

ARTICLE

New Kazakhstan and the Future of the Organization of Turkic States: Key Areas of Cooperation

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Abstract

This article explores promising areas of cooperation between the member states of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS), which need to be developed in response to global climate and geopolitical challenges. It also examines issues of economic, energy and environmental security while referring to the theory of regional security complex developed by representatives of the Copenhagen School of international relations. After the theoretical introduction, the article analyses the significance of different areas of cooperation, such as transport and communications, the green energy sector and food security. In line with its aim, the article focuses on the role of the OTS in providing security in the sensitive fields of transportation, logistics, agriculture and power supply. Finally, the article discusses the need for a qualitative deepening of integration between the Turkic countries in the face of geopolitical uncertainty.

Keywords

Organization of Turkic States, New Kazakhstan, regional security complex, diversification of transport routes, green energy, food security.

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Introduction

During the first thirty years of Kazakhstan's independence, there was a powerful connection between its socio-economic situation and the legacy of the Soviet Union. However, in 2022, affected by the tragic January events in the country and the military conflict in Ukraine, the Kazakh society is witnessing a breakdown of the previous system. Kazakhstan is on the verge of moving to a new stage: it is vital to understand that the country's future depends on the citizens themselves, and it is crucial to respond to the current geopolitical challenges in a balanced and correct way.

In March 2022, the authorities of the country announced the transition to a New Kazakhstan and Second Republic.¹ These two ideologemes have the same essence but differ in emphasis. As noted by the state authorities, New Kazakhstan is, in general, an image of the future of the country, a new goal of nation-building with updated social values. The construction of New Kazakhstan entails a deep and lengthy process of social transformation.² Meanwhile, the term "Second Republic" first used by the President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev in his speech on the Nowruz holiday this year, represents the formation of a fundamentally new constitutional balance between the institutions of power which, in brief, means transitioning from a super-presidential form of government to a presidential republic with a strong parliament.³ The ambitious reform plan includes working to amend more than 30 articles of the Constitution and 20 laws with the focus on expanding the participation of citizens in the government and the formation of a new political culture. According to experts, the implementation of the political initiatives announced by the President has already begun, so the transition to the Second Republic will take place quite soon. Therefore, if New Kazakhstan is the renewal of the society and nation, that is, a profound and conceptual process, then the Second Republic is the renewal of the state model, which is an institutional process.⁴

As a result of internal revisions and the tragic Russian-Ukrainian war (or "special military operation" by Russian interpretation), the Kazakh people are beginning to realize the value of independence obtained with difficulties and the significance of the country's multilateral foreign policy. As President Tokayev noted in his article "Independence is Above All,"

"Our ancestors survived and went through a terrible famine, repression, world war. During totalitarianism, we almost lost our traditions, language, and religion. Nevertheless, thanks to Independence, we were able to revive and strengthen our values. However, if we want to survive as a nation and state, current and future generations must be ready for new challenges."⁵

It is necessary to review modern geopolitical threats and challenges in the context of security, which is understood not as an objective state of affairs but as a

political practice or social construct. This is the main principle of the influential Copenhagen School of security studies. While crediting the importance of the military meaning of security, an expanded understanding of the concept includes various spheres of public life. New threats such as population growth, lack of resources, unfavorable environmental conditions, natural disasters and energy dependence are coming to the fore.⁶

The authors of securitization theory, Danish researcher Ole Waever and British researcher Barry Buzan, write that small and medium-sized states cannot cope with such challenges alone and can only respond adequately to these threats by cooperating with their neighbors. Thus, the dynamics of the security of medium and small countries must be considered at the regional level.⁷ To analyze regional processes, Buzan and Waever propose the theory of regional security complex (RSC), defined as distinct and stable patterns of security interaction between actors.⁸

RSCs are conceptually distinct from “regions”. Buzan and Wæver’s view of security as a social construct means that such factors as culture and history can significantly influence actors’ perceptions.⁹ In this sense, the OTS has the potential to evolve into an RSC. There are certain factors that could facilitate this transformation

- Turkic states share a common understanding of external sources of risks. Often, in the political discourse of the Turkic countries, the challenges represented by their considerable neighbors have an increased significance. At the same time, Türkiye along with Kazakhstan, as OTS drivers, are perceived as allies and partners.
- Turkic states are concerned with nontraditional security threats and prioritize such issues as climate change, water resources management, energy deficit and food security. These multivariate security threats require deeper understanding, strategic planning and transnational cooperation among member states of the OTS in order to design and implement effective mitigation and adaptation measures at scale. Meanwhile, policies and frameworks constructed in Washington, Moscow or Beijing fail to resolve these regional concerns.

The 8th Summit of the OTS in Istanbul in November 2021 marked a fundamental transformation in regional cooperation where the name of the Turkic Council changed into the Organization of Turkic States. This Summit will undoubtedly further strengthen the unity and solidarity of the Turkic countries. H.E. Nursultan Nazarbayev, the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Honorary Chairman of the Turkic Council, initiated the change to the name of the organization and the approval of the “Turkic World Vision–2040” strategic document.

It is noteworthy that new parties are joining the OTS. In particular, Turkmenistan's official inclusion as an observer country has practically united the Turkic states into a single unit. Thus, the evolutionary development of the Turkic Council has transformed it into a full-fledged political subject in the world arena.

Kazakhstan has been an active member, architect and author of initiatives within the Turkic world since gaining its independence. It has initiated the establishment of the International Organization of Turkic Culture (TURKSOY), the Turkic Council, the Turkic Academy, the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries (TurkPA) and the Coordination Committee of Turkic Cooperation Organizations. These interaction formats were essential and

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relevant for maintaining cultural and humanitarian relations with fraternal countries. In the past two years, Kazakh representatives have headed three out of five Turkic cooperation organizations and have been instrumental in bringing Turkic integration to a new level. Low politics has provided an excellent political background for cooperation, but the evolution of the OTS is more visible in high politics. The development vectors of the Turkic countries are associated with such sectors as the economy and security. Now is the time to deepen their integration and enhance their strategic development.

This article aims to introduce the reader to the promising projects of the Turkic countries in transport, communications, sustainable development and green energy to show the productivity of these areas of cooperation. From this perspective, the OTS could become not only a driver of economic and environmental initiatives but also a provider of security in climate, decarbonization and sustainable development for people living on a vast territory stretching from the Altai to the Balkan Mountains. The evolution of the OTS in this direction will contribute to the content and institutional development of the organization.

Transport and Communications

Transport and communication is already a solid platform for interaction among the member states of the OTS and an essential integrating factor. Increasing the capacity of transport corridors and expanding the possibilities of transit and logistics centers would provide ample opportunities for the OTS states to enter European and Asian markets. However, infrastructure improvements must be accompanied by improvements in public policies and agreements to facilitate trade and transit across national borders.

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and an emergency that necessitated repairs on the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) pipeline, Kazakhstan could not export oil to Europe for a month. As a result, the country's budget is presently short by more than \$300 million. In these challenging circumstances, oil-producing corporations are considering the possibility of constructing a pipeline from the north of the Caspian Sea

with a further tie-in to Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan. In addition to European partners, companies from Türkiye and Azerbaijan could be involved in creating this critical infrastructure.¹⁰

Despite ongoing geopolitical tensions, interest in the transit opportunities of Kazakhstan and other Turkic states remains high, and the demand for transport and logistics services is growing. According to Russian carriers, in the first two months of the war in Ukraine, almost 3,000 twenty-foot equivalent (TEU) containers were transported along the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA) corridor through the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Experts say that cargo transportation to Georgian ports can reach 10 million tons, but Georgia lacks locomotives and freight trains to further disperse the cargo.¹¹ Therefore, the best solution is to share locomotives with Georgia and increase the volume of traffic along the Trans-Caspian corridor. In addition, the first train was launched from China, bypassing Russia, through Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic to Mannheim, Germany.¹² In this context, the potential for strategic cooperation in the railway sector opens up broad prospects for the Turkic countries. According to the government of Kazakhstan, machine engineering is one of the most promising sectors of the national economy, and there is significant potential for expanding localization in Kazakhstan. Systematic work is underway to upgrade the rolling stock.¹³

One of the essential components of transport and communications development is the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR) initiative or "Middle Corridor". It begins in Türkiye and passes through the Caucasus region via Georgia and Azerbaijan, crosses the Caspian Sea, traverses Central Asia and finally reaches China. It connects via rail and road respectively through Georgia and Azerbaijan, and across the Caspian Sea via the Caspian transit corridor, reaching China by following the Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan or Kazakhstan route. On this route, the ports of Baku/Alat in Azerbaijan, Aktau/Kuryk in Kazakhstan and Turkmenbashi in Turkmenistan

are the main points of multimodal transport on the Caspian transit corridor. The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) Railway, inaugurated in 2017, offers broad opportunities for uninterrupted trade between China and Europe, and has an initial capacity of 1 million passengers and 6.5 million tons of cargo, which is foreseen to increase to 3 million passengers and 17 million tons of cargo per year by 2034. The Middle Corridor is crucial for landlocked Kazakhstan and offers excellent opportunities for cargo traffic from Central Asia. The loads can reach the Middle East, North Africa and the Mediterranean region by benefiting from port connections in Türkiye.¹⁴

According to the results of the activities of the “International Association Trans-Caspian International Transport Route” for 2021, the stable growth of transit and container traffic along the TITR was noted. Thus, over the past year, 25,200 TEU containers were transported along the TITR route—20% more than in 2020. This year, cargo transshipment is expected to grow six times, reaching 3.2 million tons due to sharply increasing demand for the TITR route against the backdrop of recent world events. The container shipping plan also aims to increase capacity to 50,000 TEU containers.¹⁵

The branching and resilience of transport networks are vital to strengthening regional economic integration. The “Turkic World Vision–2040” adopted at the summit last year calls the Trans-Caspian International Transport or “Turan” Corridor “the shortest and safest transport link between East and West.”¹⁶ It also states that it is crucial to incorporate the member states into the supply and value chains regionally and globally via this corridor. The implementation of the Turan Corridor project will significantly unlock the economic transit potential of the OTS.

In addition, the Turan corridor is of great geo-economic importance. Land corridors will become increasingly vital, given the growing pressure on China from the U.S., Japan and South Korea. As the first President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev mentioned in his speech before the Turkic countries in March 2021, with the development of the Chinese project “Belt and Road Initiative”, the importance of transit along the Turan corridor becomes the most optimal.¹⁷ However, for large volumes of transportation, it is necessary to build infrastructure, specifically to increase the ferry and dry cargo fleet in the Caspian Sea, develop alternative pipeline routes and attract long-term investments.

It is also essential to increase the capacity of digital transit corridors. Therefore, Kazakhstan attaches great importance to the Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway (TASIM) project as a strategic initiative that can serve

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the interests of many states. In addition, on a bilateral basis, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan have already launched the construction of a fiber-optic communication line (Transcaspian Fiber Optic) along the bottom of the Caspian Sea. The joint project will facilitate a higher level of development of high-speed, secure data transmission infrastructure joining several leading Europe-Asia trunk routes and taking a worthy place in the network of global data transit.

Further, the creation of special economic tourist zones and routes can contribute to building economic corridors and expanding economic cooperation. Creating special economic zones of this type would significantly promote the fast-growing market for event tourism. In the current conditions of economic recession, this should be one of the factors for increasing regional products, diversifying sources of income, creating jobs and improving the population's quality of life. Their rich cultural heritage, national holidays and traditions provide the basis for the development of event tourism among the OTS members. Many cities with unique and interesting sites and art installations provide the hubs for forming tourist routes and marketing these attractions would serve as an additional tool to increase tourist traffic from abroad.

Funding

As Kazakhstan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Mukhtar Tleuberdi stated at the Meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Turkic Council in November 2021, the digital age sets different technological requirements and priorities. Today it is crucial to develop and invest in new environmentally friendly technologies and ensure comfortable conditions for living places. Tleuberdi accentuated the importance of the Turkic Investment Fund initiated by the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. On November 11, 2021, following the results of consultations and negotiations between the parties, the Heads of State decided to create such a fund by September 1, 2022, with equal contributions from each of the parties. The matter of its location is currently under consideration. One of the possible locations for the Fund is Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Tleuberdi proposed to establish its headquarters in the Astana International Financial Center, which plays a pivotal role as a global center for business and finance, connecting the economies of Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), West China, Mongolia, the Middle East and Europe.¹⁸ In future, the Turkic Investment Fund may play an extremely important role in the sphere of economic development across many sectors.

Green Energy as a Ground for Consolidated Solutions

In 2010, climate change was identified as a key threat to global stability—one that is contributing to poverty, food and water scarcity, environmental degra-

ation and the weakening of already fragile states.¹⁹ Eleven years later at the COP26 conference, over 153 countries pledged to reach net-zero emissions, and more than 40 countries pledged to move away from coal.²⁰ Türkiye declared that it would be a party to the Paris Agreement and that it would accept the 2053 net-zero emissions target. Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan will endeavor to reach carbon neutrality by 2050, and Kazakhstan confirmed its commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2060.

Achieving these goals will require significant changes in the structure of electricity generation, since electrification based on renewable energy sources (RES) is the best way to reach carbon neutrality. Also, energy transition creates incentives for developing new innovative sectors of the economy. Türkiye, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan are the OTS members with the highest carbon footprint. Therefore, these countries face complex tasks in reforming their energy market structure.

As President Tokayev noted at the 8th Summit of the Organization of Turkic States, in order to achieve carbon neutrality, Kazakhstan intends to develop the use of RESs. At the time of this writing, the country has brought its share of renewable energy to 3%. By 2030, this figure will rise to 15%, as stated in Kazakhstan's concept for the transition to a "green economy". Over the next ten years, greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced by 15%. The International Center for Green Technologies and Investment Projects was opened in Nur-Sultan to achieve these goals.²¹ Therefore, the 8th Summit that was dedicated to the theme of "Green Technologies and Smart Cities in the Digital Age" upon the proposal of the host country Türkiye could be regarded as a significant commitment for the activities of the OTS in the aforementioned areas.

The backbone of any energy transition to achieve net-zero emissions consists of renewable energy sources. The growth of the world's capacity to generate electricity from solar panels, wind turbines and other renewable technologies is on course to accelerate over the coming years, with 2021 setting a record for new installations (290 gigawatts of new renewable power capacity), according to a recent International Energy Agency (IEA) report.²² By 2026, global renewable electricity capacity is forecast to rise more than 60% from 2020 levels to over 4,800 GW—equivalent to the current total global power capacity of fossil fuels and nuclear power combined.

There are many options for promising projects in the field of renewable energy that could become the basis for further cooperation between the OTS states:

- Construction of offshore wind farms in the Caspian Sea

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- Creation of a powerful consortium for solar generation in Central Asia, construction of stations in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan
- Production of solar photovoltaic panels from silicon raw materials
- Construction of gas infrastructure for use in tandem with RES
- Digitization of the electric power industry, digital accounting of consumption and losses

President Tokayev named the development of hydrogen energy the second priority of the green agenda and drew attention to the fact that hydrogen energy is considered a new type of “clean” fuel.²³ Therefore, Kazakhstan has excellent opportunities to create an industrial “green” hydrogen cluster. Currently, the Kazakh authorities are working on new technological projects with French companies, and Kazakhstan is exploring the possibility of implementing large projects in the field of “green” hydrogen production. The KazMunaiGaz company is considering creating a Competence Center for hydrogen energy and technology for carbon capture, storage and processing (CCUS). Foreign investors are ready to study five regions in Kazakhstan to assess the economic feasibility of implementing large projects there.²⁴ A possible outcome is to export the hydrogen produced in Kazakhstan to the markets of the European Union.

The global “green” hydrogen market will be formed over the next ten years. During this time, Kazakhstan and other Turkic countries need to make an offer on the future market in the form of products. As renewable energy and other low-carbon technologies, including hydrogen, develop, the boundary

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between energy and electricity markets in a narrower sense will blur. Traditional utilities can build and operate “fueling” infrastructure, whether charging stations or hydrogen distribution stations. Consumers will expect integrated energy practices in which fungible sources (renewables, batteries, hydrogen) are seamlessly used to power homes, vehicles and workplaces.²⁵ The Turkic states must consistently develop and integrate these important processes to

prevent technological backwardness at the global level.

It should be noted that in the current conditions, the topic of sustainable development is going through difficult times. The drivers and incentives that moved the agenda yesterday are undergoing significant changes. A new oil super-cycle is brewing on world markets, and European countries, in an at-

tempt to reduce Russian gas imports, are rushing from one extreme to another—stimulating the processes of decarbonization while frantically reopening coal stations.

At the same time, the sustainable development agenda is evolving unevenly. Most countries are proceeding with a combination of international practices and local approaches that consider national interests and development rates. For example, for Kazakhstan, whose economy is dominated by heavy mining and coal power production, issues of health and safety, industrial waste and emissions, and air quality come first. Some aspects of these important considerations need local and regional regulations, as well as regulatory mechanisms related to carbon control and climate projects that bring together the efforts of stakeholders and governments. The OTS can become an optimal platform for enhanced dialogue between stakeholders to develop consolidated solutions to maintain a balance between economic development and environmental conservation in the Turkic states.

When studying sustainable development, the question of incentives inevitably arises. Therefore, motivation for ESG (environmental, social and governance) contains both material and moral components. First, without following ESG standards, a company, organization or even a country will not be allowed to enter the markets, not be given funding and, after a while, consumers will turn away from it and stop buying its goods. Second, ESG is necessary because it is the basis of sustainability as well as the moral climate of the society and the country. ESG should be an internal agenda, not only for attracting banks, clients or investors. All citizens should feel a severe and profound moral demand for sustainable development. In addition, a mature and systematically implemented ESG agenda is a serious contribution to a state's brand and image, which will yield long-term sustainable, competitive advantages.

The coordinated actions of the participating countries and the development of a unified strategy to achieve carbon neutrality will allow the OTS to become a space in which climate problems are effectively addressed. It might be a long-term strategy, but if properly executed and implemented, it will help improve the international image and increase the political and economic clout of the OTS.

There are several high-potential directions of work for the OTS in the field of sustainable development:

- 1) Creation of infrastructure for sustainable development: Starting with goal-setting, it is necessary to formulate OTS development goals around which to build the activities of the state bodies and commercial organizations of the member countries and facilitate interactions between Turkic countries and international organizations, including international verifiers in the field of climate and sustainable development. Next, it will be advisable to build rating models and metrics relevant to territories and regions,

which will ensure the adaptation of international practices and standards to the development conditions of the Turkic countries. In the future, this may contribute to the localization of ESG standards in the Turkic world and the development of the energy policy of the OTS countries.

- 2) Development of a “green” capital market for the implementation of projects related to green technologies: In the context of rising inflation and geo-economic turbulence, the development of incentive measures for the ESG agenda can include priority lending to green energy projects, improving conditions for state support and subsidizing environmental modernization projects. As President Tokayev noted, during the last ten years, the global volume of green bonds has grown 20x and has reached \$2 trillion. Kazakhstan has begun to develop a bond market whose volume exceeded 100 million dollars in 2021. This work is carried out at the Astana International Financial Center and the Kazakhstan Stock Exchange. Kazakhstan is ready to place the green bonds of the Turkic countries on these sites.²⁶
- 3) Technical assistance and exchange of competencies between OTS member countries in such matters as energy storage, hybrid RES, smart grid intelligent energy distribution systems and long-duration energy storage (LDES) technologies.
- 4) Conducting joint academic research in sustainable development that will result in identifying priority transformational projects that are important for all OTS states.

Providing Food Security: Sustainable Agriculture

In March 2022, the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) warned that food prices could rise as much as 22 percent due to the war in Ukraine. A severe drop in Ukrainian and Russian exports will devastate global food security, adding 13.1 million additional people to the 821.6 million already malnourished or starving. As states grapple with the effects of climate change, war and the ongoing pandemic, foreign and trade relations are shifting to minimize food insecurity and meet domestic demand for food to avoid further cascading crises.²⁷

Maurice Obstfeld, a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics and formerly chief economist at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), stated that food price increases would strain incomes in poorer countries, especially in some parts of Latin America and Africa, where some people may spend up to 50 or 60 percent of their income on food. According to the economist, it was “not much of an exaggeration” to say that the world was

approaching a global food crisis and that slower growth, high unemployment and stressed budgets from governments that have spent heavily to combat the pandemic had created “a perfect storm of adverse circumstances. There is a lot of cause for worry about social unrest on a widespread scale.”²⁸ Sudden spikes in food prices could lead to social unrest, as happened in 2007–2008 and again in 2011 when global food price increases were associated with riots in more than 40 countries.

For the OTS, food security issues are relevant and on the agenda. The problem of food imports remains an area of vulnerability that must be addressed. On April 17, the Kazakhstan Ministry of Agriculture limited the export of wheat and flour until June 15, 2022. The main markets for Kazakh grain are Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Kazakhstan is a fairly large exporter of grain, and the demand for this product is growing. For two months of this year, the export of wheat from Kazakhstan to the countries of the EU increased by 13 times.²⁹ The establishment of logistics chains for the export of grain through the territory of the Turkic countries is a promising area of cooperation.

For Kazakhstan, the fact that Türkiye has built a powerful port flour-grinding industry over the past 15 years is beneficial. The largest Turkish mills are situated in ports; Türkiye buys grain from Russia and Ukraine, processes it into flour and other products and sends it to the Middle East and African countries, taking advantage of its strategic position on sea routes.

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In addition to the production of grain, the cultivation of other crops in the territory of the countries of Central Asia has broad prospects. For example, the southern regions of Kazakhstan are excellent in terms of climatic conditions and labor resources. In these areas, investments are being attracted to construct agro-industrial complexes with greenhouses to ensure a year-round production cycle.

The agro-industrial complex could become an important component of the “TURANSEZ” special economic zone project presented by the delegation of Kazakhstan at the 8th summit of OTS in Istanbul. TURANSEZ was first initiated by President Tokayev during the Turkistan Informal Summit and was deliberately created for the Turkic states. All of the member and observer states of the OTS are invited to join “TURANSEZ”, which is situated at the spiritual capital of the Turkic world, Turkistan.³⁰

The OTS countries need to realize the potential of the agro-industry, given the consistent rise in food prices. Since the issue of low industrial labor productivity remains relevant in the agricultural sector, the Turkic states can cooperate

and exchange experience and competencies in such matters as the creation and installation of engineering infrastructure, mechanisms for investment subsidies and project financing, the transfer of effective agricultural technologies and making these technologies accessible for small and medium farms.

It is worth highlighting the problem of staffing. According to local executive bodies in Kazakhstan, about 80% of the subjects of the agro-industrial complex are in dire need of specialists.³¹ Under the auspices of the OTS, it would be possible to create educational centers to train relevant personnel for the agro-industrial complex.

Another promising direction in the development of the agricultural industry is the production of high-quality protein in the form of meat products. Kazakhstan has already made progress in achieving a higher processing stage, bringing more expensive products to market and minimizing costs, including transportation costs. Development of this industry has resulted in the creation of new jobs and a new labor market. Today, Kazakhstan has the potential to export 500,000 tons of beef with its existing water and land resources. In monetary terms, this is the equivalent of about 5 billion dollars. Very promisingly, the economic multiplier in animal husbandry is 1:6 – that is, 1 dollar from meat exports puts 6 dollars into the economy through feed, fertilizers, logistics and jobs. Thus, the turnover around meat production can reach \$30 billion, which is comparable to the volume of the oil and gas industry in Kazakhstan.³² And unlike oil and gas, the income from the agricultural sector is stable as it does not depend on the global oil price environment or the development of technology, engineering or transport electrification. People will always eat, so this direction of the economy is practically unlimited.

Agro-industry in Kazakhstan has enormous potential. 220 million hectares are available for agribusiness which is open land ready for farming. In terms of arable land per capita, Kazakhstan ranks second globally.³³ For comparison, the U.S., the largest food exporter, has 240 million hectares, and Ukraine has 40 million hectares. The development of agricultural land in Kazakhstan can open up new horizons for cooperation between the peoples of the Great Turan. It will undoubtedly lead to an increase in the competitiveness of the entire region of Central Asia and the restoration and development of rural areas, which will result in improved social stability. Investing in human capital is essential under current conditions. With a suitable investment in infrastructure and technology, the agro-industry could become the backbone of the Turkic union.

Price and supply shocks related to the war in Ukraine are being compounded by climate-related events, including severe drought affecting Central Asia for five years in a row. Therefore, the rational use of water resources is directly related to the success of the food sector. Water resources determine various aspects of national and regional security. The OTS can become an important platform for forming a new regional policy for managing water and energy

resources in Central Asia. As a consolidating structure of the Turkic states, the OTS can conduct a “water dialogue” among the Central Asian countries. Efficient and equitable use of transboundary water resources is the key to the stability and prosperity of the region. It can be facilitated by automation of the system for managing, distributing, recording and monitoring the water resources of the Aral Sea basin, including their quality. It will ensure transparency in states’ water use and strengthen mutual trust between neighbors.

Conclusion

By launching internal renewal processes, the authorities of Kazakhstan have put people at the center of their domestic and foreign policy. In the article “Turbulence across Eurasia Will Not Slow Kazakhstan’s Progress,” President Tokayev writes, “our government has listened carefully to civil society and public opinion in the design of the reforms. Economically, our system must work for all people. Growth that is not inclusive is not sustainable.” Speaking about the international situation, he emphasizes, “Eurasia has always been a dynamic region, but concerted efforts must be made to keep it peaceful, open, and prosperous. We still have far to go. Both domestically and internationally, partnership is still the only way to build a better common future of peace and prosperity.”³⁴

Sustainable growth and equal partnership are included in the leading goals and principles of the OTS. Since its establishment as a regional inter-governmental organization, the Turkic Council has proved that decisions and actions taken within the organization are comprehensive and inclusive.³⁵ The OTS has also confirmed that it can handle various challenges. It is noteworthy that during the global COVID-19 pandemic, the OTS did not halt its collaboration, but instead expanded into new essential sectors such as health and migration.³⁶ Strengthening economic ties is especially important during a geopolitical storm when the world economy is in crisis and all countries are looking for the best ways out.

The Turkic states strive for an honest partnership and are driven by pragmatic interests. The member states of the OTS have converged politically on several themes, including sustainable development, climate change, energy security and other contemporary challenges. The OTS engages actively in the international agenda and confirms its role as a promoter of global development issues.

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Today, many experts and researchers are heralding the return to a bipolar world order and the growing confrontation between the two superpowers: the

U.S. and China. However, there is another, opposite point of view, in which the primary trend of the global system, across economic, demographic and technological dimensions, is one in which centrifugal—not centripetal—dynamics prevail. In other words, the world is increasingly striving for multipolarity and multicentricity. The nature of these processes lies not only in the much-speculated ‘balance of power’, but rather in the diversity of civilizations that explore the world differently, and in which important centers of world civilizations—Europe, America, China, India, Russia, the Arab world—declare their interests and visions in a rich plurality of perspectives and voices.

One such center is the Turkic world, which represents both a vibrant path forward and the deep roots of an ancient civilization. In this sense, the institutionalization of cooperation and brotherhood of the Turkic peoples, expressed in the creation of the OTS, is an attempt to determine its own vector of civilizational development. The process of strengthening Turkic civilization has powerful and basic impulses. The association of the Turkic countries, based initially on linguistic and cultural community, has broad prospects for becoming a solid and stable alliance whose multifaceted agenda includes security in the broadest sense of the word.

Endnotes

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