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<p><b>Kazakhstan in Africa: An Economic Diplomacy within Distant Neighborhood Foreign Policy</b></p> <p>Afrika'da Kazakistan: Uzak Komşuluk Dış Politikası Bağlamında Ekonomik Diplomasi</p> <p>Video Link: <a href="https://youtu.be/wjlk5-zD5tA">https://youtu.be/wjlk5-zD5tA</a></p>	
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## Afrika'da Kazakistan: Uzak Komşuluk Dış Politikası İçinde Bir Ekonomik Diplomasi

### Öz

On beşinci yüzyıldan beri Afrika küresel bir ilginin öznesi durumundadır. Bu bağlamda Avrupalı devletler Atlantik Köle Ticareti döneminde Afrika'nın iş gücünden, sömürgecilik döneminde ise Afrika'nın topraklarından kendi çıkarları adına yararlanmışlardır. Atlantik Köle Ticareti boyunca Afrika'daki halkların bireyleri zor kullanarak yerlerinden edilmiş, çalıştırılmak için özellikle Amerika kıtasına gönderilmişlerdir. Bunun yanında Avrupalı devletler 1884-85 Berlin Konferansı'nda resmileştirdikleri sömürgecilik yönetimlerini Afrika topraklarını kendi aralarında paylaşarak gerçekleştirmişlerdir. 1950'li yılların ortalarında başlayan bağımsızlık hareketlerinde bile devam eden bu ilginin üzerine Avrupa devletlerinin dışında kalan Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, Sovyetler Birliği, Hindistan, Çin, Rusya ve Brezilya gibi devletler de siyasi ve ideolojik birtakım nedenlerle Afrika'ya yakınlık duymaya başlamışlardır. Siyasi nedenler olarak Afrika ülkeleri üzerinde nüfuz elde etmek ve onları kendi çıkarları çevresinde konumlandırmak örnek gösterilebilir. İdeolojik nedenler olarak ise özellikle Soğuk Savaş sırasındaki sosyalizm/kapitalizm rekabeti içinde Afrika'dan taraftar toplama örnek gösterilebilir. Gerek Sovyetler Birliği gerekse Amerika Birleşik Devletleri Soğuk Savaş döneminde Afrika ülkelerini birbirlerine karşı bir destek bulmak amacıyla desteklemiştir. Bu ilginin daha sonradan söz konusu devletlere ekonomik çıkarlar sağladığı görüldüğünde ise Afrika diğer devletleri de kendine çekmiştir. Bunlardan biri 2012 yılında 2050 Stratejisini ilan ederek Afrika'ya açılan Kazakistan'dır. Elde edilen ve makalede gösterilen bulgulara göre sadece Kazak devletinin değil, aynı zamanda Kazak şirketlerinin de rehberliğinde gerçekleşen Kazakistan'ın Afrika ülkelerine açılımında ekonomik boyut temel alınmıştır. Bu bağlamda makale Kazakistan'ın 2050 Stratejisi'yle başlayan Afrika açılımının Kazak devletinin uzak komşuluk dış politikası içindeki ekonomik diplomasisinin bir uygulaması olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Buna göre makale Kazakistan'ın Afrika ile 2012 yılından beri süregelen ilişkisini ekonomik diplomasi kuramında açıklayıp bu ilişkiyi ekonomik iş birliği, yatırımlar ve ticaret başlıklarında incelemektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kazakistan, Afrika, Ekonomik Diplomasi, Yakın Komşuluk Dış Politikası, Uzak Komşuluk Dış Politikası



## Kazakhstan in Africa: An Economic Diplomacy within Distant Neighborhood Foreign Policy

### Abstract

Since the fifteenth century, Africa has always been subject to global attention. European states benefitted from the lands and labor force in Africa during the Atlantic slave trade and colonialism periods. Individuals from different tribes in Africa were forced to leave their homelands in return for forced labor in chiefly the American continent. Besides, European states partitioned the lands of Africa within colonialism that was officially launched in the 1884-85 Berlin Conference. In addition to their ongoing interests in Africa upon the launch of independence movements by the mid-1950s, states out of Europe such as the United States of America (USA), the Soviet Union, India, China, and Brazil have approached Africa for political and ideological reasons. In terms of political reasons, Africa has been regarded as one of the main venues to construct a sphere of influence and to position around these states' national interests. In terms of ideological reasons, on the other hand, the Soviet Union and the USA tried to support African states in order to provide sustainable protection from each other during the Cold War. Once it appeared that this involvement brought economic gains thereafter, Africa has attracted many other states. Among them is Kazakhstan, who declared an opening to African states by the 2050 Strategy which was announced in 2012. Under the guidance of not only the Kazakh state but also the Kazakh private enterprises, Kazakhstan has been implementing an economic opening to Africa. Accordingly, it is stated in the article that Kazakhstan's opening to Africa by the 2050 Strategy is an example of how economic diplomacy within the Kazakh distant neighborhood foreign policy has been implemented. In this context, this economic dimension between Kazakhstan and Africa through economic cooperation, investment and trade on the basis of a theoretical debate about economic diplomacy has been tried to show.

**Keywords:** Kazakhstan, Africa, Economic Diplomacy, Near Neighborhood Foreign Policy, Far Neighborhood Foreign Policy

### Introduction

Kazakhstan, a former Soviet Republic, is a landlocked state in Central Asia. The borders it has shared with Central Asian states therefore construct the backbone of its near neighborhood foreign policy whereas the states in other regions that Kazakhstan has not shared any border form its distant neighborhood one. Relations between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan is an example to near neighborhood foreign policy thanks to shared borders whereas relations between Kazakhstan and Romania is an example to



distant neighborhood foreign policy because of the lack of any shared borders, respectively.

Upon the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Kazakhstan as a newly established republic preferred focusing on its near neighborhood foreign policy rather than its distant one. Its expected dependency on Russia, its willingness for an alliance with other states in Central Asia to create a regional bloc, and its efforts to create an institutional structure and bureaucracy in domestic politics stopped Kazakhstan from deepening a distant neighborhood foreign policy until 2005. Kazakhstan's interaction with the world has consisted more of a dialogue with Russia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan as its near neighbors on the basis of bilateral diplomacy and regionalism. Except for symbolic diplomatic actions such as official visits, opening embassies to other states, and sharing memberships with them in various international organizations, demands of the United States of America (USA) in its struggle with the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and of the European Union (EU) for more market reform from Kazakhstan have been the main praxis in the Kazakh distant neighborhood foreign policy. Nevertheless, changing national agendas, political instabilities, economic turmoil, and nationalist thrives in Kazakhstan's near neighbors, in addition to pressuring demands of the USA and the EU from Kazakhstan by time hampered not only construction of sustainable bilateral diplomacy with near and distant neighbors but also blocked consolidation of a strong regionalism. Moreover, Kazakhstan's decision to do more business in the Global South and to be more active in global affairs with the 2005 elections amplified its care for distant neighborhood foreign policy. Declared in 2012, the 2050 Strategy which foresees making Kazakhstan one of thirty most developed nations was the catalyst of the Kazakh distant neighborhood foreign policy by entailing an economic opening up third world states including Africa.

Nature of the relations between Kazakhstan and African states since the announcement of the 2050 Strategy demonstrates that the Kazakh distant neighborhood foreign policy in Africa has been shaped by economic diplomacy. Peculiar to the argument, an answer to on what basis the Kazakh state has been setting up its opening to Africa is searched for. Related with this, the article is also an attempt to discuss definitions of near and distant neighborhood foreign policies, the role of economic diplomacy in foreign policy making, the main pillars of Kazakhstan in its economic diplomacy toward Africa, and how Kazakhstan could consolidate its distant foreign policy toward Africa. All in all, the article contributes to the academic literature about Kazakhstan's foreign policy towards Africa, which was either touched upon by newspapers or journals only without a theoretical background. In this sense, the gap in the literature about the distant



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neighborhood foreign policy of Kazakhstan toward Africa was filled with the theory of economic diplomacy in the article.

While answering these questions, the near and distant neighborhood foreign policy was defined at first. Then, the role of economic diplomacy on near and distant foreign policy definitions was analyzed. Later, how Kazakhstan has used economic diplomacy in its near and distant neighborhood foreign policies was discussed. Finally, Kazakhstan's Africa policy as a model to its economic diplomacy based on distant neighborhood foreign policy was stated. At the end of given sections, and as a reply to all these questions, it is argued that Kazakhstan's opening to Africa with the 2050 Strategy is a concomitant implementation of a distant neighborhood foreign policy with African states on the basis of economic diplomacy.

### **Methodology and Ethics**

The article basically used secondary resources for the theoretical part that deals with the debate of economic diplomacy having evaluated within near and distant neighborhood foreign policy. In terms of empirical data, however, related news from Astana Times, Azer News and Africa News were referred to as primary resources. Since the article does not refer to original interviews conducted by the authors, there was no need to articulate an ethics report.

### **The Theory of Near and Distant Neighborhood Foreign Policy**

Depending on how classical realism, structural realism, defensive realism, constructivism, liberalism, English School, feminism, or postcolonialism define international relations, foreign policy is the study of how a state behaves towards other states, individuals, governmental, or non-governmental organizations. Foreign policy is therefore defined as states' actions to deal with foreign states, which consists of leaders' strategies of thinking global politics on the basis of national interests (Wallace, 1991, p.6 & Morgenthau, 1993, p.3-16). These national interests are then used in the formulation of state's goals among diplomatic and administrative functions (Müller, 2015). In accordance with, foreign policy is the hub of the leaders who try to focus on government behaviors to defend the economic, world order and ideological interest of their nations with the ultimate aim of surviving in international politics (Nuechterlein, 1976, p.248; Waltz, 1979, p.99). With its protective side, foreign policy expects the government leaders to act on behalf of their nation and to maximize all efforts to provide their security (Snyder, 1997, p.17; Hill, 2003, p.239). Taking the actors of foreign policy into account, the relationship between two or more states that share borders, two or more states that do not share any borders, and the relationship between a state and an international governmental or non-governmental organization is crucial. The border sharing case gives foreign policy the status of near neighborhood, whereas the lack of border sharing case gives foreign policy the status of distant neighborhood (Tobler, 2007, p.236). Geographical proximity that is defined by a shared border or not



vary the intensity of diplomatic interactions such as cooperation, mutual investments, number of official visits, defense policies and also non-diplomatic interactions such as conflicts and wars (Zhukov & Stewart, 2013, p. 270). The propinquity of neighborhoods determines the quality and quantity of all these interactions between governments, which may involve borders, border fencing, migration, cross border trade, mutual trust, practices of conversation, and reconciliation. Deliberately, states in near neighborhood have better access to the intensification of these interactions than the states in distant neighborhood. In terms of near neighborhood, states try to give high priority to closer political, economic and cultural ties because they do not want to receive any threat later from them (Chattopadhyay, 2011, p.93).

### **Economic Diplomacy in The Orbit of Foreign Policy**

Related to the interaction of states within near or distant neighborhood, foreign policy embraces a wide range of behaviors including political, diplomatic, cultural, and economic. Of these behaviors, considerable attention is also paid to economic ones which involve with primarily trade, foreign aid, and investment actions of one actor vis-à-vis another. Foundation of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund, the oil crises in the 1970s, debts of the Third World in the 1980s, the East Asian financial crisis in the 1990s, and the rise of the Chinese and Indian economies in the 2000s provide evidence of how economy is integrated in foreign policy among its political, diplomatic, and cultural components (Lee & Hocking, 2010: 3). Under the roof of economic diplomacy, an economic security with the use of traditional diplomatic tools like intelligence, lobbying, representation, negotiation and advocacy to foreign economic policies has been targeted. Related with this, economic behaviors include diplomacy as a process through which states have been engaged with other states to increase their national economic gain with activities such as trade, investment and other forms of economically beneficial exchanges and cooperation (Berridge, 1995, p.18; Jönsson & Hall, 2005, p. 14; Watson, 1982, p.21; Rana, 2004, p.67; Wang, 1993, p. 626-7). Economic diplomacy, then, becomes the mechanism in which states conduct their economic relations with other states within diplomatic channels including how decision-making through negotiation have been constructed in international politics (Bayne & Woolcock, 2007, p.3). Related with globalization particularly, economic diplomacy covers not only states but also by corporates, national or transnational non-governmental organizations (Saner & Yiu, 2003, p. 2-3).

The role of economic diplomacy has been lying beneath the difference between high foreign policy and low foreign policy, which states that that high foreign policy deals with matters that care about national security and survival whereas low foreign policy concerns a large number of secondary





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issues that arise in relations among countries including economic relations. Foreign trade and investment policies have been evaluated in low foreign policy category just like monetary and financial relations among states. Contextually, matters about economy such as import, export, trade volume, tariffs, quotas, foreign direct investment, agricultural policies, General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT), World Trade Center, European Economic Community (EEC) that turned into the EU in 1997, Mercosur, North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have been regarded as low foreign policy issues (Cooper, 1972-1973, p. 19).

A state generally conducts its economic diplomacy parallel to its foreign policy goals. Small powers are more reluctant and hesitant in engaging an economic diplomacy with especially great powers due to the lack of resources it has. In contrast, great powers such the USA or West European states, for example, is able to set its foreign policy goals from a much broader standpoint. The USA has perceived economic diplomacy as its national interest to embrace the economic reconstruction and integration of Western Europe, the economic development of the poor countries of the world, and the creation and support of international and regional economic institutions for consultation, cooperation, and peaceful resolution of economic interests. Compared to the USA, Europe and Japan have had narrower objectives for economic diplomacy, which is export maximization and obtaining contracts especially in the least developed states (Solomon, 1969, p.588). On the other hand, economic diplomacy is more interconnected with regionalism in the Third world, which is also observable in the West such as the EEC that turned into the EU in 1997.

When it comes to the Third World, or, the Global South, economic diplomacy embraces regionalism with the cooperation of states to pursue and promote common goals against the regional or global hegemon (Ferrel, Hettre, van Langenhove, 2005, p. 22). Deliberately, economic cooperation becomes one of the most stable tools of regionalism which promotes coordination and cooperation in security, institutionalization, and conflict resolution/management as well (Schulz, Söderbraum & Öjendal, 2001, p.17-18; Fawn, 2009, p.6; Dangerfield, 2000, p. 23). Economic flows from one state to another define regionalism as a political process characterized by setting economic policy among states (Fishlow & Haggard, 1992). The success of regionalism, which has become dependent on the level of economic activities such as international trade, currency markets, and capital flows, therefore is highly correlated with multilateral trade liberalization favored by economic diplomacy. Preferential trade agreements as the symbols of this liberalization have become critical since more extensive commercial liberalization becomes more feasible than unilateral or multilateral strategies. That is why trade arrangements in regions have become a very prominent feature of multilateralism in international trade according to the World Trade Organization (Mansfield & Miller, 2003, p. 594).



In addition to unlimited examples of economic diplomacy one can imagine in the near neighborhood foreign policy, the ones in distant neighborhood are more germane as a model to the relationship between Kazakhstan and states in Africa because of their split locations. In accordance with, Australia and China, as two distant neighbors whose borders are detached by the North Pacific Ocean, ought to work together with some other actors in Asia and the Pacific for more connection and extension of trade activities in the region. The relationship between Australia and China, therefore, has developed while deepening regional economic integration and strengthening bilateral relationship to strengthen economic cooperation in the region (Ang, 2010, p.130).

Economic diplomacy of the USA has also been studied on the basis of commercial interests' role in American foreign policy. In this context, the American business has a special effectivity on the American state that was supposed to open markets for the American business abroad. One example is the United Fruit Company which helped formulating the American distant foreign policy towards Latin American states with the monopoly of banana productions in Honduras, Costa Rica, and Guatemala in the 1970s. Another example is the Big Three auto companies General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler which forced the first Clinton administration to launch a trade rivalry with its distant neighbor Japan for the competition of automobile production (Gerten, 1997, p.68).

Economic diplomacy between Taiwan and the socialist states in Europe and Africa in the 1980s is also an example of distant neighborhood foreign policy. Taiwan enjoyed economic relations with these socialist states during the presidency of Lee Teng Hui, who launched a flexible diplomacy that aimed to expand Taiwan's international space by empowering non-diplomatic and unofficial relations that covered trade and investment with states with which Taiwan was not diplomatically engaged with before. In 1987, economy became a pillar of the Taiwanese foreign policy through the establishment of the Economic Planning and Development, which offered significant measures of trading with the states Eastern Europe (Tubilewics, 2004, p. 892).

### **Economic Diplomacy in Kazakh Near and Distant Neighborhood Foreign Policy**

Despite being surrounded by five states in Central Asia, economic diplomacy in Kazakhstan's near neighborhood foreign policy has three main characteristics. First, Russia and China are prioritized by Kazakhstan in its near neighborhood besides other Central Asian states. Second, Kazakhstan considers construction of a regionalism with the participation of other Central Asian states such as Russia and China. Third, priority was given to





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United States and the European Union in terms of economic diplomacy in Kazakh distant neighborhood foreign policy.

Kazakhstan's economic diplomacy with Russia and China as its near neighbors encompasses petroleum products, mostly. The Kazakh oil and gas have been processed in Russia whereas the Siberian crude has been processed in Kazakh refineries. Regarding China, the first stage of the Chinese energy strategy in Kazakhstan started in 1997. The Chinese National Petroleum Company (CNPC) acquired 60.3 % of rights to explore and exploit the Zhanaoil oilfield in Kazakhstan, where the Kazakhstan China LLP was later founded. The Kazakh oil company Kaz Munai Kaz received 10 billion USD from the Import Export Bank of China together with 3.3 billion USD that was devoted to acquire Mangistai Munai Gaz in 2008. The Kazakh government has included Russia and China, which contrasts with Azerbaijan that prefer working with Western companies. The CNCP, for example, submitted the offer for the Aktobe field and received it. Subsequently, the CNCP also bought Petro-Kazakhstan, a public oil company. The Kazakhstan-China pipeline now runs from Northwestern Kazakhstan to Xinjiang in China (Ipek, 2007, p. 1190). Besides Russia and China, Kazakhstan's economic diplomacy to Turkmenistan, for example, was implemented in the Kazakh-Turkmen and Iran Railway project (Astana Times, 2017 April 20), to Kyrgyzstan with the decision to augment bilateral trade to 1 billion USD by 2020 (Astana Times, 2019 July 19) and to Uzbekistan with founding a strategic partnership agreement consisting of economic relations (Astana Times, 2019 April 05).

In the Kazakh near neighborhood foreign policy, economic diplomacy has been used within regionalism as well. Referred to Central Asianism, Kazakhstan has been one of the pioneers of regionalism in Central Asia with major contributions of Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Russia since the end of the Cold War. Kazakhstan has a significant role in the foundation of several regionalist international organizations such as the Commonwealth of Independent states, the Economic Cooperation Organization, the Central Asian Economic Union, the Shanghai Five, the Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation Initiative, the Special Program for the Economies of Central Asia, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Central Asian Cooperation, and the Organization of Collective Security Treaty. A Customs Union with Russia and Belarus in its distant neighborhood foreign policy was also set up by Kazakhstan as well, that was in 2015 transformed into the Eurasian Economic Union. With the initiatives of Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan also favored Eurasianism by founding the Eurasian Economic Community in 1996 with Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Russia and joining the Eurasian Economic Union in 2014 with Kyrgyzstan and Russia from its near neighborhood, and Belarus and Armenia from its distant neighborhood foreign policies (Collins, 2009, p. 259-261)

Concerning its economic diplomacy with distant neighborhood prioritized by the United States and the EU, Kazakhstan received 874.3 million USD



from the United States as technical assistance and investment support between 1992 and 2001. It also signed the Cooperative Threat Reduction agreement with the United States, which pledged support for further cooperation in 1993. These two have also been involved in a strategic partnership dialogue since 2012. With the C5-1 Initiative, which involves Kazakhstan too, the United States has launched projects concerning Central Asia business competitiveness, transport corridor development, powering the future, supporting national and regional adaptation planning, and counter-terrorism. Regarding the European Union, Kazakhstan has never set itself the task of integrating into or receiving the status of an associate membership in contrast to other post-Soviet republics. In 1999, the first initiative was taken through the mutually beneficial cooperation bid of the Kazakh state with the European Union. Kazakhstan also became a part of the European Union's Strategy of the New Partnership prepared for the Central Asian states between 2007 and 2013 (Kurmanguzhin, 2016, p. 111). Kazakhstan's trade with the European Union was resumed by the 2015 Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA), that significantly made Kazakhstan as the first Central Asian partner state to have concluded such an agreement with the EU. Thanks to the EPCA, Kazakhstan reached to a more stable cooperation phase with the European Union trade, establishment and operation of companies, capital movements, raw materials and energy, government procurement, and intellectual property rights (European Union, 2020).

### **Economic Diplomacy with Africa in the Kazakh Distant Neighborhood Foreign Policy**

With the advent of the 2050 Strategy, Kazakhstan's economic diplomacy came to increase relations with Third world states. The Strategy that was declared in 2012 by the former President Nursultan Nazarbayev attempts to realize several long-term goals to transform Kazakhstan into one of the greatest thirty economies in the world. It includes creating new sources of economic growth, strengthening the position of small and medium size businesses, diversifying exports, expanding infrastructural projects and developing cutting-edge industries and technologies, and increasing Kazakhstan's mobility in world economy (Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy, 2014). Consistent with the 2050 Strategy, Nazarbayev also emphasized the importance of foreign cooperation within regional and global economic interaction (Lin, 2014, p. 284). Moreover, Kazakhstan decided to claim for more responsibility to achieve these goals with effective participation and integration in both regional and global levels (Aitzhanova, Katsu, Linn & Yezhov, 2014, p. 1). As stated by the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Shahrat Nurishev;



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“Since its inception, economic diplomacy has been part of Kazakhstan’s foreign policy as a key mechanism for achieving productive economic and trade relations at bilateral and multilateral levels. It remains a key tool for the development of effective cooperation between countries and regions on the global level. Today, comprehensive tools are being developed for promoting trade and economic diplomacy for our country. At the state level, a program for attraction of investments, development of special economic zones and export promotion was adopted and is being implemented, while a national export strategy is also being developed”  
(Astana Times, June 9th 2014)

The 2050 Strategy, which seeks to make Kazakhstan a developed economy, has two major objectives. The first one involves with transforming Kazakhstan from landlocked to a land-link open country by actively supporting regional and global prosperity. The second one aims at diversifying financial and economic activities of Kazakhstan in the global arena. In order to fulfill these goals, President Nazarbayev highlighted international dimension of the program that announced the readiness of Kazakhstan to supply the energy demands of the region until 2050. In accordance with, Nazarbayev aspired to transform Kazakhstan into a soft power that could impact the region and the globe thanks to its economic power. Additionally, the objective of new economic policy declared in the 2050 Strategy was to expand Kazakhstan’s interaction with the globe and to make it more resilient to potential political and economic threats, especially those coming from its near neighborhood (Weitz, 2014, p. 16). The 2050 Strategy also consisted of improvements in growth, human resources, improvement of the institutional environment, creation of a science driven economy, and accelerated expansion of infrastructure. Moreover, it entailed official development assistance to states that need help, within its distant an also near neighborhood foreign policy. The Kazakh Agency for International Development (KAZAID) donated 52 million USD to Afghanistan for instance, between 2006 and 2011 (Malyshev & Bainazarova, 2016, p. 262).

Regarding Africa as one of the continents that encompasses such states that need help, the 2050 Strategy aims at introducing the Kazakh economic diplomacy. Among many factors that led Kazakhstan launching an economic diplomacy with Africa are natural resources, business-hub potentials, pharmaceutical and machinery market prospects, ongoing stabilization of politics and democratization, and increase of foreign capital accumulated. Upon closer scrutiny, the initiatives taken and projects launched by Kazakhstan in Africa would help put the country’s image-making strategies into perspective. Moreover, they would provide insight into the companies and potential individual investors getting involved. Implementing economic diplomacy in Africa by the 2050 Strategy in 2012 has brought political gains to Kazakhstan in a short time. Kazakhstan received the observer status in the African Union (AU) in 2013 and subsequently opened embassies in the Republic of South Africa, Egypt, and Ethiopia. In addition, leaders from Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, and the Gambia



visited Kazakhstan with the intention of both initiating political dialogue. In a short time, Kazakhstan's economic diplomacy with Africa was crystallized in three dimensions; economic cooperation, trade and investment.

## Economic Cooperation

Economic cooperation with African states started with sustainable development projects that Kazakhstan prepared, such as the 2 million USD cooperation package. This program was designed to provide financial and expertise assistance to the continent in the areas of institutional development, coal mining, agricultural practices, technical and transportation. An offshoot of this focus on sustainable development has been Kazakhstan's proposal to create the Islamic Organization for Food Security, which was supported by several African countries as a means of preventing hunger in African states. These initiatives reflect the commitment made in Kazakhstan's 2050 Strategy, to contribute to sustainable development which lays the cornerstone for many of Kazakhstan's domestic and international activities and shapes its foreign policy towards Africa. In 2015, Astana Economic Forum was organized in which economic cooperation between Kazakhstan and Africa was targeted. As again Minister of Foreign Affairs Erlan Idrissov stated:

"Africa is a 'continent of opportunities' which are being actively explored by economic giants such as China, India and the Western states and it is those opportunities that Kazakhstan intends to develop in cooperation with our African partners. Our country is interested in establishing closer relations of mutually-beneficial political, economic and trade cooperation with African countries" (Astana Times, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2015)

In 2016, economic cooperation between Kazakhstan and African states was highlighted in the official visit of Senegal's President Macky Sall to Kazakhstan. In the welcoming ceremony, Nazarbayev stated that cooperation for banking would be discussed:

"As members of the Muslim community, we've agreed to cooperate within the framework of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The sphere of our cooperation is at a low level. Obviously, there are large territorial and transportation problems in this area. Energy, agriculture and Islamic banking are our priorities as of now. This continent [Africa] is going to develop sharply soon, and Kazakhstan needs to step up cooperation with the African countries now" (Astana Times, May 20<sup>th</sup> 2015)

In 2017, Kazakhstan decided to provide development assistance to African countries at the 26<sup>th</sup> African Union Heads of States and Government Assembly. Kazakhstan pledged \$2 million USD for a Kazakh-UNDP cost-sharing project in the meeting, which aimed at institutional development assistance to African countries (Astana Times, February 02). The same year,



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Morocco opened its first embassy in Kazakhstan, nearly after twenty-five years of suspended diplomatic relations. Morocco's first Ambassador to Kazakhstan, Abdeljalil Saubr stated that this political opening must have been reflected on economic and cultural relations as well including trade:

“Our political relations are very good. Our goal is to ensure that our remarkable political relations are reflected economically and culturally, as well as in other areas of common interest. For example, at the moment, trade can be called ‘modest’ and irregular. Hopefully, the situation will improve. Trade turnover between two countries is about \$170 million USD, the indicator is not high”. (Astana Times, July 25<sup>th</sup> 2017)

Concerning the economic diplomacy between Kazakhstan and Africa in 2017, a South-South Development Exchange on Economic Diversification and Industrialization Africa in line with the UN Sustainable Goals was organized in Almaty. To the program which 43 African states joined, not only solutions to economic problems of Africa but also economic exchanges possibilities were discussed. As Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA) strategy and analysis team chief Ayodele Odusola said:

“There are a number of lessons and experiences that can be shared between Kazakhstan and many African countries, essentially in the areas where Kazakhstan is doing very well when it comes to the issues of industrialization and mechanized agriculture. The beauty of it is that Kazakhstan and many African countries have similarities in the structure of economy and because of this the experience is similar. What they need to do is just to contextualize for the African economies to be able to make sure that the exchange of ideas really transforms into development solutions” (Astana Times, November 15<sup>th</sup> 2017)

In 2019, the Rwandan Ambassador in Kazakhstan announced that the Rwandan state was looking forward to developing trade relations with:

“Now, we are beginning to look at the areas of collaboration. For example, we have already submitted an air services agreement that we want to negotiate with Kazakhstan so that we can sign it and create a framework for collaboration between your air services and our air services industry. Once we have air transportation connection and that becomes the bridge between economies, you can move people, you can move goods and services. We are happy with the state of affairs in our relationship. We think we can do much more and that is why I am here to explore how we can strengthen the relationship between us. Rwanda, for example, is interested in Kazakhstan's experience and “strength in the energy sector, mining sector and in the agriculture sector” and wants to find “possibilities of exploring synergies, sharing experience, sharing technology, opening up markets” (Astana Times, October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2019)



Concerning investment, Kazakhstan decided to follow the sustainable development goals set by the African Union in African Agenda 2063 for its distant neighborhood policy toward Africa. In this regard, the 2016 African Union meeting which Kazakhstan attended as observer, highlighted investment opportunities. Kazakhstan also played a major role in facilitating projects with African states via cooperation within the UNDP. This has contributed to Kazakhstan's engaging with African states' leaders in South-to-South activities including projects of sustainable development. The Co chairmanship of the Republic of South Africa's Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Nomaindiya Mfeketo in the first Kazakhstan-South Africa Business Forum in 2014 for economic consultations was the first step of investment from Kazakhstan to Africa. As stated by Ministry of Foreign Affairs Erlan Idrissov in the Forum:

"The African continent is not the same as it was earlier. Everything is changing now. The business goes where there is clarity; for doing business, there is too little information about Africa. The same is with African countries; they do not know much about Kazakhstan. To date, Kazakhstan is intensively exploring new markets and that is why the priority projects as well as those offering investment possibilities are of ultimate interest for us. We count that some African countries such as Ethiopia can become a 'window' of Kazakh exports and investments to Africa, the so-called 'business-hub' for Kazakh business people on this continent. The perspective directions for establishing the mutually-beneficial ties are the mining sector, agriculture, repair and upgrade of the armament equipment, and so on" (Astana Times, May 27<sup>th</sup> 2015)

In 2019, serious companies expressed interest in investing in Zimbabwe's electro-technical, agriculture, and aerospace industries. This interest was evident in the statements made by the chairmen and executives of Alageum Group in electro-technical sector, Chimfarm pharmaceuticals, Export Insurance Company, and Kazakhstan's Ministry of Defense and Aerospace Industry. Meanwhile, the board of The Eurasian Resource Group invested \$100 million USD in Zimbabwean platinum and coal projects, with the emphasis on future investment perspectives in chrome and ferro-alloys. As stated by Eurasian Resource Group investor Alexander Maskevich:

"Zimbabwe has a lot of opportunities for business and that is why I have been there several times and know what I am talking about" (Africa News, January 21<sup>st</sup> 2019)

The Kazakh state's wish to invest in Africa was also highlighted in the meeting of Minister of Foreign Affairs Kairat Abdrakhmanov with a delegation from the Gambia in 2019. As Abdrakhmanov stated:





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“The future is in Africa. It is no coincidence that nowadays all the world's largest investors are investing in various areas of the economy of African countries. And Kazakhstan will not lag behind either and will work to ensure that Africa takes a worthy place not only in our foreign policy, but also in the foreign economic agenda. In political terms, our positions coincide on almost all issues on the agenda, not only in the UN Security Council, but also in other organizations. Probably, more attention should be focused on issues of trade and economic cooperation” (Azernews, September 20<sup>th</sup> 2018)

In terms of trade as the last component of the Kazakh economic diplomacy toward, the 2050 Strategy was the key document. It initiated an increase at Kazakh trade volume with African states, including export to and import from. In 2013, one year after the declaration of the 2050 Strategy, Kazakhstan traded with almost all Africa. mineral oils, distillation, articles of iron and steel, electric and electronic equipment, prefabricated buildings, and salt were the top products exported to Africa. On the other hand, coffee, tea, ores slag and ash, articles of apparel not knit or crocheted, cocoa and cocoa preparations were the top products imported from Africa. (“Trading Economics Kazakhstan”, n.d.). Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia have been the greatest trade partner of Kazakhstan, whereas trade with Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Burundi, Equatorial Guinea, Niger, Togo and Sierra Leone especially after 2014 has been very limited. The Kazakh state gave importance to export to African states rather than import from, which in both cases the volumes are much fluctuated from year to year. On the other hand, Kazakhstan developed trade volume with some states that it already had trade relations even before the declaration of the 2050 Strategy in 2012. Among these states are Nigeria, Namibia, Sudan, Malawi, Guinea and Burkina Faso.

Export to/Import from	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Algeria	500K/1K	480K/1K	470K/4K	510K/0,1K	80M/0,8K	143M/1K	92M/9K
Angola	200K/6K	1,4M/0	50K/0	49K/28K	60K/0	62K/0,1K	40K/0,2K
Benin	0/7K	0/12K	1,5M/0	2,4M/0,1K	3,1M/0	2,5M/1K	2,4M/12K
Burkina Faso	0/0,6K	0/0,2K	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
Burundi	25K/1K	0/1K	0/1,8M	0/1K	0/1K	0/0	0/0



Cameroon	38K/5K	0,8K/9K	0/0,1K	21K/5K	96K/3K	13K/1K	0/3K
CAR	0/3K	0/3,5K	0/0	31K/0	0/0	0/3K	0/8K
Chad	118K/3K	160K/18K	40K/0	0/0	0,5K/0	0,8K/0	0,7K/0
Congo	0/11M	36K/4M	140K/6M	1K/11M	0/1M	150K/4M	0/7M
Congo DR	580K/0	220K/4K	180K/0	175K/0	40K/0	3K/3K	50K/0,2K
Djibouti	0/2,6K	0/0	0/1,9K	0/0,6K	0/0	80K/0	5K/0
Eq.Guinea	2K/32K	10K/0	0/13K	0/0	0/0	0/0	1K/0
Eritrea	3K/120K	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
Ethiopia	0/5K	0/7K	0/7K	400K/36K	0/67K	2K/86K	1,8M/54K
Gabon	190K/9K	220K/0	200K/45K	10K/0	40K/13K	3K/44K	50K/2K
Gambia	0/1K	0/1K	0/0,1K	0/0	0/2K	27K/0	21K/0
Ghana	600K/35M	0/38M	15K/16M	1,3M/28M	13K/22M	390K/21M	175K/4M
Guinea	0/0	0/0	27K/8K	0/3K	0/16K	0/7K	0/2K
Ivory Coast	180K/0,5M	1K/0,7M	125K/2M	10K/2,6M	155K/2,5M	140K/3,4M	10K/2,9M
Mauritania	0/300K	0/290K	3K/200K	11K/0	0/1K	0/2K	5K/1K
Kenya	200K/74M	10K/55M	1K/43M	1,3M/46M	0/54M	0/58M	1K/57M
Libya	5M/21K	1,8M/76K	34K/0	32K/0	31K/0	36K/0	35K/0
Malawi	0/1,8M	0/3,8M	0/1,3M	0/1,4M	5K/1,6M	0/0,6M	0/0,5M
Mali	0/350K	0/150K	0/0,1K	0/0,3K	0/0,12K	8K/0,10K	115K/0,8K



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Morocco	75M/16M	76M/32M	23M/18M	22M/33M	52M/32M	132M/57M	70M/28M
Mozambique	5K/2,6M	6K/1,3M	0/0,8M	0/1,3M	0/0,4M	0/0,1M	2,8M/0,3M
Namibia	7,9M/7K	1,8M/25K	1,9M/0	100K/275K	0/0	0/10K	3K/8K
Niger	0/1K	0/12K	0/0	0/2K	0/0	0/0,1K	0/28K
Nigeria	200K/5K	100K/4K	1M/1K	100K/1K	102K/6K	101K/7K	500K/1K
Rwanda	0/41M	0/6M	0/7M	0/2M	0/2M	0/9M	0/1M
S.Africa	30K/16M	40K/32M	45K/18M	3M/33M	6,5M/32M	24M/22M	22M/57M
Senegal	5M/3K	300K/36K	9M/6K	5,5M/0,1K	2M/20K	13M/3K	15M/47K
Sierra Leone	0/2K	0/11M	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
Somalia	0/5K	0/21K	4,1M/10K	680K/5K	0/121K	0/0	0/0
Sudan	0/850K	15M/20K	0/10K	0/0	1M/0	0/5K	0/0
Tanzania	7K/7M	6K/3,7M	8K/1,8M	6K/2,2M	20K/2,1M	21K/0,4M	22K/0,11M
Togo	0/0	0/0	0/0,9K	0/0	17K/0	1,4M/0	0/0
Tunisia	8M/5M	8M/4,8M	200K/4M	10M/4M	11M/3,8M	40M/3,7M	34M/3,6M
Uganda	6K/1K	26K/1K	0/7K	0/12K	0/6K	0/1K	40K/18K
Zambia	0/0,3M	0/0,1M	0/0,18M	0/0,75M	0/0,21M	0/0,18M	0/0,1M
Zimbabwe	560/1M	0/1,1M	0/0,5M	0/1,1M	0/0,6M	0/0,7M	0/0,1

Table 1. Kazakhstan Trade volume with African states in the post 2012 period (K: 000 USD, M:000000 USD with approximate figures): Source: Trading Economics, <https://tradingeconomics.com/kazakhstan/exports-by-country>, <https://tradingeconomics.com/kazakhstan/imports-by-country>



## Conclusion

Foreign policy of states that have shared borders are near neighborhood, and that do not have shared borders are distant neighborhood. The fact that Kazakhstan does not share any land border with African states makes them distant neighbors to Kazakhstan. Therefore, Kazakhstan's foreign policy toward African states is an implementation of distant neighborhood foreign policy.

The 2050 Strategy deliberately have been trying to make Kazakhstan one of the thirty most developed states by giving emphasis to opening to world markets and settling economic diplomacy to distant neighborhood foreign policy. In this sense, the cooperation between the Kazakh state and Kazakh business circles in the foreign policy toward Africa is noteworthy. Since this cooperation has economic roots, especially toward Africa, Kazakhstan's foreign policy to African states is an initiative of economic diplomacy within distant neighborhood. States in Africa, all in all, became one of the loci of the Kazakh state to implement its economic diplomacy with specific focus on economic cooperation, investment and trade which have been the basis tenets of economic diplomacy.

Kazakhstan's economic diplomacy toward Africa is pivotal in four respects. First, the African states themselves understood the 2050 Strategy and offered some reciprocity. This took the form, for example, of granting observer status to Kazakhstan in the African Union in 2013, increasing the number of official visits from African states to Kazakhstan by 2012, the conveying of positive messages by the Ambassadors of African states in Kazakhstan regarding the development of business relations, and providing certain support to Kazakhstan's becoming a non-permanent member to the United Nations Security Council. Second, the participation of Kazakhstan in China's New Belt and Road Initiative was a step taken to definitely foster economic diplomacy in Africa. It is expected that China which has sought to include its near neighbors in the Belt and Road Initiative would benefit from Kazakhstan's economic diplomacy with African states when it comes to its investment in Africa. Third, the interest given to Africa by Kazakhstan shows that the more there is economic diplomacy the more there is a Kazakh engagement with global politics and economy. Currently, Africa is one of the regions that Kazakhstan considers investing in and if success comes, Africa would be the gate for Kazakhstan to open to the globe. Fourth and last, Kazakhstan is the only state among other Central Asian states that has a clear and defined foreign policy toward Africa policy so far. Its near neighbors have had no such planned and systematic foreign policy toward Africa. The 2050 Strategy, hence, did not only draw a clear line to follow in Africa but also systematized Kazakhstan's foreign policy toward the South in general and Africa in particular. This automatically makes Kazakhstan a



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rival to Russia and China in Central Asia, which also have had not only economic but also political ambitions and aspirations for Africa.

To sum up, Kazakhstan has been implementing an economic diplomacy to Africa within a distant neighborhood foreign policy and it is very energetic for now. Considering the only fifteen years the Kazakh state has been caring of its distant foreign policy and the six years the Kazakh state has seriously been taking care of Africa, the amount of both discourse and actions about economic diplomacy with Africa is quite satisfactory. In terms of discourses and practices about its economic diplomacy based foreign policy toward Africa, the Kazakh state very well managed to mobilize itself and the Kazakh business circles. Moreover, the reaction of African states to Kazakhstan's economic diplomacy is also quite constructive. Declarations of the officials from different states in Africa clearly expressed their wills to cooperate with Kazakhstan. This mobilization and the positive reactions, all in all, would keep the 2050 Strategy and the importance that Kazakhstan gives to Africa always alive.

Despite this positive table, Kazakhstan has much more to walk for its foreign policy toward Africa. The Kazakh state needs more concentration and not only economic but also political opening to Africa compared to France, the UK, Brazil, China, India, and also Turkey who have long been professionalized in economic diplomacy with Africa. The Kazakh state must consider investment with more African states and must find a solution to stabilize the fluctuation in its trade volume, especially with Senegal, Rwanda and Zimbabwe where the state has openly declared its aim to cooperate with. Then, it should certainly and immediately support its economic diplomacy with political diplomacy such as more official visits to Africa, more embassies in Africa, and cultural activities such as more student exchange programs. Last but not least, it must consider transforming its economic diplomacy with Africa into regionalism as does China, which is also a distant neighbor to Africa. Once consolidating its economic diplomacy and support it with political and cultural openings to Africa, Kazakhstan might model the Chinese African regionalization examples such as The Belt and Road Initiative, Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, China African Union Strategic Dialogue and China-Africa Local government cooperation. Any kind of medical assistance to Africa in COVID-19 days, besides all, would not only facilitate consolidation of Kazakhstan's economic diplomacy in Africa but also would show the humanitarian side of the Kazakh foreign policy, no matter near or distant.

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