

# Interethnic and Interconfessional Agreements are Major Factors of the Political Stability in the Republic of Kazakhstan

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**Abstract**—In the article the historical formation of interethnic and interconfessional agreement policy in Kazakhstan and their developing features at present time will be analyzed.

The successfully pursued by Kazakhstan at the present in the direction of ethnic and confessional policy is regarded as a major factor in promoting stability for the country.

**Keywords**—Political stability, interethnic relationship, interconfessional agreement, tolerance.

## I. INTRODUCTION

XI century is known to be a period of interethnic and religious violence's. Particularly, under the multi-ethnic society condition to define the borders of new born countries according to their ethnic lines is putting their survival in peril. In addition the increase of religious associations and groups and their development in ideological direction occasionally incite inter State conflicts. Under this circumstance for multinational and multi confessional Kazakhstan to maintain its political stability has become an important issue.

In order to research Kazakhstan's interethnic and interconfessional policy first of all one should review its historical causation.

In the long term period of Russian agricultural colonization before revolution 1 million and 150 000 population had migrated into Kazakhstan from Russia and Ukraine. During the forcible collectivization 250 000 confiscated peasants were forced to move into Kazakhstan from the central parts of USSR. Before the World War II for the purpose of promoting the industrial constructions from all the parts of USSR, particularly from European parts 1 million 200 000 people had moved.

In the course of several years 800 000 Germans, 18 500 Koreans, 102 000 Poland's and 507 000 various nations from the North Caucasus had been moved.

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From the other point of view between 1930-1932 years because of big famine which deliberately organized during «the small October revolution» 1 million 300 000 ethnic Kazakh residents had to leave their native land for ever and millions of them became victims of famine. Besides that 1,5 million Kazakhs including thousands Kazakh intellectuals were victims of Stalin's precession. All these matters bringing about the Kazakh minority and overwhelming majority in Kazakhstan created tensions in ethnic policy of the state. Consequently, various cultures, religious and traditions happened to live together in the historical territory of Kazakh nation. Foundation specific condition for Kazakhs and 140 ethnic groups for living together peacefully had been one of the biggest problems [1].

From the very beginning of the country's independence days the consolidation of Kazakh social and promotion equal rights for all ethnic groups have become one of the main courses in its national policy. Under the tension of transient period due to the governments purposeful and strategic plans any inter-ethnic violence, instability and social discords have not taken place in Kazakhstan society. The primordial concept to build not ethnic but civil community was chosen as a base of agreement and stability. In spite of ethnicity and religious belonging to hold all citizens' mutual interest in the country has proved to be the best way. On the strength of it the major ideological responsibility for Kazakhstan was to promote country's stability by establishing interethnic and interconfessional agreements.

## II. AN INTERETHNIC AGREEMENT POLICY IN ESTABLISHING STABILITY IN REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

Since the independence declaration in 1991 The Republic of Kazakhstan has moved a lot of amendments in its civil rights, political and economic development courses. The government has been paying attention to social economic conditions, ethnic consents and establishment of national security. In foreign policy the transparent and systematic course was so essential as the social stability was essential at the same time for internal politics of the country.

For the multi-ethnic and multi-confessional Kazakhstan the main objective was to enhance its independence by reserving public consent and political stability.

First of all one should mainly regard the internal integrity of the country.

The domestic integrity and political stability have been achieved by reserving political equality and civil rights of all

ethnic groups. This achievement is still being held by the government as one of the major priority of the State.

In Kazakhstan solving the interethnic problems had been fulfilled within early two terms. **First term is 1991-1995 years.** Interethnic policy to form the foundation of the national state has accumulated all the spiritual and the other resources in a short period of time. The integration between the interethnic groups affected the rising of Kazakh status and the new state. It also gave many opportunities for adoption to the new requirements.

In 1990 year on 25-th of October Kazakhstan Socialist Republic adopted a declaration about «State sovereignty». According to this declaration Kazakh nation was declared on a legal ground to be the state establishing nation and the main ethnic group in ethno-cultural field. In 1991 on 16-th December in constitution bill «about the state independence of Republic of Kazakhstan» «the self-identification rights of Kazakh nation» was defined. The national identity of Kazakhstanian state was amended in the Constitution adopted in 1993 on 28-th February.

**The second term** of developing interethnic relationship begins from the Constitution signed in 1995. In this main document the common civil principles of statehood were added with the social integration tendencies and territorial models of the nation. [2] The main vector of this Constitution is directed to concord the ethno-political unification with the tendency of civil society.

In 1995 on 1-st March by the President's decree the Assemblies of the Peoples was established. It covers all the national cultural centers in the Republic. Assembly is intended to propose projects on cultural enlightenment, reviving and disseminating their old specific traditions; forming *Kazakhstanian and national patriotism*; by watching the interethnic relationship to enhance the interethnic agreement and friendship; in pursuing the policy that causes the development of relationship between the ethnic groups who inhabit in Kazakhstan. They analyze the new legislation related to the national policy and 818 ethno-cultural centers were gathered together here. Their leaders were included into the membership of the Kazakhstan Nations Assembly. 46 ethnic members are able to meet together and demonstrate their arts. Assembly 2007 year during the constitutional reforms gained an opportunity to elect 9 deputies for the parliament straight away. Thus, the leverage which protects the interests of ethnic groups has been implemented. In 2008 in world history for the first time the legislation about «The Kazakhstan Nations Assembly» was passed.

In Kazakhstan the state policy is being pursued in the national and ethno-cultural trend. The meeting of these two cultural trends in the same path is the specific feature of the state policy. Providing support to the social status of ethnic groups the government is making a favorable condition to cope with the total national and cultural demands in the country. According to the new index the revival of ethnic spiritual values and tolerance have raised on the state level, constructive dialogue and amicable relationship between nationalities are continuing, stability and agreement set up foundation for social security. These positive changes have built the certain base for social creativeness [3].

By reinforcing the mutual relations between ethnic and nations we'll be able

to strengthen the national integration and increase our social rank.

About its realization president N. Nazarbayev pointed out in his 2030 strategic development:

- to ensure equal opportunities for all our citizens to develop their citizenship;

- to provide equal rights for all ethnic groups and eliminate the motives of interethnic discord;

- to enhance secure relationship, tolerance and mutual respect between confessions. Besides them some more other parts of master planning were mentioned [4].

The state national policy model of Kazakhstan is interethnic tolerance and social compliance. This can be noticed in the establishment of Constitution, in Constitution amendments (2007), in legislation «The Kazakhstan Nations Assembly» adopted in 2008, in the doctrine of «The unity of the country» (2009-2010)

The main national policy trend of Kazakhstan is to intensify the congregation around the independence idea of Kazakhstan society and at the same time keep the ethnic groups balance. The Kazakh country holding its cultural values as its main priority during this volatile period has been securing the society from the interethnic disputes and discords. It is necessary to intensify democratic and civil influence in the society in order to prevent the ethnic problems, observing firstly the rights of ethnic groups, secondly providing ethnic development, thirdly the protection individual rights.

Interethnic relationship is a major factor in providing the stable development for the country and society. In connection with this issue the public opinion poll were held in the Republic. Many members of all ethnic groups were asked; «How do you account the interethnic social status in Kazakhstan?»

		Ethnical Origin							
		Kazakh	Russian	Uzbek	Ukraine	Uyghur	Tatar	German	Other
How do you account the interethnic situation in Kazakhstan?	peaceful coexistence	48,2%	57,3%	54,3%	70,6%	30,0%	45,5%	70,6%	7,7%
	favourable	36,1%	33,2%	21,7%	14,7%	36,7%	22,7%	17,6%	53,8%
	There is internal tension	11,6%	7,8%	17,4%	8,8%	26,7%	18,2%	11,8%	15,4%
	There is little danger	2,2%	1,4%	6,5%	2,9%	3,3%	4,5%	0%	7,7%
	Rather dangerous	0,7%	0,3%	0%	2,9%	3,3%	9,1%	0%	7,7%
	The other answers	1,2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	7,7%

In the result the most members of six ethnic respondents 85-87% accounted the interethnic situation to be stable and 3-4% of them accounted it unstable and dangerous [5]. The tremendous amount of answers inclined to reply that the interethnic status is auspicious. This integrity is the evident performance of stability and agreement in the country.

The fact that more than 130 ethnic groups peacefully co-existing side to side is an interesting phenomenon for the other world. However, to understand the tool of living in harmony of different nationalities with different interests and desires is becoming essential.

An ideology of Kazakhstan had been evolved and submitted by the president- is the national unity. It means the community of ethnic, religious, and cultural societies which are inhabiting in Kazakhstan.

In Kazakhstan to promote interethnic consent and political stability in early years of independence had been a crucial policy of the republic. In addition, the state policy of development and restoring the multiculturalism and unity has been activated. The national unity doctrine is trended to continue the consolidation of society, unify Kazakhstan nationalities and establishment favorable condition, creation common values for them. The object is to establish not ethnic but civil society in Kazakhstan and in spite of their ethnic features to provide all citizens with equal rights and impose them responsibility and hold their interests.

If we analyze the world experience and Kazakhstan's position it becomes to be the most effective way. According to the adopted international experiences in national states the only one political nation live though the state includes different ethnic groups. There must be prerequisite that will consolidate them around the common language, values, interest and purpose.

In this position the consolidation of different ethnic groups can be fulfilled only through the Kazakh nation basis. As president N. Nazarbayev pointed out: «Kazakh nation is the basic ethnic in Kazakhstan, that's why they must take responsibility before the other ethnics and the other ethnics must regard Kazakh nation with comprehension» [6].

President N. Nazarbayev has mentioned the importance of equality for all ethnic groups living in the country and living in full accord with the other groups. He also said that the State needs pivotal nation who can promote their consolidation and coming to their common consent. In this position Kazakh nation are responsible before the other ethnics and to show dominance in society.

The president in his message emphasized: «Evidently, there is only single way of fulfilling the common national interests. Only in case of consolidation role of Kazakh nation we can supply equality for all ethnic groups» [6].

The development strategy of Republic of Kazakhstan covers all the common values and national orientation which celebrate the country. N. Nazarbayev said: «The multicultural feature of Kazakhstan is our major peculiarity and development potential»

Kazakhstan is known to be offering its own specific model and the world community also supported Kazakhstan. In the republic the efficient standard-legal and conceptual foundation of enhancing the interethnic agreement have been made. The Constitution of Republic of Kazakhstan ensures to protect

rights and interests of all citizens in spite of their racial, national, religious and the other features [7].

Kazakhstan being a country of friendship is providing a peaceful life for all nationalities and ethnic groups. In this way it sets a good example for the other world. In 2010 Kazakhstan held Astana summit where 56 European countries took part. Thus, in the same year being a responsible for chairmanship the international organization OSCE Kazakhstan has gained a high authority. The Kazakhstan's chairmanship trended to establish unique model of interethnic friendship and agreement in the country. The interethnic policy conducted by Kazakhstan government is to establish the civil society and agreement. This trend is also estimated to be valuable experience in the world community.

### III. THE RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AND INTERCONFESSIONAL AGREEMENT POLICY OF KAZAKHSTAN

Currently the inter-religious policy of independent Kazakhstan is based on the friendship, tolerance, agreement and peace. When we scrutinize the Kazakhstani model of religious tolerance and inter-confession agreement we should observe of its historic-cultural features. If trace the history one can see that from the ancient times different religious had co-existed for centuries in this steppe. Kazakhstan crossed by Silk-way routes being foundation for many pathes from the ancient time till today due to trade and cultural ties served as a connecting link between Asia and Europe. Having been influenced by various religion adherents Kazakhstan turned into enriched land. Before Islam came here many religious such as Tenggrism, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Buddhism, Judaism and Nestorian had spread in this region. Even after Islam's appearance all them used to live together peacefully and became a striking example of religious tolerance and interconfessional consent.

Therein, the president N. Nazarbayev emphasized: «Perfectly enriched with spiritual heritages of different ethnic groups and religious belief the unified nation of Kazakhstan managed to shape up their religious tolerance and openness identity. We believe that, we are responsible to pass on all these moral qualities generated from the old ages to the whole mankind» [8].

The holy traditions of our nation like religious tolerance, loyalty, hospitable including the other traditions have been adopted by the nation succeeded in living through such historical progress. Consequently, in the land where different cultures and civilizations mixed by this period we are watching their lives in mutual understanding and agreement.

In Kazakhstan more than 130 nationalities, 4 000 religious associations are working which belong to about 46 religious confessions. Among them 2337 Islamic: Sunni-1756, Shiism 3, Sufism 2, Ahmadiya 4, Russian Orthodox Churches 281, more than 90 the Roman Catholic Churches, 1189 protestant, evangelion Christians 291, Lutheran 28, Jehovah's Witnesses 104 organizations are existing. (reported 2009 year) [9].

In general, Kazakhstan is poly-confessional state. Islam, Christian, Buddhism, Judaism and the other untraditional religions are spread in the territory. But, 70 % of population follows Islam, 28% Russian orthodox and the remains hold different religious. In such state pursuing the religious policy

where exist multi-religious and different confessions requires tranquility.

As the president N. Nazarbayev said: «The religious unity means the state integrity: religious discord leads us to national discord».

Holding religious integrity is becoming the state's major priority.

First of all as it is indicated in the Constitution of Republic of Kazakhstan no citizen of the state will be discriminated in spite of his religious belief, race and nationality. In addition each citizen of Republic of Kazakhstan is allowed to choose his own faith. [10]. In 1992 the legislation which ensures religious freedom for all citizens of Kazakhstan was adopted. Besides that 2011 year «the bills about religious service and religious associations» was adopted. In Kazakhstan favorable condition has been created for all confessions to live in peace and the state policy is trended to concord all these inter-ethnic relationships.

*In religious field of Kazakhstan the state policy is relied on the next principles:*

- the secular and neutral features of the state and its institutes;
- the rights and freedoms of all men and women are equal in spite of their religious convictions and belonging to any kind of religious or secular groups.
- equality before the law of religious associations;
- respect for all ethno-cultural traditions and mentality of all the multi-cultural nations;
- the citizens' rights are not restricted in these fields: freedom of conscience, health and their legal rights and the other cases which apply constitutional rights of every citizen.
- to conduct the freedom of conscience and religious freedom policy transparently in all levels of state power and governmental structure [11].

According to scholar opinions such as A. Nysanbayev, A. Artiomov, S. Kolchigin, A. Kosichenko, K. Syroejkin, A. Hamidov, F. Bisenbayev in Kazakhstan spiritual agreement is based on two world religion Islam and Christian. They are mainly adherent by the major races of Eurasian continent Turkic and Slav.

That's why in Kazakhstan through the «Islam-Christian» tolerant sense of Kazakhstanis' will be developed and reserved. This agreement does not effect temporarily but it will promote in any spheres the further unifying process [12].

The religion can be an effective factor in unifying and integration progress. In order to keep this trend we should seek in religions not contradictions but common features, principles and values.

About this matter the president in his message mentioned: «We guarantee equality for all religions and interconfessional agreements»

The purpose of government is to provide peace and concord in the state and enhance them steadily. That's why while Kazakhstan citizens holding their language, religions, traditions they don't face any pressure. The huge Kazakh land imbibed various civilizations and cultures. The present multiethnic and poly-confessional Kazakhstan is a legatee of spiritual and cultural traditions gathered for many centuries. The religious tolerance and consent rules can be noticed in

foreign policy of Kazakhstan. They are based on multi-vectoral, global and in regional security cooperation, justice and progress. Kazakhstan was the first state to be refusing its nuclear weapons voluntarily and closing one of the biggest nuclear testing facilities. This is our deserved contribution to the world security. This act also influenced to recognize Kazakhstan as a peace-loving country. Kazakhstan also was an initiator of security and faith events. During «The peace and agreement» conference held in Astana many well-known spiritual leaders and different confession members who took part in this event unanimously adopted the «towards peace and agreement» declaration and then established «The peace and stability forum» [13].

Kazakhstan is also intended to broaden its interaction with the other European constructions and the Islam world.

The participation of Kazakhstan in international conferences arranged by international institutes like «The Alliance of civilization», «The house of Asia» (2007 year «The new threats of the world: The role of human dimensions in the security sphere ») and the inter-religious meeting for peace organized by the Community of Saint'Egidio (2008 year October Neapol), the 11-th summit of «Islam conference» (2008 year March, Dakar) can prove it. Believed as a good example both at regional and at the international level by the initiative of Kazakhstan president in 2003 **Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions** has been called and Astana became as a prominent center for interfaith dialogue. 17 leaders from different confessions participated in this forum and they prayed for the world peace. In 2003 year on 23-24-th of September during the meeting held in Astana the world religious leaders announced that the religion has nothing to do with the violence and terrorism. As the author of the idea the president of Republic of Kazakhstan was suggested by the religious leaders to be appointed as a chairman of this forum. Then they agreed to keep holding this forum every three year.

It has sense in calling Kazakhstan - «The land of crossed civilizations». In 2006 year 29 delegations took part in the forum, in 2009 year 77 delegations came from 35 countries worldwide. The president of Pakistan international university Ahmat Gazi speaking at the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions said that when many conflicts and violence are taking place around the world the initiative by the president N. Nazarbayev about holding the international religious in Astana enhances the consent between the adherents of different religions. The world religions' congress has been put against the terrorism problems, inter-ethnic and interfaith violence. The congress will also help in solving problems of conceptual ideas and faith conflicts. Thus, the Kazakhstani model of social compliance and tolerance has been formed.

At the first congress the main principles have been determined. They are: tolerance, mutual respect, interethnic agreement and religious tolerance. These principles create a foundation for interfaith relationship in Kazakhstan.

The president of Kazakhstan mentioned in his public message «we guarantee equality for all faiths and provide interconfessional agreement». The president N.Nazarbayev at the first edition of the Congress of World and Traditional Religions said: «We must not establish the whole religious

space. We need not absorb the existing distinctions between them because all of them are related to the big world religions. But the importance of constant dialogue is that in spite of existing some discrepancies we will be able to keep the process of seeking for «The Golden mean». [13],

The world religion dialogue doesn't mean to create the single religion by unifying all of them. Through the humanism ideas and common values of all world religions we can call the whole mankind to live in peace holding different faiths and cultures. At the present it became clear that one of the effective ways of influencing to the civilization development is a dialogue between cultures and religions. The Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions can considerably effect to prevent from religious collisions and ethnic violence which have been seething from the ancient times in different parts of the world. It is also believed to be effective way of bringing the civilizations and interfaith agreements to harmony. With the aim to broaden the international integration between confessions the international centre of cultures and religions was established in Astana. The main aim of this centre is to develop the dialogue between religions and civilizations and boost the Kazakhstani model of enhancing the interfaith agreements. This center is carrying out a large amount of work on forming dialogue between cultures, civilizations, ethnics, confessions and besides that on creating conceptual works against intolerance, xenophobia and religious persecution. It is not by accident that Kazakhstan situated at the cross of Asia and Europe is called as an initiator and an ardent campaigner of interfaith dialogue. Currently many ethnic groups and religion representatives are co-existing in Kazakhstan. They have already gained their own communicating experiences therefore; Kazakhstan deserves to be called an auspicious land where the fertile dialogues between confessions and civilization have deeply rooted.

At the present time the international community is highly estimating the activity of Kazakhstan in fulfilling the interfaith stability. This experience became essential in the field of strengthening the interconfessional agreements in the state policy. The specific model of Kazakhstan has proved that different religious and ethnic groups are able to live in peace under the same dome. All these efforts of Kazakhstan promoted its chairmanship at international organizations such as OSCE (2010) and the OIC (2011). Situated in the very hub of Eurasian continent Kazakhstan is spanning Europe and Asia both in geographical and cultural.

During its chairmanship OSCE Kazakhstan influenced to security and integration in Eurasian continent and to spiritual rapprochement of European and Asian countries. The day before entering Kazakhstan's chairmanship duty at OSCE N.Nazarbayev spoke: «Our interfaith and interethnic model is Kazakhstan's contribution to the world interfaith relationship issues»

Kazakhstan chaired OSCE under these fore slogans connected with letter T: Trust, Tradition, Transparency, Tolerance. The forth component in this scheme is Tolerance. It shows the enhancement of dialogue between religions and civilizations is still essential. In addition Kazakhstan heading the Islam conference tried to regulate the relationship between West and East and dialogue between civilizations. While chairing the Islam conference Kazakhstan put into the first

place rapprochement issue of East and West, Europe and Asia, Christian and Islam civilizations. Thus, Kazakhstan could shape its initiator image in the field of inter-civilization dialogue. Kazakhstan is becoming a hub of peace and progress. The foundation and creation favorable conditions for further interconfessional dialogue are the major trend of Kazakhstan and its president N. Nazarbayev. He will do everything in his power to increase the integration and confidence between religions. Now all his efforts are giving its fruits.

Currently the civilized view has become one of the part of democratic changes. In Kazakhstan all the favorable conditions created for living in peace and harmony are based on the constant dialogue.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The sovereignty of Kazakhstan in post totalitarian space depends on mutual understanding of multiethnic and multifait nations. In general, interethnic end interconfessional development is reported to be sustainable. All ethnic groups are proving their readiness for entering interethnic relationship. In Kazakhstan interethnic tolerance and social agreement policy are being conducted transparently and freely. The tolerant identity in independent Kazakhstan is not only norms of political culture but also the main trend of the State policy. The difficulties meet in realizing this policy appear of lacking experience and ethnic diversity.

The Republic of Kazakhstan as an independent State is trying to protect interests of all ethnic groups living in its territory and develop the State identity. In this way Kazakhstan is unifying all ethnic groups around the common values. Joining the State is the key factor of unity. As a result all ethnic groups are taking place actively in unifying process of the State. Their role is rising in social life of the State. The principle «*We are people of Kazakhstan*» is a strengthening mechanism of national unity and independence. The Constitution with the begin «We are people united by the willing of destiny» is to treat equally and unify all the people in spite of their nationality, race, religion, sex. The interethnic and interconfessional agreement policy of Kazakhstan is proving to be a key factor in establishing integration, tolerance, stability internal policy and unifying different ethnics and confessions.

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