kazakhstan expressed that South Korea could receive priority consideration during the provision of its desired oil contract in exchange for information technology and telecommunications support from South Korea in the record of the conversation between. Kazakhstan's Prime Minister and creates ambassador. The record relates that Kazakhstan "prefers those countries that, along with the development of oil and gas fields, will bring new technologies to Kazakhstan, and create a trade oriented production on their basis."¹⁵⁴ Kazakhstan's underscoring of the countries' mutual interest permitted coalignment in the development of Caspian energy supplies, and their connection with other issues as they both sought deeper *economic diversification*. In this fashion, Kazakhstan's transformation of Caspian oil contracts into a bargaining chip indicates that

¹⁵² "Information on the development of the issues."

¹⁵³ "Record of the conversation between," 111.

¹⁵⁴ "Record of the conversation between," 112.

leadership sought to *shop for assets* and was even open to the exchange of a future Kazakhstani favor where possible.

Other markers of bilateral cooperation soon mounted. During discussions between the Ministry of Trade and Economy of Kazakhstan and the Korean ambassador to Kazakhstan. It was discussed that 108 enterprises with South Korean investment operate in Kazakhstan and of those that, 47 were joint ventures, while 61 were of purely Korean Ownership. The plurality of these enterprises sold to the Kazakh domestic market (55.5 percent), while 7.5 percent were involved strictly in production and 6.4 percent were exporters.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, diplomatic, and industrial relations were warm enough that the South Korean ambassador soon asked Kazakhstan's Prime Minister for its vote of in favor of South Korea's bid to host the World Expo in 2010, particularly if Russia's competing effort failed during the first round of voting. On this condition, the Prime Minister of Kazakhstan provisionally approved the support, but later indicated it could only give support to South Korea's bid city, Yeosu, after it was inspected by the Commission of the International Bureau of Exhibitions, which was traveling to the capitals of the candidate states for the World Expo.¹⁵⁶

As matters progressed, Kazakhstan's then-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, arrived in South Korea on October 19th, 2002, to continue discussions concerning mutual collaboration and prior industrial deals. There, Tokayev met with South Korea's President, Prime Minister, Speaker of the National Assembly, its top ambassador at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Energy, as well as the Chairman of Parliamentary Association for Friendship with Kazakhstan. In addition to these meetings, Tokayev also met with the management of the Samsung and LG corporations and the Korean National Petroleum

¹⁵⁵ "Theses of discussions between Ministry of Trade and Economy (MTE) and Korean Ambassador to KZ."

¹⁵⁶ "Correspondence on the Joint Commission." As fate would have it, South Korea's World Expo bid overcame Russia's in the second round of voting, but their effort would fail only to Shanghai in the final vote.

Corporation, as well as the Federation of Korean Industrialists.¹⁵⁷ Amidst these discussions, the Korean President emphasized the importance of the economic aspect related to the investment of South Korean enterprises in Kazakhstan, and he underscored the ongoing investment potential of the Kazakhstani-South Korean relationship in explicit functionalist terms. He also emphasized that their relationship could physically connect South Korea with Europe through Kazakhstan, through the creation of what he called an "Iron Silk Road."¹⁵⁸

In the meantime, South Korea's top diplomat stressed the importance of Kazakhstani oil consortium to South Korean business, and the two countries proceeded with cooperation in the spheres of mechanical engineering, consumer technology, and IT technologies. The Kazakhstani delegation to South Korea brought together many important figures within South Korea while the Korean press noted the lucrative qualities of the deal of the meeting. Furthermore, specialists in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) stressed to Kazakhstan that the meeting occurred at a consequential moment in South Korean politics, as it occurred specifically during the final stages of the country's presidential elections. Tokayev's meeting South Korea's top leadership political and industrial leadership provided an important opportunity for dialogue that emphasized the Trans-Asian Railway and the potential for Korean business.¹⁵⁹

Shortly after the late October visit, Tokayev returned to Seoul alongside Nazarbayev for further discussions with South Korean leadership, and it became clear that matters were progressing. In late November, following the Kazakh delegations to Korea and further meetings in Almaty, Kazakhstan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs received a formal letter from South Korea's representative expressing gratitude for the relationship created during the recent meeting in Almaty while emphasizing that South Korea's developmentalist history and experience would prove particularly

¹⁵⁷ "Concerning the visit," 121.

¹⁵⁸ "Concerning the visit," 121.

¹⁵⁹ "Concerning the visit," 122.

useful to Kazakhstan's own future, and South Korea was ready to help.¹⁶⁰ This letter proved to be more than just fluff, as a protocol of intention was signed on March 26th, 2003, by Korea's Samsung and a Kazakhstani closed joint stock company, KazMorTransFlot, to create a dry dock in the Kazakh sector of the Caspian Sea and expand South Korean participation in the IT and telecom sectors. The agreed minutes from the signing confirm this significant step in bilateral cooperation between Kazakhstan and South Korea.¹⁶¹

Thus, following the extensive cooperation and common works, Kazakhstan successfully channeled SK relations into the construction of physical infrastructure with the capability to expand Kazakhstani carbon production and total profitability, while also laying the groundwork for rapid administrative evolution in Kazakhstan's bureaucracies via the mass provision of equipment capable of serving digital telecom subscribers.¹⁶² With such points developing so rapidly, solid bases from which to advance commonly held *functionalist collaboration* were already developed nearly six months prior to Tokayev and Nazarbayev's visits to Seoul. Thus, in late September 2002, Kazakhstan was already broaching the idea of using itself as a conduit to markets accessible to Kazakhstan via its memberships in the EAEC and CIS for joint South Korean-Kazakhstani products and ventures while using such a carrot to ply manufacturing support from South Korea.¹⁶³ With such suggestions, Kazakhstan can be seen to be both *increasingly suggesting South Korea double down* on its technological and manufacturing commitments *as a soft form of local access fee*. Such suggestions provide evidence that Kazakhstan's omnienmeshment was advancing not only beyond deepening collaborations, but also even to the use of *juncture moves* to exploit stages in the negotiation process itself to extract greater fees and value to local developers.

¹⁶⁰ "Letter from Korean minister."

¹⁶¹ "Agreed Minutes of the 2nd Session," 26.

¹⁶² In 2002, this included provision of a "soft loan" to Kazakhstan worth \$13 million, materials for 80,000 subscribers in Almaty, and service readiness by the start of the following year. "Information on the development of the issues," 105.

¹⁶³ "Draft speech of Introductions," 83–85.

Analysis

With Kazakhstan's preoccupations with its neighbors passing from the country's daily attention, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' turn toward other targets of interests – beginning in the late 1990s – represented clear efforts to diversify from the immediate neighborly circumstances which had occupied it since independence. Higher quality relationships and outcomes were possible. Kazakhstan built its prior relationship with South Korea via co-alignment and then enmeshment around profitable economic issues of mutual interest. Kazakhstan's new connections, increasing in number over time, enhanced its ability to make independent decisions based on its own national interests and added cumulatively to the country's niches of interest.¹⁶⁴

Kazakhstan's enticing of South Korea by way of its oil supplies was an element of repeat importance to the relationship's expansion. Kazakhstan suggested South Korea invest in its domestic shipping, IT and telecommunications, and carbon sectors, as well as rail to support the shipments which would follow. But notably, Kazakhstan repeatedly used improved odds in South Korea's oil bids in the Caspian Sea, in connection with the Korean Consortium of the Caspian Oil Project, as the penultimate carrot with which to skim off advanced technical supplies from external partners. Such beckoning and leveraging together demonstrate a case of loyalty trading. Since the total weight of South Korea's involvement already indicated long-term interests in the country, adding additional work items permitted both sides to make productive advances in their respective plans.

By shopping for support and expressing willingness to share its domestic market of raw materials and oil, Kazakhstan was able to organize a trade for South Korean investment wherein trade priority would ultimately go to another middle power state. In so doing, Kazakhstan gained an international stakeholder invested in the ongoing political leadership and stability and of the country

¹⁶⁴ Contessi, "Foreign and Security Policy Diversification in Eurasia: Issue Splitting, Co-Alignment, and Relational Power."

and decreased its relative need for other East Asian demand, notably from the PRC. Kazakhstan's specific conditionalizing of South Korean industrial expertise, above and beyond its financial resources creatively connected its own needs with its partner's capabilities in a positive sum fashion.

Tokayev's high-level meetings in Seoul during October 2002, also raised numerous avenues for bilateral industrial cooperation. In mutual discussions of the proposed Iron Silk Road, South Korean expansion into Kazakhstan's mechanical engineering, consumer technology, and IT markets provided noteworthy examples of Kazakhstan seeking out economic partnerships. Diversification of Kazakhstan's domestic market offered Kazakhstan more opportunities vis a vis its immediate neighbors, thus offering the country still greater autonomy in regional and world markets.

Similarly, South Korea's interest and engagement of Kazakhstan's earlier proposals to construct shipping routes and transit infrastructure via the Iron Silk Road also provided clear examples of Kazakhstani efforts to expand its diplomatic and economic networks with both South Korea and its own domestic sphere of action. Regional connectivity, via Kazakhstani and South Korean collaborations, offered both countries leadership voices in Central Asia and afforded Kazakhstan still greater reinforcement of its positive perception of opportunities beyond traditional alliances and its traditional relationships.

The deepening of bilateral ties through layered and enmeshed relations allowed Kazakhstan to assert itself as an active player on the international stage. This approach granted Kazakhstan greater agency in shaping the terms of engagement and pursuing its national interests. By identifying areas of mutual interest and offering reciprocal benefits, Kazakhstan positions itself as an equal partner with foreign powers and contributes to a more balanced and independent dynamic in its international relations. Kazakhstan's non-major power relationships grounded issue-based and co-aligned relationships against strict polarities in world affairs.

Conclusion

The range of works driving South Korea's and Kazakhstan's relations proved diverse and effective, and they broadly provided Kazakhstan a valuable escape route from its immediate neighbors. With this connection, Kazakhstan constructed a relationship around issues of such fundamental mutual interest that early co-aligning actions ultimately transformed into omnimeshment practices. Such exchanges relied at base upon exchanges of mutual influence, raw materials, consumer markets, and technological materials and expertise. The exchanges provide grounds from which Kazakhstan has sought to upgrade its developmental position, but they also altered the country's relation to East Asia, where it was previously negligible.

The range of opportunities available in Kazakhstani productive industry, as with its economy and state bureaucracy at large, made its co-aligning advances immensely desirable to the South Korean government. The relative proximity between the two countries further facilitated the immediacy and ease of cooperation, presenting both sides with a strategic advantage in fostering their bilateral ties. South Korea recognized the potential in engaging with Kazakhstan's burgeoning industries and sought to capitalize on the benefits that the partnership could bring, while Kazakhstan secured an experienced developmental power as one of its key partners.

The multifaceted nature of the Kazakhstan-South Korea relationship presented a range of opportunities that went beyond mere economic benefits. The strategic alignment between the two countries allowed for the exchange of knowledge, expertise, and resources that contributed to Kazakhstan's overall development. This mutually beneficial collaboration not only bolstered Kazakhstan's economic prospects but also enhanced its standing in the international arena, as Kazakhstan's shift towards diversifying its economic relations and engaging with South Korea opened up new avenues for growth and independence. The mutual benefits derived from the

partnership have facilitated exchanges of influence, resources, and expertise, and both elevated Kazakhstan's developmental position and altered its role in Central Asia at large.

Chapter 6: Kazakhstani-Israeli relations

Kazakhstan's relations with Israel, meanwhile, present another intriguing case of multivector relations. While relatively minor, Kazakhstani and Israeli relations can stand beside Kazakhstan's relations with that of Turkey. Due to both states placement in West Asia, far away from the concerns of Central Asia. And post-Soviet politics. Many connections directly back to Europe and the United States become increasingly possible via these two action actors. While the present chapter will only focus upon Israeli relations. Insofar as archival materials are concerned, the contrast will still prove of use by indicating the parallel substance of relations with which the two states could pursue Kazakhstan in common despite their sometimes otherwise difficult regional relationship in Western Asia.

Background

Kazakhstani-Israeli relations have broadly been defined by overlapping perceptions that the opposite party would provide instrumental value to the other side. While in many cases, the two countries' relations have proven quite standard – with Kazakhstan providing ample grain to Israel and Israel providing an assortment of value-added machinery, chemicals, electronic and mechanical equipment¹⁶⁵ – Kazakhstan has apparently sought additional specialty commodities and connections which Israel could provide. Notably, with Kazakhstan's independence from the USSR, Israel was soon perceived as a connection by which Kazakhstan could reach Euroamerican partners and their capital markets. Through these pathways, Kazakhstan could also create further notches marking its diversification from the RF. The two-fold value Israel could provide was immediate, but not yet exhausted.

¹⁶⁵ Feiler and Lim, "Israel and Kazakhstan: Assessing the State of Bilateral Relations," 24–25.

In addition to such concerns, Kazakhstan was also able to turn to Israel for consultation in two other arenas of importance. Broadly speaking, the first area included consultative support in agriculture (notably the use of drip irrigation), public health matters, livestock husbandry, industry, technology, and human services. Being a diverse subject, many opportunities for connection were present. However, the other arena of Kazakhstani engagement proved in cooperation surrounding police technologies in connection to Israel's 'counterterror' experience.¹⁶⁶

Israel, for its part, perceived Kazakhstan as a major player within Central Asia that could provide both further business opportunities as well as strategic flexibility. Notably, Israel's pursuit of Central Asian relationships in general followed a remodeled application of Ben-Gurion's "periphery doctrine," wherein actors external to West Asia and the Arab world would provide Israel with resources and allow it to avoid the antagonism of its neighbors.¹⁶⁷ Additionally, serious acknowledgement was paid to the potential that Kazakhstan could become of importance to Israel's northern neighbor, Turkey.

In the case of Turkey, Kazakhstan's ideological and strategic relations relate partially upon the countries' linguistic and ethnic ties. The Turkic Common Market and Bank were proposed in a series of group meetings in 1992, 1994, and 1995 following the original 1992 establishment of the Turkish International Cooperation Agency by Turkey to coordinate with its Central Asian counterparts. This has brought noteworthy successes, such as Turkey, Kazakhstan's, and Central Asia's support for Azerbaijan in its wars against Armenia, connections with Kazakhstan's later adoption of Latin as a national alphabet in the 21st century's increasingly nationalist environment, and the 2009 establishment of the Turkic Council.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ Feiler and Lim, 21.

¹⁶⁷ Feiler and Lim, 18.

¹⁶⁸ Sasley, "Turkey in Central Asia: Turkish Identity as Enabler or Impediment," 208.

However, the commonalities have not been so powerful as to create common spaces. While Nazarbayev commented warmly upon the opening of official relations between the two countries, because it satisfied “the longing which the Turkish and Kazakh peoples had been feeling for each other for years,” a basic reading of the right wing of Turkish state ideologies, these comments and subsequent relations can be read as pursuit of more limited associations. Put simply, both general relations and additional markets shared with a friendly and eager cultural compatriot were appreciated, but the growing pan-Turkism emanating from Turkey has not proven desirable enough to sway Kazakhstan from an essentially a contrasting and state-delimited Kemalism – or a secular Turkism – that retains Kazakhstan’s independence of program and mission against the Turkish right’s pan-ethnic programs. Following decades of Soviet rule and centuries further of its own experiences, the region had disassociated itself with Turkey’s Republican and nationalist ideological programs. As Nazarbayev himself underscored in March 1992 following Turkey’s entreaties, and despite the countries’ linkages, “[they do] not mean we will give precedence to Turkey, we are open to all countries.”¹⁶⁹

While a Turkey-RK relationship exists, it has not broadly impacted Kazakhstan’s relationship with Israel. Even as the three state’s relations underwent parallel evolution, Kazakhstan’s apparently sanguine political relatability vis a vis Israel was such that official military relations began in 2001 – with the Israeli war industry soon thereafter identifying Kazakhstan as a potential client for a diverse array of rocket, artillery, and UAV systems.¹⁷⁰ While the RF remains the principal supplier of military equipment to Kazakhstan, the Israeli connection in this case has allowed Kazakhstan to pursue its

¹⁶⁹ Sasley, 211. Central Asian leaders as a whole disliked the Turkish Embassies’ assumption that shared ethno-linguistic traits were adequate to equate to preferences for closer ties with Turkey at the expense of other states. See also Aslund, Olcott, and Garnett, *Getting It Wrong: Regional Cooperation and the Commonwealth of Independent States*, Washington. United States of America..

¹⁷⁰ McDermott, “Kazakhstan-Russia: Enduring Eurasian Defence Partners,” 36, 16–17; Feiler and Lim, “Israel and Kazakhstan: Assessing the State of Bilateral Relations,” 31–33.

usual preference “to prioritize joint ventures and indigenous ‘co-production’ with foreign partners in order to secure technology transfers.”¹⁷¹

In this manner, Israel may be seen as another MP with the ability to provide technical assistance and financing, but also as a conjunctural player that can provide specialized assistance in the crafting of war-making and police technologies. For Kazakhstan’s multivectorism, it is noteworthy that the state is willing to engage not only major powers for such equipment and skills, but other MP peers.

The Archives

Within the range of documents considered, the Israeli-RK relationship proceeded quickly as matters in Central Asia compelled the Kazakhstan to continue its efforts to enmesh partners abroad within both its region and national borders. To such ends, Kazakhstan-Israeli relationship is especially noteworthy for the extent of its border security dialogues and support and the contracting of Israeli firms for specialist support, notably in the application of information services and technology, as well as the provision of telecommunications equipment and military helicopters.

In 1993, a year after the formal launch of diplomatic relations, the two states signed agreements to establish joint cooperation commission in telecom, air traffic, science and tech, cultural cooperation, and tourism. Soon after such basic connections were established, further visits to Israel by Nazarbayev followed in 1995 that yielded agreements establishing further cooperation promotion and mutual protection of investments, on cooperation in healthcare and medicine, agriculture, and environmental sustainability.¹⁷² Such basic efforts in *diversification* provided the first shots in quickly expanding and narrowing relations.

¹⁷¹Feiler and Lim, “Israel and Kazakhstan: Assessing the State of Bilateral Relations,” 31; McDermott, “Kazakhstan-Russia: Enduring Eurasian Defence Partners,” 33.

¹⁷²“On Kazakhstan-Israeli relations,” 97.

In 1998, one year after the Kazakhstani embassy is opened in Israel, Israeli Ministers of both Industry and of Trade and Agriculture visited to discuss implementation of joint projects, much in line with Kazakhstan's parallel and future works with South Korean specialists. During the same year, Kazakhstan's Chairman of the State Customs Committee traveled to Israel to seek experimental use of Israeli customs services and its border security technologies, particularly as it was interested in purchasing.

As more civilian support for Kazakhstani information services and its tax bureaucracy were sought in 1998, important developments in Kazakhstan's acquisition of military equipment were to follow in the new century. By 2001, in a major example of Kazakhstan seeking extra-Russian military diversification, the Director of the Border Service of the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan led a delegation to Israel to get acquainted with advanced technologies for the protection of the state border. Later that year, in August, experts of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Kazakhstan visited again at the invitation of the Israeli Aircraft Industries Corporation to investigate the modernization of Kazakhstan's military aircraft and helicopters.¹⁷³

A subsequent contract was inked between IAI Corporation and the Kazakhstani company, Aviaremont, for the modernization of two Mi-8 helicopters for the border service of Kazakhstan. The Israeli Military Industries and Tadiran then won a contract announced by the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan for the supply of 18 sets telecommunication systems worth \$1.2 million to Kazakhstan.¹⁷⁴ While Israeli investors would elsewhere provide investments worth \$270 million (the Leviev Group in a metallurgical plant, alongside other products) in industry and also (the Bateman Company) launched infrastructural projects around Caspian oil and gas

¹⁷³ "On Kazakhstan-Israeli relations," 98, 101.

¹⁷⁴ "On Kazakhstan-Israeli relations," 101.

developments, the Kazakhstani-Israeli relationship at large is characterized primarily by its engagement with the Israeli security sector.¹⁷⁵

Analysis

Kazakhstan's engagement with Israel holds particular significance, considering the timing of their contact. During this period, the Russian Federation played a customary role as the primary security provider to independent Kazakhstan. Through direct transfers and sales of weapons, Russia accounted for approximately 60 percent of all Kazakhstani procurements until 2011. However, the establishment of Israeli security connections, which can be traced back to either 1998 or 2001, reflected Kazakhstan's significant internal decisions to diversify its sources and partially reduce reliance on Russian supplies.

In 2008, Kazakhstan's Defense Minister expressed the country's aspirations to become the leading arms dealer for Central Asian nations. This statement highlights Kazakhstan's ambition to expand its influence and involvement in the regional arms trade.¹⁷⁶ While Kazakhstan's pursuit of this goal does not signify a complete break from Russia, as the bulk of its high-tech weaponry continued to originate from Russia for many years, it does indicate a deliberate shift in their procurement strategies and a desire to broaden their defense partnerships beyond a single supplier.

Moreover, purchase conditions negotiated with Israel further exemplify Kazakhstan's strategic intent. In addition to acquiring Israeli weapons systems, Kazakhstan's Defense Minister also indicated in 2008 that Kazakhstan secured access to technical documents and support that detailed the production processes of numerous military technologies.¹⁷⁷ This move demonstrates

¹⁷⁵ Kurç, "The Puzzle."

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¹⁷⁷ Defense Minister Daniyal Akhmetov explained Kazakhstan's defense-industrial base in the following way: "As the main condition for purchasing new samples of military hardware, we demand that all technical documentation be handed over. Under the money in exchange for technology scheme, for example, we purchased the new Nayza missile

Kazakhstan's emphasis on not only acquiring the necessary equipment but also developing indigenous capabilities and knowledge in advanced defense manufacturing.

These developments signify a gradual evolution in Kazakhstan's defense relationships, characterized by a deliberate effort to diversify and strengthen its military ties beyond the reliance on a single supplier. While Russia remains a crucial partner in providing high-tech weaponry, Kazakhstan's engagement with Israel and its aspirations to become a prominent arms dealer in Central Asia reflect the country's strategic vision for enhancing its defense capabilities, establishing a more diversified and self-sufficient defense industry, and even the motor of other industrial innovations and production for the country and potentially the region at large.

Sectoral diversification and asset shopping, particularly in the case of Israel-Kazakhstan weapons transfers, represent a major example of narrow, issue-based co-alignment in Israeli-Kazakhstani relations. Kazakhstan's initiative in developing the relationship and dispatching of multiple high-level officials to Israel indicates that Kazakhstani leadership considered long-term upgrades and diversification in weapons procurement a major priority. This proactive approach prefigures negotiations via searches and comparisons for the most lucrative policy partner. It is thus distinct from bargaining tactics used during from approaches that rely upon foreign initiative. While auctioning could occur in the midst of wedging tactics, such confrontational tactics do not accord with the searching process to locate points for co-alignment.

Kazakhstani leadership was willing to engage with Israel on a wide range of fronts that benefitted both Israeli investors and Kazakhstani industry, but they were especially keen to pursue weapons contracts with Israel, but the relationship did not need morph into an expansive alliance or even extensive deals beyond the mutually established interests. Nonetheless, the connection still

system from Israel and obtained all technical documentation for manufacturing this system,” in Kurç, “The Puzzle,” 322.

provided further footholds for future westerly connections in the event it became increasingly possible and desirable.¹⁷⁸

Conclusion

The two countries' basic commercial exchanges here demonstrated Kazakhstan's interest in pursuing relations with individual countries in possession of relevant technical capabilities. Israel, in common with South Korea, possessed a supply of IT companies and technologies of value to the Kazakhstan's modernization needs. However, the recurrent, unique feature connecting Kazakhstan and Israel primarily follows the latter's specialization in policing and defense technologies.

While the countries' scale of relations cannot be compared with that of Kazakhstan's and the United States' or with that of the Russian Federation, the quick trust of Kazakhstani officials in Israeli expertise must be weighed in connection with their policy connections to the United States and to Western Europe. The Israeli-Kazakhstani military-industrial relationship, as with its pursuit of more mundane civilian information services, follows Kazakhstan's relative paucity of resources and technical expertise predominant at the time. As a consequence, ongoing relations have likely only brought further evolutions in the relationship and more opportunities to develop it in more profitable directions for both parties.

¹⁷⁸ Tanchum, "Kazakhstan's Western Rebalancing: The Changing Strategic Contours of Eurasian Connectivity."

Chapter 7: Conclusions

Despite the heavy pressure of major power politics pressuring the Republic of Kazakhstan to caucus or bandwagon with any of today's world powers, blind or stricken from pursuing independent national interests, the country has instead willfully pursued relationships with a diverse set of players. These relations were not always successful: as we know, the Central Asian republics – especially Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan – could not find common cause to construct a common regional. The benefits from this lost possibility exceed easy measures at remediation. Multivectorism in Kazakhstan, like omnienmeshment in Southeast Asia, indicates that middle powers possess the capabilities to alter their environments provided that cooperation and opportunities permit such wide regional decisions.

Such efforts can still fail, as Ukraine's multivector approach has also demonstrated elsewhere, not all attempts to lever foreign support within the practitioner's borders are conducted in a manner that leads to problems' amicable resolution. Thus, where such failures have occurred, Kazakhstan's approach has cautiously taken stock of the state's similarities with its frenemies and the opportunities available to it. Despite the many fractious concerns Kazakhstan with its more assertive foreign partners and stakeholders, the country's status has not required or perceived defection from its multivector model as a serious approach to resolving any of the international problems it has faced.

In this light, Kazakhstan's foreign policy has undergone significant transformations since gaining independence, particularly through the implementation of its multivector strategy. While multivectorism's earliest pronouncements and scopes may have suggested that Kazakhstan's foreign policy goals were primarily aspirational, the strategy provided Kazakhstan with structured reasons to

diversify its foreign relationships and lessen its dependencies – and particularly those experienced together with its other Central Asian neighbors. Kazakhstan sought to lessen reliance upon Russia and major powers in general to create a strong environment for development. Where Kazakhstan's regionalist vector of action failed, primarily due to difference with Uzbekistan, it began exercising attention in its near abroad at the same time as it began working with major powers, thus watering down those 'traditional' relationships to reduce its reliance on and its vulnerabilities to major powers.

The 1992 Strategy on the Formation and Development outlined potential areas of interest for Kazakhstan, with partners sought in Central Asia, Russia, China, East Asia, Western Europe, and the United States. South Korea emerged as a crucial partner in this period, as Kazakhstan enticed South Korea by offering access to one of Central Asia's largest and growing markets. In turn, the invitation from South Korean leadership to discuss expansive industrial projects marked a significant turning point in the relationship and expanded Kazakhstan's engagements with East Asia. Perhaps as important, the South Korean suggestion represented a milestone in the modernization and diversification of Kazakhstan's economy and foreign partnerships.

Kazakhstan's pursuit of multivectorism extended beyond its engagement with South Korea. Israel recognized Kazakhstan early on as a potential carbon supplier, while Kazakhstan recognized Israel as an important investor, a weapons provider, and as a gateway to European powers. The engagement with Israel not only resulted in investments and technical support but also facilitated the establishment of Kazakhstan's domestic arms industry, which was aimed at indigenizing the country's arms production and internationalizing its sales to become the primary provider for Central Asia – all of which would further reduce reliance upon arms sales from major powers. These

connections demonstrated that Kazakhstan had alternative markets and actors to engage with and that it could reduce its vulnerability to pressure from China or the United States.

Israel also played a significant role in Kazakhstan's diversification efforts. Recognizing Kazakhstan's potential as a carbon supplier, Israel established early acknowledgments of the country. In return, Kazakhstan viewed Israel as a valuable investor, weapons provider, and a gateway to foster relationships with European powers. The collaboration between the two nations resulted in Israel supplying Kazakhstan with helicopters, border surveillance equipment, and significant investments. Additionally, Israel's technical support in telecom adoption proved beneficial for Kazakhstan's modernization endeavors. Israeli weapons, however, facilitated the launch of Kazakhstan's domestic arms industry and further reduced its reliance on Russian military supplies. Kazakhstan consequently exhibited its capacity to manage its defense-industrial base without the supervision of major power states, even as it maintained military ties to such actors.

Kazakhstan's early approach revealed a strategy still under development, but one capable of shifting its attention to other promising vectors and opportunities from the country's independence to the mid-2000s. The effectiveness of multivectorism relied on Kazakhstan's accumulation of contacts, the identification of profitable partnerships, and – in time – the modernization of its industries. The evolving nature of Kazakhstan's multivectorism, in combination with the state leadership's flexibility in the face of changes, suggests that the 21st century's already numerous global events have impacted the strategy as the country's foreign policy record has unfolded beyond the limits of the present study. Further examination of archival materials, as they become available, will provide further insights into the evolution of Kazakhstan's multivectorism, and it will provide for a deeper understanding of Kazakhstan's foreign policy and the implications its development and global positioning.

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