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**MULTI-VECTOR POLICY AS A STRATEGY OF GEOPOLITICAL
MANEUVER: CRITICAL GEOPOLITICS OF KAZAKHSTAN IN
RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA AND CHINA AFTER 2022**

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Abstract. This article examines Kazakhstan’s evolving foreign policy strategy following Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine and China’s growing assertiveness in Eurasia. Positioned at the crossroads of competing great power interests, Kazakhstan has amplified its multi-vector policy into a strategic tool of geopolitical maneuvering. While maintaining formal alliances – such as with Russia through the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) – Kazakhstan simultaneously deepens economic ties with China via the Belt and Road Initiative and cultivates relationships with Western partners. This paper draws on critical geopolitics and discourse analysis to assess how Kazakhstan reconfigures its role from a peripheral actor to a regional norm entrepreneur.

Using a qualitative methodology grounded in the works of Ó Tuathail, Agnew, and Müller, the study analyzes official speeches, strategic documents, and regional policy narratives to unpack Kazakhstan’s spatial imaginaries and diplomatic signaling. It argues that Kazakhstan’s foreign policy reflects not only pragmatic hedging but also a deliberate discursive strategy to preserve sovereignty, recalibrate asymmetries, and assert agency in a contested multipolar order.

By contextualizing recent statements by President Tokayev – especially his vision of a self-sufficient and strategically cohesive Central Asia – the paper illuminates how Kazakhstan reclaims geopolitical subjectivity. The study contributes to understanding middle-power behavior under shifting global hierarchies and highlights Kazakhstan’s pursuit of autonomy through critical diplomatic balancing.

Key words: Kazakhstan, foreign policy, multi-vector diplomacy, critical geopolitics, geopolitical maneuvering, strategic autonomy, middle power behavior, security

Introduction

Kazakhstan’s geopolitical environment presents both challenges and strategic possibilities. Located at the intersection of major power interests, the country finds itself navigating a delicate balance between its historical ties with

Russia, its deepening economic partnership with China, and the shifting presence of Western actors. The doctrine of multi-vector foreign policy, long central to Kazakhstan's external strategy, has evolved into a more deliberate mechanism of geopolitical maneuvering in response to the post-2022 global context.

While maintaining formal alliances – such as its participation in the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) – Kazakhstan has simultaneously sought to deepen ties with China through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and to retain constructive relations with Western states, including the United States and European Union. This balancing act is becoming increasingly nuanced as the regional order transforms, particularly following Russia's large-scale military engagement in Ukraine and China's growing ambition to reshape Eurasian connectivity and trade patterns.

In his recent article, «The renaissance of Central Asia: towards sustainable development and prosperity», President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev outlined a vision of Central Asia that emphasizes greater autonomy, enhanced regional cooperation and diversified global partnerships [1]. This vision reflects Kazakhstan's proactive stance to transcending traditional alliances and solidifying its role beyond external geopolitical influences. Tokayev emphasized the region's potential to serve as a bridge between Asia and Europe, highlighting Central Asia's strategic importance in global affairs. Thus, Kazakhstan seeks to enhance its sovereignty while contributing to the stability and prosperity of the region.

However, despite these aspirations for self-determination and diversification, Kazakhstan's foreign policy remains constrained. Deeper integration into the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) has strengthened political and economic ties with Russia. At the same time, strong bilateral relations with China, particularly in economic sphere, further complicate its strategic calculus. These dynamics highlight the challenges Kazakhstan faces in managing its foreign policy amid shifting regional and global power structures. Experts have interpreted these developments in various ways: some highlight Kazakhstan's capacity for strategic autonomy, while others point to new forms of dependency emerging under a multipolar order.

This paper contributes to the literature on critical geopolitics by analyzing Kazakhstan's foreign policy choices vis-à-vis Russia and China after 2022 through the lens of geopolitical maneuvering. By examining how Kazakhstan's elites strategically reframe their country's geopolitical position – both discursively and practically – the paper challenges deterministic views of regional dependency. Instead, it explores how Kazakhstan engages in subtle forms of agency to recalibrate power asymmetries, maintain sovereignty, and secure favorable outcomes in an increasingly contested Eurasian order.

Materials and Methods

This study is based on qualitative content and discourse analysis grounded in the tradition of critical geopolitics. A reference foundation is constructed using peer-reviewed academic articles, official policy documents, government speeches, and reports from leading international think tanks to establish a comprehensive understanding of Kazakhstan's evolving foreign policy positioning after 2022. Drawing on the conceptual frameworks developed by scholars such as Gearóid Ó Tuathail, John Agnew, and Martin Müller [2], the paper treats geopolitics not merely as a spatial reality but as a set of discursively constructed practices that shape state behavior and international alignments. The research adopts a critical lens to explore how Kazakhstan's multi-vector foreign policy reflects and reproduces spatial narratives and strategic identity formations in a contested geopolitical context.

The methodological approach combines thematic coding of official rhetoric with comparative content analysis, tracing the representations of Russia and China in Kazakhstan's strategic documents, public speeches by political elites, and media discourse. Inspired by Müller's discourse-analytical tools, attention is given to how certain geopolitical imaginaries – such as “bridge between East and West” or “buffer state” – are constructed and mobilized by Kazakhstan's leadership to sustain autonomy and strategic flexibility. The critical geopolitics perspective provides a suitable framework for understanding how Kazakhstan's foreign policy operates not only through formal alliances and economic integration, but also through symbolic positioning, diplomatic signaling, and selective engagement.

This methodological design enables the analysis of Kazakhstan's geopolitical maneuvering as a dynamic process shaped by both structural constraints and discursive agency. The paper seeks to contribute to the broader critical geopolitics literature by highlighting how a medium power like Kazakhstan navigates overlapping spheres of influence and leverages discursive strategies to resist hegemonic pressures while pursuing diversified international partnerships.

Results

Since 2022, Kazakhstan's foreign policy has exhibited a marked evolution, positioning the country more distinctly as a middle power adept at navigating an increasingly fragmented global order. The war in Ukraine and the imposition of sanctions on Russia have notably altered the diplomatic dynamics in Central Asia. This segment synthesizes data from official diplomatic communications, public opinion research, and foreign policy behavior to illustrate Kazakhstan's growing diplomatic independence from both Russia and China, alongside a reaffirmed commitment to its multi-vector approach [3].

A pivotal moment in Kazakhstan's recalibration came during the 2022 St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, where President Tokayev openly

refused to endorse the legitimacy of the self-proclaimed Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics [4]. This move, widely interpreted as an assertion of national sovereignty, garnered both regional and international attention. In parallel, Kazakhstan has deepened its engagement with China, Turkey, the European Union, and the United States, demonstrating a deliberate effort to maintain foreign policy diversification and reduce asymmetrical reliance on any one state.

In addition, Kazakhstan is emerging as a diplomatic agenda-setter in Central Asia. President Tokayev's addresses at the Sixth Consultative Meeting of Central Asian Leaders (2024) underscored a vision of enhanced regional cohesion. He advocated for shifting the role of Central Asia in global affairs—from a passive geopolitical zone to an active, sovereign actor with a distinct voice on the world stage [5]. These aspirations mirror strategies traditionally associated with middle powers: using diplomacy, institutional engagement, and soft power to influence regional outcomes [6].

Empirical evidence from public surveys further affirms this shift. A 2022 poll by Demoscope revealed that 43.6% of Kazakh respondents disapproved of the CSTO's military involvement during the January events, indicating rising reservations about Russia-led security mechanisms [7]. Likewise, findings from Central Asia Barometer surveys point to declining confidence in Russian leadership and increased public preference for partnerships with actors such as China, the EU, and Turkey [8].

This trajectory is not exclusive to Kazakhstan. Uzbekistan, for instance, has similarly advocated for regionally-driven solutions in sectors like energy, water management, and infrastructure—explicitly minimizing dependency on Moscow. While Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan remain more closely tied to Russia economically and militarily, they too have expressed interest in enhancing regional autonomy. Declarations at recent regional forums increasingly emphasize shared principles of Central Asian unity, resilience, and diversified diplomacy as the foundation for collective foreign policy strategies [9].

Discussion

This study interprets Kazakhstan's foreign policy not merely as a mechanical application of multi-vectorism, but as a critical-discursive strategy aimed at rearticulating the country's peripheral position and asserting strategic agency within an emerging bipolar global order. As the post-unipolar international landscape becomes increasingly defined by systemic competition between major powers, Kazakhstan seeks to reframe its role—not as a passive object of influence, but as a middle power with the capacity to engage in norm-setting and independent diplomatic action.

In this context, multi-vectorism functions not only as a pragmatic balancing tool but also as a discursive resource through which a new state identity is constructed—one that affirms Kazakhstan's sovereign right to independent

foreign policy decisions and active participation in global governance. President Tokayev's public refusal to recognize the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics during the 2022 St. Petersburg International Economic Forum signaled a shift from deferential alignment toward sovereign policy articulation, challenging prior assumptions about Kazakhstan's strategic dependence [4].

In a familiar display of geopolitical coercion, Russian leadership, including President Putin, revived revisionist rhetoric by questioning the legitimacy of Kazakhstan's borders and sovereignty, portraying parts of Kazakh territory as historically Russian. This tactic – invoking shared language and the presence of ethnic Russians – has often been used by Moscow to assert influence over neighboring states. In a pointed gesture of defiance, President Tokayev notably declined Russia's offer of the Alexander Nevsky Order – an act laden with symbolic significance that underscored Kazakhstan's refusal to acquiesce to gestures implying hierarchical subordination to Moscow [4]. This move did not occur in isolation; rather, it forms part of a broader pattern in which Kazakhstan, alongside other Central Asian states, has adopted a careful yet assertive diplomatic posture in the wake of Russia's war in Ukraine.

Importantly, this posture – often manifested as formal neutrality and calculated silence – should not be mistaken for passive alignment with Russian interests. On the contrary, Kazakhstan's persistently diplomatic but affirming references to Ukraine's territorial integrity suggest a deliberate attempt to distance itself from Russian geopolitical pressure. This distancing has become increasingly visible in the country's public rhetoric, which has grown more direct in its response to both official and unofficial Russian provocations. Parallel to this, other Central Asian countries have also offered limited, non-military expressions of solidarity with Ukraine, revealing a region-wide inclination to resist being drawn into Moscow's sphere of influence. Kazakhstan, in particular, has managed to parry some of Russia's more assertive demands by intensifying ties with alternative powers. Expressions of support from leaders like Xi Jinping and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan for Kazakhstan's sovereignty illustrate the strategic calculus behind this maneuvering – where multi-vector diplomacy serves not only as a hedge but as a quiet assertion of agency within a contested geopolitical space.

President Tokayev and his government have subtly embraced aspects of this decolonization narrative – for example, accelerating policies to strengthen the use of the Kazakh language and completing the transition of the Kazakh script from Cyrillic to Latin. Such cultural policies are more than domestic reforms; they send a diplomatic signal that Kazakhstan is a modern, post-Soviet nation charting its own course. By foregrounding Kazakh ethnic and linguistic identity (while still celebrating multi-ethnicity), the leadership frames Kazakhstan as neither an appendage of the “Russian world” nor a passive bystander in China's Eurasian ambitions. Instead, official speeches increasingly highlight Kazakhstan's legacy as the land of the Great Steppe, invoking imagery of a proud, independent

people with deep roots in Central Asia. This internal narrative of sovereignty and resilience dovetails with the country's external messaging.

Kazakhstan's regional activism – particularly its efforts to institutionalize Central Asian cooperation – further reflects its aspiration to serve as a normative entrepreneur within the region. Through diplomatic initiatives emphasizing shared sovereignty and regional cohesion, Kazakhstan positions itself as a facilitator of collective agency in Central Asia, echoing the strategic logic of middle powers, which often rely on diplomacy, soft power, and institutional engagement to exert influence in asymmetrical international environments [6]

President Tokayev's speeches at the UN General Assembly, particularly the addresses at the 77th and 78th sessions, serve as pivotal discursive acts reinforcing Kazakhstan's redefinition of its geopolitical identity amid systemic global upheavals [10]. His articulation of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and multilateralism – delivered from the central podium of international diplomacy – cannot be interpreted merely as normative affirmations. Instead, they must be understood within the broader critical-discursive framework that this study highlights: Kazakhstan's use of multi-vectorism not only to navigate but to reformulate its formerly peripheral status. Tokayev's appeals for a new global security paradigm, the rule of law in international affairs, and an equitable global economic order position Kazakhstan as a normative agent – a middle power-seeking strategic subjectivity under conditions of emerging bipolarity. These speeches thus underscore a deliberate shift: from reactive diplomacy toward proactive narrative construction, seeking to entrench Kazakhstan's voice in shaping the evolving architecture of global governance.

This performative role of Kazakhstan as a middle power is further substantiated by President Tokayev's address at the VI Consultative Meeting and his strategic speech, *The Renaissance of Central Asia: Towards Sustainable Development and Prosperity* (2024). In both, Tokayev articulates a bold reconceptualization of Central Asia – not as a mere transit corridor or passive geopolitical periphery, but as a self-sustaining and strategically pivotal epicenter within the broader Eurasian transformation. His discursive framing of the region as a cohesive civilizational entity reflects Kazakhstan's ambition to reconstitute regional subjectivity through the language of unity, shared history, and synchronized development. This signals a transition from reactive regionalism toward proactive regional norm-setting, wherein Kazakhstan seeks to institutionalize cooperative sovereignty as a regional doctrine and operationalize multi-vector diplomacy at the intra-regional level.

By invoking the historical and civilizational integrity of Central Asia, Tokayev's discourse aligns seamlessly with Kazakhstan's broader critical-discursive strategy: the transformation of its inherited peripheral identity into a deliberate project of strategic centrality. The vision of a "Central Asian Five" functioning as a politically stable, economically integrated, and diplomatically

autonomous bloc represents a reframing of the region's geopolitical ontology. Rather than existing as an object of great power contestation, Central Asia is reimagined as a regional subject with agency, capable of articulating and implementing its own developmental agenda. Tokayev's emphasis on water-energy cooperation, shared infrastructure such as the Middle Corridor, and youth-driven innovation further reinforces this normative ambition, positioning the region not as a passive recipient of external agendas but as an originator of globally resonant initiatives.

In this context, Kazakhstan's multi-vector foreign policy transcends its conventional interpretation as a balancing mechanism among external powers. It emerges instead as a discursive and strategic project aimed at recalibrating the region's structural positioning in the international order. The conceptual and institutional articulation of Central Asia as a «center of gravity» serves as empirical evidence of Kazakhstan's effort to shift the narrative from one of marginal dependency to purposeful protagonism. This evolution reflects a form of discursive sovereignty – a soft power modality through which Kazakhstan advances a middle power identity grounded in norm advocacy, institutional entrepreneurship, and regional coalition-building [11]. Through this lens, Kazakhstan's global positioning strategy is not merely adaptive but generative, seeking to shape global and regional governance by exporting localized norms of cooperative resilience and multilateral inclusivity.

This discursive reorientation reflects a growing emphasis on soft power and diplomatic agency. Kazakhstan is not only adapting to external pressures but also shaping its surroundings by promoting norms of regional cooperation, institutional engagement, and strategic autonomy. The country's integration into China's Belt and Road Initiative, launched in Astana in 2013, alongside active participation in European and Middle Corridor infrastructure programs, demonstrates this approach. These initiatives are framed not as concessions to foreign powers, but as expressions of Kazakhstan's sovereign role as a connector between East and West.

Moreover, Kazakhstan's foreign policy discourse increasingly draws upon cultural and historical references to its Turkic and Central Asian identity. Engagement with the Organization of Turkic States and long-term programs such as “Vision 2040” allow Astana to construct an alternative geopolitical narrative that does not center Russia or China. Simultaneously, Kazakhstan promotes its international credentials by emphasizing its contributions to nuclear disarmament, religious tolerance, and conflict mediation – further projecting itself as a responsible and principled actor in global affairs.

These strategic narratives help legitimize Kazakhstan's multi-directional diplomacy both at home and abroad. By drawing on national history, regional identity, and international credibility, the country's leadership signals that its partnerships stem from sovereign agency rather than dependence. This carefully

constructed geopolitical narrative enables Kazakhstan to assert itself in a volatile and polarized world without provoking confrontation. It exemplifies the principles of critical geopolitics by demonstrating how discursive frameworks and historical memory can be mobilized to defend national sovereignty and expand diplomatic space.

The strategic balancing act between Russia and China continues to define Kazakhstan's foreign policy calculus. While Moscow retains a dominant role in the domains of military infrastructure and energy transit – particularly through its control over key pipelines and its influence via the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) – Beijing has eclipsed it economically, emerging as Central Asia's foremost trade partner and infrastructure investor through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) [12]. Yet Kazakhstan's engagement with these powers is far from passive or binary. Rather than succumbing to dependency, Kazakhstan strategically navigates this dual influence through what can be termed «institutional multiplicity with embedded autonomy».

Kazakhstan's cooperation with China, particularly through the BRI and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), is guided by a conscious effort to localize benefits and mitigate asymmetries. Kazakhstan's leadership consistently emphasizes principles of transparency, mutual benefit, and domestic stakeholder involvement in BRI-linked projects, thereby asserting agency within structurally asymmetrical partnerships [13]. This discursive framing is not abstract – it is explicitly voiced in Tokayev's July 2024 interview with Xinhua, where he reaffirmed Kazakhstan's support for the BRI while underscoring the importance of local industrialization, trade diversification, and strategic transport development, including use of the Lianyungang port and Khorgos SEZ [14]. Tokayev's remarks highlight a deeper logic: Astana seeks not only to benefit from Chinese capital but also to embed its own development priorities within the BRI framework.

Furthermore, Tokayev's emphasis on the SCO as a platform for dialogue, ecological sustainability, and equitable security architecture – reiterated in his role as chair during the 2024 Astana Summit – reinforces Kazakhstan's strategic aim to steer multilateral institutions toward inclusive regionalism. By declaring 2024 the SCO Year of Ecology and launching high-level UN-SCO environmental initiatives, Tokayev advances a form of “eco-diplomacy” that simultaneously elevates Kazakhstan's regional status and deepens Sino-Kazakh cooperation on normative grounds.

This dual-track diplomacy – engaging both the infrastructural and ideational dimensions of China's presence – epitomizes Kazakhstan's strategic behavior as a middle power. Rather than passively accommodating external pressures, Astana operationalizes its multi-vector foreign policy to recalibrate power asymmetries, embedding its national priorities into initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. In doing so, Kazakhstan transforms structurally uneven partnerships into arenas of negotiated agency, asserting its

role as a normative entrepreneur in an increasingly multipolar environment.

Concurrently, Kazakhstan's efforts to counterbalance Russian political and economic coercion are reflected in its diversification of strategic export corridors. The development of the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route and the deepening energy alliance with Azerbaijan signify more than infrastructural pragmatism – they represent a deliberate geopolitical maneuver to reduce dependency on Russian-controlled routes [15]. These infrastructural recalibrations signal a conscious effort to reposition Kazakhstan as a logistically autonomous and politically sovereign actor within Eurasia.

Taken together, these multidirectional engagements illustrate the strategic hedging behavior typical of middle powers. By balancing great power relations and maximizing policy flexibility, Kazakhstan reinforces its image as a regional convener and institutional innovator, rather than a passive periphery state. Its foreign policy architecture – underpinned by multi-vectorism – therefore becomes a dynamic instrument of discursive sovereignty, enabling Astana to shape the evolving norms and structures of Eurasian cooperation.

This strategic shift is further legitimized by domestic political sentiment. Public disillusionment with Russian-led security institutions, particularly following the CSTO's controversial intervention during Kazakhstan's January 2022 unrest, has catalyzed broader societal support for foreign policy diversification. In this context, Kazakhstan's diplomacy functions not as a rigid doctrinal framework but as an adaptive repertoire of geopolitical maneuvering – one that expands the country's decision-making space while mitigating the vulnerabilities of asymmetric entanglements.

Conclusion

Kazakhstan's foreign policy trajectory should be understood as a sophisticated response to the evolving competitive-cooperative dynamic between China and Russia in Central Asia. While these two powers often present a united front in opposing Western hegemony, their interests in the region are increasingly differentiated – China is solidifying its economic dominance through the Belt and Road Initiative, whereas Russia clings to its traditional role as a security guarantor. However, this tacit “division of labor” is not immune to shifts. Beijing's expanding footprint is increasingly viewed as encroaching upon Russia's former hegemony, even as both continue to navigate their uneasy coexistence.

In this context, Kazakhstan has not remained a passive bystander. On the contrary, its diplomacy exemplifies what Cooley [16] and Collins describe as strategic balancing by regional elites. Kazakhstan's multi-vector foreign policy – first articulated in the 1990s to prevent overdependence on Russia – has evolved into a highly pragmatic and institutionalized model of international engagement. It enables Astana to maintain productive ties with all major powers while prioritizing national sovereignty and regional agency.

The aftermath of Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine further validated this strategy. Rather than severing ties with Moscow, Kazakhstan diversified its external partnerships, intensifying cooperation with China, the EU, Turkey, and the United States. This pragmatic diplomacy reflects a broader regional shift in which Central Asian states assert themselves as active participants – rather than passive arenas – in shaping the strategic dynamics of a multipolar world.

Kazakhstan's leadership, particularly through President Tokayev's discursive framing – at the UN, in the 2024 Xinhua interview, and in his "Renaissance of Central Asia" speech – emphasizes the country's commitment to equal partnerships and regional ownership. By promoting intra-regional mechanisms like the "Central Asian Five" and resisting asymmetric dependency, Kazakhstan actively repositions itself as both a regional convener and a global norm.

In sum, Kazakhstan exemplifies middle-power diplomacy in practice. Through a combination of normative advocacy, infrastructural realignment, and calibrated engagement with great powers, it is not merely maneuvering within a multipolar world – it is helping shape the terms of that world's reconfiguration.

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КӨПВЕКТОРЛЫ САЯСАТ ГЕОСАЯСИ БҰЛТАРЫС ҚҰРАЛЫ РЕТІНДЕ: 2022 ЖЫЛДАН КЕЙІНГІ ҚАЗАҚСТАННЫҢ РЕСЕЙ ЖӘНЕ ҚЫТАЙМЕН ҚАТЫНАСЫНДАҒЫ СЫНДЫҚ ГЕОСАЯСИ БАҒЫТЫ

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Аннотация. Бұл мақалада Ресейдің Украинадағы ауқымды әскери операциясы және Қытайдың Еуразия кеңістігіндегі белсенділігінің артуы аясында Қазақстанның сыртқы саяси стратегиясының өзгеруі қарастырылады. Жетекші әлемдік державалардың мүдделері тоғысқан

аймақта орналасқан Қазақстан көпвекторлы саясатын геосаяси бұлтарыс құралына айналдырды. Қазақстан ресейлік Ұжымдық қауіпсіздік туралы шарт ұйымы (ҰҚШҰ) шеңберіндегі одақтастық қатынастарды сақтай отырып, сондай-ақ, Қытаймен «Бір белдеу, бір жол» бастамасы аясындағы экономикалық ынтымақтастықты нығайта отырып, Батыс елдерімен де байланыстарын кеңейтуде.

Мақалада сындық геосаясат және дискурсивтік талдау әдістері (Г. О'Туатейл, Дж. Эгню және М. Мюллердің тұжырымдамалары негізінде) қолданылып, Қазақстанның геосаяси рөлінің перифериялық мемлекеттен аймақтық нормалар мен стандарттарды қалыптастырушы белсенді акторға өзгеру үдерісі зерделенеді. Ресми баяндамалар, стратегиялық құжаттар мен аймақтық саяси дискурстарға сапалық талдау жүргізу арқылы мемлекет басшылығының кеңістік туралы көзқарастары мен дипломатиялық ескертулері зерттеледі.

Мақалада Қазақстанның сыртқы саясаты сыртқы күш орталықтары арасындағы икемді теңгерімді сақтау жөніндегі прагматикалық көзқарасты ғана емес, сонымен қатар егемендікті сақтауға, асимметрияларды қайта қарауға және көпполярлы және бәсекеге қабілетті халықаралық тәртіпте субъективтілікті бекітуге бағытталған саналы дискурсивті тәжірибені білдіреді деп көрсетілген.

Президент Қасым-Жомарт Тоқаевтың соңғы баяндамаларына, әсіресе стратегиялық тұтастыққа негізделген және толыққанды Орталық Азия жөніндегі көзқарасына сүйене отырып, мақала Қазақстанның геосаяси субъектілігін қалпына келтіру және нығайтуға деген ұмтылысын ашады. Осылайша, зерттеу қазіргі жаһандық иерархия өзгеріс жағдайындағы «орташа державалардың» мінез-құлқын талдауға үлес қосып, Қазақстанның стратегиялық автономияға жету жолындағы сындарлы дипломатиялық теңгерімділігін көрсетеді.

Тірек сөздер: Қазақстан, сыртқы саясат, көпвекторлы дипломатия, сындық геосаясат, геосаяси маневр, стратегиялық автономия, орта державалардың мінез-құлқы, қауіпсіздік

МНОГОВЕКТОРНАЯ ПОЛИТИКА КАК СТРАТЕГИЯ ГЕОПОЛИТИЧЕСКОГО МАНЕВРИРОВАНИЯ: КРИТИЧЕСКАЯ ГЕОПОЛИТИКА КАЗАХСТАНА В ОТНОШЕНИЯХ С РОССИЕЙ И КИТАЕМ ПОСЛЕ 2022 ГОДА

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Аннотация. В статье анализируется трансформация внешне-политической стратегии Казахстана в условиях после 2022 года, на фоне полномасштабной военной операции России в Украину и нарастающей активности Китая в Евразии. Географически расположенный на перекрестке

интересов ведущих мировых держав, Казахстан превратил многовекторную политику в инструмент стратегического геополитического маневрирования. Сохраняя формальные союзнические обязательства - в частности, в рамках Организации Договора о коллективной безопасности (ОДКБ) с Россией - Казахстан одновременно углубляет экономическое сотрудничество с Китаем через инициативу «Один пояс, один путь» и укрепляет связи с западными партнерами.

В статье используется теоретико-методологический подход критической геополитики и дискурсивного анализа (в частности, концепции Г. О’Туатейла, Дж. Эгню и М. Мюллера) для оценки того, как Казахстан переосмысляет и конструирует свою роль – от периферийного субъекта к региональному нормообразующему актору. На основе качественного анализа официальных речей, стратегических документов и региональных политических нарративов исследуются пространственные представления и дипломатические сигналы, транслируемые казахстанским руководством.

В работе утверждается, что внешняя политика Казахстана отражает не только прагматичную стратегию «хеджирования», но и осознанную дискурсивную практику, направленную на сохранение суверенитета, переосмысление асимметрий и утверждение субъектности в условиях многополярного и конкурентного международного порядка.

Анализируя последние выступления Президента Касым-Жомарта Токаева – в особенности его концепцию самодостаточной и стратегически консолидированной Центральной Азии — статья раскрывает, как Казахстан стремится восстановить и укрепить свою геополитическую субъектность. Тем самым исследование вносит вклад в изучение поведения «средних держав» в условиях меняющейся глобальной иерархии и акцентирует внимание на стремлении Казахстана к стратегической автономии через критически выверенное дипломатическое балансирование.

Ключевые слова: Казахстан, внешняя политика, многовекторная дипломатия, критическая геополитика, геополитическое маневрирование, стратегическая автономия, поведение средних держав, безопасность

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