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Peacekeeping as a Tool of Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy

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Abstract: Unresolved geopolitical conflicts that have emerged since the end of World War II are changing the architecture of Global Security. This contributes to the further deterioration of existing ones and provokes the emergence of new hotbeds of tension around the world. Absence of possibility to resolve the situation between two conflicting parties requires involving a third party, who would act as a mediator with the ability to resolve it, using certain tools, such as peacekeeping operations. Not only internal, but also external factors that have a direct impact on peacemaking have contributed to the development of today's peacekeeping as a mechanism for conflict resolution. Emerging conflicts are becoming more complex, and the approach of participants has changed, as well as the attitude towards peacekeepers. Growing globalization erases borders making them more transparent, and encourages States to respond more actively to events that are taking place in other countries. Involvement in such conflicts has allowed some "actors" to use peacekeeping as a political tool to promote their own interests in conflict zones. These goals are not always positive for the parties directly involved in the conflict situation. The achievement of their goals by the third parties involved can sometimes be radical, which in the end can further worsen the overall unstable existing state between the conflicting parties. Kazakhstan, despite the fact that it is a "newcomer" in the field of peacekeeping, also has the opportunity to promote its initiatives in the international arena through peacekeeping. The article discusses Kazakhstan's activities in this area, as well as possible ways to achieve these goals.

Keywords: peacekeeping, peace enforcement, foreign policy, UN mandate, peace operation types, Kazakhstan, UN, CIS

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Миротворческая деятельность как инструмент внешней политики Казахстана

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Аннотация: Неразрешенные геополитические конфликты, возникшие после окончания Второй мировой войны, меняют архитектуру глобальной безопасности. Это способствует дальнейшему ухудшению существующих и провоцирует возникновение новых очагов напряженности по всему миру. Отсутствие возможности разрешить ситуацию между двумя конфликтующими сторонами требует привлечения третьей стороны, которая выступала бы в качестве посредника, способного разрешить ее, используя определенные инструменты, такие как операции по поддержанию мира. Не только внутренние, но и внешние факторы, оказывающие непосредственное влияние на миротворчество, способствовали развитию современного миротворчества как механизма урегулирования конфликтов. Конфликты становятся все более сложными, и подход участников изменился, как и отношение к миротворцам. Растущая глобализация стирает границы, делая их более прозрачными, и побуждает государства более активно реагировать на события, происходящие в других странах. Участие в таких конфликтах позволило некоторым «актерам» использовать миротворчество в качестве политического инструмента для продвижения своих интересов в зонах конфликтов. Эти цели не всегда являются положительными для конфликтующих сторон. Достижение своих целей третьими сторонами порой может быть радикальным, что в конечном итоге может усугубить текущее состояние между конфликтующими сторонами. У Казахстана, несмотря на то что он является «новичком» в сфере миротворческой деятельности, также существует возможность продвижения своих инициатив на международной арене через миротворчество. В статье обсуждается деятельность Казахстана в этой сфере, а также возможные пути достижения этих целей.

Ключевые слова: миротворчество, принуждение к миру, внешняя политика, мандат ООН, виды миротворческих операций, Казахстан, ООН, СНГ

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Introduction

In a rapidly changing world, new challenges are emerging that are increasingly widening the rift in the global security architecture. International terrorism, drug crime, climate change, illegal migration, and the growing gap between rich and poor are becoming additional “triggers” for the destabilization of the peaceful coexistence of peoples and the emergence of new hotbeds of armed conflict. Without the joint efforts of the international community, it will become more difficult to further cope with these and many other challenges further. In this context, the United Nations, as one of the

most effective tools for existing collective security systems, should concentrate all its member states' capabilities to effectively address these challenges.

However, it is impossible to deny the attempts of some "actors" to prevent the formation of a polycentric world, to use the factor of force to unilaterally establish their own interests and strengthen their security at the expense of the security of others. These actions unfortunately lead to further escalation of tensions at the global and regional levels.

In this context, Kazakhstan, which contributes to ensuring global security within the framework of its obligations as a responsible UN member, needs to pay special attention to further strengthening its global security position. By doing this, Kazakhstan's authority will be strengthened on the world stage. Additional opportunities could be afforded Nur-Sultan to promote national interests on the foreign policy platform.

Development of Kazakhstan's Peacekeeping Potential from the Moment of Independence Until 2014

In 1992, the civil war began in Tajikistan. Some countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), namely Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, seeing this as a threat, jointly organized a peacekeeping campaign on the Tajik-Afghan border (Serrano, 2013: 156–183).

For this purpose, a separate consolidated rifle battalion of up to 500 people was created on the part of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan on a voluntary basis. During the entire period, about 9,000 servicemen served in the battalion; 46 of them were killed. The largest irrecoverable losses occurred during the battle on April 7, 1995, where 17 soldiers were killed (Official site of the MOD of the RK, 2019). Although the missions that took place during this war, in some moments were far from the peacekeeping standards announced by the UN. This was the first experience of Kazakhstan in such activity. As a result, in December 1995 the government of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan signed an agreement for the creation of a peacekeeping unit — the Central Asian Battalion (CENTRASBAT).

Despite the fact that the CENTRASBAT was disbanded in 1999, the UN recommended the participants form their own peacekeeping unit. As result, only Kazakhstan decided to follow the advice and in 2000 formed a Kazakhstan Peacekeeping Battalion (KAZBAT) (Stein, 2018: 257–271).

In the period from August 2003 to October 2008, in order to implement the international obligations of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the engineering and sapper detachment of the KAZBAT carried out a mission in Iraq as part of the Stabilization Forces of the international coalition led by the United States.

The main tasks of the contingent were search and destruction of unexploded ordnance, and providing water supply points, water purification and medical care. In October 2008, due to the end of the mission, the unit was returned to its homeland. During the period of participation in the mission, one officer was killed (Official site of the MOD of the RK, 2020).

Since the beginning of its mission, the detachment has neutralized more than four million explosive objects and purified about 7,000 cubic meters of drinking water. More

than 500 explosive ordnance disposal specialists, including 70 field water supply specialists, have been trained for the Iraqi security forces. Detachment doctors provided medical assistance to more than 5,000 local citizens, mainly women and children affected by terrorist acts.

The mission in Iraq was carried out in accordance with the UN Security Council resolution, where the actions of the Kazakh military contingent were highly appreciated by the world community. During the mission a total of about 300 servicemen of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan served, giving them invaluable experience for having participated in such operations.

Participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations Since 2014

In accordance with the decision of Parliament¹, starting in 2014 the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan, including women, took part in UN missions in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI)² as military observers (Sabekov, 2013).

The next major step in the development of Kazakhstan's peacekeeping potential was the agreement of the Indian leadership³ to the participation of the Kazakh peacekeeping company, about 120 military personnel, as part of the Indian peacekeeping battalion of the Armed Forces of the Republic in the UN Interim Force in Lebanon mission (UNIFIL). Therefore, in accordance with the Resolution of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan⁴, 120 servicemen of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan had participated in the six-month mission that was conducted from October 31, 2018 until October 13, 2021. Nowadays, six Kazakh peacekeepers are participate in the mission as part of the Indian Battalion. Since the participation, more than 500 servicemen have supported this mission.

Within the framework of the UNIFIL mandate, the Kazakh peacekeeping contingent performed the following tasks in its area of responsibility:

- on foot and mobile patrolling;
- organization of the work of roadblocks;
- protection of bases;
- daily combat training of personnel involved in operations.

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¹ Resolution of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 15-V of December 20, 2013 On the proposals of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N.A. Nazarbayev on sending officers of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan to United Nations peacekeeping missions as military observers.”

² Since January 1, 2018, the UN mission in Côte d'Ivoire has been closed.

³ Technical arrangement between the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of India to the Memorandum of understanding between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Republic of India with regard to joint deployment to the UNIFIL concerning arrangements for joint deployment of a Kazakh peacekeeping contingent as part of Indian battalion in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) — signed in August 21, 2018.

⁴ Resolution of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated June 15, 2018 No. 25-VI PRK “On the proposals of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N.A. Nazarbayev on sending servicemen of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan to participate in United Nations missions”.

In addition, in 2019, defense ministries of Kazakhstan and Italy signed a Technical Agreement¹, according to which representatives of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan participate in the contingent of the Italian Armed Forces in the UNIFIL. Thus, two Kazakh officers serve as staff officers in this six-month mission.

Peacemaking and Foreign Policy of Kazakhstan

Peacekeeping Activities for the Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy

As part of the diversification of the Kazakhstan's peacekeeping potential peacekeeping training centers have been formed:

- Peacekeeping Training Center of the Ministry of Defense (KAZCENT).
- The Demining Center of Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
- The Military Medicine Center of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The centers conduct special courses to train military observers, staff officers, medical specialists, engineers-sappers.

Therefore, for the first time in 2008, the Partnership for Peace Training Center (KAZCENT) was established in the Central Asian region and was recognized by the North Atlantic Alliance as the 19th NATO Training and Educational Center "Partnership for Peace".

The main purpose of the Center is to train servicemen of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan, NATO countries and partners to participate in peacekeeping operations by holding various regional and international seminars, courses and conferences.

In 2010, after the accreditation of the course "Military English Terminology in Multinational Operations Course", KAZCENT became a full-fledged member of the "Partner Training and Educational Centers".

As a result, the English language training for peacekeepers was annually organized with support from United States and Great Britain.

In order to develop the capabilities of KAZCENT for peacekeeping training, in 2016 center was also included in the international Association of peacekeeping Training Centers. Due to activities aimed at training partner countries; military personnel in 2019, with the support of partner countries (USA and UK), the center received UN certification for these courses: "UN Staff Officers" and "UN Protection of Civilians".

In 2020, as part of peacekeeping development, and in order to expand the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan's participation in peacekeeping missions, the KAZCENT was reorganized into the "Peacekeeping Training Center of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Kazakhstan" (KAZCENT). This action occurred without changing the main task of the KAZCENT to train military and civilian personnel tasked with peacekeeping missions/operations.

In addition to conducting special peacekeeping training for Kazakhstani peacekeepers, the Center organizes courses for representatives of foreign states. So, in the period of May 17-28, 2021, a course "UN Staff Officers" was held at the Center, where representatives of Kyrgyzstan, Great Britain, Spain and Mozambique took a part. In addition,

¹ Technical Arrangement between the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Defence of the Italian Republic on cooperation with in the operation "United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon" (UNIFIL) — signed in February 27, 2019.

on November 8-19, 2021, the course “UN Protection of Civilians” was held with the participation of representatives of Germany, Bangladesh, Brazil, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, the UAE, Kyrgyzstan, Finland and Mauritania.

Since 2011, the staff of the Military Medicine Center trains the medical personnel of Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Nowadays, together with the Regional Representation of the International Committee of the Red Cross, several training courses are held at the Center:

- 1) first aid training;
- 2) first aid instructor training;
- 3) course “Emergency medical actions for extensive injuries”;
- 4) course “Military field surgery, actions for mass receipts”.

In 2019, with support of the U.S. Department of Defense, the Center’s “International trauma life support” course was certified to fulfill a requirement for joining the international trauma life support program (ITLS), and was awarded the status of an independent branch of ITLS’ organization.

In May 2019, the 5th International Partnership for Technology in Peacekeeping Symposium, with the theme “Protection, Security and Trust” was held in Nur-Sultan.

The Symposium was attended by the UN Under-Secretaries-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix and support for the operations of Atul Khare, as well as more than 200 representatives from 70 countries, primarily from the States-suppliers of peacekeeping forces.

During the event, issues related to making proposals on technological tools/innovations that contribute to safer and more effective activities in the field of ensuring peace and stability were considered.

Another activity in peacekeeping field is the Kazakhstan armed forces’ joint exercises with partner countries. One of them is Joint Peacekeeping Exercises “Steppe Eagle” that was annually conducted together with armed forces of the United States and Great Britain and certain other NATO members since 2003. The purpose of the exercise is to improve the practical skills of commanders and multinational headquarters supporting the peacekeeping operations’ organization, the organization of interaction between foreign units and the management of units during peacekeeping operations.

During these exercises, in 2017 KAZBAT reached the first level of NATO assessment — an assessment of the status of interoperability with NATO forces.

Joint Peacekeeping Exercise “Steppe Eagle” is a unique event that is held not only in Central Asia, but also in training centers in Germany and the UK, which is gaining great authority among the partners of military cooperation of Kazakhstan. Additionally, this event allows the armed forces of the United States and Great Britain to build rapport with Kazakh army personnel as well strengthening ties with Kazakhstan.

Prospects for the Development of Peacekeeping

With the development of a multipolar world order, Kazakhstan is practicing a multi-vector foreign policy because it is located between two great powers — Russia and

¹ ITLS has about 140 branches and 90 training centers around the world.

China. Kazakhstan has to conduct foreign policy in such a way as not to get closer to one of the sides, but to balance between them (Vanderhill et al., 2020: 975–993).

After the collapse of the USSR, Kazakhstan's relationship with Russia remained very close. In order to moderate its relationship with Russia, Kazakhstan began cooperation with China to include having established the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The potential Sino-Russian conflict of interests forced Kazakhstan to seek a third party, which was the United States. However, with the weakening of US influence in the region and with the growing influence of India on the countries of Central Asia, Kazakhstan, following a multi-vector foreign policy, began cooperation with India through a peacekeeping policy: a Kazakh detachment of 120 people participated in the Indian contingent in UNIFIL (Schlegel, 2021: 107–124).

This example shows that in order to continue to successfully pursue a multi-vector foreign policy, Kazakhstan should further develop cooperation with other countries to foster peacemaking, and to allow it to spread its sphere of influence while also earning prestige on the world stage. This is one of Kazakhstan's key foreign policy strategies.

Kazakhstan considers UN peacekeeping activities as an important element of maintaining and strengthening international stability, and its security is closely linked to ensuring global security.

Participation in UN peacekeeping operations contributes to the further development of dialogue with the Organization. It is an effective tool for positioning Kazakhstan as a member of the international community, while also seeking to make a systematic contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security.

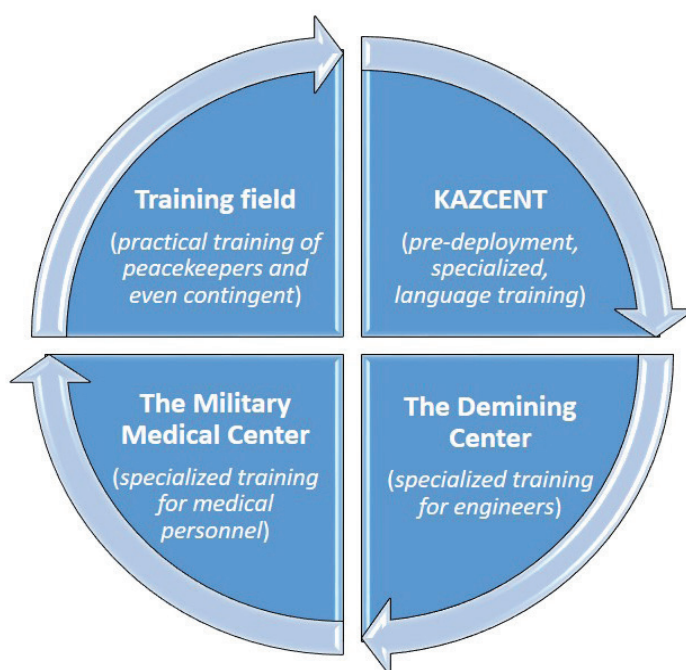
Additionally, it gives Kazakhstan's military personnel the opportunity to gain invaluable experience in peacekeeping operations, receive training in elite advanced military powers' military units, and increases their combat readiness to support the mitigation of possible regional conflicts.

The main tasks of Kazakhstan in this endeavor:

1. The main task of participating in UN peacekeeping operations is to preserve and strengthen the achieved image of Kazakhstan as a peacekeeper state, as a neutral state that contributes to the resolution of conflicts and does not pursue any selfish interests, as a State that the international community can trust completely. It is very important that as a member of the United Nations, and as the leader of the Organization, that the world continues to have a high opinion of our country, which we have achieved and want to maintain. One of the basic principles of peacekeeping is the impartiality and neutrality of the participating States.
2. Greater involvement in peacekeeping has certain economic benefits for our country too. Kazakhstan, with its military potential, could organize the supply of military equipment to the UN on a paid basis for conducting peacekeeping operations in countries affected by conflict. The main condition for the sale of Kazakh military equipment should be its competitiveness, proven in combat operations and affordable price. Kazakhstan could use its military equipment in peacekeeping operations in order to demonstrate its high quality to the UN. Kazakhstan, as a neutral state that does not have any specific interests in military conflicts, will have an advantage in acquiring U. N. equipment that meets the above parameters.

3. Based on the experience of the Kazakh armed forces in previous missions, and existing demands of the UN for engineering services and medical support, Kazakh experts could participate in the rehabilitation process in post-conflict nations, including infrastructure rehabilitation and development.

In order to realize these goals Kazakhstan's armed forces need to exercise its potential and capabilities. For example, Kazakhstan's military engineers have the necessary equipment and means of engineering weapons; they can perform complex tasks that require professional personnel training. In addition, military medical personnel provide care to military personnel and their families. Furthermore, in support of pandemic strategies to limit the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus, military medical personnel provided services to our country's civilian population. Moreover, in August 2020 a group of Kazakh armed forces medical specialists provided assistance to victims of the explosion that occurred in Lebanon's capital Beirut.



Cycle of Training of Peacekeepers.

Цикл подготовки миротворцев

4. It is economically advantageous for Kazakhstan to compensate the UN for the costs of sending its military personnel to participate in peacekeeping operations. According to the uniform rate approved by the UN General Assembly, compensation is US \$

1,428 per soldier per month (as of July 1, 2019), and compensation is also provided for national military armament and equipment used in UN missions. It will also provide an opportunity to compensate for the financial resources spent by Kazakhstan, the annual contributions of UN partner members, as part of its cooperation obligations with the UN.

5. Constant participation and development of our own centers for training peacekeepers in Kazakhstan raises our prestige in the eyes of the organization. Building a full cycle of the “Peacekeeping Training Cluster” will bring these centers to the regional level in the short term and further to the world level (Fig. 1).

This will help to attract foreigners to seek peacekeeping training at these centers, which in turn will allow them to understand the life in Kazakhstan. Knowledge of Kazakhstan’s culture, traditions and general life will form a certain understanding about Kazakhstan, as an independent and peaceful state, and establish certain attitude toward our country and its people.

Conclusion

The development of the peacekeeping potential opens up new opportunities and prospects for Kazakhstan, both economically and politically. This will make it possible in the future to consider peacekeeping activities as an instrument of political influence for certain states and regions, in order to promote our own interests.

The establishment and further development of “Peacekeeping Training Clusters” could be the first step in the near future for achieving these goals.

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