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TURKEY-KAZAKHSTAN RELATIONS: AN OVERVIEW OF MUTUAL RELATIONS SINCE THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION

Summary

The bilateral relations between Kazakhstan and Turkey have started, firstly due to deep cultural, historical ties, brotherhood kinship which caused Turkey to be the first country to recognise the independence of Kazakhstan. Secondly, the development of the Turkish-Kazakh relations is based on the identity or similarity of positions on a wide range of issues; moreover, both countries' own interests in the international relations system also played a significant role in strengthening the bilateral relations.

Key words: Turkey, Kazakhstan, economy, diplomacy, military cooperation.

JEL codes: F5

Introduction

Being transcontinental countries yet located mostly in Asia both Turkey and Kazakhstan are the rapidly emerging countries. Turkey is one of the most influential players in Asia, while Kazakhstan is enjoying of being a fast growing economy among the former Soviet Union states. The bilateral cooperation between Turkey and Kazakhstan is, undoubtedly, consistent with the national interests of both countries, objectively strengthens their international position and contributes to the success of economic performance.

The aim of this study is to analyse the economic relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan since 1991.

Therefore, the following objectives are defined:

- 1) To describe the economic potential of Kazakhstan.
- 2) To study the evolution of the Kazakh-Turkish relations in various fields.
- 3) Using specific examples of cooperation, to show the process of development of economic relations between the two countries during the period in question.
- 4) To define the achievements and problems in economic bilateral relations of Turkey and Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan: a brief description

This part includes general information as regards geography, demography, political situation, education in Kazakhstan. The aim of the chapter is to describe the economic potential of Kazakhstan.

Geography

Kazakhstan is located in in the heart of the Eurasian continent and is the biggest country in Central Asia, the territory of which is 2,724,900 square kilometres. Kazakhstan is the 9th largest in the world, after Russia, China, USA, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, India and Australia; the territory of the country surrounds 13% of the whole Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and is the second biggest among the CIS countries, after Russia (Solak 2003, p. 72). Kazakhstan is 5 times bigger than France and 3.5 times bigger than Turkey (Kazakhstan, CIA Factbook) and in total the territory of Kazakhstan can cover more than 12 countries of the European Union.

Kazakhstan borders China (1460 km) to the east, Kyrgyzstan (980 km), Turkmenistan (380 km) and Uzbekistan (2300 km) to the south, with the Russian Federation (6467 km) to the north, and the Caspian Sea to the west. The total length of the borders is 12,187 km.

Its territory extends from the lower stream of the Volga River in the west to the foothills of the Altai Mountains in the east – 3000 km, and spanning two time zones, from West Siberian lowlands in the north to the Kyzyl Kum desert and mountains of Tien Shan in the south – 2000 km.

Demography And Social Structure

Despite the fact that Kazakhstan has very large territory, it is one of the sparsely populated countries in the world – 6.1 people per 1 square kilometre. Total population is 17,948,816 people by July 2014 (62th place in the world) (Kazakhstan, CIA Factbook) of which 63.1% are Kazakhs, 23.7% are Russians. In addition to the two main ethnic groups, Kazakhstan is a home to another 120 nationalities, including Uzbeks – 2.9%, Ukrainians – 2.1%, Uighurs – 1.4%, Tatars – 1.3%, Germans – 1.1%, and others – 4.4% (2009) (Kazakhstan, CIA Factbook).

Moreover, 53.6% of the population is considered to be residents of cities and towns, the remaining 46.4% are the villagers. Over the first decade of the independence, in the country has slowed the rate of population growth. This situation is due, on the one hand, to migration outflow of large number of people, and, on the other hand, to the loss of a stable natural population

growth. Since 1988, in connection with the crisis in the economy and society, the demographic situation has seriously deteriorated: fertility decreased and mortality increased. The total fertility rate for the 1988-1995 period decreased from 25.5 to 17 per 1000 people, and mortality – increased from 7.5 to 10. Between 1989 and 1999, there were a negative balance of external migration, i.e. out-migration, about 1.5 million people (Tatimov & Akshalova 1997, p.11). Nevertheless, the economic growth since 2000 has changed the situation and migration decreased. The average life index among women is 73.32 and for men are 63.51 (Social index, Statistic Agency, 2011). The literacy rate is very high as in other post-Soviet countries – 99.8% (Social index, Statistic Agency 2011).

Political and administrative structure

Kazakhstan declared its independence on 1 December 1991. Since then two constitutions there have been adopted: in 1993 and in 1995. On the basis of the constitution, Kazakhstan is a unitary state, democratic, presidential republic. The country is divided into legislative power: Parliament, which consists of two Chambers – the Senate and the Majilis (Assembly); executive (the President) and the judiciary ones (judges of local courts and the Constitutional Court).

Since the first days of independence, the President of the country has been Nursultan Nazarbayev. He was first elected to the post in 1990, and in 1991 he was elected by vote of the people for 5 years. In 1995 and 1999, the people also voted for him, and both times were early-voting. After the last term of his Presidency, it was extended to 7 years. The President appoints the ministers and the prime minister, chief judges and the public prosecutor, takes control of the financial activities of the country's head of Government and is the commander in chief of the armed forces.

Natural resources

Kazakhstan is very rich in oil and natural gas reserves; and natural gas reserves are bigger than the country's oil reserves. Kazakhstan, among former Soviet republics, is the second largest oil producer after Russia. The country's economy is largely based on oil export revenues. According to statistics of 2010, the country's total oil reserves are 39.8 billion barrels. This figure constitutes 2.9% of total world reserves. Saudi Arabia by the end of 2010 had 264.5 billion barrels (about 19.1% of world reserves) of proven reserves. Kazakhstan's reserves have been increasing along with the newly discovered reserves in the Caspian Sea.

Kazakhstan's natural gas reserves by the end of 2010 made the 1% of world's total reserves, which makes 1.8 trillion cubic metres. In addition, the

country has also 3.9% of the world's coal reserves (33.6 billion tons). Kazakhstan is also a country rich in gold reserves. The country's Vasilkovsky mine has approximately 370 tons of gold reserves. The country is also rich in iron ore, copper, chromium, lead, tungsten, and zinc deposits.

Turkey and Kazakhstan: diplomatic relations

This part of the paper explains the bilateral diplomatic relations as well as humanitarian relations of Turkey and Kazakhstan. The aim of this chapter is to analyse the bilateral relations in different areas, which directly influence the economic relations between two countries.

Turkey's relations with central asian countries

Turkey was the first country to recognise the independence of the Central Asian countries. These states are close to Turkey in terms of history and religion, ethnicity and linguistic relations. That is why the newly emerged states issue occupied an important agenda for Turkish foreign policy decision makers (Aslan 2012, p. 221). This situation opened to Ankara a tempting prospect to lead a conglomeration of ethnically related countries. Turkey started to develop its new identity as the leader of the Turkic community, as Idris Bal mentions, under the emotional quote – “Turkish world from Adriatic Sea to Great Wall of China” (Aslan 2012, p. 221).

In this regard, in the structure of the Turkish Foreign Ministry in 1992, the Agency of Turkic Cooperation and Development (TIKA) was established, which deals with economic, cultural and technical cooperation; also the Centre for Culture and Arts was created. The main activity of the TIKA is provision of economic assistance, development of joint projects and programmes, regulation of the legal, technical and economic, social and environmental cooperation. The priority tasks of the TIKA are to facilitate the structural and market reforms, the rapid integration of the Turkic states in the world economy. In carrying out these functions, the representatives of the TIKA are involved in individual projects by government ministries, businesses and banks, working with international organisations, including the UN agencies and foreign countries.

In the first years of independence, the Central Asian countries made contacts with the world via Turkey. The leaders of the new states saw Ankara as a mediator, which is able, thanks to the long-standing relations with Brussels and Washington, to help them as soon as possible to integrate into the global political and economic system.

With the assistance of Turkey the Turkic republics were included in the regional economic and political organisations such as OSCE, the Organisation

for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. Turkey played an important role in the accession of the Central Asian republics to the NATO's "Partnership for Peace" (PfP) programme. Ankara also contributed to the penetration of these states of the international financial institutions (the IMF, World Bank, Asian Development Bank). At the World Economic Forum in Davos, it has become a tradition to hold a meeting of leaders of Turkey and the Central Asian states.

Turkish leaders were confident that the close ties with the new republics would not only enhance regional importance of Turkey but also provide new opportunities for the development of its export-oriented economy. Along with the activities of the Turkish official governmental organisations in expanding the zone of influence of Turkey actively involved private commercial and industrial capital. Turkish business won the markets of the young states using dumping prices and the mechanism of barter transactions. The Turkish side has established a special Turkish-Central Asian Bank to finance its economic influence in the region's markets. In Central Asia, Turkish businessmen had cultural and linguistic advantage over Western business competitors. In these states were established joint universities, particularly in Kazakhstan, and high schools in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, with the support of the Turkish side.

Turkey was initially perceived as a model of socio-economic and political transformation by the Central Asian states. A number of countries in the region showed an interest in the Turkish version of economic development. On the one hand, Turkey was able to indicate its presence in the Turkic-speaking countries and greatly enhance the economic and cultural ties with them. However, the hopes that Turkey would become their main political and economic partner did not materialise. Among the main reasons are the lack of common borders, the Russian influence in the region, and the reluctance of the leaders of the newly independent states once again to become dependent on someone else.

Nevertheless, Turkey has military attaches in all capital cities of the Central Asian states, fairly strong agents, trying to create a pro-Turkish political parties and groups that work to strengthen the political and military cooperation of their countries with Ankara. Turkey cooperates with the Central Asian republics in the elimination of such threats to regional security and stability as radical religious movements, terrorism, drug trafficking and arms trafficking. As part of the agreements on the fight against terrorism, signed with these countries, Turkey provides them with the necessary equipment and financial assistance. Since 2001, Ankara has significantly increased its military assistance to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, in a lesser extent to Kyrgyzstan, providing weapons and military uniforms, conducting trainings with the aim of upgrading the armies of these countries. Turkey's participation in the operation in Afghanistan has clearly enhanced its prestige among the Central Asian states.

Turkey, providing an opportunity to export Azerbaijani energy resources to Europe, undoubtedly, interested in connecting Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to the Trans-Caspian project. Astana is satisfied with the option of further development of the dialogue with the European Union, with the active participation of Turkey, including the development and implementation of joint projects for the transportation of oil and gas to Europe.

Diplomatic relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan

Turkey is the first country to recognise Kazakhstan's independence in 1991, but the relations between two nations have deep roots of being used to be the parts of a big family and sharing the same territory until the XI century, when the ancestors of today's Turks living in Turkey moved to Middle East and created "second Turan" (Bistilli 1996) – The Ottoman Empire. The first official diplomatic relations started between Kazakh Han and Ottoman Sultan in 1713 (Andican 2009, p. 191).

However, being separated by historical circumstances, due to which the connection with each other had been lost. Since the late XX century, the peoples of Kazakhstan and Turkey have gained the opportunity to restore the broken relationship, to establish multilateral contacts at all levels, in all areas of cooperation. Though, the first steps of the relations in modern stage started prior to the breakdown of the Soviet Union. In March 1991, Turkey and Kazakhstan signed an Agreement on Cooperation in political, trade-economic, scientific-technical, ecological, cultural, social, communication and in other areas (Tokayev 1997, p. 509).

In September 1991, the Presidents of Kazakhstan and Turkey signed the Declaration containing the principles and objectives of bilateral relations. In this context, the principles of friendly relations were emphasised based on the objectives of international documents. The President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev during his visit to Turkey in the same year defined "XXI century" as "Turks' century" (Aydin 2005, p. 380).

On 2 March 1992, the diplomatic relations were established and in the same year – the embassies of both countries were opened in Kazakhstan and Turkey. Since 1999, the Consulate also started to function (since 2002 – the Consulate General) of Kazakhstan in Istanbul. Nowadays, Kazakhstan has 9 representations in Turkey. These representations include an embassy in Ankara, consulates in Adana, Antakya, Antalya, Bursa, Istanbul, Izmir, Kayseri, and Nevsehir. The Turkish Embassy in Almaty was opened in March 1992 and in 2008 Turkish Embassy was moved from Almaty to Astana. In addition to the embassy in Astana, Turkey has also a consulate general in Almaty.

In 1993, the Prime Minister of Turkey Turgut Ozal visited Kazakhstan and, year later, in 1994, the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev made his next visit to Turkey. During these meetings by the Heads of States the development and expansion of mutual relations in economy, politics, culture and in other areas were confirmed; and the Agreement on Friendship and Cooperation was signed.

A new impetus to relations between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Republic of Turkey was received after the statements of the leaders of the development of the strategic partnership between Astana and Ankara. The initiative was announced during the official visit of President Nursultan Nazarbayev to Turkey in May 2003 and was confirmed during the bilateral meetings between the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev and the President Ahmet Necdet Sezer at the NATO summit in Istanbul in June 2004.

Turkey, in order to provide closer relations and to concrete these relations with a strategic partnership agreement accelerates its relations with the friend and brother state Kazakhstan, and Turkish Prime Minister in order to hold talks in details with Kazakh officials headed to Astana in May of 2005. The cooperation is also based on the expansion of inter-parliamentary relations. Thus, in the legislatures of the two countries, parliamentary friendship groups have been activated. From 31 January to 3 February 2006, there was held the official visit to Turkey of the delegation of the Majilis of the Parliament of Kazakhstan headed by the Majilis Chairman U. Mukhamedzhanov. On 27-29 September 2012, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (Parliament) Speaker Cemil Cicek paid an official visit to the Republic of Kazakhstan. During those official meetings the past experience and future perspective of bilateral cooperation in Parliamentary level have been discussed.

Following the visit of President Nazarbayev, which took place in 2009, to Turkey, as a consequence of long-time endeavours, both states agreed to sign a strategic partnership treaty, thus Kazakhstan became the first Central Asian Turkic state with whom the Republic of Turkey signed such an agreement.

Another considerable step to closer cooperation was signing an Agreement of Cooperation in the field of science and technology, education, economy, environmental protection and tourism development.

On 23-26 May 2010, the President of the Republic of Turkey Abdullah Gül paid an official visit to Kazakhstan. During his visit, he participated along with the President Nursultan Nazarbayev in the opening ceremony of Turkish Academy in Astana. The Academy is intended to give service as a cultural and scientific centre. At the same time, the Turkish Academy will carry out projects on history and ethnography of Turkic nations.

Meeting of two Presidents continued in the framework of the III Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia

(CICA), held on 7 June 2010; the celebration of “The Day of the City” in Astana on 6 July 2010; and on the X Summit of Turkic-speaking countries, which took place on 16 September 2010 in Istanbul. President Abdullah Gul attended the OSCE Summit held on 1-2 December 2010 in Astana. On 2-4 August 2011, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan Y. Kazykhanov paid an official visit to Turkey, during which he met with the President of Turkey Abdullah Gul and Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey Cemil Cicek, and held talks with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey Ahmet Davutoglu.

In line with bilateral relations, the cooperation of Kazakhstan and Turkey in a multilateral format has been conducted – in the framework of the UN, ECO, OIC, CICA, Summit of Turkic-speaking states and others.

Agreements and arrangements reflect the dynamism and the intensification of the strategic partnership between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Kazakhstan. Between the Foreign Ministries of the two countries on a permanent basis, consultations, meetings and visits on various issues of regional and international politics, as well as mutual support initiatives are conducted.

Cultural and educational relations

The cultural and educational cooperation between Turkey and Central Asian countries has significantly developed, as well as with Kazakhstan due to having the same Turkic roots. In this context, the Turkish World Research Agency, the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA), and the Turkish Culture and Arts Joint Management (TÜRKSÖY) were established.

In 1999, the Turkish World Research Agency published a special magazine called “Kazaks Living in Turkey”.

The Agency has also established departments of Turkish language and literature at the universities of Almaty, Kyzylorda and Taldykorgan, and assists in the training of specialists of Turkology studies. An active role in the consolidation of scientific communication plays the High Institution of Culture, Language and History named after Atatürk. This institution, which is essentially the national Academy of Sciences of the humanities, has expressed willingness to participate in the preparation of the publication of the Kazakh encyclopaedia, the magazine “Music of the Turkic world”, as well as in joint projects to study the heritage of Korkut and archeologic sites.

The cultural events such as the restoration of historical monuments as Ahmet Yassevi Mausoleum, the celebration of 1500th year of anniversary of Turkestan city, broadcasting a programme in Turkish every Thursday on Kazak radio, giving names to the streets and building monuments of well-known

historical persons from both countries are also strengthening the mutual relations (Shilibekova 2009, p. 60).

In an early independence period in Kazakhstan, there were big demands for professional human resources, based on which in the bilateral relations the field of education started being paid a big attention and to play a significant role.

Educational relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan started by signing an agreement on education and culture in 1991, between the President of Turkey, Turgut Ozal, and the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev. At the beginning of 1992, by the visit of the delegation composed of the officials from the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Turkey, the protocols defining the overall scope of co-operation were signed; and Kazakhstan Great Student Programme started (Shilibekova 2009, p. 60). Until now, between the two countries several educational projects have been established and implemented. One of the most advanced projects in this case is the International Kazakh-Turkish University named after Hodja A.Yassavi in Turkestan (Southern Kazakhstan). The Turkish Government allocated for this project in total 60 million USD. Today, the University became a modern higher education institution with a solid methodological and experimental base, with an enrolment of 15 thousand students.

In 1996, a private University named after Suleyman Demirel was established. Moreover, there are 28 Kazakh-Turkish high schools. Every year the number of Turkish students studying in Kazakhstan is increasing. Kazakh undergraduate and graduate students on a grant basis study in Turkey. Many Kazakh scientists and specialists teach a variety of technical and humanitarian subjects in Turkish universities.

In strengthening the bilateral relations in the educational sphere, the International Foundation “KATEV” plays a significant role. KATEV was established in 1997. The main purpose of the Foundation is to educate competitive specialists who will be able to compete at the international level with the developed countries, and to prove their abilities in the field of education, technology, arts, and culture; and also to conserve and develop the national values of the nation¹. Since the foundation KATEV has been coordinating educational activities and supervising educational institutions; in particular, 28 Kazakh-Turkish Lyceums, Economic College in Taraz, “Shahlan” elementary school, University named after Suleyman Demirel, language courses and others operating throughout the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

As a result of KATEV’s achievements, there can be shown the Kazakh-Turkish high schools’ achievements in different kinds of competitions, during which the students of Kazakh-Turkish high schools have won more than

¹ Our mission, KATEV, <http://www.katev.kz/> [access: August 2014].

8,000 medals at the regional and national competitions, and about 1,500 in international competitions.

In general, cooperation in the cultural and educational sphere between Turkey and Kazakhstan can be characterised as highly active.

Military cooperation

the bilateral military cooperation between Turkey and Kazakhstan started in early 1990s. Since then between the two countries several agreements have been signed, such as “Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Military Education” in 1993, “Agreement on Cooperation in the field of military education, science and technology” in 1994, and “Agreement on Cooperation in the field of technology and defence industry” in 1996. These agreements were extremely advantageous for Kazakhstan since the Turks assumed responsibility for all the material expenditures (Hovsepian 2010, p. 83).

Since 1993, more than 300 Kazakh officers have graduated from the War Academies of the Republic of Turkey and more than 400 Kazakhstani military officers have been trained in military education centres of Kazakhstan. Starting October 2004, Turkish language courses were set up at the Military Institute of Foreign Languages under the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Another side of the military cooperation is done through NATO’s Partnership for Peace (PfP). Every year since 1999, 5-6 officers from Kazakhstan are trained at the NATO PfP Training Centre in Ankara, which is the first to be opened in the Alliance Participating States. Moreover, Turkish military officers have also been engaged in training of the Kazakh peacekeeping Battalion (KAZBAT).

Additionally, Turkey by the agreement in 1998 envisaged allotting 500,000 USD (Shilibekova 2009, p. 60); in 1999, it allotted approximately 700,000 USD, and another 1 million USD was allotted in gratis financial assistance (Hovsepian 2010, p. 83).

Before 2010, Kazakhstan was to receive about 10 million USD for military-technical cooperation, which was to be spent on purchasing and modernising military vehicles, naval technology, and so on (Kenzhetaev 2010, p. 85).

In June 2005, Turkey sent Kazakhstan additional military hardware and equipment totalling 1.3 million (including 24 Land Rover Defender, 110 vehicles manufactured by the Turkish Otokar Company and 90 units of communication means).

Turkey’s capabilities and skills in providing joint military training and operations under the aegis of NATO are of a great value to Kazakhstan – the first country to deploy its peacekeeping unit at an international level among the Central Asian states. Consequently, mostly Kazakhstan will benefit from the

continuance of the bilateral military relations, and Turkey also by supporting these kinds of relations will be having a chance to enhance the security of its energy interests and keeping its influence in the Central Asian region (McDermott 2007, pp. 7-20).

Conclusion

Based on the study, it can be concluded that the Turkish-Kazakh relations in a given time period, since Kazakhstan's independence to the present time, occupied an important place in the system of international relations. Development of relations between the two nations went through a new phase.

The bilateral relations started, firstly due to deep cultural, historical ties, brotherhood kinship which caused Turkey to be the first country to recognise the independence of Kazakhstan. Secondly, the development of the Turkish-Kazakh relations is based on the identity or similarity of positions on a wide range of issues; moreover, both countries own interests in the international relations system also played a significant role in strengthening the bilateral relations.

The development of mutual relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan can be summed up as follows:

- Diplomatic relations can be stated as dynamically developing. The strategic nature of the relationship also adds impetus to the bilateral relations, which is strengthened with high level visits at least once a year.
- Turkey's and Kazakhstan's mutual relations in the cultural and educational spheres have been developing very actively. The establishment of educational, scientific, cultural institutions, foundations and celebrating cultural events are good examples to it.
- Military cooperation is a key field in bilateral relations. Turkey provided military-technical and financial assistance on gratis conditions. Every year Kazakhstani military officers are being trained in Turkey. These relations help to achieve not only mutual interests but also their own interests, too.

To conclude, the economic relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan show that despite of well-developed nature of relations, in comparison to other Central Asian countries, still there is the need of more activation of the economic and trade relations. We believe that the future of Turkish-Kazakh economic relations has a big potential.

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Relacje Turcji z Kazachstanem: przegląd wzajemnych stosunków od upadku ZSRR

Streszczenie

Stosunki dwustronne Kazachstanu i Turcji zostały zapoczątkowane, po pierwsze, ze względu na więzi kulturowe, historyczne i braterskie pokrewieństwo, co spowodowało, że Turcja stała się pierwszym krajem, który uznał niepodległość Kazachstanu. Po drugie, rozwój stosunków turecko-kazachskich jest oparty na tożsamości lub podobieństwie stanowisk w szerokim zakresie kwestii; co więcej, własne interesy obu krajów w systemie stosunków międzynarodowych również odegrały istotną rolę w umacnianiu stosunków dwustronnych.

Słowa kluczowe: Turcja, Kazachstan, gospodarka, dyplomacja, współpraca wojskowa.

Kody JEL: F5

Artykuł nadesłany do redakcji w sierpniu 2014 r.

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