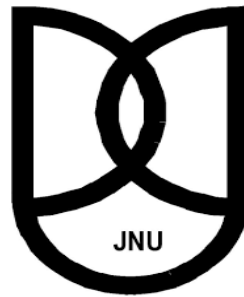


**GEOPOLITICS AND FOREIGN POLICY; A CASE STUDY
OF KAZAKHSTAN, 1991-2017**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for award of the degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

Sneha Yadav



**Centre for Inner Asian Studies
School of International Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi 110067
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**CENTRE FOR INNER ASIAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL
STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI 110067**

Date 20/7, 2018

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled “**GEOPOLITICS AND FOREIGN POLICY; A CASE STUDY OF KAZAKHSTAN, 1991-2017**” submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of *Master of Philosophy* of this University is my own work and has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University.

Sneha Yadav

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Chairperson

Prof. Sarad K. Soni



अध्यक्ष / Chairperson
इनर एशियाई अध्ययन केन्द्र
Centre for Inner Asian Studies
अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय अध्ययन संस्थान
School of International Studies
जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
Jawaharlal Nehru University
नई दिल्ली / New Delhi - 110067

Supervisor

Prof. Sangeeta Thapliyal



इनर एशियाई अध्ययन केन्द्र
Centre for Inner Asian Studies
अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय अध्ययन संस्थान
School of International Studies
जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
Jawaharlal Nehru University
नई दिल्ली / New Delhi - 110067

DEDICATED TO MY MOTHER

Mrs. ASHA YADAV

WITH LOVE

FOR HER BELIEF, HER HARDWORK, HER

PATIENCE,

HER STRENGTH

&

ETERNAL LOVE FOR ME.

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MAP OF CENTRAL ASIA



SOURCE: Mapsofworld.com

MAP OF KAZAKHSTAN



Source: <http://gettyimages.com>

CHAPTER 1.
INTRODUCTION

Global wars engender global thinking: they make us conscious of the essential indivisibility of the Geopolitics and foreign policy and through human economy emphasize the earth-determining course of our political actions. In other words they help to develop our geopolitical consciousness. It is therefore not surprising that the inter-war period witnessed the emergence of a new science, the science of Geopolitics. Indeed from the point of view of the political scientist 'Geopolitics' may be considered to be the most important product of the inter-war period between 1914 and 1944 (Mukherjee,1948: 11-13). This era led to development of geopolitics as a new offshoot in international discourse. Geopolitics is defined as providing tools and guidance for political action. It is classed as an applied science that is intended to guide practical politics up to the point where it has to depart from the sure ground of science (Kunstlehlre, 1948: 3). It is in this way only, the definition goes on, "that knowledge will find its opportunity to guide action; otherwise ignorance will make the road longer and more dangerous"(Mukherjee, 1948:12).

International world order post cold war has experienced shifts in its focus from international security to national interests, global integration, global security and continues to view international system based on different ideologies according to the need of hour. In the last few decades, international system has paid attention to 'Geopolitics' how a nation's location, geography, natural resources and physical proximity to its neighbors helps in shaping country's foreign policy. The study analyses the unique case of Kazakhstan as an example of how Geopolitics impacts foreign policy of a nation.

Geopolitics and Foreign Policy

The conventional word 'geopolitics' has not loosen its relevance in today's world rather, there is an increased phenomenon of geopolitics used as a global parameter for some theories to put into existence, such as the Great Game Theory in Central Asia. Central Asia is surrounded by global, emerging, and developing powers battling for influence due to its geographical location. The region is considered to be the heartland and "one who rules the heartland, rules the world" such is the theory of American school of classical

geopolitics proposed by Mackinder (Mackinder, 1991:2). Theorists have defined geopolitics as “Geopolitics is the new national science of the state, a doctrine on the spatial determinism of all political processes, based on the broad foundations of geography, especially of political geography” (Haushofer, 1946: 1-3).

The word ‘Geopolitics’ refers to the systematic investigation of the impact of various factors such as geography, demography, physical features of geography and human impact particularly on the foreign policy of a country. This also includes study of climate, natural resources, undiscovered resources, topography etc. in explaining the behavior of international relations. Geopolitics is the study of the influence of geographical factors on political action, has existed ever since man first engaged in politics (Kaplan, 1948: 1). Napoleon said that the politics of a state is in its geography (Kaplan, 1948:2), thinking that he was merely stating an age-old truth. The Monroe Doctrine has been described as geopolitics, because it was based on the fact that America is a continent separated from the others by vast oceans. The papal decree dividing the world between Portuguese and Spaniards was again geopolitics, as were indeed all agreements which sought to determine zones of influence. But geopolitics in this sense is quite a different matter from political geography, which is a science studying the relations between political organizations - states-and their geographical environment (Gottman, 1942: 196-198).

Geopolitics plays a crucial role in determining, explaining and predicting international politics based on geographical variables. Geopolitics continues to be an important parameter in shaping one's foreign policy, whether it is Russia's annexation in Crimea, China's aggressive claim in the coastal waters, Japan reaction through its smart and instant strategies in the region or Iran -Syria-Hezbollah alliance to exhibit prominence in the Middle-East (Kjellen, 1992: 25).

Geopolitics was from the beginning associated with geology and worldwide issues of the state framework. Topography came in to the fore as the material asset base influenced by each state's fringes and it was the separation of borders between states that got them closer or less of contact. This asset base and the domain, on which it was held, were viewed as the substance of rivalry between states. This opposition could incidentally be

explained by re-plan of regions consequently fringes yet at last new adjusts of rivalry were normal. As time passed state's resource base was considered to become decreasingly dominated by its material content and increasingly by the number and competences of its population. The geopolitical discourse could also shift in that direction. In the course of time scholars also started from the assumption that geopolitics was not so much an objective analysis of the relation between power base, geographical situation and foreign policy result, but more a world view in policy circles or among the population at large based on these and similar elements that framed foreign policy action and popular beliefs on the subject and that should be critically assessed (Wüsten, 1998: 233).

The term 'Geopolitics' and 'foreign policy' is correlated to each other as geopolitics is the method of studying foreign policy which helps in explaining International politics and geopolitics in relation with the political, social and international world order. The word has been extensively described as a way of looking at contemporary global politics that links geography, politics, culture and diplomacy. Geographical privileges help to strengthen weak relations with neighboring countries for e.g. Kazakhstan is bounded by sea and with major powers such as China and Russia to its north and west both trying to have strong foothold over this region (Klauss, 2007: 2).

“Geopolitics and International relations are neither complementary nor contradictory” (Shapiro 2016: 12). It is thus right to say that International Relations and Geopolitics are not synonymous. International relations is an elaborated concept that comprises of behavioural changes of all the countries involved towards each other. Geopolitics is the supposition that all international relationships are based on the interaction between geography and power (Friedman, Shapiro 2016: 14). A new understanding asserts that a deep understanding of geography and power enables you to do two things. First, it helps you comprehend the forces that will shape international politics and how they will do so. Second, it allows you to identify what is important and what is not (Idan and Shaffer, 2011: 1).

Geopolitics and foreign policy concept can be studied as symbiotic to each other. The word geopolitics as explained in above mentioned paragraphs are not limited to just

geographical, physical features but the word gives birth to idea of a nation being geopolitically important in the global order. There is wide debate among writers and historians in matter of linking geography with polity which henceforth gives rise to the study of geography with respect to changing political order geopolitics. Since the demise of the Soviet Union the role of Kazakhstan has geared up as an important player in Central Asia. Its increasing affinity with world super powers such as China, USA has furthered its role as regional leader in Central Asian region. It is this important role and position that is held by Kazakhstan makes it an important focus of study. It is due to the highly evolving role of Kazakhstan and importance of its geopolitics that makes it influential destination for the world powers.

Geopolitics is thus a way of looking at the world affairs in terms of what is happening in the surrounding and how surrounding affects the working of the nation. This further strengthens the assumption that modern geopolitics makes, geographical privileges helps to strengthen weak and disturbed relations with neighboring actors. For example, Kazakhstan is heavily landlocked from all its sides; Caspian Sea on one of its sides automatically enhances the position of Kazakhstan. Therefore, China, Russia, USA and other powers try to exhibit their character in this region by gaining a strong hold (Alcott, 2010: 16-17).

Historical Background of Kazakhstan

Historically, Kazakhstan shared a long period of dependence on Russia, its closest neighbors. During soviet regime, the populous was majorly dependent on the nomadic way of living and they felt victim to intruding neighbors as a result to which Kazakhstan experienced the domination of the Soviet Union for a long time. Kazakhstan at this time was occupied and dominated with the Russian presence and gradually a large part of Kazakh economy went under the control of Soviet Union. Kazakhstan's economy has been severely affected by the crisis in 1970's and 1980's in which collapse of USSR affected Kazakhstan with effects on its social and economic development due to the economic system prevailing in USSR (Agnew, 1998: 1).

Dominated by nomadic style of living, Present day Kazakhstan's history is bounded with invasion of Turkic speaking and Mongols under the leadership of Genghis Khan. It was the Mongols who invaded in central Asia and formed majority. It was during early 16th century that consolidation began and the word Kazakh and its meaning 'free and independent' in Turkish came in to existence. This process of consolidation led to the coming up of Kazakh state in which Kazakh appeared to be a distinct ethnic group. Moving close to 17th century the Kazakh population got divide into 3 tribal units known as 'zhuzes' which were headed by khans, this period was stable under the leadership of khans, as all the three units had their own distinct way of life . The history speaks of Kazakhstan's dependence; majorly they were dominated by nomadic way of living and had strict taste of land ownership. Geographical proximity remained to be the key feature that determined Kazakhstan's future as in winters survival was tough (Elster, 1989: 36-37).

Kazakhstan geography and its location was also a major cause of invasion from its borders affecting the sovereignty of the nation. Located in mid of the two Eurasian and Asian continent, the traditional Kazakh nomads were often subjected to invasion by their economically and politically more stable, settled neighbours. Later in 19th century other nomadic tribe revolted against the Kazakh state and the khanates of Kazakhstan, in search of guarantee security started moving to Russia which was its closest neighbour geographically. In search of military assistance Kazakhstan dragged itself towards Russia which in turn took this as opportunity of seizing lands in Kazakhstan. A process of 'opportunistic' colonization began; Kazakhstan began following administrative procedures of Russian government thus transferring its lands to Russian peasants This gradually resulted in to melting of Kazakhstan's sovereignty which led to ceiling of Kazakhstan as an independent state (Elster, 1989: 37-38).

In late 19th century people in Kazakhstan inclined more towards gaining a settled life and therefore, left nomadic life for agriculture. This was not voluntarily as many of the nomads had no other choice as a major portion of their lands were seized by the Russian Government this way economically, Kazakhstan was incorporated in to Russian structure of economy. Post-cold war Kazakhstan was further economically weakened as large part

of its livestock perished and pastures were devastated. It was in 1920, Kazakhstan became autonomous republic of USSR which was made as an administrative unit to function and in finally in 1936 was made a union republic of USSR.

Kazakhstan economy was largely controlled by Russian administration where in trade, transport, economy were regulated. Under the controlled economy of Russia, Kazakhstan changed its course and diversifying its ambit adapted economic development. Kazakhstan got entirely transformed under Russian government As a result of which, in 1941, the volume of industrial production increased eighth fold in comparison with 1913. it was due to the ability of the planned economy to concentrate resources on the fulfilment of large-scale economic objectives, Kazakhstan had been completely transformed by the 1930s from a wide pasture area for nomadic livestock breeders to a region with a large-scale and manifold industrial complex, a developed agriculture and livestock-breeding system, as well as a high level of culture (Alcott, 2010:25). Gradually positive developments took place with long railway tracks been made, large production of ferrous and non-ferrous metals, coals, oil and gas being explored that lead to shifts in the trajectory of Kazakhstan. These developments represented that Kazakhstan during its tough times managed to overcome its hurdles thus ultimately producing 70% of production of metals and gas (Lyalya, 2015: 12).

The transformation during the soviet period did not come easy as the process of large scale collectivisation programme and social industrialization brought number of tragedies such s the campaign of collectivization and famine on a large scale. This tragedy led to a large scale of Kazakh people fleeing the country with their livestock to central Asian neighbouring states or to adjacent neighbour China. This eventually led to loss of a major Kazakh population. Also major portion of the Kazakhstan populous died of starvation and disease in between 1931-1941, which was an impact of the programmes of Russian government (Gregory, 2001: 192). Kazakhstan remains to be the only central Asian nation where the indigenous Kazakhs are left to be in minority. These demographic shifts caused a severe loss to the treatment of Kazakhs in their own land. The tragedy continued till 1970s where the Union socialist soviet republic crisis affected Kazakhstan at large. The economic, political, social crisis affected Kazakhstan which led to high

resentment among the Kazakh people. It eventually led to Kazakh losing their trust in the Soviet Union and thus marking a shift towards independence (Cohen, 2008: 11-12).

In the early 1990s the governments of Kazakhstan launched large-scale changes to the whole social political system. On 24 April 1990, a law was passed declaring a presidential form of the government in the Kazakhstan, with Nursultan Nazarbayev elected as its first President. On 25 October 1990, the Supreme Soviet of the Kazakh approved the Declaration on State Sovereignty, establishing and the country's determination to be subject to international law, while the institutions of citizenship as well as equality of forms of ownership were also introduced. The political and social system of Kazakhstan went through major changes in the early 1990s during which the supreme court of the Kazakhstan government approved of Kazakhstan's sovereignty and Nursultan Nazarbayev was elected as the first president (Aerial, 2008: 22-24).

The country's name was officially set in 1991 and on 16th December, Kazakhstan declared its independence. The newly independent country's political system and constitutional legislation of the Republic were designed between 1991 and 1995. On January 1993 Kazakhstan adopted its first constitution. The constitution was a middle ground between the old and the new political systems. The constitution introduced a western democratic model as a result of a referendum in 1995 a new constitution was adopted (MFA, 2014).

Geopolitics of Kazakhstan

Geographical location and resource assets makes Kazakhstan an important player in world politics as Kazakhstan, a former soviet republic, with Russia to its northwest, China extending to its east, in the south lays borders of Turkmenistan Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan to its west, Geographically, Kazakhstan a former soviet republic accommodates Russia to its northwestern region, China and its intrinsic parts extending in to east, southern Kazakhstan is driven by the borders of its Central Asia neighbors such as Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. To its western side Kazakhstan is bounded by the Caspian coast which is itself the main eye-catching feature of this highly landlocked country. Kazakhstan known for its natural beauty and resources is home to

high level of geographically contrasting features with high altitude mountains; The Altai on eastern region bordering Russia and China. Similar level of deep depressions is home to Kazakhstan natural abundance such as the Caspian Sea on the western region. This whole set of geographical features in addition to huge energy potential and existing natural resources makes the republic of Kazakhstan demographically an astonishing location with its northern part extending in to the European continent and the southern portion dripping into the Asian continent. This geodynamic intermediate positioning of Kazakhstan makes this region dominated by both Europe and Asian mix thus Kazakhstan's culture, diversity, people, and lifestyle is a mix of both these elements making it a heterogeneous mixture of 'Eurasian elements' (Ariel, 2006: 12).

Kazakhstan is said to be the most developed nations amongst Central Asian states in terms of its size, it is the 'world's ninth largest landlocked country' with abundance of natural resource on its soil looked after by a huge multi-ethnic demography. Kazakhstan's enormous energy resource naturally available in its territory adds to its distinct geographical features with substantial amount of gas and energy resource present in the region to explore for future needs. In addition, its location between 'Europe and Asia' makes it a landmass of 'Eurasian' dynamics, a historically multicultural region with both eastern and western characteristics. Kazakhstan holds a significant position in the Central Asian region due to abundance of natural resources such as 'oil and gas' and energy rich asset such as Uranium (Fabrizio, 2013: 12).

Kazakhstan is well surrounded by the Caspian coast on one side where the 'Tenzin field' is placed containing twice the oil of Alaskan northern slope and proposals of connecting oil and natural gas pipeline to China and rest of the western part will makes sure that its remains to be the most geographically favored nation (Cahnman, 1943: 55). Rather being obstructive with its energy resources, Kazakhstan has diversified amount of resources. Kazakhstan stands to be the leading producer of uranium, the largest held reservoir of zinc, lead chromium, copper, iron and substantial amount of gold and silver are in Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan is aware of its enormous potential and thus shapes its foreign policy in respect to its geographical positivity. It is further important for

Kazakhstan to remain aware of its geographical location and challenges associated with being on the geopolitical verge (Alcott, 2010: 15-16).

Apart from geographical features economically, Kazakhstan stands above in all ways from its underdeveloped neighbors in Central Asia. Kazakhstan's GDP overall stands to be more than the rest of the central Asian neighbors such as Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan which makes it the most developed region in Central Asia. Kazakhstan is the world's ninth largest country: double the size of rest of the Central Asian region although landlocked but bordering the Caspian Sea adds to its abundant natural resources with enormous energy resources such as oil and gas found in great quantities. Also 'Tengiz field', bordering coast of the Caspian Sea, entails double the amount of oil present in Alaskan Northern Slope with future oil and gas pipeline development projects in China and West that will benefit Kazakhstan's position of emerging as a major global attraction for energy market in international system (Klauss, 2007: 4).

Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy

In 1991, Kazakhstan declared its independence and emerged out of the USSR and evolution of its foreign policy began. Even though Kazakhstan was independent, influence of Russia was greatly felt. Gradually Kazakhstan extended its ambit and started evolving diversified foreign policy approach that outlined the importance of developing relations with close neighbors and far western countries such as USA, China, Japan, Singapore, Iran and others. Kazakhstan chose to come out of dependence of Russia in 1991 and shaped its foreign policy in modern terms keeping the economic, political and social dynamics in mind. Kazakhstan shaped its foreign policy to accommodate assistance from the west to fix the devastating impact of the war which led the country's economic situation paralyzed. With the coming of Nazarbayev's presidential term in 1991, he served the immediate need of looking into the foreign affairs and importance of foreign relations in international system. Later in 1999, with more liberalization and globalization process unfolded the need to maintain relations with countries that would help the country's economy to grow and develop. The year 1999, highlighted importance of and

need of diversification of relations with neighbors and far west countries which gained momentum in the year 2014 thus marking a beginning of the Multi Vector Approach in foreign policy of Kazakhstan (Klaus, 2007: 34).

Kazakhstan since gaining independence was situated in a dualistic position of rebalancing its relations with Russia and simultaneously was expected to follow a shift in its foreign policy towards diversified approach that answers to the pulling needs of rising economies such as China, USA and other major powers. President Nazarbayev since his arriving as president tried to pursue a diversified policy with establishing peaceful and cordial relations with the USA and China to posit a check on the growing influence of Russian presence in the region that would lessen its dependence on Russia. The entire debate revolved around strengthening ties with other western powers to counterbalance the role of Russia. The arrangement attracted economic, military and political assistance from USA. Until 1990's the shift of pursuing active foreign assistance from USA, China and others began specially in the oil and gas sector. Kazakhstan participated in military and security cooperation with the USA by becoming members of NATO and OSCE 'partnership for peace' program (MFA, 2014).

Since 1991, Kazakhstan opened its boundaries to get economic assistance from China, political proximity from US and now the changing foreign policy is evident of including further actors in its sphere of influence. Teaming with the USA in nuclear cooperation is what has made Kazakhstan an important player in the Central Asian region. With Kazakhstan securing its independence, rather than being dependent on Russian assistance completely, it chose to take hold of major economy in its own hand. Further coming of Nursultan Nazarbayev it chose to unfold its foreign ambit and persuaded what is called as the 'Multi -Vector' foreign Policy in 2014. According to Shaffer, Kazakhstan's foreign policy is shaped by its geographically landlocked position he places most emphasis on how the lack of sea access affects Kazakhstan's foreign policy and geographical importance of Kazakhstan, how it has attracted world power attention in shaping and diversifying its foreign policy (Idan and Shaffer, 2011: 1-2).

Thus, Geostrategic position of Kazakhstan as mentioned above has helped Kazakhstan to shape its present policy which stands out due to huge energy resource base preserved by Kazakhstan. According to Rustom Kulnazarov, Kazakhstan with its enormous energy resources, play a key role in shaping its foreign policy with other nations. He says, energy and, primarily Kazakhstani oil and Turkmenistan gas, is one of the most important factors determining the new geopolitical role of the region (Kulnazarov, 2010:2). Also, with growing number of construction of oil and gas pipelines and proposal for future construction, the economic, energy and transportation graph of Central Asia demonstrates a growth. The USA, the European countries, Russia and China remains to be the core investors in this respect and clearly are defining the geopolitical and geo-economic interests in the region and are strongly seeking to spread and firmly establish their stronghold in Central Asia (Shaffer, 2011: 4).

Over the years it seems that Kazakhstan's foreign policy is tailor-made to suit the geopolitical environment of post-Soviet Central Asia, it is characterized by multi-leveled regional hegemonic competition between, on one level, Russia, the United States and China, and, on a lower level between sub-regional hegemonic aspirants such as Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. She suggests, "In the same way that Russian 'matrioshka doll' can be accommodated within one another, hegemony functionally similar but operating at global, regional, and sub-regional levels appear to coexist" (Deyermond, 2011: 1-3).

Kazakhstan located in such an important latitude, its politics is also determined by the geostrategic location it possess which appears to be continental and Heartland oriented because Kazakhstan located proximally closer to its traditional ally Russia and on the same hand accessible to the Asian continent. Kazakhstan membership and participation in Russia dominated EEU, initially initiated by Nazarbayev, supports the idea that geopolitical union with Russia is the essence of Kazakh foreign strategy.

According to Inanov, "Kazakhstan has good relations with China, but they are of secondary importance for Astana in comparison to cooperation with Russia. SCO is a comfortable platform for Kazakhstan to find its place in geopolitical dialogue of Moscow

and Beijing. The problem is that nobody knows how Kazakh foreign policy will look like after Nazarbayev leaves the office, but classic geopolitical theory says that geopolitical orientation of Kazakhstan will hardly change in the long run because its Conservative identity is too strong”(Igor, 2011: 2).

Economic Geopolitics of Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan possesses abundant natural resources such as ‘oil and gas’ with other major export items such as raw materials, manufactured product and agricultural products serving the economy of most nations. it was in 1990’s that privatization took place with liberal policies enabling free trade of goods and movement of labor amongst majorly three countries- Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan that formed an Economic Union with coordinated economic policies. Kazakhstan is bounded on the northwest and north by Russia, on the east by China, and on the south by Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and the Aral Sea; the Caspian Sea bounds Kazakhstan to the southwest. Kazakhstan is the largest country in Central Asia and the ninth largest in the world. Between its most distant points Kazakhstan measures about 1,820 miles (2,930 kilometers) east to west and 960 miles north to south (Idan and Shaffer, 2011: 2).

If we look at the development of Kazakhstan`s energy policy, to take a dig at the improvement of Kazakhstan`s diverse approach, concentrating on changing and advancing relations with the United States, Russia, China, and the EU, and how these relations help shape Kazakhstan`s remote strategy. Then, Kazakhstan's recent inclination towards the development of European Union marks that Kazakhstan needs to feed its national interest and security with external assistance as well. since 2000, focusing more on the Non-Russian relationship it moved ahead with its Multi-Vector foreign policy (2014) securing its defense ties, addressing economic hardships and fostering good relations with other powers could also be a positive sign to remain unanimously sovereign

Martha Brill, Alcott affirms Kazakhstan to be a state of enormous potential with untapped fossil fuels reserves, substantial gold deposits, copper, aluminum, uranium and other elements. She says “given its natural resource Kazakhstan future is ensured (especially

due to its large industrial based economy in ferrous and non-ferrous elements). Despite all this, Kazakhstan continues to be a fragile state and a country of paradoxes, a state crippled by its history as well as geography (Alcott 2002: 12). In March 2014, President Nazarbayev stated that “The foreign policy of Kazakhstan is balanced and multi vectored, and the policy of Kazakhstan has been proved to be on the right track by the practice” (Alcott, 2002: 20).

Kazakhstan is an important location for big countries to invest their power to successfully extract the potential of such resourceful country. This eventually could beat the same time be both beneficial and harmful for Kazakhstan in several ways (Rasch, 1996: 4). By giving geographical access to big powers Kazakhstan can reap the benefit of strategic, economic and other investments made by this huge potent countries and strengthen its own economy and its weak areas but on the same hand contentions grow out of this as this access invites competition between powers for setting a stronger hold in Kazakhstan due to abundance of resources and geography (Hovi and Rasch ,1996: 1).

According to the World Bank Report, President Nazarbayev outlined five priorities for economic transformation: accelerated technological modernization of the economy; improved business environment; increased macroeconomic stability; enhanced quality of human capital; strengthened institutions, security and anti-corruption efforts. The leadership acknowledged the need to boost diversification of the economy through research and development of several sectors such as petrochemicals, innovation technologies and agriculture. The agricultural sector in particular displays a significant growth -but yet untapped- which can create jobs, raise rural incomes and contribute to the economy’s diversification (World Bank Report, 1999: 2).

Thus, Kazakhstan and its energy resources play a key and influential role in shaping its relations with other countries. Presence of energy resources majorly, Kazakhstani oil and Turkmenistan gas itself speaks for the geopolitical importance of the region. The resources attract attention of diverse nation for a strong hold, with various construction projects of oil and gas pipelines to improve transferability and connectivity. The USA, European countries, China, Russia, oil and gas companies being the core investors play a

major role in the energy sector of Central Asia. In this context, it is evident why major powers of the world are striving to evaluate the importance of such enormous region and trying to seek attention by positing their influence through lucrative investment projects. Thus, Kazakhstan's nature of foreign policy here comes in to play by either exploring the opportunity to globalize its economy or to restrain its limit with traditional partners (Kulnazarov, 2011: 22).

Kazakhstan and Its Neighbours

Kazakhstan's spatial and geographical position on the world map has been one its most stable features, and one of the most important for itself, located as it is in the heartland of Eurasia. As a landlocked country it shares a 14,000-kilometer border with five countries, two of which, Russia and China, are major regional and global powers. Hence, border relations have become increasingly important. Kazakhstan enjoys stable and positive relation with its neighbours and foreign powers such as Russia, China, USA and other western countries which underscores the vibrancy and dynamism of this 'multi-vector' foreign policy approach". One of Kazakhstan's most important steps was gaining title of non-nuclear state and adopting non- proliferation principle. Kazakhstan's ambition of attaining peace, stability and sustainable development economically and politically is a fine example of its security interests. Kazakhstan has peaceful relation with China, Russia and the US and also with other central Asian states. With Russia, Kazakhstan shares a long history of conventional tie and great border sharing. Kazakhstan also shares a border with China (Klauss, 2007: 3-4).

Russia's cooperation with Kazakhstan has attained a new dimension that has significantly marked a shift from being tremendously dependent to become an independent nation as a whole. And on the other hand Russia in contemporary times maintains its relation is majorly, concerned by what it saw as the increasing influence of the US in Kazakhstan and the Caspian region on the whole, Since then it has began working to increase its economic projects in the Caspian and in Kazakhstan in particular. Kazakhstan is looking beyond its conventional economic assistance bloc Turkey and Iran, looking forward to

cooperate; deliberations are going on for the implementation of enhanced partnership and cooperation agreement with Kazakhstan (Cohen, 2009: 14).

Russia has another view of seeking the geographical benefits of Kazakhstan. Russia tries to stabilize its dual motive of regaining its lost influence in the region, which for today is shifting in as Kazakhstan's Multi-Vector policy approach and secondly, it wants to develop an influential role in the region in terms of oil, gas and energy resources. Russian presence in the region is more of a counter defensive strategy. Its role is to lessen the Chinese active involvement in the region which for today is winning considerable influence in terms of trade, infrastructure and strategic projects. China stands to be an important destination for Kazakhstan with its lucrative projects. Russia's presence in the region is waning which could be favorable for China but this would remain forever as Kazakhstan is not behaving like it traditionally did, depending on a country but has started diversifying its ambit, with more and more numbers of powers establishing their hold on the region (Klauss, 2007: 15).

Kazakhstan and Central Asian neighbors share economic relations which has remained underdeveloped since the collapse of the Soviet Union to a large degree this is the legacy of the formerly centralized Soviet state, which did not encourage horizontal links among its Central Asian republics. For example, Uzbekistan, at 2,330 kilometers, is Kazakhstan's second largest after the border with Russia. Uzbekistan plays special role in Central Asia, with the largest regional population of more than 30 million, and ranks as the most militarily powerful country in the region.

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have formalized their relations by entering into bilateral treaties of friendship, and even treaties of "eternal friendship," in 1997 and 1998. It has become customary in official rhetoric to speak of friendly and brotherly relations between the two countries and their respective societies. During the recent visit of Uzbekistan President Islam Karimov to Kazakhstan in November, 2014, President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev spoke of the historical and cultural proximity of the two countries. He stressed that the stability and the progress of Central Asia depend on relations between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, and is of key importance for the region

(Sultangaliyeva, 2016: 49). The Uzbek president responded by underlining Kazakhstan's support for Uzbekistan, calling Kazakhstan "the closet country and a close neighbor which has always been with us in both hard and joyful days (Sarsenbayev, 2011: 35-36).

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan share a common border, the 1,212 kilometer length of which has been demarcated. There are no territorial claims between the two countries. And, their relations are not marred by any serious or unresolved, long-standing issues. There are no differences in their respective foreign policies, and both countries are members in the same multilateral, political and economic organizations, such as the CICA, EAEU, CSTO, SCO, and the CIS Council of Heads of State. It is perceived that Kazakh-Kyrgyz relations are the closest ones in Central Asia, especially as regards socio-cultural ties. This is rooted in history, especially the Soviet period. One reason for this is the geographic proximity of their largest urban centers, Almaty and Bishkek (Sultangaliyeva, 2016: 56).

Kazakhstan's and Turkmenistan's economic and political ties have been of limited scale. For instance, Turkmenistan's share in Kazakhstan's trade turnover is only 0.4%. Kazakhstan's share in Turkmenistan's foreign trade is slightly higher, at 1.6%. Such a low degree of cooperation between the two countries is primarily due to the similarity of their exports, which are dominated by commodities, such as natural energy resources (MFA, 2017). It is no surprise that Turkmenistan's main trading partners are China, at 43.7%, Turkey, at 13.6%, and the EU, at 11.6%, in as much as they are among the biggest importers of energy resources. Turkmenistan predominantly exports natural gas, and the bulk of that goes to China, at 69.7% in 2015 (Sultangaliyeva, 2016: 64). Presently in 2017 Turkmenistan economic partnership and trade has further shown rise of 2.5 % (Pomfret, 2005, 10).

Since gaining independence in the early 90's, the Central Asian states have found themselves having to face and overcome economic hardship. In doing so they focused not so much on regional cooperation as on the search for western investment and loans. Today, Kazakhstan's Central Asian neighbors lag dramatically behind China and Russia in economic performance. In a global competitiveness ranking, out of a total of 144

countries Kyrgyzstan remains one of the least competitive at 108th, while China (28th) and Russia (53rd) lead the regional rankings. There is also extreme asymmetry in terms of population size between Kazakhstan's Central Asian neighbors, with a combined population of about 40 million people, and Russia, with 142.9 million people, and especially, China, with 1.3 billion people (Syroezkhin, 2013: 12).

This asymmetric relationship between Kazakhstan and its neighbors makes for obviously different perspectives on its economic and political ties with those neighbors. Hence, its biggest trading partners are Russia and China. In the first eleven months of 2015, the share of Russia and China amounted to 19.1% and 13.8% of Kazakhstan's total volume of foreign trade respectively. While, the combined share of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan only amounted to 3.7%

The entire Central Asian region is bordered by the super powers like China and Russia. Majorly China bordering the northern side, Central Asia is bordering the much controversial region of Xinjiang which is claimed by China as its autonomous region. The region is known to be volatile in matters of protest demanding autonomy which China fears a potential threat. Thus, China has heavily invested in the Kazakhstan region from 1999 to 2002 the trade in this region has rose significantly. China has financed the construction of highway stretching two thousand miles along with the parallel construction of oil pipeline extending from Caspian Sea to Xinjiang coast as major step in reining the unruly province. It is due to the geographical important location of Kazakhstan that China drives its oil and gas pipelines through this region to maintain stability in the Central Asian borders (Cohen, 2008: 191-201).

Over the years Kazakhstan has shifted its focus to an independent policy, increasing its own economic and military power that will help the nation to remain sovereign. Kazakhstan could achieve this target through modifying its internal domestic structure, strengthening national policies, and improving the rule of law while adjusting diverse foreign policy. Presently Kazakhstan is trying to stay connected with Russia and also improving its foreign ties as this would facilitate its vision of achieving economic, political stability by 2050 as versioned by Nursultan Nazarbayev. The impetus to this

'strategy 2050' is seeing bright days ahead with Kazakhstan opening and broadening its foreign policy. The strategy requires adherence to its multi vector foreign policy, regional integration and conflict resolution (Milton, 2014: 35-36).

The 2014 railway line between Kazakhstan and Iran built through Turkmenistan has given Kazakhstan access to the Persian Gulf thus improving the economic linkage and export figures to reach a height and is also interested to raise the export level in general at all bases. Astana is eager to attract more trade with the increased ties with European Union which is also the largest trading partner of Kazakhstan and the trade value is double of what Kazakhstan and Eurasian Economic Union does. Thus, European interests are welcomed in Kazakhstan which could prove to be a great destination. There is also improved and increased trade route between Kazakhstan and Ukraine which is objectionable to Russia. Kazakhstan has increased trade shipments with Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan as well (Cummings, 2005: 54).

Kazakhstan's regional economic integration with Russia and Belarus and the strategic considerations behind the integration. A detailed analysis on the evolution of Kazakhstan's foreign policy since the mid-1990s reveals Kazakhstan's foreign policy is posited in both Europe and Asia as geographically it extends to both the regions (Vielmini, 2013: 3). According to President Nursultan Nazarbayev, "Kazakhstan's location has helped to define its foreign-policy priorities and diplomatic activity". He also believes that "Kazakhstan by enacting strong political and economic reforms, the country will be in a better position to build its relationships with other nations. Kazakhstan is an impartial nation, one that has worked hard to reform its military, political and economic policies as it advances toward a full democracy". Thus, Kazakhstan's foreign policy sticks to its commitment to create strong, long-lasting alliances and partnerships said President Nursulatan Nazarbayev (Gleason, Gregory 2001: 167-182).

Kazakhstan's Multi -Vector Foreign Policy

Kazakhstan's diverse foreign policy is not an immediate phenomenon rather, it is an evolution of Kazakhstan's foreign policy with due course of time from 1991- 2014. Immediately after gaining independence, Kazakhstan realized the need of maintaining

good ties with its neighbors, which was also the need of hour in 1991. Kazakhstan's economy was shaken and had it not been open to liberalized and globalized world, repercussions would have been have been unexpected. It is thus in 1991, liberalization and globalization was welcomed by Kazakhstan. In September 2013, Nursultan Nazarbayev reiterated that a Multi -Vector foreign policy means the development of predictable and friendly relations with all countries. Kazakhstan due to its regional and economic potential should not be concerned only about national issues. He said through multi vector policy, we can eliminate any manifestation of threats to the security of Kazakhstan (Nazarbayev Speech, 2014). Thus It had been said in 2014 -2020 vision of Kazakhstan that Foreign Policy of Kazakhstan is based on the principle of multi vector, balance, pragmatism, mutual benefit and solid dense of its national interests (Hanks, 2009: 33-34).

Kazakhstan`s relations with the United States, the EU China, and Russia in relations to its multi-vector foreign policy makes it important to analyze Kazakhstan's foreign policy in terms of its changing geopolitics and concentrating on the security aspect of Kazakhstan`s foreign policy which highlights its relation with other actors such as China, Russia and USA. Strategically, Kazakhstan is important for the international system as it being the largest landlocked country in Central Asia (Canas, 2005: 1).

President Nazarbayev trusts that the Multi-Vector policy implies growing cordial and unsurprising relations with every one of the states that assume a huge part in world issues and speak to build a functional enthusiasm to our nation (MFA, 2014). Kazakhstan, with its solid geostrategic area and monetary potential, does not have the right to limit its involvement to regional problems only. He emphasized on the need of diversified policies saying, 'this would have been clear not only to our multi-ethnic people but to the entire international community too. Kazakhstan's future is in Asia and Europe, the East and the West. 'By pursuing this policy we will be able to rule out any threats to Kazakhstan's security. We will also be able to strengthen favorable external conditions by carrying out economic and political reforms in this country' (Cummings, 2005: 3-4).

Under President Nursultan Nazarbayev assuming office has adhered to Kazakhstan's diversified foreign policy. Committing to an approach that seeks to maintain good relations with Russia, China, Japan, the United States, and the European Union as well as other countries with important economic, political, or other roles in Eurasia. In 2004, Foreign Minister Kasymzhomart Tokayev justified Kazakhstan's balanced and multi-dimensional policy as "an objective necessity". The implementation of the policy has annoyed Moscow and USA in terms of Astana's dealings with Tehran. But, Tokayev expressed his might of diversifying policy as the only way to strengthen Kazakhstan's position he said "Limiting ourselves to certain countries and regions could do serious harm to our national interests (Wietz, 2008: 3).

Kazakhstan's diversification of foreign policy was initiated by President Nazarbayev's attempts to maintain close economic and political ties with Russia. Even though Kazakhstan was now an independent state it tried to pursue diversification of its foreign policy with Russia was an important strategic ally and its influence over Kazakhstan was great which could not be neglected whereas Kazakhstan was gradually opening its boundaries to overcome Russia's dominance again. These challenges made Nazarbayev look to the West for assistance. He stressed the need of economic assistance to Kazakhstan by the United States and multilateral agencies such as the IMF and World Bank (Pomfret, 2005: 4-5).

There were criticism attached with the behavioral shift in its policy as after independence Kazakhstan's foreign policy seemed to be too Russian centric as efforts were made by Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Russia, Belarus, and Kyrgyzstan to set up the Eurasian Economic Union to create a trade free zone. But in the year of 2000 Kazakhstan's involvement through participating in various international organizations contradicts the criticism of its foreign policy being Russian centric and being founding member of Shanghai Organization (1996) asserts its multi-vector approach. In 2007, Kazakhstan chose to chair OSCE in 2010, Kazakhstan was elected member of United Nation Human Rights Council in 2012. Kazakhstan's membership in the Commonwealth of Independent states, he increased active role in Economic Cooperation Organization (2013). A remarkable trajectory was witnessed in 2016 when Kazakhstan secured a non-permanent

member seat in the United Nation council for two year term, speaks for its role in International Organizations (Milton, 2014: 2).

Discontinuation in the linear policy towards Russia has gained attention for putting stronger impact on the nation's sovereignty but lucid attention from the Chinese investment plans attracts major attention. Kazakhstan is continuing its current 'Multi-vector' policy by strengthening its overall ties with other countries apart from Russia in various sphere of defense, military, and economic ties such as Turkey, China, USA, and other Central Asian states. Russia is certain in mapping the importance of geopolitical location of Kazakhstan and hence, is trying its best to bring Kazakhstan in its zone of control and influence, but Russia is clear of China's expansionist moves in the region that is proving to be effective in terms of enhanced cooperation between the two (Klauss, 2007: 4).

Hanks rightly says the "Multi vector approach has been a constant Kazakhstan foreign policy strategy for the last half and a decade, and there is little indication that the Nazarbayev's regime intends to deviate from this formula" (Hanks, 2009: 3). Kazakhstan's Ambassador to USA has publically reinforced the regime's commitment to the balanced approach of a multi vector foreign policy approach. He explained why Kazakhstan needed to be diversified in his approach to maintain its role and position in Central Asia as with growing political developments and changing economic needs Kazakhstan's foreign policy needed to shifts its axis towards openness (Idrissov, 2016: 10).

Kazakhstan has arguably been the most successful in crafting a foreign policy that has ensured security and contributed to the legitimacy of its authoritarian government—the result of manipulating Central Asia's strategic environment, characterized by the predominance of three, often competing, powers: Russia, China, and the United States. This environment has been conducive for foreign policy, enabling Astana to triangulate to its benefit. Neo-realist international relations theory would suggest that a secondary state, faced with such great power interlocutors, would adopt strategies of balancing or bandwagoning opposite behavior prompted by the desire for security (Schweller , 2014:

8-9). Under these conditions, states such as Kazakhstan can engage in what Parag Khanna has termed “opportunistic multi-alignment”, in which they simultaneously pursue positive relations and advantage vis-à-vis greater powers and play greater powers against each other in pursuit of their own, largely sub-regional interests thus, Kazakhstan’s foreign policy since independence largely conforms to this view (Khanna, 2014:1-2).

Kazakhstan is an important location or say destination for big countries to invest their power to successfully extract the potential of such resourceful country. This eventually is both beneficial and harmful for Kazakhstan in several ways. By providing access to big super powers, Kazakhstan can reap the benefit of strategic, economic and other investments made by these huge potent countries and strengthen its own economy and weakened areas. But on the other hand, contentions grow out of this as access invites competition between powers for setting a stronger hold in Kazakhstan due to abundance of resources and geography.

Kazakhstan’s foreign policy has been studied by various scholars in different situations. The literature available on this subject provides a better understanding of Kazakhstan foreign policy objectives both during the Soviet period as well as post-Soviet period. But there is need to study how geopolitics and particularly geographical location impacts foreign policy of Kazakhstan in shaping its relation with other countries. The existing writings also indicate various situations during which foreign policy kept changing, particularly after 1999, adopting the multi vector foreign policy approach initially. However, it was in 2014, that Kazakhstan finally adopted a fresh independent “multi-pillared” foreign policy, to suit its interest particularly in bilateral and multilateral ties with the outside world

An interesting reason to study Kazakhstan’s foreign policy is its unique location in both Europe and Asia. Kazakhstan with its intermediate location places it correctly amidst world super powers such as China and Russia making it a battle of continued influence. Geopolitics shapes this battle according to its natural wealth and resources leaving huge scope for its foreign policy to take its own shape and course that would help Kazakhstan achieving its goal of being ‘Heartland of Eurasia’. Looking at its geopolitical context,

Kazakhstan manages to stand perennial to all its other underdeveloped Central Asian regions. In terms of economy, its GDP is far greater than most of the Central Asian neighbors therefore justifying its area as the ninth largest country in the world. Geography makes Kazakhstan to remain landlocked, surrounded by land from quadrilateral points but this location does not limit the potential of Kazakhstan in becoming the most developed region amidst the Central Asian region. This geographical landlocked positioning of Kazakhstan itself provides it number of opportunity to attract influential powers in its region (Luca, 2014: 2-3).

Kazakhstan's foreign policy is thus considerate of its geostrategic location as an important organizing principle for structuring the relation of Kazakhstan with other states in respect to what could be potentially beneficial to the nation. Situated at the 'Eurasian' middle point, this striking feature of Kazakhstan is very well realized by its leaders such as President Nursultan Nazarbayev who in his speech is vocal about how Kazakhstan is acting as a "bridge between Europe and Asia". This has been at the root of the regime's construction of a multi-vector foreign policy that, in Nazarbayev's words, seeks "mutually advantageous" and good neighborly relations of confidence on the whole of the Eurasian continent. Kazakhstan's foreign policy is more focused in recognizing the sovereign characteristic of its nation while maintain independence of action through strengthening its relation with both Russia and western powers such as USA, China and other thereby diversifying its ambit of political and economic contacts with other developed and developing countries such as The USA, Russia, China, EU and Central Asian Countries (Hanks, 2009: 12).

Looking the entire phenomenon of world politics and the political moves adopted by the world powers specifically the big powers such as China, Russia and the USA makes it legible to view reflection of classical geopolitics. Geopolitics has been defined as an attractive art of power that explains the functioning of the world order, different nations at different circumstances to find an appropriate place in the world international system. Central Asia being part of the heartland explains the geostrategic of Kazakhstan that appears to be continental is basically, 'heartland' oriented. The steppe orientated land which stands to be a form of ideal land form is geographically beneficial for its position.

The role of Kazakhstan as a significant actor in international relations has thus steadily expanded since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The course of Kazakhstan's foreign policy and what accounts for it, are therefore of great importance. Kazakhstan has since independence pursued a multi-vector foreign policy and there is little indication that it intends to move away from it ((Ariel, 2006: 4). This shifts and turn in foreign policy of Kazakhstan makes it an important to evaluate how geographical location played a key role in establishing and developing Kazakhstan's foreign policy to suit its ambition.

The purpose of the study is to examine dynamics of change in foreign policy of Kazakhstan with respect to geopolitics playing an important factor from 1991-2017 as this time frame carries significance. It is this (1991- 2017) period that has shown striking changes in foreign policy of Kazakhstan and also reflects diversification of foreign policy and how Kazakhstan is trying to become an active link for Eurasia.

This study is to bring out importance of location- how geopolitics has made Kazakhstan to evolve out of post-soviet control and helped it in gaining global attention. The study in further coming chapters will evaluate the role of economic transition that helps to turn a dependent economy into a much independent one and this can be achieved by encompassing a more liberal approach in politics which needs reshaping and continuing with the 'Multi -Vector' foreign policy currently active in Kazakhstan.

The study is deductive in nature adopting historical, analytical and descriptive methodology to examine geopolitics and its role in impacting foreign policy , particularly with regard to the changes in the nature of Kazakhstan foreign policy during the period 1991- 2017. The study is based on available primary sources such as government documents in the form of parliamentary debates, government action plans and plan implementation, constitutional documents as well as conceptual documents on national security and foreign policies. These primary sources are supplemented by secondary sources such as books, journals and newspapers etc. Different speeches, statements and reports concerning foreign policy-making and its implementation available with Kazakhstan Foreign Ministry and various UN agencies reports has been consulted through websites on the internet.

The study seeks to examine key questions in order to understand the dynamics of changes in foreign policy of Kazakhstan central to its 'Geopolitics' such as what are the factors that shape and bind geopolitics and foreign policy of Kazakhstan? What is the vision of Kazakhstan towards its neighbors: Central Asia, Russia, and China? What were the geopolitical causes that led to the adoption of multi -vector foreign policy approach and how far it could be carried? What could be the present and future outcome of Kazakhstan's participation in International Organizations and implications on its 'Multi-Vector' foreign policy? And how geopolitics impacts Kazakhstan's relations with other actors?

The study is carried out to prove the following hypothesis

- Kazakhstan's 'multi-vector' foreign policy aims at becoming the heartland of Eurasia.
- Geopolitics has an impact on changing foreign policy of Kazakhstan towards its Central Asian neighbors, Russia and China.

In subsequent chapters all above mentioned concerns will be dealt to provide holistic and rationale analysis. The *second chapter titled Geopolitics and Foreign Policy: Conceptual Analysis* includes defining Geopolitics as a way of studying foreign policy. This chapter also includes the importance of geographical location of Kazakhstan in making it an important international actor and how geopolitics led to the development of Kazakhstan's foreign policy.

Third chapter titled Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy from 1991-1999 evaluates the changes in the foreign policy of Kazakhstan after independence. This chapter inculcates Kazakhstan's importance in international politics. it also includes Kazakhstan's foreign policy since 1991- 1999, how post-independence Kazakhstan tried to shape its foreign policy after realizing its geopolitical importance that enhanced Kazakhstan's role and position in global politics. Hence, attracting attention of world actors towards the resource enriched nation and further highlights the situation that led to diversification of its foreign policy.

Fourth chapter titled Kazakhstan's Multi Vector Foreign Policy 1999- 2017 evaluates the growing role of Kazakhstan in International Organizations- the Eurasian Economic Union, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Organization for security and cooperation in Europe, United Nations etc. the evolution of multi vector foreign policy since 2014 and contention between world actors such as Russia, China and others in shaping their relations with Kazakhstan with regards to its geostrategic importance, has been dealt in this chapter.

Finally *conclusion* examines the attitude of the actors towards Kazakhstan and highlights the relevance of this multi vector foreign policy in achieving its far versioned goals of getting into the list of 10 largest economies of world. Also, explains how geopolitics plays an influential role in shaping Kazakhstan's foreign policy. The conclusion tries to involve reason and repercussion of its foreign policy extending the idea of inclination towards Eurasia and changing game dynamics and the notion that how far Kazakhstan is successful of becoming the 'Heartland of Eurasia'.

CHAPTER 2.

GEOPOLITICS AND FOREIGN POLICY: CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

The word geopolitics has its origin in the early 19th century. The word traces its origin in German school of thoughts revolving around early 19th centuries. During the inter war period between 1914-1944, ruler like Hitler, their expansionist ideology and policies drove the nation and spaces, giving birth to a powerful ideology, 'Geopolitics'. The science of geopolitics is commonly referred to as the study of spaces and places. The word has its genesis in the twentieth century largely revolving around European politics. Geopolitics from its beginning is said to be interlinked with geography and international politics of the world system. Geography came in to the picture with natural resources as the guiding principle defining state behaviour and state borders thus trying to limit it according to geography eventually this geographical characteristic became the essence of state pattern and state competition thus influencing the international system as a whole (Klauss, 2007: 2).

The word 'Geopolitics' refers to the systematic investigation of the impact of various factors such as geography, demography, physical features of geography and human impact particularly on the foreign policy of a country. This also includes study of climate, natural resources, undiscovered resources; topography etc. in explaining the behaviour of international relations. Geopolitics plays a significant role in determining, explaining and predicting International system based on geographical variables. Geopolitics continues to be an important parameter in shaping one's foreign policy, whether it is Russia's intervention in Crimea, China's occupation of its coastal waters, Japan reacting with a persuasive strategy of its or Iran -Syria-Hezbollah alliance to dominate the Middle-East (Kjellen, 1890: 158).

International world order after cold-war has experienced shifts in its focus from international security to national interests, global integration, global security and continues to view international system based on different ideologies according to the need of hour. In the last few decades, international system has paid attention to 'Geopolitics' how a nation's location, geography, natural resources and physical proximity to its neighbours helps in shaping country's foreign policy. Geography is considered strictly to natural phenomenon such as changing climate, nature of soil, natural resources, energy potential but in wider acceptable terms, it studies political

organisations, working of political system, and nation states depending on geographical phenomenon. The connection between physical geography and conditions prevailing around is seen to be important in determining interlink between geography and politics.

Since, the inception of the term Geopolitics, it has been used variedly across continents in various forms. Thus resultant there is an increased phenomenon of geopolitics used as a global parameter for some theories to put into existence, such as the Great Game Theory in Central Asia. Central Asia is surrounded by global, emerging, and developing powers battling for influence due to its geographical location. “The region is considered to be the heartland and ‘one who rules the heartland, rules the world’” such is the theory of American school of classical geopolitics proposed by Mackinder (Mackinder, 1986: 1).

The interwar period is known for the emergence of a new science, the science of geopolitics and is considered to be an important result of the interwar period 1914-1944. The genesis of geopolitical thought may be traced back to the writings of Ratzel, 1844-1904 who in his "*Politische Geographie*" (Munich, 1897: 21) set up a general theory of the effectiveness of geographic factors in the life and development of states. He introduced the ‘theory of organic state’ comparing state to an ‘organism’ that is affected by its surrounding. He emphasised the organic conception of the state, the physically deterministic view of human behaviour and the struggle-for-space motive of political activities and thereby supplied some of the ideological tenets of latter-day Nazism, such as, authoritarianism (Ratzel, 1844-1904: 3).

1. Theories and perspectives on Geopolitics

1.1 Classical Perspective

The genesis of the word geopolitics lies in expansionist policies of Hitler to which German politicians emphasised their politics of spaces which was later followed by other nations such as Italy and Japan. The concept of geography was traditionally use to formulate actions on one’s own land according to geographical circumstances but politicians such as Fredrick Ratzel (1844-1904) and Mackinder developed the theory behind geopolitics and the core theme was further taken ahead by Haushofer and Rudolf

J. Kjellen (1864-1922). It was Karl Haushofer who made the word 'geopolitics' popular as a house hold name by defining geopolitics in his theses in 1928 as geopolitics is to investigate the relationship of political events to a significant part of the earth's surface (Haushofer, 1928: 1).

The endogeneity of the word 'Geopolitics' also dates back to early work by Friedrich Ratzel, he has written on various aspect of geopolitics but according to him, state is considered as "fragment of human on piece of soil by ties which take on character of organism". He says, "political community acts in the same way as the individual' this conception is known popularly as the 'organic theory of state and its peculiar characteristics rests in the relation to territory, or as Ratzel says space". By his understanding of organic state, it reflects the core theme of influence of space on ideas, on possibilities of expansion and on density of population comes under examination (Ratzel, 1848:13). This entire geographical phenomenon of physical environment and its link with the working or behaviour of states, largely defines the title geopolitics and its relation with changing foreign policy which stands important to be studied in the present world context (Ratzel, 1848: 36-40).

There had been various theories on geopolitics ranging from classical geopolitics to contemporary and critical geopolitics. While talking about geopolitics, Halford Mackinder's view gains a lot of attention thus, making it utmost important to study his concept of heartland theory. According to Mackinder, "The planetary surface should be regarded as divided in island; he called the continental landmass, Asia, Africa, Europe, the world island. The other continent could be regarded as satellite of the great land mass. Within the world island was the heartland". Thus From here the heartland theory comes in to existence - it is the region to which under modern condition, sea power can be refuse access, south-western part of it lives without region of arctic and continental drainage. Thus if heartland would be united in to a single great political authority, it would dominate the whole world (Mackinder, 1982: 156).

Traditional theorists distinguish between political geography and geography in broad generalised term that they tend to merge. In broad terms Political geography is

considered with historical and factual account of changes in circumstances of state and it observes state in a condition of rest. Geopolitics on other hand observes and speculates upon the influence of geographical necessities, upon political events, upon changing political circumstances. It observes state as a dynamic phenomenon. This could be appropriate to state that the process of geopolitics and study of effect of geopolitics in contemporary world politics stands to be dynamic in nature, which changes according to the world events (Gregory; Gleason, 2001: 267-269).

1.2 Contemporary perspective

important view that helps to trace wide meaning and interlink age of geopolitics and foreign policy are formulated by the contemporary school. Theorists have defined geopolitics as “Geopolitics is the new national science of the state, a doctrine on the spatial determinism of all political processes, based on the broad foundations of geography, especially of political geography” (Haushofer, 1946: 2-3).

A traditional line of thought is well presented in the writings of Fredrick Ratzel and Mackinder and their enormous work such as Rudolf J. Kjellen provides us with a second line of thought that may be essentially grouped under the contemporary or say modern theories. According to this perspective, political speculation on contemporary geopolitics is provided by revising emphasis on territory, population, welfare, society, security etc. The union between state and its territory was that of an organism, and from this several inferences got evolved. Kjellen brought the relation between external affairs of the world politics into integrated relation with domestic policies. Thus geopolitics is the resultant of deliberations of intellectual sphere as its roots lies in Germany both in theory and in practice (Milton, 2014: 28-29).

Unlike Mackinder, Rudolf J. kjellen has offered a more contemporary definition of geopolitics- by emphasising on the word contemporary here means linked to foreign policy change. He was a disciple of Fredrick Ratzel and he placed importance not only to state or a particular concept but on several aspect such as territory, people, state, organisation, welfare, and society The term, geopolitics, is introduced in the work of kjellen '*Foundation for a system of politics*', Rudolf J. Kjellen is credited for inventing

the word, and the present-day school of geopolitics theorists in Germany have appropriated it. He brought the interlink age of foreign policy and domestic policy in to forefront with respect to geographical factors of state. Rudolf J. Kjellen has been considered to be the father of the science of geopolitics and is also credited with the invention of the name of the science, 'Geopolitics' (Kjellen: 1924 :54).

Ratzel and Mackinder were forerunners who were essentially dealing with the political and anthropological aspects of Geography Rudolf J. Kjellen was the first to turn to interpret Politics in term of Geography and that was the beginning of Geopolitics which has been defined by him as "the theory of the State as a geographic organism or phenomenon in space". Another important contemporary geopolitics theorist was Karl Haushofer who was accommodative of Rudolf J. Kjellen views and thoughts. Haushofer was highly inspired by the intellectual pursuits of Kjellen and Mackinder. He is known to be acknowledged for defining an independent branch of geopolitics and presenting a systematic study of geopolitics. Therefore, his ideas are nicknamed as '*Haushoferrism*'. He is not sceptical of all the ideas of Mackinder but presents his own ideology on geopolitics. Karl Haushofer says, Geopolitics formulates the scientific foundation of the art of political transaction in the struggle for existence of political living forms on the tiny space of the earth (Geopolitics 1924: p.1).

Another noted modern theorist on geopolitics defines the concept as empirical based on practical ground of explanation with respect to change in foreign policy. Geopolitics is viewed as contemporary rationalisation of power politics that puts considerate importance to geography determining state politics. Another formulation in Baustein's geopolitics states it to be "Theoretical set of political events integrated into the geographical setting considering character of state as living organism"(Baustein, 1938: 7). The condition of demography, growth, birth, life function and death are studied empirically in order to determine the operatives of system. It is thus in this context of geopolitics, physical features of geographical configuration or settings comes under scrutiny in a way to link the ideas of international phenomenon and human events in shaping politics (Baustein 1938: 9-10).

According to the traditional writers or theorists expansionist policies are determined by geography such as frontier, mountains, peaks, seas, oceans, deserts, rivers etc. changes in such features impacts the working of system accordingly. It is these feature that also determines expansionist policies of certain nations example, Germany, Italy and Japan. But mere policy of expansion cannot determine the changing relations among countries such is the argument potently put forward by contemporary theorists, criticising the traditional narrative.

1.3 Critical Geopolitics

In international relations, what we call Geography is subjected to two contradictory appraisals. The influence of factors considered to be geographic is either greatly exaggerated or nearly overlooked, in spite of obvious territorial imperatives (Lacoste: 1984, p.213). There is another set of writers or theorists who criticise the traditional and modern theories of geopolitics, giving rise to a new branch of geopolitics- critical geopolitics that has been widely accepted and offers a distinct insight to what the traditional theories presented. The notion of geopolitics has grabbed considerate attention and importance in recent years from scholars deliberation on the concept from across the globe, from using this term predict and explain international events it is arguable that if geopolitics, studied carefully taking into account the latest developments, current foreign relation changes amongst countries proves to be satisfying. This extensive and elaborated branch of studying international relations, foreign policy of nations with respect to dynamic changes in geography is what is popularly known as ‘Critical Geopolitics’ paradigm (Agnew, 1998: 12).

According to Owens in his claims ‘Geopolitics’ makes certain claims: there is an international pecking order, determined by who has power and who does not; power is rooted in the physical nature of the world itself; the power of the modern state has some relation to the territory that it occupies, controls, or influences; resources and strategic potential, the sources of state power, are unequally distributed worldwide; and power is ephemeral possession is no guarantee of its permanent retention, and therefore states must take steps to ensure its retention (Owens, 1999: 60).

There is difference in how traditional geopolitics looks at international relations and how the critical geopolitics looks at the international affairs. There is deviation in their horizon as the classical geopolitics are more glued to the notion of geographical factors and the interlink age of physical environment on state. But the modern geopolitics or critical geopolitics pays attention to analysis of foreign policy and changes in the international world order with respect to geography thus adding another dimension in its study. Critical geopolitics in relation to foreign policy studies the effect of geographical factors on the foreign policy of nations as whole. Geopolitics is viewed as a way of approaching international events and assessing geographical circumstances as a method of studying countries foreign relations to which critiques such as Carolyn Gallaher and Dodd's Klaus reflect negative side marking geopolitics as 'tool of imperialism' and stresses on its association with regimes like Nazism (Klauss, 1993: p.70-75).

Astana's foreign arrangement can be best comprehended through the perspective of neoclassical authenticity as it underscores auxiliary elements (neorealist) as well as residential level factors in forming diverse approach. Neoclassical authenticity recommends that key residential level factors, for example, administration composed or intra-world class legislative issues are critical in impacting how state-elites react to the limitations and impetuses for diverse approach activity for states important in international system. The school believes The scope and ambition of a country's foreign policy is driven first and foremost by its place in the international system and specifically by its relative material power capabilities, but the impact of such power capabilities on foreign policy is indirect and complex, because systemic pressures must be translated through intervening variables at the unit level. In the Kazakh case, the predominant concern of balancing Russian and Chinese is refracted through the core domestic-level concern of regime survival (Clarke, 2011: 2-3).

Critique argues that geopolitics is largely restrictive to the dominant states such as the United States and the USSR. Larger interest of the traditional theories lies in the developed countries therefore the study seems to be dominative of their view and politics. Some argue that the nature of the state system has changed. Sovereignty is less generally accepted as the natural basis of the survival of the global political order. New political

actors appear; some of them become important on the international (actually interstate) scene that by this appearance becomes less clear-cut. International agencies become an actor in their own right. They become interesting as the representative of geographical augmentation, pursuers of geographical concerns and objects of geopolitical deliberation and analysis by themselves. Consequently the whole set of actors and scene of geopolitical lay changes dramatically According to some noted scholars geopolitics is defined as combination of geography and history that affects the contemporary working of the system (Mukherjee,1948: 46-48).

According to John Agnew , Geography and foreign policy is considered to be a vital element in contemporary world politics as following O'Tuathail and Agnew further writes that “The practice of foreign policy is inherently geopolitical because it involves the construction of meaning and values of spaces and places”(Agnew, 1998: 124-125). Instead of focusing on how, for example, the external environment influences foreign policy, critical geopolitics seeks to evaluate how geography constructs ideas and representation which furthers adds to the presumed reality of places. Thus, geography, instead of being treated as a mere stage or backdrop on which events occur, is seen as a crucial element in the construction of worlds (Atkinson, 1996: 267). Thus contemporary notion on geopolitics is reflection of configuration of geopolitics and foreign policy which make it important to study the changing world order and system in a larger perspective (Agnew, 1998: 128).

Foreign policy if viewed as a boundary-producing practice draws attention to how the boundaries that divide relations between the domestic and the foreign are constituted (Campbell, 1990: 164). In the process spaces are clearly demarcated. International system and its working makes it important to note that foreign policy has geographical and geopolitical implication which suggests that it is necessary to look at geographical dimension as a way to study foreign policy which helps to predict relations, growth, trajectory and development for future. The theories of critical geopolitics throw light on two perspectives. **Firstly**, it places importance to space as a protagonist in international relations that shapes the world politics. Critical geopolitics makes it a point of geography not be viewed merely as a space phenomenon. Rather draws attention on to how

construction or delimitation of spaces can change international system. **Secondly**, critical geopolitics analyses how spaces and people affect foreign policy of a country according to the need of its demographic and geographical affinity (Ratzel, 1924: 55-58).

The concept of geopolitics went under tremendous speculation of its affiliation with the branch of sociology or geography altogether. But, it stands out to be a distinct political discourse in itself with numerous authors writing on its trajectory. There had been wide theories from its genesis to current popularity .there are classical, contemporary and critical geopolitics writing on the discourse and its importance. The definition of geopolitics being linked to geographical factors such as climate, topography, demography, physical environment and its effect social organization, political entities and nation as a whole makes it a subject of sociology but according to classical writer Friedrich Ratzel, the concept is more associated with political geography and at the core of it lies the state which responds according to its environment thus highlighting his organic state theory (Ratzel, 1924: 12).

“Season affects man directly through agriculture, food, recreation etc. and indirectly through physiological processes. Even our inherited are now believed to be affected by the season of our fact that variations in vigour, longevity, and achievement closely tied up with the season of reproduction seems that man inherits a definite reproductive response to as do birds and other animals. Even intelligence of the same person has been found according to the seasons” (Huntington p. 349). This view relates to the context that geography also determines the political circumstances, changing orders, and mostly affects foreign policy that stands important to be studied. Geopolitics and foreign policy are thus interrelated that is they are mutually governed. The subject matter of geopolitics incorporates demography as a whole impacting the consumption of natural resources that leads to competition amongst states for occupation of territory and power (Keohanne, 2011: 12).

The term ‘Geopolitics’ and ‘Foreign policy’ is correlated to each other as geopolitics is the method of studying foreign policy which helps in explaining International politics and relations. Dodd’s describes geopolitics in details and how it is related with the political,

social and international world order. He extensively describes geopolitics as a way of looking at contemporary global politics that links geography, politics, culture and diplomacy. Geographical privileges help to strengthen weak relations with neighboring countries (Klauss, 2007: 34).

2. Geopolitics of Kazakhstan

Geographical location and resource assets makes Kazakhstan an important player in world politics as Kazakhstan, a former soviet republic, with Russia to its northwest, China extending to its east, in the south lays borders of Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, to its west it is surrounded by the Caspian coast which is in itself the main eye catching feature of this land-locked state. Kazakhstan is known for its high level of geographically contrasting features with high altitude mountains: the Altai to its eastern part bordering Russia-China and similar deep depressions such as Caspian to its west (Cohen, 2008: 13). This makes republic of Kazakhstan demographically an astonishing location with its northern part extending into the European continent and the southern part dripping towards the Asian continent. The geodynamic position of this region provides us with the basic insight that due to both its northern and southern tips being dominated by the European and Asian people respectively, Kazakhstan's culture, people and lifestyle appears to be a heterogeneous mix of 'Eurasian' elements (Aitken, 2009: 39).

Historically and geographically, the given location of a state can affect its development both positively and negatively. In this regard, Kazakhstan's location is interesting to study. **First of all**, geographically, Kazakhstan is positioned from the ocean further than any other country, at some 13,000 kilometers. This puts the state in a "continental trap," stifling economic growth. As a rule most land-locked countries are developmentally behind countries which have access to open water. It is no coincidence that, with a few exceptions, landlocked states are all developing countries, at 29 out of 35. Only those land-locked states which possess natural resources for export fare better, and in the Central Asian region these are Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan (Nurgaliyeva, 2015: 4).

Secondly, Kazakhstan has a major disproportion between the size of its territory (9th largest in the world) and its economic development. Kazakhstan's vast expanse is mostly semi-arid, dry, steppe, which is unfavorable for agricultural cultivation and habitation, about 90,000 hectares of Kazakhstan's land are unusable due to nuclear testing during the Soviet period" (Nurgaliyeva, 2015: 6).

Third, the size of Kazakhstan's population is not only sparse for such a territory, but is also disproportionately settled, resulting in a kind of "territorial pressure." Most of the population is concentrated along the perimeter of the country, most especially in the southern and north-eastern portions which possess the most favorable climate. In the western portion of the country, which is characterized by harsh climatic conditions the average population density is only 2.3 people per square kilometer, while in the fertile south the average population density is 19.3 people per square kilometer (Nurgaliyeva, 2015: 6-8).

The Kazakh government views Kazakhstan's geopolitical position as both an organizing principle for its foreign policy and a potent domestic political symbol of the independent Kazakhstan that it sought to build. President Nazarbayev has often explicitly defined his country as a Eurasian nation straddling East and West with the implication that it is uniquely positioned to be a bridge between Europe and Asia. This has been at the root of the regime's construction of a multi-vector foreign policy that, in Nazarbayev's words, seeks mutually advantageous and good neighborly relations of confidence on the whole of the Eurasian continent (Lillis, 2014: 10). It is concerned with ensuring Kazakhstan's independence and sovereignty by offsetting traditional Russian hegemony through the diversification of political and economic ties with other major power centers China, the United States and the European Union (Lillis, 2014: 11).

Kazakh geopolitics is predetermined to be continental, Heartland oriented, because Kazakhstan is located in the closest neighbourhood of Russia and is a steppe land with the conservative identity totally different to the one of sea powers. Therefore its geopolitical gravitation towards strategic alliance with Moscow is very strong and even

more strengthened by its president Nursultan Nazarbayev as a consistent partisan of the Russian geopolitical theory called 'Eurasianism' (Igor, 2011: 3-4).

3. WHY KAZAKHSTAN IS IMPORTANT?

Kazakhstan is a country with an enriched historical and cultural past. Its geographical and geopolitical situation has been an important factor in the development of Kazakhstan. Due to geostrategic location, Kazakhstan has enjoyed being at the crossroad of ancient world civilizations. Kazakhstan has been home to many nations with distinctive cultural histories which have, in turn, been absorbed into modern Kazakhstan. Presence of enormous energy resources (especially oil and gas) Kazakhstan plays an important role in socio-economic, geopolitical and global politics of Central Asia (Cummings, 2005: 5).

Kazakhstan is a landlocked country in the world and is about the size of Western Europe. To the north and west is the Russian Federation; to the south is Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan; and to the east is China. Along part of the western border is the Caspian Sea. Some people abroad associate Kazakhstan with wide, endless steppes or grasslands, much like the North American prairie (Cummings, 2005: 13).

Apart from geographical features economically, Kazakhstan stands above in all ways from its underdeveloped neighbours in Central Asia. The country's GDP exceeds that of Kyrgyzstan Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, combined. It also remains the world's ninth largest country: double the size of rest of the Central Asian region. Although landlocked but bordering the Caspian Sea adds to its natural resources with oil, gas, and hydrocarbons found in abundance (Brian, 2008: 2).

Kazakhstan possesses abundant natural resources. Its major exports include agricultural products, manufactured goods raw materials, and chemical products. In noted work 'Kazakhstan and its people' by Sapargul Mirseitova highlights enormities in Kazakhstan, she says, Kazakhstan has regions with mountains and lakes, deserts and forests. The mountains are mostly in the east and southeast. The steppes are in the north and central part of the country, and fade to the deserts in the south. The winters in the north are very cold and summers are mild. In the southern part, however, the winter is very mild, with

little or no snow, and summers are extremely hot. The country is divided into fourteen regions, called oblasts. Each oblast is named after its regional capital. The national bird is the golden eagle, which is represented on the Kazakh flag. The country is rich in oil but also has other natural resources, including a wide variety of plants and animals. In the desert areas, herds of camels roam. Kazakhstan is thus a treat for the eyes for tourist coming from different parts of the world (Pinar, 2007: 2-3).

Kazakhstan has abundant fossil fuel reserves and vast deposits of minerals and metals including uranium, zinc, and copper. The country's economy heavily relies on its oil and mining industries. Almost 89% of Kazakhstan's exports are attributed to mineral commodities. Kazakhstan is a country with a diverse range of natural resources (Pinar, 2007: 168). A leading producer of uranium accounting for 33% of world output, The third largest producer of chromium with 16% of world output, fourth largest producer of titanium, cadmium, and magnesium metal amounting for 11%, 8%, and 3% of total world output, respectively. Kazakhstan is also the fifth largest producer of rhenium, contributing 5% of world output and the tenth largest producer of copper (Pinar, 2007: 179-181).

All the uranium produced in Kazakhstan is being exported due to the lack of nuclear power plants in the country, and this export generates huge revenue for the country. The flow of investments into uranium exploration activities in the country has increased considerably over the last six years. This accounts for the steady increase of the country's uranium production from 3,300 in 2003 to 17,803 tonnes in 2010. In 2009, foreign investment amounted to about 66% of the total uranium mining investment (Sebastian, 2008: 5-6).

Kazakhstan and its energy resources play a key and influential role in shaping its relations with other countries. Kulnazarov says, "Energy, primarily Kazakhstani oil and Turkmenistan gas, is one of the most important factors determining the new geopolitical role of the region". Even today, with construction of oil and gas pipelines in the western and eastern areas, the economic, energy and transport role of Central Asia demonstrates a growth. The USA, European countries, China, Russia, oil and gas companies being the

core investors play a major role in the energy sector of Central Asia. In this context, the world powers more and more clearly define the contours of geopolitical and geo-economic interests in the region and strongly are seeking to spread and firmly fix their influence in Central Asia (Kulnazarov, 2011: 16).

Mining sector in Kazakhstan is privatised since 1998. Kazakhstan joined the Belarus-Kazakhstan- Russian Custom Union to develop its foreign ties and improve its economy. According to government official records huge foreign investments has flowed in the region with foreign companies allowed to share the profit and ownership rights for better trade relation. World actors are keeping strong eye in this region due to its enormous potential. Future development projects that are given importance are in exploring rare metals, gold, and uranium and copper this would further attract the world economy in this region (Sebastian, 2008: 30).

Privatization took place in around 1990's in Kazakhstan that led to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan forming an economic union in 1993 that enabled free movement of labour and capital among the three countries and established coordinated economic policies (Cohen, 2008:16). Natural abundance of energy resources makes it easy for Kazakhstan to easily become a hub of industrial activities attracting foreign companies (Sebastian, 2008: 32). It is due to this geostrategic location and enriched with minerals that Kazakhstan is a place of nuclear and energy power projects such as the latest Uranium bank opened recently in Kazakhstan. It's important geographical location helps industries in Kazakhstan to be well attended by major powers to extract resources from this region.

Resources in Kazakhstan are bound by the enormous Caspian Sea, the largest inland body of water in the world, forms Kazakhstan's border for 1,450 miles of its coastline. Other large bodies of water, all in the eastern half of the country, include Lakes Balkhash, Zaysan, Tengiz, and Seletytengiz. Kazakhstan also wraps around the entire northern half of the shrinking Aral Sea, which underwent terrible decline during the second half of the 20th century: as freshwater inflow was diverted for agriculture, the salinity of the sea increased sharply, and the receding shores became the source of salty dust and polluted

deposits that ruined the surrounding lands for animal, plant, or human use (Hindley,2008: 21).

Kazakhstan is endowed with high soil fertility that characterizes the land from far north to slightly turning to alkaline soil in the southern part of Kazakhstan. This adds to soil diversity and improved fertility thus making a vast part of Kazakhstan land is arable for cultivation. Kazakhstan possesses rich flora and fauna that highlights its vegetation. Considerably and flora and fauna of Kazakhstan is characteristics of its abundant natural resources that add to its positivity (Sebastian, 2008:18-19).

The vegetation on plains and deserts in Kazakhstan is inclusive wormwood and tamarisk, with feather grass on drier plains, Kazakhstan has very little wooded area, amounting to only about 3 per cent of the territory. Many animals, including antelope and elk, inhabit the plains. The wolf, bear, and snow leopard, as well as the commercially important ermine and sable, are found in the hills, fishermen take sturgeon, herring, and roach from the Caspian Sea (Sebastian, 2008: 20). Kazakhstan enormous natural resources are also categorised as world heritage sites. In 2008 Kazakhstan’s “Naurzum” and “Korgalzhyn” state nature reserves were named as UNESCO World Heritage site (Cohen, 2009: 4).

Agriculture gives prominence to Farming which comprises of a significant portion of labour force. Kazakhs raise sheep, goats, cattle, and swine. The country produces potatoes, vegetables, melons and other fruits, sugar beets cereal crops, rice, as well as fodder and industrial crops as well. Nuclear contamination of soils near Semey—the result of Soviet weapons testing has hindered agricultural development in the northeast (Luca, 2014: 12).

Manufacturing industries employing primarily Russian and Ukrainian workers produce cast iron, rolled steel, cement, chemical fertilizer, and consumer goods. Plants in Temirtau and Qaraghandy produce steel. The country, with its nonferrous metallurgy concentrated in the east, is a major lead and copper producer. Kazakhstan’s fuel production has increased with the extraction of coal from the Qaraghandy and Ekibastuz basins (Richard, 2005:1).

Kazakhstan shows transitions from majority Kazakhs to them becoming minority in their own state. Kazakhs are Muslim dominated population who are majorly Turkic speaking the population divide in Kazakhstan is inhabited by 8 million ethnic Kazakhs living in its territory and also in some other parts of central Asia mainly Uzbekistan, and Russia. Currently the region is dominated by Russians and Uzbeks proportionally which was largely due to the immigration of about thousands of slaves, Germans , Jews and others in filtering the region due to weak borders. The crowding took the best pastures land to be occupied by influx of slaves due to the virgin and idle land projects initiated by the soviet. This eventually led to Kazakhstanis being outnumbered by the Russians and Slavic population (Sebastian, 2008: 18).

Kazakhstan does not possess a huge standing army rather, it has a small trilateral of army, navy and air force in its territory. In 1995, Kazakhstan merged its army partially with the Russian military thus establishing a joint command force for training personnel in both borders. Kazakhstan successfully ratified the non-proliferation treaty in 1993, due to which it returned Russia's vast arsenal that was stationed in Kazakhstan territory to Russian government. Presently Kazakhstan believes in peaceful cooperation of relations. This policy is evident in its military capabilities where it tried to detach itself from Russian allied favours but also the fact can't be overseen that Russia is the place where Kazakhstan derived its military homage (Sebastian, 2008: 20).

International system is largely being governed by geopolitics therefore, making it important to justify the concept both in theory and in practice. Kazakhstan stands to be an appropriate example for this purpose. Kazakhstan geographically is the largest landlocked country bordered by seas and major powers such as China and Russia to its east and west. The above mentioned important geographical location and abundance of resources attracts major powers towards this region both cooperating and contesting for their strong foothold in the region. Kazakhstan accommodates the highest natural resources and minerals of entire central Asia that further highlights its geostrategic location exhibits how Kazakhstan's foreign policy is shaped by its geographically landlocked position (Idan and Shaffer ,2011: 2-3).

4. Geopolitics and Foreign Policy of Kazakhstan

The above mentioned geographical asset speaks itself for the role of Kazakhstan as it plays a potential actor in the ‘new great game’ of global politics. Kazakhstan is one amongst the Central Asian states where global and emerging powers are battling for strong influence. This makes it an important ground for the triad (Russia, China and the USA) and others in continuous struggle of getting a strong hold in the region. Historically, Kazakhstan shared a long period of dependence on Russia, its closest neighbours. During soviet regime, the populous was majorly dependent on the nomadic way of living and they felt victim to intruding neighbours as a result to which Kazakhstan experienced the domination of the Soviet Union for a long time. Kazakhstan at this time was occupied and dominated with the Russian presence and gradually a large part of Kazakh economy went under the control of Soviet Union. The crisis experienced in the USSR economy, the social and political unrest experienced during the late 1970s early 1980s affected Kazakhstan economy severely (Clarke, 2014: 22).

Throwing light on the important and potent geostrategic location of Kazakhstan, Thomas Ambrosia and William A. Lange marks how “Kazakhstan sits at the crossroads of Eurasia and how its foreign policy is highly defined by geopolitics”. He focuses on major factors that has resulted Kazakhstan foreign policy to diversify its domain. It also focuses on four issues: the degree of emphasis President Nazarbayev has placed on specific countries and regions, Kazakhstan’s geopolitical situation and position, the multi-vector foreign policy and Kazakhstan’s role in the international system, and the need for Kazakhstan to be integrated into the global economy which would help to further correlate geopolitics and future of Kazakhstan’s foreign policy in terms of other actors (Lange, 2014 : 1).

Kazakhstan is an important location for big countries to invest their power to successfully extract the potential of such resourceful country this eventually could be both beneficial and harmful for Kazakhstan in several ways (Hovi and Rasch, 1996: 14). By giving geographical access to big powers Kazakhstan can reap the benefit of strategic, economic and other investments made by this huge potent countries and strengthen its own economy and its weak areas but on the same hand contentions grow out of this as this

access invites competition between powers for setting a stronger hold in Kazakhstan due to abundance of resources and geography.

According to a monthly issue of *Foreign Affairs Review* (2013) Kazakhstan due to its location bordered by Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Russia makes it an important destination for Central Asian neighbors as well as super powers such as Russia, China and USA. Russia seeking this enormity is trying to tighten its loosen grip in Kazakhstan. China economic role in Kazakhstan is of dual orientation on one hand it is trying to successfully extract Kazakhstan 's enormous natural resources and on the other hand is trying to override Russian a traditional trade partner for Kazakhstan which is evident in the rising figure of trade between both the countries. Many Kazakhstanis remain nostalgic as traditional base of its political population has been the Soviet background thus limiting the scope of China to fully outnumber Russia but surely it has taken over the economic figures successfully (FPR, 2003:20).

Kazakhstan's geographically close proximity to China, which is now the world's largest exporter, gives Kazakhstan a number of economic prospects. Most specifically, it benefits from the transit of freight between the two major global trading poles: China and Europe. Although maritime shipping remains the most popular and cheapest means of transporting goods to Europe, land-based routes are twice as fast. This is especially crucial for the delivery of high value-added products. One of the first companies to use inland transportation by rail from Chongqing to Hamburg via Kazakhstan was the multinational IT Company, Hewlett-Packard. Now, rising trade volume with China will allow Kazakhstan to develop its transport, associated logistics and industrial infrastructure. The coincidence of the two countries' economic interests in strengthening transport ties is reflected in concrete policy decisions (Sultangaliyeva, 2016:18).

The US role in Kazakhstan, and in Central Asia as a whole, appears more prominent in terms of its geopolitical interests. US policy seeks to prevent the transformation of the region into a physical threat to the security of the United States and into a zone under the exclusive influence of other countries, in particular Russia and China. Restraining the

latter is a real concern of the US, despite the fact that the US has distanced itself from a more active role in Central Asia after Afghanistan post 2014 (Kerry, 2015: 10).

Thus, political proximity from US and now the changing foreign policy is evident of including further actors in its sphere of influence. Teaming with the USA in nuclear cooperation is what has made Kazakhstan an important player in the Central Asian region with Kazakhstan securing its independence, rather than being dependent on Russian assistance completely, it chose to take hold of major economy in its own hand. Further coming of Nursultan Nazarbayev it chose to unfold its foreign ambit and persuaded what is called as the Multi Vector foreign policy in 2014 (Kerry, 2015: 11).

Russia has significantly changed its foreign policy to suit the needs of Central Asian region, such as indulging in military talks and actions. It does not want to lose a traditional ally and most importantly wants to keep a check on growing Chinese influence in the region. However, Kazakhstan is continuing its current multi-vector policy by deepening its non-Russian relationships through bolstering defense ties and diversifying materiel procurement such as Turkey, China, USA, and other Central Asian states. Russia envisions the positivity of getting Kazakhstan in its zone of influence due to Kazakhstan leanings towards China. This shift and turn in foreign policy make it important for assessing geographical location and its key role in establishing and developing Kazakhstan's foreign policy to suit its ambition.

While Kazakhstan tries to balance its foreign policy with both traditional and new actors emerging for greater cooperation in its region, Kazakhstan could formulate a more adjustable policy that accommodates the need of large number of powers for Kazakhstan to remain growing at its pace through structural reforms and improving the rule of law while adjusting its multi vector foreign policy. Presently Kazakhstan is trying to stay connected with Russia and also improving its foreign ties as this would facilitate its vision of achieving economic, political stability by 2050 as versioned by Nursultan Nazarbayev. The impetus to this 'strategy 2050' is seeing bright days ahead with Kazakhstan opening and broadening its foreign policy. The strategy may require adherence to its multi vector foreign policy, regional integration and conflict resolution which is discussed in third chapter reflecting evolution of Kazakhstan foreign policy and how geopolitics lays a major role in shaping it (MFA, 2015: 2).

CHAPTER 3
KAZAKHSTAN FOREIGN POLICY,
1991 -1999

Kazakhstan's foreign policy was formulated shortly after Kazakhstan gained its independence on December 16, 1991. The first President of the independent Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, indicated that diplomacy's main objective was to create and maintain favorable conditions for steady development of the Kazakhstan based on political and economic reforms. The nature of these reforms determines the nation's foreign policy priorities, impartiality, and a desire to be fully involved in both international and regional events (Cohen, 2008: 12).

Soon after gaining independence in 1991, the largely landlocked country with huge demographic divide of fourteen provinces called oblasts with an area as large as 2,724,900 sq. km, capital located is Astana 'formerly known as Aqmola' was loaded with a "twin challenge" of both shaping its foreign policy and enhancing its diplomatic ties from start to end. Kazakhstan is highly distinct from its counter Central Asian countries which were busy dealing with their domestic affairs post 1991 disintegration, whereas Kazakhstan nation building was different in terms of its engagement and execution, focusing not just on economic rejuvenation but at the same time realizing the potential of a strong well knitted foreign policy. With Nursultan Nazarbayev's taking the office of president in 1991 of newly independent Kazakhstan, the focus was not restricted to domestic affairs only but, was rather more active and engaging in terms of its national policies (Hindley, 2010: 12).

Kazakhstan's foreign policy is based on dual concept of 'balance' and 'security', where Kazakhstan needed to stabilize its existing relation keeping security as a key concept in its foreign policy. Kazakhstan's foreign policy post 1991 was burdened with both maintaining a balance between its 'Central Asian neighbors' and outside world and on the same hand, the nation wanted to ensure global security and responsibility towards the outside world. Beginning with such strong and balanced approach in shaping its foreign policy is what has made Kazakhstan exercise its sovereignty, security and economic development in line with other nations of global order (Klauss, 2007: 34).

The position of the country or 'geopolitics' has already made Kazakhstan an international player with different world actors contesting to maintain a strong hold on the region but this would not have been possible without a strong, robust, and diversified foreign policy.

1. Kazakhstan's Political Relations

A lot of credit is to go for political leadership of President Nursultan Nazarbayev who has actually realized the geopolitical significance of the nation, thus shaping the national policies that suits the independent nation and other countries as well. The strategic course arranged by the President Nursultan Nazarbayev on peaceful co-existence and cooperation with neighbor countries, with other states of the world in new conditions of the multipolar world was both result, and instrument of establishment and expansion of international relations of Kazakhstan, statement of the sovereignty and independence of our state (Sheryazdanova, 2007: 42).

At political level, it is important for the state bodies to work closely with the ministry of external affairs to further develop a concrete proposal regarding the international relation of the country's working. In shaping Kazakhstan's foreign policy and to achieve its high end goals, development of diplomatic service, training of diplomatic personnel, expanding country's international presence, representation in international organizations was strongly prioritized. Foreign policy of Kazakhstan post 1991 aims at making the region politically stable, economically viable and prominent in Central Asian region. Kazakhstan acknowledges its responsible role towards the region for maintaining a rational and secure order taking actions against the challenges arriving from neighboring countries so as to maintain a secure regional framework (Hindley, 2011: 16).

Political infrastructure stimulates the working of the Foreign policy in accordance with the countries involved in international system. Under the Ministry of Foreign affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, there are interdepartmental committees and groups that specifically work in forwarding the relation of countries with Kazakhstan, developing foreign policy, foreign economic policies. Actions on execution of national policy and implementing the decision of intergovernmental meetings are developed that further are considered while formulating the foreign policy. At the state level, there is a different

mechanism of carrying out implementation of the international treaties and formulating strategies of foreign policies (Pomfret, 2005: 66).

There are so many policies which President Nursultan Nazarbayev always ensured for development of present day Kazakhstan. The language policy and the ‘strategy 2030’ are some of the prominent policies which direct the development of Kazakhstan. In this context very recent during his annual state of the nation address in Astana on December 15, 2012, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev introduced the new Kazakhstan ‘2050 Strategy’ a comprehensive state plan aimed to bring Kazakhstan into the world’s 30 most developed countries by the middle of the twenty-first century. This strategy is based on one goal, one interest and one future will be the key for Kazakhstan in terms of economic, social and political reform to place Kazakhstan among the top 30 developed countries in the globe. Before these strategies there are so many policies on economic front which not only announced by the president of the republic of Kazakhstan but also successfully completed (Vinokrov, 2010: 36).

2. Kazakhstan and its Economic relations

Kazakhstan was more heavily industrialized by the Soviets than the other Central Asian nations. It was a center of space exploration and the testing of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, each employed lots of people and had huge facilities. During the Soviet-era, Kazakhstan was a cog in the centrally-planned Soviet economy (Hanks, 2009, 52). Its economic sectors such as cotton production were very specialized. Kazakhstan was dependent on the rest of the Soviet Union for markets, goods and supplies. Industry and mining didn't really get cranked up until after World War II. Much of the development of the oil industry has taken place since the breakup of the Soviet Union (Hanks, 2009: 56).

The Soviet Union developed specific sectors of industry such as chemicals, metals, and military equipment. The industrial infrastructure was geared to feeding materials into the Soviet economy. The emphasis of the national economy was on attaining and processing raw materials, while the daily needs of ordinary people were ignored. Shortages of consumer goods and food products were a problem.

Independence in Kazakhstan was supposed to unleash economic reforms, privatization and prosperity. Since the country was rich in resources and had a relatively small population everyone was supposed to prosper. That is not what happened. Instead economic reforms were slow in taking place or didn't take place at all and primarily the well-connected have got rich while the general population, initially anyway, got poorer. A number of measures were taken to create a market economy. Joint-stock companies, cooperative works and the privatization of state businesses were all authorized. Land was given to farmers, with the right to unlimited use and inheritance. Prices were freed on a number of farm and industrial products, except for those deemed necessities (Petrenko, 2016:14).

Average growth between 1990 and 1998 was 1.9%. In 1994 the estimated growth rate - 25.4%. In the early 1990s, growth was hindered by Soviet-era specialization and centralization, and slow privatization. Kazakhstan's economy was closely linked to Russia's in the centrally planned system of the Soviet Union; the breakup of that union in 1991 caused a severe economic downturn in the years that followed. In the 1990s, the contribution of industry to the gross domestic product (GDP) fell from 31 % to 21 %, and GDP fell by 36 % between 1990 and 1995 (Sarsenbayev, 2011: 136). By 2002 new oil extraction operations restored the GDP share of industry to about 30%, and overall economic indicators rose substantially. The government engaged in widespread privatization, although many profitable enterprises went to members of the government-connected elite (Economic Report, MFA December, 2006: 12).

Economic reforms slowly bore fruit in Kazakhstan. In the mid-1990s the economy shrunk less considerably than in other Soviet and Central Asian countries. In 1997 the GDP was 45 % of the 1990 level, compared to 85 % in Uzbekistan and 62 % in Russia. Kazakhstan managed to survive the Asian financial crisis in 1997-1998, the Russian financial crisis of 1998 and managed to continue attracting investors even when the price of oil dropped to 14 dollars a barrel. It slowed from 17.8 % in 1999 to 9.8 % in 2000 to 6.9 % in 2001. By 2003, Kazakhstan had built up reserves of 3 billion dollar, about 10% of GNP (Sarsenbayev, 2011: 137).

The reforms were largely in place when the price of oil began to rise. Kazakhstan enjoyed the windfall that high oil prices brought and didn't waste too much money from this windfall. One problem that accompanied the high oil prices was inflation. The National Bank tried to keep inflation within a 5 % to 7 % range by regulating deposits rates, refinancing loans, intervening on the foreign exchange market and following advice from the IMF (World Bank report, 2012).

Country's investment potential is based on minerals and raw materials. Because their exploitation creates more than a half of the gross product, the quality and extent of deposits utilization and the reproduction of raw material reserves play decisive role in the present and future of Kazakhstan. For example, it is supposed that exploitation of the oil and gas field Kashagan which is one of largest fields in the world will make Kazakhstan one of the major producers of hydrocarbons not only on the regional, but also on the international level (Trough, 2006: 54).

According to certain estimates, in the next 10 years the oil and gas sector of the country, particularly the Kazakh sector of the Caspian Sea, could attract between to 150-200 bln dollar. At the same time, the Kazakhstan Government's top priority is to encourage foreign direct investments into industry, agriculture, innovation, processing sectors in order to decrease the dependence of the Economy of Kazakhstan on energy and extracting sectors and to ensure continued growth of Kazakhstan's economy. Aiming at attracting foreign direct investments Kazakhstan carries out the policy of ensuring stable macroeconomic environment and realizes other measures which contribute to the improvement of investment climate in the country. The Government and the National Bank pursued the coordinated policy directed to ensuring sustainable economic growth with low inflation rate and budget deficit not higher than it is envisaged (Trough, 2006: 61-62).

In spite of its remoteness from any ocean, being the bridge between Europe and Asia and having a huge territory laden with the high potential for transport (transit) between other states, Kazakhstan can form a world land bridge via its territory. Even in ancient times, the people who inhabited the territory of modern Kazakhstan and Central Asia

completely took advantage of the neighborhood, establishing a route of the Great Silk Road. The total length of the Silk Road is 6,500km, from southeast China to the Mediterranean coast of Turkey. A large quantity of goods and the exchange of advanced culture passed through these lands. Realizing these advantages, Kazakhstan has managed to make the first steps in the restoration of the route (Syroezhkin, 2013:6).

Currently, Kazakhstan is connected with China by all types of modern transport (railway, highway, aviation) Kazakhstan delivers cargo from European and Asian countries to many provinces of China, or to the countries of Southeast Asia. Sea transportation has been established through Iran, and mixed connections (railway and road) have been opened with Turkey. In May 1996, a short railway which extends to Iran and the borders of Turkmenistan was established. Thus, the Great Silk Road has been restored in a railway variant from the Chinese Far East to Europe. Kazakhstan is working together with China to develop the station "Druzhba" (Syroezhkin, 2013: 11-12).

3. Society and culture in Kazakhstan

The Soviet Union's interaction with Kazakhstan started just after the 1917 October Revolution, with Lenin granting the peoples of Central Asia the right to self-determination. Kazakhs are historically a nomadic people, and thus many of their cultural symbols reflect nomadic life. The horse is probably the most central part of Kazakh culture. Kazakhs love horses, riding them for transportation in the villages, using them for farming, racing them for fun, and eating them for celebrations. Many Kazakhs own horses and keep pictures of them in their houses or offices. Also a product of their formally nomadic lives is the 'yurt', Central Asian dwelling resembling a stepee, which was transportable and utilitarian on the harsh Central Asian steppe. These small white homes are still found in some parts of Kazakhstan, but for the most part they are used in celebrations and for murals and tourist crafts (Alcott, 1992 :168).

Also central to Kazakh symbolism are Muslim symbols. Kazakhs are Muslim by history, and even after seventy years of Soviet atheism, they incorporate Islamic symbols in their everyday life. The traditionally Muslim star and crescent can be widely seen, as can small Muslim caps and some traditionally Muslim robes and headscarves in the villages.

Kazakhs are also very proud of their mountains, rare animals such as snow leopards, eagles, and falcons, and their national instrument, the 'dombra' a two-stringed instrument with a thin neck and potbelly base, resembling a guitar (Alcott, 1992: 174).

The symbols of Soviet Kazakhstan still exist and are important to some people. At its peak there was hardly a town that did not have a statue of Lenin; a street named after the revolution; or a large hammer, sickle, and Soviet red star on many of its houses and public buildings. Much like the attempt to assert the Kazakh language, the increased use of Kazakh symbols on money, in schools, on television, and in national holidays has been tempered by those who do not wish to part with the Soviet symbols of the past (Alcott, 1992: 181).

In 1924 Kazakhstan was given union republic status, and in 1936 full Soviet socialist republic status - a status that did not change until Kazakhstan was the last Soviet republic to break from Moscow and declare independence, on 16 December 1991. The years between 1924 and 1991 were truly transformative for the people and land of Kazakhstan. Factories were built, schools reorganized, borders closed, and life changed in almost every facet. Soviet years were a time of immigration into Kazakhstan. Stalin's collectivization campaign after World War II brought people from the Caucasus, southern Russia, and the Baltic to Kazakhstan. Khrushchev's "Virgin Land" campaign in 1954 made much of Kazakhstan into farmland, run by huge collective farms, largely made up of the Russian and Ukrainian settlers brought in to run them (Alcott, 1992: 184).

4. Defense relations of Kazakhstan

The military of the Soviet Union was very strong and well-trained. The armies of the post-Soviet republics are much weaker and less supported by the government. The available Kazakhstani military manpower of males between ages fifteen and forty-nine was estimated at 4.5 million in 1999, with about 3.5 million of those available being fit for service. All males over age eighteen must serve in the military for two years. Exemptions are made for those in school and the disabled. The 1998 fiscal year expenditures on the military were dollar 232.4 million (U.S.) 1 % of the GDP of Kazakhstan (Sean, 2012: 8).

Kazakhstan is in a semi precarious location. It has a friendly, although weakened, neighbor to the north in Russia. Recent complaints by Russians in Kazakhstan have begun to resonate in Moscow, putting some strain on relations that are for the most part friendly.

Kazakhstan has a historical fear of China and thus watches its border with that country closely, but the most unstable areas for Kazakhstan involve its neighbors to the south. Movements in Afghanistan have spread to the failed state of Tajikistan, forming a center of Islamic fundamentalism Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have already dealt with attacks from rebel groups in Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan has significantly increased its military presence on its borders with Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The region does not seem to be one that will readily go to war, while memories of the war in Afghanistan in the late 1970s are fresh in most people's minds (Sean, 2012: 10).

5. Foreign policy of Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan foreign policy is often termed as a gradually developing policy which has a steady graph with a balanced foreign policy approach that can be well exemplified in the way Kazakhstan has strengthened its strategic partnership with major powers of the world order such as, Russia, China, USA and others (Geoffrey, 1998: 2-3).

Marking a new era of independence amongst all its Central Asian states, Kazakhstan post its independence gained lot of attention. Immediately after the breakup of soviet union Kazakhstan stood amidst a 'twin challenge', task of nation building and state formation to ensure the 'viability' and 'legitimacy' of a new regime and political border that contradicted historical, natural and ethical boundaries (Narottam, 2006: 34). Much of the credits in designing compact foreign policy post USSR disintegration have been done under supervision of a strong political leadership of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, taking the forefront with changes according to the need of the newly independent nation - Kazakhstan. Domestic policies were made to suit the need of people with diverse task of fitting in to the frame of national policies. As it has been argued in by Sunil Kumar Narottam he says "authoritarian attitude, ethnic bias and majoritarianism have remained

common characteristic of policies and programs initiated, and laws enacted to fulfill the nation state project” (Narottam, 2010: 19).

In the process of the making of foreign policy of Kazakhstan , political leadership of President Nursultan Nazarbayev plays a key and important role of formulating and determining a foreign policy that is representative of the nation largely in the international system. Legislative activity of the country is carried out by the highest representative body, the parliament which has the supreme constitutional; authority of making the policy ,designing it according to the international treaties and obligations. The government is solely responsible for making the policies in accordance with the relation among foreign states, international organization, regional organizations, carrying out the financial activities and implementing foreign policy of the nation (MFA, 2017).

Kazakhstan is known for its distinct foreign policy, adhering to a non-zero sum foreign policy which stands independent in choosing its partners irrespective of its membership in small or big alliances. This is evident in the foreign policy of Kazakhstan in which ties have deepened with, European countries such as France and the United Kingdom and super powers such as Russia, China, and USA.

The beginning era of the 21st century was well suited for the execution of Kazakhstan’s dual foreign policy. In other words, the ‘twin foreign policy’ worked positively in the beginning few years with openness, regional and global security initiatives promoting the balanced approach. Post 1991, Kazakhstan sitting at the crossroads of Eurasian continent, the geopolitics of Kazakhstan was unique serving itself as a bridge between giant continents such as Europe and Asia. Kazakhstan has always maintained its position to continue with a balanced foreign policy approach and welcomed other nations to participate with it in the international system. Its openness with the rest of the world furthers its foreign policy distinct from other Central Asian states which is rather more cooperative at the regional level (Dave, 2011: 55-58).

Moreover, Kazakhstan is recognized as nation of 120 states or oblasts, Kazakhstan has diplomatic missions in more than 78 nations, and it is an active member of various international organizations and participant of more than 70 international organizations.

In the same decade of 1999, Kazakhstan widened its sphere of interaction with seeking membership of many international organizations. Foreign policy was made with formalization of the state borders, defining the legal limit of the Caspian Sea and establishment of a stabilized connect with the littoral states based on the principles of international law. The inclusion of Kazakhstan as an active participant in various international organizations was based on the principle, protecting the national interest, and making decisions that served the interest of the nation regionally among Central Asian states and in the international system. Foreign policy of Kazakhstan adhered to serve its contribution in the form of active participation which in turn was constructive, contributing to regional and global security (Hindley, 2010: 22).

Beginning a new independent era, called for many new challenges also for Kazakhstan which was evident in Kazakhstan's diminishing economy. The very fresh years were marked with decline in economy occurring in 1994, when GDP fell by 12.6% (Hindley, 2010: 2). Economic downfall and declining trade figures was the immediate cause and need for a serious cooperation with Russia to help the economic and social system of the nation. In the face of such economic crisis, confederation with Russia was seriously considered as a way out of the systemic crisis and maintaining social stability in the country (Vinokurov, 2010: 14).

Soviet controlled Kazakhstan in 1990's was earlier driven by the New Economic policy of the Russian system, which was later shaped transitionally under the supervision of President Nursultan Nazarbayev. Post 1991, economic and foreign policy of Kazakhstan was partly driven by President Nursultan Nazarbayev's attempt to maintain close economic and political ties with Russia (Pomfret, 2005: 859). Largely Kazakhstan was dependent on its predecessor authority by maintaining harmonious relation with the country but Nazarbayev's vision of foreign policy was keen on seeking western assistance. Thus, in 1994, a shift came in where the attention gradually shifted to the western countries for partnership. This possible shift marked the beginning of 'Multi-Vector' foreign policy of Kazakhstan that started taking shape (Cohen, 2008: 14-16).

Kazakhstan's new foreign policy concept accords priority to promotion of political stability, economic development, and security in the Central Asian region (Hanks, 2009: 59). This acceleration of importance to international relations is evident in the numerous heads of state visits during the past years; regional neighbors are inclusive in these visits where, heads of Central Asian republics such as Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan paid their visit to Kazakhstan, fostering closer cooperation amongst Central Asian region. Apart from central Asian neighbors Kazakhstan under the leadership of Nursultan Nazarbayev also paid attention to western assistance. He tried establishing economic, political relations with the United States and other global multilateral agencies such as the World Bank and the IMF (Elenea, 2016: 1).

During a speech of Nursultan Nazarbayev, it was evident of the growing strong ties of Kazakhstan shared with USA. He said- "It has always been important for us to establish political and economic relations, and to enlist the support of the USA at a difficult time (Almaty, 2014). Moreover, I was grateful because the US Actively supported us, so that the donor states should help Kazakhstan with advantageous credits for supporting our country and our reform" (MFA, 2014).

This diversified shift in president's attention to the western states was mark of an economic stability that the country had begun developing. Thus, Nazarbayev conceptualized a balanced 'Multi -Vector' foreign policy deriving its economic needs and safeguarding its security through international organizations that were majorly supported by western power such as the United States. By cultivating their support and establishing a strategic partnership with Russia, USA, Japan and other countries, the multi vector foreign policy had started taking its course.

Nursultan Nazarbayev's foreign policy was far sighted and futuristic in its perspective. In 1999, itself President Nursultan came up with his plan of 'Mission 2030', a proposal to make Kazakhstan stand amongst the 30 most developed countries of the world. "Mission 2030 visions prosperity, security and improvement in welfare of the citizen of Kazakhstan strategy". This was also due to the economic pressure that had been built which led to the vision 2030 program (MFA, 2016: 4). Thus this decade constantly

marked the need of evolving a diversified foreign policy. The key points of this strategy are:

- Privatization of state owned corporations
- Updating of foreign investment laws and increase in foreign participation
- Lifting of restrictions on trade and foreign exchange transactions
- Modernization of financial system
- Updating of laws on labor practices
- Corporate governance and transparency
- Upgrading of tax and custom administration (Hindley, 2008: 66).

International system was leaned towards macroeconomic policies that shaped the working of the global system thus political situations were less coordinated and less paid attention to. The Kazakh government also made coordinated efforts to link security and economic development” (Gleason, 2001: 171). Kazakhstan signed the Helsinki accord, the strategic arms reduction treaty and the Lisbon protocol in May 1992, ratified the nuclear non-proliferation treaty in December 1993, the democratic partnership charter in Washington in February 1994 and ratified the NATO ‘Partnership for Peace’ agreement in December 1994. In 1992, “Kazakhstan took the initiative of inclusion in to the international system by joining the World Bank, IMF and United Nations, the Asian Development bank and the European bank for reconstruction and development, Thus a carpet was set for the ‘Multi –Vector’ theory to walk on it (Brian, 2008: 64).

As mentioned before, the beginning years were marked with liberal ideologies that furthered privatization and inclusive globalized order with integration at the global level thus defeating the communist ideas and practices. Kazakhstan with the very beginning independent years faced globalization and integration at another level, which gave acceleration to its ‘Multi –Vector’ foreign policy.

Kazakhstan and its evolution from the union of soviet socialist republic, amongst its entire central Asian neighbor is an example to learn from. The trajectory is different from the rest in terms of economy; political and other aspect. It is the largest developed

economy in the central Asian neighbors and has the highest GDP amongst all the central Asian neighbors. In 1993, the Kazakh government adopted a tradable currency, liberalized policy, and started privatization of major sectors of the economy, including industry, telecommunications and energy. Kazakhstan abolished almost all its subsidies on consumer goods. In 1994, Kazakhstan phased out many industrial subsidies before the end of the year and began stabilizing the public and private sectors with a series of major reductions in force of public employees and privatization of state owned public service facilities (Gleason, 2001:172).

According to Gleason, economic structure was placed appropriately first to accommodate the need of newly independent nation. During the initial years of independence, Kazakhstan established a realistically stable and regulatory structure for commerce and civil rights and implemented a progressive civil code, establishing the framework for commercial transactions and property rights also Kazakhstan government proposed economic system that were suitable to incorporate a modern banking system, a securities exchange system, bankruptcy legislation and a system for public utilities management (Gleason, 2001: 172). It was in the near end that the government started experimenting with its share in large enterprises to foreign purchasers; Phillip Morris purchased 49% share in the Almaty tobacco factory for 313 US million Dollar, RJR Nabisco purchased 90% of the shymkent confectionary factory for 70 US million dollars, Unilever purchased 90% of the Almaty and Karaganda margarine plants for 60 US million dollar (Pomfret, 2005:264). In 1994 and 1995 the state property committee earmarked several large enterprises for sale, but the process of privatization by sale really took hold only after September 1995 (Pomfret, 2005: 264).

Kazakhstan also established a uniform framework for a new system of government fiscal management, with a modern system for managing public external debt, a new tax code and a new system of tax administration. Opening its boundaries to liberalization proved to be positive for Kazakhstan in various terms such as, this eventually led to huge foreign direct investments coming from the west alliance that led to further attraction of worthy investments. These were more or less result of the multi vector approach that led to extensive flow of western attention to this resourceful nation. Nazarbayev held strong

views to the reform programs, pledging to continue the promised advances towards an independent, open and free market economy that would help fasten the economic system (Gleason, 2001:172).

According to the foreign policy concept of Kazakhstan 2014-2020 the key highlights are prioritized as serving Kazakhstan's national interests, the main foreign policy efforts will be focused on achieving the following goals: It includes Measures that will ensure national security, defense capacity, sovereignty and territorial unity of the country; Strengthening peace through regional and global security; Sustainable international position and positive global image of Kazakhstan, Kazakhstan resolute for Establishment of fair and democratic world order under the guiding and coordinating role of the United Nations Organization and looks for Further integration into the system of regional and global trade-economic relations (Petrenko, 2016: 79).

The foreign policy of Kazakhstan also looks forward towards creation of favorable external conditions for successful implementation of the Strategy 2050, providing high living standards for the population strengthening unity of the multinational society, reinforcing rule of law and democratic institutions, protection of human rights and freedoms foreign policy of Kazakhstan needs diversification, industrial-technological development and increased competitiveness of the national economy (MFA, 2015:1). Keeping an open eye towards the environment, Kazakhstan also looks towards balancing ecological development and infrastructure that are ecologically right therefore, focusing the country onto the "Green" development path and bringing it to the list of the 30 top-developed nations of the world also saving the national-cultural uniqueness and following own original way of the state development. Human rights and development are also on the key list of development, Protection of the rights of personal, family and business interests of citizens and legal entities of the Republic of Kazakhstan while extending support to Kazakh Diaspora and Kazakh language overseas (Source: Ministry of External affairs Kazakhstan: 2014).

6. Kazakhstan's Neighborhood Policy

The “neighborhood factor” is also important for Kazakhstan in the security context that helped develop and shape Multi Vector foreign policy post 1999. This includes various potential challenges such as territorial integrity, the threat of military invasion, demographic pressure from, and internal stability in neighboring countries, drug trafficking, uncontrolled migration, environmental risks, information security etc. Kazakhstan is located in a region with the potential for political or social conflict, including border disputes and inter-ethnic tensions. Consequently, the question of security is no less important than economic pragmatism. Crisis situations in some neighboring states have impacted both the external and the internal security of Kazakhstan to a greater or lesser extent. For instance, during the violence and riots which accompanied the political upheaval in Kyrgyzstan in 2010, Kazakhstan was forced temporarily to close the border with that country for fear of an influx of refugees and crime” (Sultangaliyeva, 2016: 84). “The sporadic aggravation of ethnic separatism in China’s Xinjiang province, which borders on Kazakhstan, also carries risks. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine indirectly affects Kazakhstan”, as well, because “Kazakhstan maintains good relations with both of those countries. There is also the problem of drug trafficking which originates in Afghanistan and passes through Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan before reaching Kazakhstan. Tensions in relations between Kazakhstan’s neighbors, such as Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, are another risk factor. Moreover, there is the issue of equal access to trans-border water resources, an issue which is important both to Kazakhstan and to its neighbors (Sultangaliyeva, 2016: 33-34).

Talking about foreign policy of Kazakhstan, it is necessary to look at oil policy which led to major economic developments. Kazakhstan is a huge producer of oil and has an approximate output of oil production estimated at 1.6 million barrels per day in 2012. The country has the second largest oil production among the former soviet republics behind Russia. Developing the oil sector was a key priority for the Kazakh government to increase state revenue, earlier the oil sector was not developed as during Kazakhstan’s association with the USSR, it did not achieve the status of major exporter and producer.

Nazarbayev's far sighted vision provided him with the insight of putting importance to investment from west so that the economy could grow (Sean, 2012:88).

The Investment potential of Kazakhstan is so large that it would require resources which are not available even to the highly developed countries. Thus, the requirement for a diversified set of investors that represents dozens of countries from Europe and Asia in addition to the United States is an imperative in Kazakhstan's policy (Ipek, 2007:1184). In the early stages of its independence, Kazakhstan had to look both Russia and to the west to develop their oil industry. Kazakhstan's oil enterprises were heavily integrated in to the soviet economic system and Kazakhstan was dependent on oil supplies from Russia. In 1994, energy accounted for 32% of the total imports of Kazakhstan (Ipek, 2007:1181).

Oil and gas sector in Kazakhstan exhibit dependence on Russia as the final processing of oil is done in Russia. Oil contributed to the dependency as major exportation was to take place through Russian gas pipelines that were controlled by Russia. This eventually led to opening of place for foreign direct investment in oil sector to generate oil; revenues and reduce dependence on Russia. Kazakhstan could not roll out its dependence on Russia due to huge oil and gas being transported through this region and controlled by Russia and on the same hand there was needed to attract foreign investment in this sector which required a 'Multi-Vector' approach to reach its far ends, where foreign policy had to be flexible and western investments had to be promoted. Thus, oil and gas significantly contributed in the evolution of Kazakhstan's multi vector foreign policy.

Kazakhstan has perceived two main goals concerning its oil policy, representing its problem situation. **First**, it wants to reduce its dependence on the Russian pipeline system, thus routes diversification has since independence been a top priority for the government, as stated by the former Kazakh foreign minister, Kasymzhomart Tokayev, 'As far as pipelines are concerned, our policy is clear and simple, have as many export routes as possible' (Hanks, 2009: 264). **Second**, as a crucial ingredient of staying independent, another top priority for the Kazakh government is remaining in control over its oil sector and not letting any foreign actor become

too powerful. The exploitation and transportation of Kazakhstan's hydrocarbon resources are the Kazakh government's top priorities in shaping the foreign policy (Gumppenberg, 2007: 37).

In the very onset of 1992, Kazakhstan signed a deal with Italian Agip and British Gas on oil and gas condensate field Karachaganak and founded the Caspian pipeline consortium with Russia and Oman as partners. one year later, the government signed a giant deal with chevron the first major western oil company operating in Kazakhstan the result was a 40 year long deal called the 'The contract of the century. Gradually other western countries started investing in Kazakhstan oil industry. In the same year as chevron entered Kazakhstan, an agreement on the creation of an international consortium (comprising of British petroleum, Statoil, British gas, Agip, Mobil, shell and Kazakhstan Caspian shelf) to conduct geological exploration projects on Kazakhstan's shelf of the Caspian sea was signed, Joint ventures began such as in the same year, Germany and Kazakh government created the enterprise KazgerMunay (Ryan, 2011:22).

In 1994, the program of development of oil and gas complex of Kazakhstan, was adopted by the government, priorities included the strengthening of refining capacities, full coverage of domestic needs for oil products, growth of oil export was started. Successively in 1995, a production sharing agreement in the Karachaganak field was signed between Kazakhstan, represented by Kazakh gas, and Ajip (Italy), British gas, Gazprom (Russia) was adopted. The main purpose of the law was securing growth in foreign investments in to development of the oil and gas industry. One year later, the construction of the CPC oil pipeline was agreed between member states of the Caspian pipeline consortium as a consortium of foreign oil companies (Ryan, 2011: 24).

Major development of the year 2000 was the discovery of the large oil field at the northern Caspian Sea, also known as 'Kashagan'. The National Fund was established later that year. The main purpose of the fund is to accumulate financial resources for the benefit of future generation and reduce the Kazakh economy's dependence on external factors. Opening Kazakhstan's indigenous oil companies' international market actually led to positive development in the landlocked nation. Multi vector approach gained

adherence with this approach as foreign actors contributed by utilizing the best of their technology and resources to invest in Kazakhstan oil sector (Ryan, 2011: 30-32).

In the words of Neo realist scholars Kazakhstan's foreign policy can be best understood by its concern to remain independent, with a high degree of autonomy. 'Dependence' means being determined or significantly affected by external actors (Keohane; Nye, 2011:7). Stephen Blank had commented about Nazarbayev's vision of foreign policy that, Nazarbayev clearly feels at Russia, China, and the United States each wish to dominate central Asia, and he is determined to preserve his administration's autonomy in the face of this and other threats (Gumpenberg, 2007: 36).

Kazakhstan position is heavily centered with its geopolitics impacting its foreign relations. Kazakhstan in its quest to maintain its autonomy in a potential threat environment, with central Asian neighboring countries and world powers such as Russia, USA, and China on one side fights a tough time for its nation state building process. In terms of oil, petroleum, natural gas and minerals, Kazakhstan occupies an upper hand thus enabling the "New Great Game" in the region with powers contesting the battle.

7. TRADE GEOPOLITICS OF KAZAKHSTAN

Since independence, Kazakhstan tried every possible move of diversifying its foreign policy in terms of oil, gas, and minerals that has enormously contributed to the trade statistics the region of the region. Kazakhstan has become more open economy and more open to international trade. Export significantly surpasses imports. Kazakhstan exported for 59.23 US billion dollars in 2010, an increase from 28.77 US billion dollars in 2009 (MFA, 2009: 1). Fuel and energy dominate export, while an import consists mainly of machinery and food. The increase in the privatization process and trade openness of 2000s went hand in hand with the increase oil and gas production. Kazakhstan started to become a major oil producer and exporter, by 2010, it exceed the traditional records of 8 million tonnes per year. Therefore oil significantly contributed to the trade development of the region (Gleason, 2010: 174).

7.1 Regional Trade policies

Kazakhstan is an active member of the Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC) which entered into force in May 2001. It aims to implement a custom union and, eventually, a common economic area that goes beyond just a common external tariff (Hindley, 2008: 20) members of this economic community are Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Armenia Uzbekistan, with Moldova, and Ukraine as observer states. Regional cooperation is also a highlight of Kazakhstan's foreign policy post 1991 that helped Kazakhstan to sustain amongst its Central Asian neighbor. Kazakhstan, Belarus and Russia in 2007, signed an agreement on the establishment of a custom union. The three countries managed to remove most of the mutual trade barriers, agreed on unified customs tariff visa-a-vis third party countries, and place the resulting single custom territory under the control of a supranational executive commission (Vielmini, 2013: 21).

At the end of 2011, the presidents of the three countries went further ahead by relinquishing all barriers to the free movements of commodities, goods, services, capital and labor within the free trade zone, thus creating a common economic space (Vielmini, 2013:1). The regional economic integration is seen as a step towards the ultimate regional integration, a full scale economic union which constitutes an institutional supranational architecture formally modeled on the European Union, namely the Eurasian Union (Vielmini, 2013:22).

The newly formed custom Union between Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Russia stood to be the first successful example of regional integration between countries from the Soviet Union. Nazarbayev is rightly viewed as the inventor and a strong believer in the idea of "Eurasian Integration" and in the special and important role that Kazakhstan played in making this idea a reality (Vinokurov, 2010:2).

In 1997, President Nazarbayev proposes several regional integration projects where he postulates his strong will in promoting cooperation with the European Union thus giving impetus to the idea of Eurasian unity he said, "I have formulated, and will continue to propose the idea of Eurasian unity which, I believe, has a strategic future. Kazakhstan alone cannot realize its great transit potential; no can any other neighboring country do

so. This should be done jointly, in close and mutually beneficial cooperation” said Nazarbayev (Vinokurov, 2010:2).

The Custom Union is an example of regional integration where Kazakhstan’s participation in the custom union shows a leaning tendency towards Russia which limits its scope of cooperation with the west such as China and USA. This intermediate position of Kazakhstan also serves the purpose of avoiding over influenced by the west thus acts as a balance of influence for both Russia and western countries on the other side.

According to Vielimini, there is an asymmetrical trend in the trade relation of Kazakhstan and Russia. It is contrary to its policy of multi vector approach, statistics shows that Kazakhstan is too dependent on Russian imports and the trade between them hardly provides room for others. Looking at the structure of trade, the asymmetry becomes clear. Kazakhstan stands for 3% of Russia's total export, while goods from Russia and Belarus constitute 40% of Kazakhstan's total imports” (Vielimini, 2013: 5). Kazakhstan could both reap the benefit of the integration and also could be regionally focused that limits its scope. Thus, the integration is both opportunity and challenge to Kazakhstan’s autonomy and independence.

Russia has been a traditional ally of Kazakhstan since its inception, a huge trade relations occur in between both the nations. Kazakhstan trade signifies a shift or lean towards its former parent authority but Kazakhstan can't afford to overlook such an important partner.

8. Kazakhstan’s Foreign Policy with China

In terms of economy, another important position is held with China which eventually has become an important economic partner post 2000. In the 2000 Decade, trade with China got a new boost in Kazakhstan. In June 2003, on the occasion of Hu Jintao’s visit to Kazakhstan, program of economic cooperation between the two countries was adopted for the period 2003-2008 and on Nazarbayev visit to China in December 2006, both the

countries agreed on cooperation strategy for the 21st century and the “plan for economic cooperation between Kazakhstan and China (Syroezhkin,2013: 75).

The Chinese vector has always been a priority in Kazakhstan’s foreign policy strategy. The huge and rapidly growing manufacturing economy of developing China is complementary to Kazakhstan's raw materials exporting economy. A passive policy towards its powerful neighbors could gradually lead to strong political and economic expansion of China with adverse effect upon Kazakhstan's strategic interest (Cohen, 2008: 91). In 2007, an agreement was reached on the signing of a program of bilateral cooperation in the economic sectors related to raw materials (Peyrouse, 2008: 35). Nazarbayev has been constantly seen encouraging and acknowledging the global role of rising China.

Chinese economic presence on the region reduces Kazakhstan’s dependence on Russia and increases the FDI in the country, but the fear of a total Chinese takeover is presenting in Kazakhstan. The fear is mainly about an enormous wave of Chinese migration and that some region of Kazakhstan would be too dependent on Chinese business (Peyrouse 2008: 35). The trade figures in Kazakhstan China relations are evident of the fact that China tries to project strong influence in Kazakhstan. In 2006, Kazakhstan represented only 0.49% of Chinese foreign trade, while China represented 15.5% of Kazakhstan’s foreign trade close to Russia's 18.8% and then in 2005, China projected 1.2 billion US dollars in touché Kazakh economy, whereas Kazakhstan invested only 7.6 million US dollars in China”(Peyrouse,2008:36). Chinese attention in Kazakhstan evolves from the need of securing a steady oil supply. Chinese idea is to diversify its oil supply from Middle East to geostrategic location and Kazakhstan proves to be an appropriate one due to its important geopolitical location.

9. Kazakhstan’s Foreign Policy and The United States of America

The United States is one amongst the biggest and fastest growing trade partners of Kazakhstan. In 2011, the trade turnover volume between Kazakhstan and the United States amounted to 2.743 US billion dollars. There is enormous trade interaction between both the countries which marks an increase of 26% in just one year. The

fundamental field of cooperation between Kazakhstan and the United States investments are mining, real estate operations, rent and service for enterprises, transport and communication, trade, repair services, electric energy, gas and water production and distribution. Since 1993, the volume of US investments in Kazakhstan has exceeded 22 billion US dollars (FPR, 2014: 20). In 2006, Kazakhstan has implemented the Economic development program jointly with the United States. The purposes being to diversify Kazakhstan's economy, increase the economy's competitiveness, including businessman, and promote growth in economic terms (Gumpenburg, 2010:186).

USA foreign officials have been time and again remarked Russia's presence in the region as a cover up that plans to hold greater influence in the region. According to Hillary Clinton, economic integration is just a cover-up for Russia's ambition in the region. Even though Nazarbayev is keen on Eurasian Union, the Kazakh government is quick to deny any accusations about Kazakhstan moving away from the rest of the world. By using multi vector approach, the regional economic integration does not hinder Kazakhstan's path on becoming a WTO member or strengthen its economic ties with the west (FPR, 2012:16). The United States is very significantly important for Kazakhstan as a counterbalance to Russia and China, not only strategically but also because of its heavy investments in Kazakhstan. American direct investment in the Kazakh economy was total up to 13.8 US billion dollars in the period from 1991 to 2007, which is about 30% of all the direct investment to Kazakhstan (Yesdauletova, 2009: 33).

10. Kazakhstan Foreign policy and the European Union

The EU has been the very first trade partner of Kazakhstan, their trade partnership is regulated by the partnership and cooperation agreement signed in 1995". Immediately after independence, trade with European Union began which later came to force in 1995. Both Kazakhstan and European Union shares a gradual growing economic history with "domination of oil and gas exports which accounts for almost 80% of the country's total exports". Kazakhstan's imports from the region are machine items and transpiration equipment, chemical and manufacturing products swell. Kazakhstan has always been an

important trade partner for EU as an oil and gas supplier. EU constitutes almost 50% of its foreign direct investment to Kazakhstan (Sarsenbayev, 2011: 202).

The European Union commission has concentrated their mutual benefits ranging from trade, finance, import, export to energy and resources. The EU has a vital role to play from Astana's perspective both as a pacifier between the rival energy and geopolitical interests laid by Russia, China and the US in Kazakhstan and its surrounding sub region such as the Caspian Sea. Importance of Kazakhstan for European Union is viewed from the latter's perspective as Kazakhstan represents not only an important source of energy outside of the middle east, but equally a guarantor of stability in central Asia, and a potentially long term strategic partnering the region (Cohen, 2008: 99).

The overall economic policy of Kazakhstan throws light on its foreign developments. Kazakhstan is a playing field Where in every strong nation wants to posits its strong hold. Thus, the battle never remains silent, there is Russian influence, which is a traditional partner of Kazakhstan but economically, and Kazakhstan is heavily dependent on Russian imports of defense. China is economically strong in the region as it has its strong hold in terms of energy, oil and natural gas pipelines actively working in this region to establish its hegemony over the region and USA has a diplomatic interest of both maintaining its hold in the region in name of terrorism but also counter balancing the role of Russia in the region. Thus the triad and struggle of influence carries on in Central Asian region, whereas Kazakhstan 's foreign policy posits another picture, it realizes its geopolitical strength and does not limits its foreign policy to these powers, rather Kazakhstan looks forward unfolding its foreign policy with multi vector approach that attracts other countries such as Turkey, Iran , Japan, South Korea and central Asian neighbors (Vinokurov, 2010: 33).

11. Foreign Policy and Regional Cooperation with Central Asian States

With emphasis on intra-regional cooperation, transforming the region in to a unique land of existence is what drove the newly independent nation's policies, accommodating the socio- economic problems, water-energy issues and other considerations within. In 1993, Eurasian economic integration was considered to be an important step where

Kazakhstan's engaging relation with the European Union gained impetus, integration in to the Economic Union was an effective step that ensured importance of the country in the world. Strengthening the Custom Union and the common economic space was an important move in the foreign policy formulation. Kazakhstan's foreign Policy is known to be divergent, pragmatic, independent and inclusive of its principles of maintaining sovereignty and security from the world. At the very formulation stage, its geostrategic location such as the highly landlocked nature of the nation, lack of access to the sea and intermediate positioning, was very well kept in mind while developing the foreign policy. It is thus, resultant of which, Kazakhstan has over the years, has comprehended its partnership with Russia, China, USA and majorly European countries (Yesdauletova, 2009: 44-46).

12. Kazakhstan's active engagements in International Organizations

Kazakhstan since 1991 has actively participated in various international platforms where, its presence has enhanced its role and importance in the global world order. This active participating role had grabbed attention after the disintegration of USSR in 1991, when Kazakhstan's economically, was striving to regain its position. Its active involvement in the international system attracted major support and assertions from international organizations to cooperate with Kazakhstan on various international aspects such as global economy, global security and stability.

Kazakhstan's involvement in participating in various international organizations contradicts the criticism of its foreign policy being Russian centric. Kazakhstan's membership in the Commonwealth of Independent states, its increased active role in Economic Cooperation Organization (2013) and being founding member of Shanghai Organization (1996), asserts its multi-vector approach. In 2007, Kazakhstan chose to chair OSCE for 2010, Kazakhstan was elected member of United Nation Human Rights Council in 2012. A remarkable trajectory came in 2016, with acceptance of Kazakhstan as a non-permanent member in the United Nation council for two year term speaks for its role in International Organizations (Foreign Policy Report, 2012).

12. 1 Kazakhstan and the United Nations

In 1992, Kazakhstan formally joined United Nations programs and corporate in almost every endeavor of the United Nations. Kazakhstan offered its land to host several major events of United Nations and international system for roughly a decade. This decade is precisely marking the evolution of Kazakhstan's foreign policy. According to various sources there is no particular date that marks the birth of 'Multi-Vector foreign Policy' rather an entire decade is evident of this process. Major conferences such as the first global conference for landlocked countries in August 2003, the 63rd session of UN ESCAP in May 2007, a WHO conference in 2008, the 18th general assembly of the UN world tourism organization in 2009, and the UNESCAP 6th ministerial conference on environment and development for Asia and the Pacific in 2010, had been successfully hosted by Kazakhstan (Cohen, 2009: 49-50).

The preamble of the United Nations charter declares a commitment to international peace and security, tolerance, and economic and social advancement. Kazakhstan's foreign policy is representative of these characteristics and welcomes the policies of UN and its missions. Kazakhstan has participated in the peacekeeping operations such as dispatching 20 military servicemen in to peacekeeping operations in Cote d'Ivoire, Haiti, Liberia and western Sahara in 2013, promoting its adherence to nuclear non-proliferation, hosting of peaceful dialogues and negotiations that has led to development of positions in Afghanistan (Dave, 2010: 14).

Kazakhstan took another initiative of launching national program of official development assistance named 'KadAIs' which at present is seen to be a crucial move by Kazakhstan that aims to transform its city Almaty into a potential United Nation hub in central Asia. In September 2014, 20 qualified individuals were selected for the first UN peacekeeping mission after meticulously vetting. The ministry of external affairs in Kazakhstan has been closely cooperating to allow Kazakh troops to engage in combat situations also. This is clearly reflective of Kazakhstan's intention of contributing in the peace building affairs of the United Nations, UN department of peacekeeping operations, the department

of political affairs, the peace building commission and the peace building support office (PBSO) (MFA, 2014).

Kazakhstan in present day times is committed for the implementation of sustainable development that gained momentum at the Rio De Jenario conference on sustainable development held under the auspices of the United Nation a national concept of green economy has been adopted and national programs aimed at sustainable developments in key sectors such as energy, utilities, water, agriculture, industry biodiversity has been developed. In November 2012, Astana was chosen by the member states of the Paris based bureau international des expositions to host EXPO 2017 under the theme of future energy. More than 10 international organizations and 100 countries had participated in the exhibition from June to September 2017 (MEA, 2014: 5).

12. 2 KAZAKHSTAN AND THE OSCE

In 1992, Kazakhstan became a member of OSCE with the aspiration to put into practice the principle of the Helsinki final act of 1975 and other OSCE document, which in the Astana declaration also reaffirms the adherence to the UN charter and adopts a comprehensive and cooperative approach to security, is a natural partner for Kazakhstan in its quest to promote national, regional and global security. In 2010, Kazakhstan became the first post-soviet country to host the OSCE and hosted the first summit of the participating states of OSCE held in 11 years (OSCE, 2010:1). OSCE specifically mentions the clear choice of the participating states to freely choose according to their own security and interests (Yesdauletova, 2011:67).

Kazakhstan foreign policy is highly expressive of its concern with peace, security and stability. With peace and security, Kazakhstan is committed to adhere to the principle of non-proliferation, nuclear security and disarmament, evident in its close ties with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) 1994. Kazakhstan is the founder and proposer of the establishment of a conference on confidence building and interaction in Asia (CICA), whose mission overlaps with the goals of OSCE. In September, 1996, at the 51st general session of the UN general assembly, Kazakhstan signed in November 2001, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) which was subsequently ratified, marking

the concern of the highly landlocked nation in maintain its security as a top priority on its list (Canas, 2005: 2).

Kazakhstan has taken a number of concrete steps that reflects its intention to commitment of the non-proliferation. Kazakhstan's commitment to non-proliferation, nuclear security and disarmament has enabled close ties with the international atomic energy agency (IAEA) (MFA, 1994). Formally Kazakhstan joined this protocol in 1994. Nuclear security for Kazakhstan is a priority and it takes the idea seriously.

Kazakhstan took the decision of closing the Semipalatinsk Nuclear test site 1991 due to its strong assumption on national security and peaceful existence, Kazakhstan also renowned its fourth largest defense equipment and nuclear arsenal. Thus, Kazakhstan took security as a high rated subject and decided to join the Non-proliferation treaty as a non-nuclear weapon state in 1993.

Kazakhstan participation in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is a secure representation of its idea of security and prosperity of global world order for example, the conversion of highly enriched uranium in to commercial fuel material carried out by Kazakhstan in partnership with the Nuclear threat initiative has been touted by then secretary general of the IDEA Mohammed El- Parade as a model for future projects in other countries seeking to upgrade levels of nuclear security (Cannas, 2005: 4-5). Kazakhstan is also actively engaged in CSTO which unites Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan Uzbekistan Armenia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. The agenda of this security organization is to ensure national security, strengthening armed forces related to military and organizational issues, defense of sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states, and keeping a united system of air defense (Alcott, 2010: 174).

12. 3 Kazakhstan And NATO

In 1994, Kazakhstan signed the 'Partnership for Peace' agreement with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), whose goal is to cooperate with the United Nations. In 2008, a training Centre has been established for training Kazakhstan's military personnel for peacekeeping operations. Kazakhstan is also an active member of

the Shanghai Cooperation Organization whose members are its Central Asian neighbors such as China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan along with five 'observer status' states and three dialogue partners. In terms of security policy, Kazakhstan is actively engaged in reconstruction of security and stability in Afghanistan region (Canas, 2005: 5).

Security of this region post 1991 became a priority with success important for the working of the Central Asian region. Kazakhstan invested in Afghan market and training of 1000 Afghans in Kazakhstan in the field of economy, industry, finance, transport and education under a special program (Aitken, 2009: 86). Kazakhstan intends to influence its position on advancement of security at both regional and global level. Security has been a core theme in Kazakhstan's foreign policy list. This would eventually benefit Kazakhstan's own security and domestic interests. Kazakhstan actively participates in international organizations and is committed to cooperate on global security at every level possible. Sitting at the crossroad of Eurasian dynamics Kazakhstan takes the opportunity to participate in both the Eurasian and Euro - Atlantic security structures, which agrees to cooperate for security and global engagement that are based on security concepts (Sarsenbayev, 2011: 255-256).

1999 and times after, Kazakhstan unfolded its 'Multi -Vector' foreign policy that led to its recognition in the international system. Kazakhstan focuses on enhancing its relations with every potential country and developing its economy to bring it in the list of developed nations. Much of credit goes to the well-designed foreign policy of this highly landlocked region that helps it to sustain through its geopolitical position. For a country like Kazakhstan that is bordered by land from all its sides comprising major powers at one end, leaves Kazakhstan with limited options of cooperation or isolation. Kazakhstan's development as the largest GDP contributing nation amongst all the central Asian nations speaks of its position of immense cooperation regionally and globally. Thus, fourth chapter presents plethora of possibilities for this landlocked nation to adopt 'Multi -Vector' approach as the highest tool to achieve its high end goals.

CHAPTER 4
KAZAKHSTAN'S MULTI-VECTOR
FOREIGN POLICY, 1999-2017

The concept of foreign policy is surrounded by the idea of sharing relations, good or bad, with neighboring and far distant countries. Priority is always given to the immediate neighboring countries as they act as a bridge between countries to carry further relations with external powers. For Kazakhstan, being the largest landlocked state, having good relation with its neighboring central Asian states becomes utmost important. Immediate debate between countries and states occurs due to turmoil on neighboring states, Therefore border dispute are resultant of this trouble. For most of the country's foreign policy begins with their shorelines and borders and Kazakhstan is no exemption in this case.

Kazakhstan, an enormous territory covered by endless green steppes and inhabited by populations with ancient tradition, was part of that heartland. More than a century after, history has traced a different path after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Kazakhstan stands as a united, independent and sovereign country, which has been developing a multi-vector foreign policy, with Russia and Eurasian Economic Union the United States, China and the European Union. Nevertheless, it may be recognized to Mackinder to have grasped the potential of a country which aims to become a “heartland of modernization” in the Central Asian context (Cohen, 2009: 20).

The very evolution of this concept of ‘Multi-Vector’ Foreign policy started to evolve from 1999 where in after 2014, active engagement and involvement in international organizations and improved relations with neighboring countries made Kazakhstan’s foreign policy to be largely diversified. Even with the new foreign policy friendly and mutually advantageous relations with Russia has always been an important player in Kazakhstan’s foreign policy, especially in all domains of political, cultural and social relations.

Since 1999, the continued political leadership of President Nursultan Nazarbyev in Kazakhstan has promoted a multi-layered vision for modernization- impacting the Kazakh culture, traditions, politics, society and business- and which, ultimately, aims to lead the country toward a sustainable future. This fundamental shift has been carefully

crafted by the country's political leadership to have a steady and significant impact on the society.

The basic structure of Kazakhstan's multi vector policy is designed to achieve domestic and international stability in the international environment on issues directly affecting Kazakhstan. The basic goal is to multiply the sources of international support for Kazakhstan's sovereignty and its secure development. The policy represents to some extent, a creative adaptation of the age old practice of small and medium powers to balance between great powers and regional blocks. The 'Multi- Vector' foreign policy concept is not just restricted to reactive maneuverings between Russia, China and the west and also Kazakhstan's diverse approach involves proactive initiatives to influence big players in the central Asian region and the relevant decisions of international organizations (Socor, 2015: 15).

Multi-vector foreign policy presents several puzzles for international relations scholars and practitioners. According to Kuzio, never explicitly defined, the post-Soviet leaders claim that it is a policy of cooperation and cohabitation with all regional powers others however, view Multi-Vector foreign policy as shifting, incoherent, and ideologically vacuous behavior (Kuzio, 2006: 66). Such that it prevents the post-Soviet states from engaging in systematic and fruitful cooperation with either Russia or the EU. Scholars present and analyze such policies as variations on a 'pro-Russian' or a 'pro-European' international orientation but fail to offer and test any alternative explanations as to why these states alternate cooperation with two actors rather than more closely cooperate with either (Cohen, 2009: 13).

According to Richard Weite, Kazakhstan post 1999 started diversification of its multi-dimensional foreign policy that seeks to maintain cordial and development oriented relations with Japan, , China, the United States, Russia and the European Union as well as other countries with important economic, political, and other important roles in Eurasia. Kazakhstan is already balancing its relation with both China and Russia within the SCO and wants to cement it further through the new institutional framework of the Custom Union". "A close analysis of Kazakhstan's policy of 'Eurasianism' reveals that

it is mainly directed toward economic integration at regional level by involving other soviet states setting aside complex and controversial issues like political, ideological and security (Weite, 2008:77).

Many scholars of international relations perceive Multi-Vector foreign policies as the result of Russia and the EU ‘pushing’ and ‘pulling’ the neighboring states in opposite directions. In 2004, EU launched the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) which offered neighboring states the opportunity to adhere to EU values and harmonize their relation with the EU acquits in several sectors in return. Meanwhile, a politically and economically resurgent Russia tried to revive post-Soviet integration with the help of various multilateral initiatives and bilateral diplomacy (Lavrov,2008: 28). It aimed at creating a ‘common civilization area’ in touch with its authentic ‘historical and spiritual heritage’ (Lavrov, 2008:29). In respect to these regional goals, both Russia and EU have executed diverging agendas in carrying out their common neighborhood policies subjecting neighboring countries to a variety of challenging and diverse external pressures (Hindley, 2008: 18).

Central to Kazakhstan’s multi-vector policy has been the elite’s desire to balance through activist diplomacy the perceived need for political and economic integration with the former Soviet space with the desire to prevent a return of Russian predominance. Reul Hanks has suggested Kazakhstan’s ‘Multi-Vector’ foreign policy has at its core two broad goals FIRST state security and SECOND economic development and has permitted Nazarbayev to use all available option so as to secure both of these objectives. This has led to “integration” with a variety of regional and extra-regional actors (e.g. China and the United States), organizations, and multilateral institutions (Hanks, 2009: 78).

President Nursultan Nazarbayev believes that the ‘Multi-Vector policy’ means developing and further establishing friendly and predictable relations with all the states that play a significant role in world affairs and represent a practical interest” in developing relations with the particular country. Kazakhstan, because of its geopolitical position and economic potential, does not have the right to limit its involvement to regional problems only. This would have been clear not only to our multi-ethnic people

but to the entire international community too. Kazakhstan's future is in Asia and Europe, the East and the West. By pursuing this policy we will be able to rule out any threats to Kazakhstan's security and we will also be able to strengthen favorable external conditions by carrying out economic and political reforms in this country (MFA, 2014: 6) (Speech, 2014:2).

President Nazarbayev further said "There are individuals who like to Make link between Kazakhstan and Europe; and there are those who also like to see Kazakhstan to be in close tie with the Asian "Tigers" still there are others who want to consider Russia as an important strategic land of Kazakhstan, while suggesting not to ignore that Kazakhstan is an Eurasian state that has its own history and own future" (Nazarbayev, 1997: 59). President Nazarbayev had expressed his vision of Kazakhstan in his book '*Nazarbayev and the making of Kazakhstan*' for him, "Kazakhstan is located in the epicenter of the world and its new capital, Astana, situated in the 'Heart of Eurasia' is widely popular among the views of scholars and authors across the world" (Klauss, 2007: 44-45).

Throughout 1990s and early 2000s, Kazakhstan continued to engage in regional, thematic, and global organizations and participated in regional discussion to administer itself into the international system. Many scholars have also pointed to the creation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as a successful example of a space for maneuver between the strategic gravity of China and Russia. Such a platform would allow each state to choose the most beneficial perspective on a case-by-case basis, using the supporting regional powers as a source of coverage. In addition to participation in the SCO, Kazakhstan has continued to use China as an economic counterweight to Russia. This trend began after the collapse of the USSR and deepened as China sought additional overland natural gas, oil, and raw materials resources (Joshua, 2016: 59).

Ilyas Suleimenov a well-known Kazakh poet and writer, believes that independent Kazakhstan illustrates the principles of 'Multi ethnic, tolerant, and diverse country typically characteristics to Eurasia'. He argues that the titular Kazakhs has no longer define identity without taking into account the European borrowings that has given them an access to world advanced culture at large (Ram, 2011: 3). there are multiple agenda of

the Eurasian geopolitics in Kazakhstan such as to improve its relation with the neighboring countries such as Russia based on Eurasian solidarity, acting as an intermediate bridge between the Asia and Europe due to its reposition at the “crossroads of Eurasian dynamics, pursuing stability and neutrality and maintaining a harmonious relation with all its neighbor externally and internally (Joshua, 2016: 3).

1. Eurasianism and Kazakhstan Foreign Policy

Kazakhstan ‘Multi-vector’ foreign Policy is also known to be ‘Eurasian policy that intends to become the heart of Eurasia. All historical events and circumstances helped to create an objective, congenial atmosphere and foundation for the creation of a strong integration process. President Nursultan Nazarbayev first proposed his vision of ‘Eurasianism’ in his speech at the Moscow State University, in spring 1994 where he developed his view systematically and proposed as a series of projects including the creation of a Eurasian Union (Nyssanbayev and Dunaev, 2010: 198). He further elaborated his vision of ‘Eurasianism’ in 1995 in one of his books when he says, “if one looks at a geography then it is easy to notice that there is a consecutive vertical row of countries of Eurasia from Russia in the north to India in the South that does not yet link either with the east or with the west” (Dunaev, 2010: 8).

1.1 Foreign policy of Kazakhstan in Eurasian Dynamics

The term ‘Eurasia’ is rooted in the classical theories and concepts of ‘Geo-politics’ particularly the concepts of ‘pivot’ and later ‘heartland’ defined and developed by British Geographer Sir Hartford Mackinder in 1904, where he identified the huge landmass of the east of Urals as the ‘pivot’ and claimed that whoever will control this vast territory control global politics (Mackinder, 1904: 421–444). Eurasia is a highly debated, contested and illusive term with different meanings and perceptions in time and space. It has two apparent meanings and dimensions: geographical and politico-philosophical-ideological; where the first one deals with space and location meaning Eurasia is a place (space) which is located both in Asia and Europe; the other is more complex and complicated with multiple views and perceptions, often conflicting and contradictory,

probably with one common feature that the concept of Eurasia first emerged and evolved in imperial Russia (Sengupta,2009: 166).

For Kazakhstan, Eurasia is an interesting area where all ethnic, social and religions bunches live and exist together calmly through hundreds of years of shared trust, conviction and comprehension. The idea of room and topography is an essential factor in arranging and deciding a country's remote arrangement objectives, destinations and bearings and it is all the more so for Kazakhstan; a huge, ingenious however landlocked nation. Topographically, Kazakhstan is an Asian nation and just around 10% of its region is situated in Europe yet geopolitically, it thinks about itself as a Eurasian state amid the mid 1990s the initiative of Kazakhstan proposed the idea of Eurasia which depended on the rule that Kazakhstan is found both in Asia and Europe (Nazarbayev, 1998: 480). Kazakhstan's Eurasianism is proclaimed as an official philosophy by Nursultan Nazarbayev in 1992 and the concentration was to fabricate peace, solidarity and solidarity among people groups based on ethical quality, otherworldliness, social and recorded connections of people groups of various ethno-etymological, social and religious foundations (Geoffrey, 1998: 26-27).

Kazakhstan is posited at the “crossroads of Eurasia” and its foreign policy is highly defined by geopolitics. Focusing on major factors that has resulted Kazakhstan foreign policy to diversify its domain, Geopolitics also focuses on four issues which is the degree of emphasis Nazarbayev has placed on specific countries and regions, Kazakhstan’s geopolitical situation and position, the multi-vector foreign policy and Kazakhstan’s role in the international system, and the need for Kazakhstan to be integrated into the global economy which would help to further correlate geopolitics and future of Kazakhstan’s foreign policy in terms of other actor (Ambrosia, A. Lange, 2014: 5-6).

Kazakhstan is standing in between Eurasia as an important economic destination while Russia is trying to tighten its grip in Kazakhstan; China is enhancing its presence in the region on two grounds. First, it is seeking prominence and an edge over others in obtaining natural resources from Kazakhstan. Secondly, in terms of investment it is attracting Kazakhstan’s attention to itself which seems ‘comparatively abrasive and

controlling'. The internal dynamics of Kazakhstan presents a waning influence of Russian presence in the region making China a powerful competition in the region (Foreign Affairs Review, 2013: 10)

The concept of 'Eurasianism' came to Kazakhstan as a response to its 'historical preoccupation with Russian influence in the region, and internationally it serves as a policy doctrine in molding Kazakhstan's political ambition and foreign policy goals and objectives (Regis, 2010: 11). The Eurasian dynamics justifies Kazakhstan's ties with USA, The EU and other European countries, Asian and the Middle Eastern states. As mentioned earlier, Kazakhstan Wants to see itself as a "bridge between Asia and Europe" and pursue an active foreign policy through the membership and active participation in the organization of security and cooperation in Europe (OSCE), conference of interaction and confidence building measures in Asia (CICA), Shanghai organization (SCO), organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the commonwealth of independent states (CIS), and the Custom Union (Regis, 2010: 12). Through an active Eurasian policy of engagement, Kazakhstan intends to turn 'Curse' of geography in to strength and advantage by maintaining and balancing relations with all major actors in world (Alcott, 2002: 37).

This continuous belt of countries is situated along the meridian of Eurasia is in the belt of anticipation despite all the differences among these countries, they constitute a relatively solid group from the point of view of potential resources and possibilities of influencing not only the balance of power in Asia or Eurasia but even in respect of geopolitical balance of the world (Sengupta, 2009: 11). Since independence, the basic core objective of Kazakhstan's foreign policy had been the following-

- To strengthen peace through regional and global security, Ensuring national security, defensive capability, sovereignty and territorial unity of the country.
- Integration in to the regional and international economic system, diversifying industrial and technological developments through increased competitiveness of the national economy.

- Sustainable international position and positive global image of Kazakhstan, Creation of favorable external conditions for the successful implementation of the strategy 2050, providing high living standards for the population, and strengthening unity of the multinational society” (Sengupta, 2009:12).

The steady development of the country is also based on it being an active, yet impartial, actor in regional events. As a result, Kazakhstan has gained entry to several regional organizations of large importance, such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), Central Asian Economic Association, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Additionally, it should be noted that joining the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member is one of Kazakhstan’s highest international priorities. The country’s recent track record of leadership speaks for itself (Hanks, 2009: 56). In 2010, it became the first Central Asian, post-Soviet and predominantly Muslim country to chair the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the world's largest security oriented intergovernmental organization, and chaired the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation the following year. By leading nuclear arms reduction efforts and promoting regional cooperation, Kazakhstan is poised to play an even larger role in regional and international community (Hindley, 2008:49).

Nazarbayev understood early on that Kazakhstan had to be open for investments from anyone who wanted to invest in Kazakhstan so that the economy could grow. Nazarbayev said, the investment potential of Kazakhstan is so large that it would require resources which are not available even to the highly developed countries. Thus, the requirement for a diversified set of investors that represents dozens of countries from Europe and Asia in addition to the US is an imperative in Kazakhstan's policy (Ipek, 2007:1184).

In April 2015, Kazakhstan held its fifth presidential election of an independent statehood where Nazarbayev was re-elected to another term of 5 year. In his speech he spoke about the necessary policy initiatives that potentially transform country in terms of global

instability and Kazakhstan's stability rests on harmonizing the country's multiple internal and external identities (Ipek, 2007: 1185). Among all the Central Asian nations Kazakhstan has been apparently the best in creating an outside arrangement that has guaranteed security and added to the worldwide flow of strategy change as indicated by the global framework. This condition has been favorable for diverse strategy, empowering Astana to triangulate to its benefit.

On April 12, 2017 President Nazarbayev published the article "Course towards the Future: Modernization of Kazakhstan's Identity, in which he declared that the large-scale economic and political reforms that we have started should be complemented with advanced modernization of our identity. This won't just complement political and economic modernization but provide its core. In the article, five priorities for the cultural modernization of Kazakhstan are outlined (MFA, 2017:4).

The first priority is the transition of the Kazakh language from the "Cyrillic" to the "latin" alphabet before 2025, pursued through a staged approach to boost the country's international reputation and competitiveness to attract foreign investors. This measure is intertwined with the widespread promotion of the study of the English language in the country's schools system, in order to ensure that the younger generations will become world citizens (MFA, 2017: 5).

The second one is the translation into the Kazakh language of the 100 best textbooks on humanities and social sciences at a global level so that they might be taught in the schools. The third priority is represented by the "Tugan Zher" (Homeland) program, aimed to improve and support the educational and cultural environments of Kazakhstan. Through the fourth measure, the country aspires to raise awareness on the Kazakh culture and traditions through the "Modern Kazakh Culture in the Global World" project. And last but not least, the project "100 New Faces in Kazakhstan" aims to spread the success stories of 100 Kazakh citizens and to promote a platform for dialogue and solidarity between the citizens (MFA, 2017). Furthermore, President Nazarbayev announced the "Modernization 3.0", which follows the first modernization plan-the creation a market economy in Kazakhstan – and the second modernization initiative – the implementation

of the Strategy 2030 which is to get listed in world's top 10 developed countries (MFA, 2017: 6).

According to Cohen, the Kazakhstan's political elite perception of great and rising powers has been shaped by four major factors: the country's political position, natural resources endowment, ethnic demography, and regime type. Its position in the centre of the region and landlocked largely has conditioned its foreign policy choices (Cohen, 2009: 11). (Schatz and Cummings, 2008: 36) has persuasively argued that, elites have used foreign policy to legitimate its rule Focusing on integration of a reconstructed Kazakhstan identity in 1990's pacifying with the economic, liberal and intellectualist identity to accommodate the ethnic Russians, maintain a necessary and special relation with Moscow and sovereignty vis a vis Russia and China. It is a conventional notion to believe that the U.S. interest is largely vested in terms of energy export parameters in Kazakhstan which is not entirely true as during the talks in the Oval Office, President Bush made it clear that, it's not just the energy interest that serves the relation but more. Despite Washington's interest in further energy cooperation with Kazakhstan, it is not the main factor in the bilateral relationship the main thing is to understand the commonality of purposes these include the fight against international terrorism, nuclear Proliferation and other threats to peace and security (Cohen, 2008:98).

Since independence, Kazakhstan is trying to adhere to its 'Multi- Vector' foreign policy and has been successful to a lot with attracting global investment in its landlocked territory. The objective to foster good relations with immediate neighbors and also with the surrounding neighbors such as Russia, China and the USA has shown positive results. Kazakhstan's participation in international organizations furthered the idea of it diversifying its foreign policy by actively engaging itself in international organizations. Kazakhstan has also been trying hard to secure a non-permanent member seat on the UN Security Council 2017-2018. Kazakhstan has secured its position as a non-permanent member in the UN Security Council in 2016 (Foreign Policy Review, 2017).

Kazakhstan is central to the concept of maintaining a strong and stable relationship with all its neighboring countries. Nazarbayev confided the foreign policy of Kazakhstan as

the development of friendly and predictable relations with all states that play a significant role in global politics and represent practical interest for our country. Kazakhstan cannot limit itself to narrow regional problems. This would not be understandable to not only the indigenous multi ethnic population but the entire international community Kazakhstan's future is both in Asia and Europe, in East and West (Nazarbayev speech , 2014).

Considering the energy dimension of the policy Ipek had argued that Kazakhstan has been following a multi vector foreign policy in strict relation to oil and gas contracts, given the determining influence of geopolitics and the pragmatism of Kazakh political leadership in its foreign policy discourse (Pinar, 2007: 16). It is thus, the combinations of pragmatic vision of political leader Nazarbayev Nursultan and diversified foreign policy that has led to manifestation of Kazakhstan goals and security in global order.

'Multi-Vector' foreign policy of Kazakhstan resulted in numerous developments in respect to its relation with the international system and simultaneously maintaining its autonomy. Nazarbayev clearly feels that Russia, China and the United states each wish to dominate Central Asia, and he is determined to preserve his administration's autonomy in the face of threats. Kazakhstan's multidimensional foreign policy also was a result of "need of the hour" as there could have been no alternative. Kazakhstan's geopolitics and marking location at the Centre of Eurasian dynamics had to take care of all its surrounding neighbors and western powers. Therefore, Kazakhstan's Multi-Vector foreign policy proved to be an effective tool, cooperating and coordinating with other countries as the whole central Asian region has become a ground for battle with respect to its abundant natural resources and enormous energy potential (Klauss, 1993: 74-75).

2. Kazakhstan Foreign Relations with Central Asian States

Since USSR disintegration, in quest of designing a foreign policy that suits Kazakhstan's domestic and national concern, it also managed to pursue a policy that was suitable to its neighbors immediate to Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan and its relation with the Central Asian states has been more of economic cooperation and political accommodation. In respect of world powers such as Russia and China, Kazakhstan bestows lesser attention to central Asian states. Nevertheless numerous process and initiative had been taken up by

Kazakhstan to make regional cooperation successful in this centrally landlocked region. Kazakhstan leaned towards Russia as it being conventionally dependent on the power. The very first attempt of regional integration between the central Asian states, the free trade zone on Eurasian space comprising of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia Tajikistan, Ukraine, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Uzbekistan in 1994 was taken down by Russia as it refused to ratify it (Canas, 2005: 16).

In 1999, the Custom Union and Common Economic Space were created with clear objective to further economic integration led by Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan. In 2000, Eurasian Association of Economic cooperation (EurAsEC) with the goal of creating custom borders amongst its member states was created with all five Central Asian states. The immediate purpose being was to deliver the objective of common foreign economic policy, creation of a common traffic policy and market. The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) is another platform through which Central Asian member states cooperate (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014).

Common policy and strategies did not work well with the Central Asian states thus leaving vacuum for west and other powers to collaborate with some of the Central Asian states promoting regional integration. This shift attracted attention from west resulting in west powers battling for influence in this region. In 2009, a Custom Union was created with Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia being the forming countries that would include the formation of a common custom space and paved the way for further integration, resultant being the creation of common economic space further in the year 2012 (FPR, 2014: 1). Kyrgyzstan joined in 2012, with Tajikistan being the next country showed interest in custom union. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are not yet supportive but if the custom union will grow with Moscow exerting pressure, remaining outside of this union would be difficult for these countries (FPR, 2014:2).

It has been argued by scholars that since independence, Kazakhstan has made its foreign Policy receptive of the fact that it is looking more and more towards integration. Since independence, Kazakhstan has focused on evolving its diverse foreign policy that accommodates attention of every neighboring country. After long efforts in 2014

Kazakhstan unfolded its 'Multi- Vector' foreign policy seeking to maintain good relations with all developed and developing countries to establish its foot strongly in Asia and Europe both. Kazakhstan is already balancing its relations with both China and Russia within the SCO and wants to continue it by strengthening it further through the new institutional framework of Custom Union (Sengupta, 2009: 2). A close analysis of Kazakhstan's policy of "Eurasianism" reveals that it is mainly directed towards economic integration at regional level by involving other post-soviet states setting aside issues such as political and security level (Weitez, 2008: 48).

3. Kazakhstan Foreign Relations with Russia

Russia has been a traditional ally of Kazakhstan on every aspect and thus is very important to its foreign policy. Bilateral relations between Russia and Kazakhstan were set up in 1992; post the USSR breakup Russia extensively shares political, ethnic, linguistic, demographic, social, cultural, economic, religious, and geographical ties with Kazakhstan. Located in Kazakhstan's north frontier, Russia is one of the largest bordering states to Kazakhstan, Russia's region bordering CIS countries, twelve borders Kazakhstan's regions along the 7,591 km range. Russia is the largest and most important partner for Kazakhstan for a number of reasons; Kazakhstan has a 7591 km border with Russia and out of the 14 oblasts (administrative districts) 7 have direct border with Russia (Genre: 2010: 11).

Demographically both Russia and Kazakhstan share its population with more than million ethnic Russians living in Kazakhstan and over 1 million Kazakhs live in Russia. Such demographic statistics automatically stimulates a cooperative relation between Kazakhstan and Russia. Both countries have been an active participant in international collaborations in all political, economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation. Since Kazakhstan claimed its independence, more than 300 treaties and agreements have been signed. On May 25, 1992 Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance was signed laying the foundation of bilateral relations of Kazakh-Russia relations. Further in 1998 July 6, there was a declaration on fostering eternal friendship and alliance to be taken ahead in the 21st century (Cohen, 2009: 58-62).

The interdependence created during the long years of the USSR in transportation, communication and infrastructure at its place and closer and integrated relations between the two countries will be mutually beneficial which was one of the main motives for the creation of the Custom Union Cooperation in energy sector thus is of crucial importance for both the nations (Yesdauletova: 2009: 24). As a Eurasian state Kazakhstan maintains a delicate balance with major regional powers through trade, investment and participation in a cluster organization.

Political contacts and relations has been the focal point of Russia-Kazakhstan relation. Numerous summits took place in 2012 and high level meetings were organized that took place in the same year 2012. Both countries have exchanged various presidential summits and 9 prime ministerial meetings since 2012. All this exchange of high level meeting between Kazakhstan and Russia is due to the active participation of both in various regional and international agreements such as Custom, SCO and Custom union.

3.1 Economic Relations

In terms of trade there has been a significant increase of 8.5% from the year 2011 to 2012 reaching about 22.4 billion US dollars. Bilateral economic relations were put on a new footing by the economic cooperation program for 2012-2020 signed in 2011 in Astana. Russia and Kazakhstan economic relations have seen a gradual increase in the beginning years Russia supplies increased by more than 3% up to 14.6 billion US dollars whereas imports from Kazakhstan grew by nearly 20% up to 7.9 billion US dollars in 2012, a joint operating plan for Russia and Kazakhstan for the year 2012-15 was laid, determining key task of bilateral cooperation signed by the heads of the two states. There is shift that has been witnessed since 2014 when Chinese economic investments started to become prominent in the largely landlocked nation (Hindley, 2010: 33-34).

The Russian federal custom service statistics for 2012- 2013 show that 'Kazakhstan's export structure to Russia consisted of Machines and equipment, vehicle, instruments and devices 32.1%-32.6% Mineral product 26%, textile, article and shoes 12%, products of chemical industry and industrial branches 8.7 %'. In total these categories of goods made up 97.6% of total volume import from Kazakhstan to Russia in 2012 (MFA, 2012: 2).

Defense equipment is the dominating exchange between Russia and Kazakhstan. Resources such as fuel and energy, electric power industry, nuclear power industry, especially uranium mining in Kazakhstan, implementation of joint projects of hydrocarbons resources development in North Caspian sea are other important deals between the two countries (Yesdauletova, 2009: 22).

3.2 Oil policy

Russia-Kazakhstan carries out their oil and gas transit through the Caspian pipeline consortium (CPC) the government of Russia and Kazakhstan own 50% of the CPC, with the remaining 50% left to the crude producers that sponsored the commission of the project at first place (Alcott, 1992: 5). In 2002 an intergovernmental agreement was reached between the two countries through the Atyrau-Samara crude oil pipeline. Approximately 15.5 million tonnes of oil per year is transported through this pipeline (Cohen, 2009: 13).

The state is landlocked, more remote from Open Ocean than is any other large nation of the world, and hence more dependent on its neighbors to be both customer and vendor. It is also 'demographically vulnerable', almost equally split between two ethnic groups whose interests, desires, and cultures are all but antithetical; what is worse, Kazakhstan also shares an enormous and undependable border with Russia, which would no more permit Kazakhstan to become a strong independent military power. Kazakhstan knows perfectly well that, at least in its own case, there is no realistic way that Russia can be cut out of the Caspian oil profits, because it is too easy for an excluded Russia to ensure that no one else can have the oil, either pipeline or no pipeline (Alcott:1995: 48).

Crude gas from the 'Karachaganak gas deposit is transported to the Freiburg Natural Gas processing plant by CJSC "KazRosGas"- a joint venture between Gazprom and the Kazakh KazMunaiGaz. Since 2002, the project on cooperation in integrated uranium exploitation has been carried out at Kazakhstan uranium deposit. The joint declaration on cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy was signed by both presidents in January 2006, instructed the party to devise a schedule for integrating nuclear powered

enterprise of both the countries a complex program for cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy is being carried out on the basis of this declaration(Hindley, 2008: 36).

3.3 Technological and military cooperation

In the sphere of military and space, technological cooperation has been carried out on the basis of bilateral intergovernmental agreements signed in 2004 and 2005. Baikonur space launch complex which is located in the region of Kazakhstan is given to Russia for a lease period of 10 year which in 2004, was further extended till 2050 (Hindley,2008: 40). Russia supplies defense articles to Kazakhstan. Russia has 6 grounds of Kazakhstan as lease territory for testing purpose. Military equipment ate manufactured in Russia and is then supplied to Kazakhstan. Russian government provides training to Kazakhstani military personnel in Russian raring school and centers.

Cooperation between both the countries are inline on various partnership programs of intergovernmental and international organizations such as the CSTO, EurAseS, SCO and CICMA. A common free market has been in effect since January 2012, which provides an additional boost to more extensive integration process within the former Soviet-Union. Above mentioned facts clearly are depictions of Kazakhstan's extended relations with Russia. This integration is resultant of a traditional bondage between the two that is also based on looking ahead for further cooperation and collaboration (Vinokurov, 2010: 11).

4. Kazakhstan Foreign Relations with China

Kazakhstan and China share ancient historical ties with each other. China is Kazakhstan's northwest neighbors who is geographically closest Kazakhstan borders and adhere to common interest in terms of political, economic and military cooperation. It was in 1992 that both countries tried to establish a stable neighborhood with building mutual trust and interests. Kazakh president Nazarbayev officially visited China in October 1993; it marked the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two nations. Foundation of friendly relations was established with a joint declaration between Kazakhstan and

People's Republic of China was the first to be signed and marked the principles of interaction between the two countries (Sebastian, 2008: 11).

Kazakhstan and China relations are also marked by the fact that Kazakhstan was the first amongst the central Asian countries to solve all its border disputes with China. Post-soviet disintegration 1991, there were huge disagreements on the issue of delimitation of the borders of largest landlocked nation Kazakhstan. China was sensitive to the issue of marking its territory. Several agreements were signed in Moscow in 1997, Shanghai in 1996 and Almaty in 1998. It was within the purview of the 'Shanghai Five' organization that all the issues were reached on to a fair reason and issues were resolved. Thus Kazakhstan's 'Multi-vector' foreign policy is reflective of its enhanced relations with not only Russia, but China, USA, Japan and other western powers.

4.1 Economic cooperation

Chinese companies are actively involved in Kazakhstan in "Oil and gas sector" Chinese occupying a major share in Kazakhstan 's 'Aktibemunaigad oil and gas' company that accounts to 60% share. Chinese engagement in the oil and gas sector has been rapidly developed with Chinese interest in this resource abundant region. In 1997, both the countries agreed to 'build and implement major project of oil pipeline from Kazakhstan to China'. This was the 'Atyrau-Kenkiyak oil pipeline which was completed successfully. In 2005, another phase of Atasu-Alashankou oil pipeline was established (Sebastian, 2008: 15).

With the successful implementation of the 'Kenkiyak-Kumkol and 'Kumkol-Atasu' pipelines linking the earlier built 'Atyrau -Kenkiyak and Atasu- Alashankou pipeline' in to the Kazakh pipelines had been integrated as a single system and incorporated in Chinese oil pipeline network (Clarke, 2014: 7). Kazakhstan implementing its 'Multi-Vector' foreign policy realized the importance of China as an important strategic partner in terms of development of oil and energy sector. Therefore, Kazakhstan has been actively engages in the energy sector, completing to its decisions, China also supports the initiative of Kazakhstan serving its economic interest in the region. China to posit a stronghold in the region finds energy as the route to this resource rich land. For example,

the process taken out by the Kazakh “KazMunaiGas” national “oil and Gas Company” at the end of 2009, is an important tool to diversify other routes to transport energy resources to global market (Luca, 2014: 14).

China and Kazakhstan cooperate in transit and transportation sector with huge investments in. In these areas with steady developing growth in freight and trade transport network, the importance of transportation links has seen growth as well. China focuses on four strategies that have been suggested by Chinese economist to meet its self-defined goal of exporting great amounts of energy to China. **Firstly**, importance has been laid on expanding the transportation routes of the region by establishing pipelines. Pipelines acts as a bridge to carry enormous energy from Kazakhstan to China. The director general of ‘KazTransOil’ states that ‘the capacity of the Kazakhstan-China pipeline sets to almost double by next year through an extension that is predicted to cost approximately 667 million US dollars’ (Kabyldin, 2011: 22).

Secondly, construction of new pipelines in the region to ease out traffic and multiply the exchange rate of energy supplies. Kazakhstan already exports gas through the central Asian China gas pipeline but aims to add extension to it, which would supply natural gas from the Karachaganak, tennis and Kashagan gas fields’. China has overpowered the region in terms of energy and gas with pipelines being heavily stalled by Chinese companies. Construction of pipelines through the Kartaly-Astana gas pipeline located in Russia is a way of extending gas and oil to central and northern parts of Kazakhstan from the Karachaganak field via Russia (Gleason, 2011: 48).

Thirdly, the Kazakhstan Caspian Transport system employed by Astana to transport tankers from the ports of Ata and Murky to Baku, from where they will be pumped into the Supra and Baku -Tbilisi Ceyhan pipeline. Not limiting the transfer of oil to overland pipeline is the key idea behind adding to the pipelines that would be built in newly discovered oil fields of Kashagan to linking to Aktau (Sebastian, 2008: 11).

Fourthly the Chinese strategy is to use the sea route to transport oil so as to directly connect to the ‘Baku-Tbilisi Ceyhan’ pipeline China faces firm objections to this proposal on the grounds of security concern by Russia and Iran. China is keen on

investing in Kazakhstan pipelines to extract energy in to its region which is seen as a competition by many nations and to counter this Russia joins hands with Iran and Other nations (Noonan, 2016: 3-4).

Economically China is not just projecting the construction of new pipelines but also contributes economically in to the nation. The China development bank has played an exemplary role in financing energy infrastructure projects and ought to be labeled the “engine of Eurasian energy integration”. China has financially assisted Kazakhstan in providing loans to Kazakhstan for the successful deliverance of Kazakhstan-China oil and Trans-Asia gas pipeline, so that it occupies the eastern region as a destination for energy exported by the Central Asian region.

China’s concern in Kazakhstan is not limited to energy and gas but also dwells upon the concern of Xiangjiang which is an autonomous region, which constitutes about one sixth land are of the Chinese territory. The tensions in the Uyghur region concerning the ethnic population that are half Kazakhs and Uyghurs and Muslim is a worry some fact for China. China does not want any separatist movement from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (UAR) as the rising Muslim separatism in the region. About 20,000 Uyghurs reside in Kazakhstan and significant Kazakhs residing in China. Any tension in this sensitive region could affect its relation with Kazakhstan which could harm the stability of the region (Sebastian, 2008: 56).

5. Kazakhstan Foreign Relations And the United States of America

Kazakhstan - US relation is determined by the bilateral cooperation shred by the two nations in security, nuclear security, especially nuclear nonproliferation has been valued top at the priority list of both the counties. Recognizing the independence of Kazakhstan post 1991 disintegration, US established diplomatic relations with Kazakhstan. US maintain its voice and opinion on peace and stability of the international system, which Kazakhstan immediately reacted to by cooperating on various security agreements. US recognized the potential of Kazakhstan as a key nation to establish stability in the entire stable region as Kazakhstan at the very beginning took its biggest step by closing the nuclear site of Semipalatinsk and renounced all its nuclear weapons in 1993. This marked

Kazakhstan's adherence to successful cooperation, peaceful development and enabling security in the region. This non-proliferation treaty was the foundation stone of US-Kazakh relation with Kazakh gaining recognition from west and particularly US for its coherent task of establishing a peaceful state (Harsanyi, 1989: 96).

President Nursultan Nazarbayev has explained the "inclusion strategy of Kazakhstan's foreign policy", in May 1992. He said, "Our foreign policy is very much oriented to the geopolitical position of Kazakhstan. In the south, apart from the former Soviet Central Asian states, we've got such countries as India, Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. In the east, we've got 1,500 kilometers of common frontier with China. In the north, we border Russia. I adhere to the policy of integration within the Commonwealth, and I'm doing everything possible so that the further disintegration of the Soviet Union continues without any bloodshed or further clashes. We will try to strategically continue building a good relationship with Russia, coordinating all of our problems as well as our work in economics and politics the same good relationship we are building with our traditional neighbor, The People's Republic of China"(President's Speech, 2014).

Basically, Kazakhstan and USA relations are mainly based on defense perspective with US cooperating with the nation to remove nuclear warheads, weapons grade material and supporting infrastructure from the region. According to Kazakhstan's foreign officials, defense and non-nuclear proliferation was an utmost concern for the development of the region. By 1994, Kazakhstan managed to remove almost more than half a ton of grade uranium and transferred it to the USSR. In 2000 and closing decade, Kazakhstan removed its last nuclear stock of warheads with the assistance of US and sealed almost 181 test tunnels by then (Lillis, 2014: 3). The cooperation between the two nations did not stop here and they further sealed 40 nuclear tunnels. Kazakhstan also successfully signed the conventional armed forces in Europe Treaty 1992, and the START treaty 1992, the nuclear non-proliferation treaty 1993 the Chemical Weapons convention and the comprehensive test ban treaty 2001 (MEA, 2016).

United States assisted Kazakhstan in economic terms by spending 240 million dollars to eliminate the nuclear heads from the region. Kazakhstan is an active participant of the

US 'International Military Education and Training Program' and foreign Military financing US has constantly assisted in Kazakhstan endeavor to maintain peace and stability of the region by removing weapons of mass destructions and its infrastructure, thus sharing the highest defense cooperation amongst the central Asian states.

On 11 April 2010, Presidents Nazarbayev and Obama met at the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, D.C., and discussed strengthening the strategic partnership' between the United States and Kazakhstan. They pledged to intensify bilateral cooperation to promote nuclear safety and non-proliferation, regional stability in Central Asia, economic prosperity, and universal values. Again in April 2011, President Obama called President Nazarbayev and discussed many cooperative efforts regarding nuclear security, including securing nuclear material from the 'BN-350 reactor. They reviewed progress on meeting goals that the two presidents established during their bilateral meeting at the Nuclear Security Summit in 2010 (MFA, 2010: 5).

5.1 Economic cooperation

USA is the largest good trading partner of Kazakhstan with a significant trade of 2.5 billion US dollars in the year 2013. In the export items of US- Kazakhstan economic cooperation consists of machinery, aircraft, and electrical machinery, vehicles and railways locomotive parts. And parallel us imports Kazakhstan significant amount of mineral fuels Quran and steel, inorganic chemical, tantrum, uranium ores. Economically in terms of FDI there has been a decline in the net figure which was 11.4 billion US Dollar, this highlighted decline of just over 3% compared to 2011. Areas of foreign direct investment largely comprises of Energy sector, business sector, telecommunication and electrical supplies (Kennedy, 2011: 162- 164).

While Russia and China pursue coherent strategies towards Kazakhstan and the wider region, the United States currently seems inclining on disengagement or, occasionally, grouping to define some elements of a strategy. Viewing the region through the prism of Afghanistan or Islamist terrorist threats from outside the region are narrow, ad-hoc approaches that cannot substitute for a US strategy and fall short of expectation in the region. Those expectations are still focused basically, on maintaining a stable triangular

balance between Russian, Chinese, and the US seconded by the EU power, influence and engagement (Succor: 2015: 14).

5. 2 Military cooperation

It is a highlight of US Kazakh relations. In 2003, both countries established their military cooperation in the form of five year plan. International terrorism is a big concern for the US which, Kazakhstan tries to cooperate to an extent of developing and maintaining an active peacekeeping force, strengthening its armed forces, aerial defense forces and maintain military platforms in the Caspian region. There are further improved military cooperation established between the twin with signing extended second five year plan of military cooperation, which also helps transforming Kazakhstan's peacekeeping potential and development of the national system of military education and training, as well as supply of modern sample of military and technical equipment and vehicles (Peyrouse, 2008: 5). Kazakhstan also participates with The United States in international platforms such as, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), United Nations and NATO (Yesdauletova, 2009: 38-40).

6. Kazakhstan and Western Powers

Kazakhstan has maintained solstice relation with Britain amidst the growing struggle for cooperation in this region of Eurasian heartland. Britain has shared a long decade of economic ties with Kazakhstan with a balancing of its dynamics that signals a rebalancing power. In 2013, prime ministerial official visit to the nation by David Cameron revived the warmth of the Anglo Kazakh relations. Kazakhstan Geopolitics plays well in this respect, it is due to the strategic location and important minerals and energy in Kazakhstan that has drove Britain to cooperate in the region. Earlier it was not much recognized but Kazakhstan's strategic repositioning attracted the west's a key partner in economic terms. Britain's considerable minerals and oil interest in Kazakhstan and in this regard both countries have agreed to potential agreements (Vinokurov, 2010:13).

7. Kazakhstan Foreign Relations with European Union

Since independence, Kazakhstan has established diplomatic relations with European Poets. EU is the largest potential trade partner of Kazakhstan with over 40% of Kazakhstan exports going to member states. The economic figure of Kazakhstan EU trade and net flow of direct investment from EU member states exceeds 80 US billion dollars. Kazakhstan exports almost 40% of its export to EU member states, European Union offers a positive alternative to Russian oil and gas thus reducing Kazakhstan's dependence on Russia to a large extent. Kazakhstan's views its importance as an 'oil and gas exporter' which is beneficial for economy of EU and its need for improved relation continues to grow for the European Union. Export from this resource rich nation is not just limited to 'oil and gas' but constitutes a major amount of 'supply of rare minerals and uranium ore' to EU (Lulyva, 2015: 85).

European Union as whole exports transports equipment, machinery items and chemical items to the region. EU funded projects are also working with local and regional administration to stimulate small and medium business startups and ppp investments” (Hutchinson, 2012: 2). Martin Hutchinson has also argued that “predicting EU growth in Kazakhstan, Foreign Direct Investment in Kazakhstan is likely to continue due to abundance of materials like copper and rare earth minerals in the country, which enjoys a buyout market in Europe (Luca, 2015: 12).

Exchange of high level visit among various European Union member states and Kazakhstan has been taken place. Since then, President Nazarbayev has taken official visit to France, and President Francois Mitterrand and Nicolas Sarkozy each reciprocated with visits to Kazakhstan during 2014. In referring to Kazakhstan strategic partnership with Italy' Nazarbayev noted that it accounts for 13% of Kazakhstan's foreign trade. The total volume of Italian investment in our economy is 6.5 US billion dollars and Italy is the largest consumer of Kazakhstan's oil (Aitken, 2009: 56).

Kazakhstan built up a point by point arrangement of the best approach to Europe with three obvious objectives and targets: to begin with, to get remote direct speculation from Europe with the point of bringing Kazakhstan at the level of key organization with the

European nations. Second, enhancing participation in the fields of innovations, vitality, transport, building; to enhance and third, upgrading Kazakhstan institutional and authoritative base by utilizing positive experience of the EU (Cutler, 2010: 46).

The EU has a vital role to play from Astana's perspective as a balance between rival energy and geopolitical interest that Russia, China and the US have in Kazakhstan and the surrounding sub region. From the European Union's perspective, Kazakhstan represents not only an important source of energy outside of the middle East, but equally a guarantor of stability in central Asia, and potentially long term strategic partner in the region (Cohen 2008:99).

Central Asia is of extreme geostrategic significance to the European Union as the region represents a bridge to China, Afghanistan, the Middle East and source of significant energy imports for the EU (Amines: 2010). No separate policy for central Asia was developed by The EU in the initial years rather it was viewed through its neighborhood policy and the region was considered as 'EU's Neighbor policy (Rahr, 2009: 14).

8. Kazakhstan Foreign Relations with Turkey, South Korea and Singapore

In the period shortly after independence, policy makers often discussed following the Turkish model, emulating Turkey in incorporating a Muslim cultural heritage into a secular, 'Europeanized' state". Turkey's president Turgut Ozal made a state visit to Kazakhstan in March 1991 and hosted a return visit by Nazarbayev later the same year. Soon afterward Nazarbayev began to echo Turkish talk of turning Kazakhstan into a bridge between Muslim East and Christian West. In practice, however, the Turks proved to be more culturally dissimilar than the Kazakhstanis had imagined; more important, Turkey's own economic problems meant that most promises of aid and investment remained mostly just statements of intentions (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011:1)

Kazakhstan's adherence to its 'Multi-Vector' foreign policy and deliverance of successful diplomatic ties with both its traditional and contemporary allies is evident in its 'Mission 2030' presidential address to the people of Kazakhstan. In an article entitled 'Kazakhstan's Mission', President Nazarbayev outlines his vision of the country in

‘Mission 2030’. “According to the strategy it would take Kazakhstan about 30 years, roughly the amount of time it took Asian tigers to go from rags to riches, to become prosperous. However, Kazakhstan is not a tiger, it is a snow leopard, that can combine ‘western elegance and advanced technologies with Asian wisdom and endurance’. It has a great potential to leap forward and become a country with a developed market economy, clean environment and healthy population. It is also conditioned to be an economic and cultural Centre of Eurasia, a link between the civilizations of Europe and Asia (Gleason,2001:50).

According to Gleason, Kazakhstan is a ‘reform-oriented’ country facing significant governance challenges and problems of social inequality’. Kazakhstan’s foreign policies have not created the level of prosperity sufficient to enable a broad distribution of the economic benefits of the transition. Instead, the country still relies upon redistribution and foreign donor assistance to enhance the social consequences of the more difficult aspects of structural reform such as support to pension reform and public education. Nor can the further development of Kazakhstan’s oil and mineral sectors be expected to lead to a wide redistribution of income. But the openness of Kazakhstan’s markets to foreign competition is paralleled by the openness of the political system. In no other Central Asian country is there such open debate and contestation over policy alternatives (Gleason: 2001).

Kazakhstan’s reliance on Russia from one perspective and the need to pull in substantial volumes of oil and gas outside direct speculation into areas to attract foreign direct investments demanded an adaptable flexible strategy equipped for addressing the double difficulties of state-building and financial recuperation in the early long periods of freedom. Thus, each neighboring country is important to Kazakhstan in its own way, depending on its economic might, and on its political and social situation. In the case of each country the economic aspect, the political aspect or their combination, may be of special importance. Kazakhstan, located as it is between two major, gravitational forces, those of Russia and China, depends on their mutual relations, strategies and tactics in the region. Steering away from an exclusively commodities-dependent economy will not drastically reduce this dependence. The development of Kazakhstan’s transit and logistics

capacity will be closely intertwined with cargo traffic from China to Europe, and with transit routes through Russia. At the same time, alternative transport corridors, to the south and in other directions is being tested.

Thus we can say that economics is the determinant factor in Kazakhstan's relations with China, while politics and security overweigh its ties with Russia. Both economic and political considerations influence Kazakhstan's relations with its Central Asian neighbors due to the similar issues all are facing, and due to the need for coordinated efforts to address them. Although there are no imminent threats to Kazakhstan's security from the side of neighboring countries, some negative factors should be taken into consideration. And, although the situation in greater Eurasia remains politically uncertain in light of recent conflicts, all countries in the region have a vested interest in pursuing economic growth.

Overcoming the "continental trap" has been of crucial importance even for maritime powers such as Russia and China. Some of these countries' territories are landlocked and located far from the open sea, such as Eastern Siberia in Russia, or the northwest provinces of China. Therefore, the connectivity of transport corridors, communications, transit and logistics, act as a unifying point for Kazakhstan and its neighbors (Sultangaliyeva, 2016: 66).

Thus, Kazakhstan's location in the center of the region's transport corridors takes on particular importance. It becomes a decisive factor in overcoming continental land lock and in creating an international transit transport network (Sultangaliyev, 2016:66). Therefore, it can be positively asserted that the foreign policy of Kazakhstan and its "neighborhood factor" has far-reaching economic and social effects not only for Kazakhstan, but for the entire Eurasian region, which is largely shaped by the geopolitical significance that Kazakhstan holds in the international system.

CONCLUSION

Kazakhstan is the 'largest landlocked' country in the world and ninth largest country in the world' and in terms of its area is exorbitantly located in middle of the Central Asian region. This 'Geopolitics' of positioning of Kazakhstan holds extreme importance, situated in center of the, "Heartland" as Mackinder terms it, is embroidered with the Caspian Sea, world super powers such as China The United States, Russia, and energy rich countries such as the five republics of Central Asia along its borders.

Since, Kazakhstan independence in 1991, the nation struggled with domestic and national problems in front of it with a toughly tailored national policy that had to look serious. Kazakhstan was left with economic instability due to its conventional disintegration of USSR that affected the economic system majorly. It was Nursultan Nazarbayev elected as the president of the nation, foreign relations were the first to show signs of improvement (Cohen, 2009: 96-97).

In 2000, the multi vector foreign policy of Kazakhstan had been successful in managing to stabilize its relation with Central Asia's "traditional hegemony" Russia thus revealing cooperative relation with China which is Central Asia's emerging power and was successful in establishing positive relations with United states that largely showed interest in Kazakhstan's military and nuclear cooperation. "Russia has attempted to foster a Moscow led reintegration of a large part of the post-soviet space, especially in the economic domain. Beijing has begun to develop a China centric silk road economic belt while Washington unveiled its New Silk Road initiative in 2011" (Syroezhkin, 2013:22). Dwelling amongst this Kazakhstan tried to manage its foreign relations in line with diversification of its foreign policy suiting its need.

Errant Idrissov, the Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan in the year 2014 had stated that Kazakhstan's foreign policy developments, including top level meetings and visits, have once again demonstrated the critical importance of Kazakhstan 's 'Multi -Vector foreign policy. Remaining true to the fundamental principles and values of this well established doctrine is the only viable option for a country such as ours. Following to this statement in the same year, Nazarbayev said that "The foreign policy of Kazakhstan is balanced and 'Multi -Vector' foreign policy has been proofed to be on the right track by this practice".

Thus the growing relations of Kazakhstan with the outside world marks the success of its foreign policy at the same hand, it attracts contentions and competition from the developed world.

Kazakhstan faces attention from major super powers of the world such as the United States, Russia and China that are involved in a battlefield of various types. Russia seeks its defense interest carom this region, as it wants to reestablish its traditional control or hegemony on the country. To regain the hegemony, Custom Union the economic agreement, is largely seen to be motive of the Russia government to establish its control in the central Asian state, and gradually extending its ambit in the entire central Asian region.

China is in dire need of satisfying its energy needs for which, it turns to Kazakhstan due to its enormous energy resources. The trade relations between the countries have significantly increases in the last decade. China is trying to economically lay its influence in the region, to which Kazakhstan is reacting positively; this diverting of attention is a matter of concern Russia. China is potential of becoming the largest economic partner of Kazakhstan which could take Russia's position in the near future. The past twenty has shown positive outcomes of Kazakhstan's independent foreign policy and evolution of multi-vector policy, which allowed Kazakhstan to become an independent and authoritative state in the world community. Thus, according to the IMF, in 2010, GDP per capita recoded 9009 USA dollar, Kazakhstan is a leader among countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia. The same index in Turkmenistan was - 3677, in Uzbekistan - 1380, Kyrgyzstan - 643, in Tajikistan - 734, and Azerbaijan - 6008, in Armenia - 2840, Georgia – 2629” (IMF, 2010).

USA is concerned of security, as it plays the important role in its foreign relations. Central Asian as a whole is a powerful region that also is susceptible to international terrorism. To counter this, USA cooperates with Kazakhstan in security cooperation organizations thus leading to enhanced participation in international organizations such as the United Nations, NATO, and CSTO and agreeing party to non-nuclear and non-proliferation treaties and pacts.

Kazakhstan cooperation with the EU is further seen to be a domination of Russian interest which was to a restrict Kazakhstan in choosing its partner but the adoption of 'Multi- Vector' foreign policy has certainly led to a clear vision of diversifying its ambition of cooperation and collaboration with superpowers. The adoption of the 'Multi –Vector' foreign Policy has ensured the territorial integrity of Kazakhstan and has provided it with space and options to communicate freely in the international community. Thus, Kazakhstan is amongst the most cooperative states in Central Asian region. That cooperates and participates in large international endeavors. Looking at the transition of Kazakhstan from an overly dependent nation to becoming an independent one pat 1991, clearly speaks of the positive result of the adoption of multi vector foreign policy in 2014 and continuing years but there are challenges and apprehensions attached with this change as well.

According to regional analyst of Kazakhstan, George Smith, in looking forward to Kazakhstan's 'Multi-Vector' foreign Policy Reaffirmed policy as such: Central Asia's biggest country still remains committed to its traditional 'Multi-Vector' strategy. This strategy, which is now closely associated with Kazakhstan on the international stage, implies the pursuit of well balanced and mutually advantageous relations simultaneously on different fronts (Dave, 2010: 11).

Kazakhstan was clear in its vision that was evident in 2015 foreign policy review and talks held in Kazakhstan capital 'Astana' addressing 'State of the Nation' by President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev said "the basis of our economy is active work aimed at attraction of investments, both foreign and domestic Thus looking forward to create favorable investment climate as possible" (MFA, President's Speech, 2015).

Kazakhstan's foreign policy which is multi-dimensional gives priory to economic stabilization, adoption of political stabilization, and state's security in Central Asia. Kazakhstan intends to continue utilizing its strong hold to bring in regional and global level changes that suits its ambition. Seeking this security at both regional and global level, with its unfolding of multifaceted layers of its foreign policy has proven beneficial to Kazakhstan own interest. The race is to secure Kazakhstan position amongst the world

30 most developed countries and becoming the heartland of Eurasia' by securing its position in both Asia and Europe to achieve its goal of becoming 'Heartland of Eurasia'. Kazakhstan takes care of number of factors such as commitment, ability, and willingness to act in accordance with the nation's interest in the same direction. The factors contributing to meet the desired goals are elopement at the political level, democratization process and peaceful nation building process in action, futuristic leadership that accentuates and adhere to the polices that has been carrying out by the preceding government and policy makers. Any radical changes in regional politics of central Asian countries, China and Russia and future circumstance of the Afghan region may limit and affect Kazakhstan policy options and choices in the future (Dave, 2010: 36).

Seeking alliance and cooperation with Central Asian states proved helpful for Kazakhstan to functional according to the goals of its 'Multi –Vector' foreign policy. At a diplomatic meeting President Nazarbayev maintained his position of working closely with its central Asian counter parts taking in to account historical, cultural and linguistic roots. President Nazarbayev emphasized on maintaining cordial relations with the United States and maintaining its strategic partnership work more positively for both the regions. He even said that "they will further maintain and work towards development of cordial relations with the European Union, which is also the largest trade, economic investment partner of Kazakhstan". Continuation of traditional cooperation with the countries of post-soviet space is further emphasized by Nazarbayev thus giving impetus to the need of developing friendly relations with all countries. 'Astana also attaches great importance to 'strengthening all round cooperation with Turkey, which is based on the 'common historical and cultural values' shared by the people of both regions' (MFA, 2016).

Adhering to its multi vector foreign policy, Kazakhstan also supports the establishment of 'joint comprehensive action plan' on Iran's nuclear program and internal adjustments of political and territorial disputes with Afghanistan. Kazakhstan actively supports restoration of program in Afghanistan by training personals, developing the infrastructure and social facilities and intends to carry out this process of improvement further. Thus 'Multi –Vector' foreign policy largely takes care of the tension surrounded in the Central

Asian region of international terrorism by its neighboring borders. Nazarbayev had said “we will extend friendly relations with the countries of the near and the Middle East, we intend to consolidate the Asian vector of our foreign policy”. Here the emphasis is on expanding trade, economic investment and technological cooperation. Kazakhstan has a long way to go in establishing itself at the heart of ‘Eurasian’ subcontinent (MFA, 2017)

Kazakhstan’s policy of ‘Eurasianism’ is not simply an abstract concept but it is reflected and very much alive and visible in all aspects of social, economic and political life. One of the most well-known public universities in Kazakhstan is named as ‘Eurasia University’, the Eurasian Bank and other multiple social political and cultural organizations and institutions bearing the name of Eurasia – are operating in the country and focusing on the issues and aspects of Eurasian space. Press and media, both printing and electronic, are feeding back the concepts, ideas and perceptions of ‘Eurasianism’ on a continuous basis and helping to mold social learning and consciousness in the spirits of ‘Eurasianism’. (Mostafa, 2013: 12).

Kazakhstan’s foreign policy is viewed in danger due to its inclination being contentious to Russia and China. Clarke argues that a ‘shifting foreign policy promises to generate negative returns in the -Pacific, has, in effect, signaled a decline of interest in Central Asia, leaving the context of the US, Chinese, and Russian pivots to Asia’ (Clarke , 2015: 4)

Kazakhstan’s ‘Multi-Vectorism’ is in danger of becoming irrelevant in a strategic environment of only two realistic vectors alignment with Moscow or Beijing. Such concerns are linked to the political legitimacy of the ruling regime, which has, to a significant extent, rested on international recognition of Kazakhstan as a respected actor in international affairs. The potential dominance of the Eurasian geopolitical environment by Russia and/or China, thus, not only threatens to constrain Astana’s foreign policy choices but to also undermine the stability of Nazarbayev’s regime.” Michael Clarke (2015) elaborates the challenge associated with the multi vector foreign policy approach that might destabilize Kazakhstan relations with Russia and China but, also might lead to political instability (Cummings, 2005: 36-37).

Challenges to Kazakhstan's 'Multi –Vector' foreign policy

There had been various challenges surrounding the implementation of the multi vector approach the very **First** being the economic contentions prevailing in the region in the form of battle Field of influence among Russia, China and the US. The oil slump in 2015 posited a systemic threat to one of the main source of Kazakhstan's export earnings. The devaluation float of the 'Tenge oil field' has bolstered the financial position of the state by eliminating new values currency, which was a hurdle to export driven growth while also fostering the foreign reserves of the central Bank of Kazakhstan(Nonan,2016: 4-5).

Another threat comes from the lack of successor to the political seat in Kazakhstan .it was under the leadership of Nursultan Nazarbayev that such a transformation could take place due to his vision if Kazakhstan as an independent nation. Post his term, Kazakhstan might face economic troubles.

Kazakhstan foreign policy is mainly central to the working of the Custom Union which, bank scholars is questioned for its biasness. There are questions about Russia's interest and goals in the union. Oppositions place this formation of Union to be a move by Russian government, carrying political motive of regaining its hegemony over the land.

Secondly, there are questions on the way elections are carried out and the level of legitimacy and fairness involved in the legislative process. There are complains and debate about the real public support to the custom Union. There is possibility of Belarus jeopardizing future of the union.

Thirdly, Kazakhstan's multi vector foreign pricy is appreciated on a large basis in entire world. But, through the Eurasian Union there is a shift in its leanings which is Russian centric. This largely questions its multi vector foreign policy design. Thus, to keep a check on it Kazakhstan should adhere to what it believes as multi vector approach (Noonan, 2016).

Fourthly, Kazakhstan in enabling its 'vision 2030' needs to look at its neighbor both traditional and contemporary in equivocal ways that majorly supports the nation's 'Multi-

Vector' foreign policy approach. In order to posit a strong hold of its policy Kazakhstan faces challenge unaccommodating interest of varied powers such as Russia, China, USA, Japan and more (MFA, 2017).

Fifthly, Kazakhstan's foreign policy and its 'pragmatic' character are exemplified by the contentions surrounding the actual demarcation of the Caspian Sea region. Kazakhstan favored the demarcation of the Caspian Sea into national sectors over which each state had exclusive sovereignty. Russia and Iran, however, contended that the Caspian is actually an inland lake and thus subject to joint control by all littoral states. The other two littoral states, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, shared Kazakhstan's interest in national sectors (Ipek, 2008: 14-15).

Thus from the above study the hypothesis has been proved that Kazakhstan's Multi-Vector foreign Policy approach has been successful in positing Kazakhstan's ambition of becoming the 'Heart of Eurasia'' and 'geopolitics has impacted Kazakhstan's foreign policy affecting its relations with neighboring countries and attracting further international attention.

Kazakhstan's 'Multi -Vector foreign policy' is a result of the landlocked state looking for a solution to accommodate its interest amidst the two powerful neighbors, Russia and China. Foreign policy of Kazakhstan has been successful in keeping its ties intact with its traditional ally Russia and simultaneously developing and modifying it policies, which attracted other super powers to invest in the region such as the Japan, United States, South Korea, Singapore, Turkey and many more. Such a diversified policy has led Kazakhstan to keep up with its good relations with Russia, and attracting major powers to invest particularly developing the energy sector that further helped Kazakhstan to attract China in its energy giant structure. As discussed in third chapter China's interest in the region is heavily developed by Kazakhstan, seeking its interest in taking this attention as an opportunity to fulfill the growing energy demands of China due to its growth projects that in a way bolstered Kazakhstan's economy.

The past twenty years have shown the correctness of the principle of multi-vector, which allowed Kazakhstan to become an independent and authoritative state in the world

community. Thus, according to the IMF, in 2010, GDP per capita recoded 9009 USA dollar, Kazakhstan is a leader among countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia. The same index in Turkmenistan was - 3677, in Uzbekistan - 1380, Kyrgyzstan - 643, in Tajikistan - 734, and Azerbaijan - 6008, in Armenia - 2840, Georgia – 2629 (Meister, 2015: 11-12).

Today we can state that Kazakhstan has satisfied all of its strategy issues that came before the newly independent state amid the 20 long periods of autonomy, Kazakhstan has taken a commendable site on its political and financial framework, fortifying state sway and regional trustworthiness. The Kazakhstan government has successfully built up political relations with 138 nations of the world; Kazakh strategic missions are open in 73 of them. Thus, the Republic certifies ambassadors to 107 nations, and additionally delegates of provincial and worldwide associations (MFA, 2017).

Kazakhstan's dynamically changing foreign policy evolves new equation every year which shows its determination to achieve its target 2030 or 'Mission 2030'. In this continuous process, Kazakhstan has shaped its foreign policy according to its own terms. Kazakhstan's Multi –Vector foreign Policy has shown an optimistic result that keeps the international system buzzing about its trajectory in development and prominence in Central Asia. It is thus rightful to say that Kazakhstan has opened its door to its near and far neighbors, attracting tussle and contentions between super powers such as China, Russia, USA and others, which is purely due its Geopolitical importance. In coming years, Kazakhstan shall further adhere to its dynamic approach of international relations to seek fruitful consequences.

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