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DERUSSIFICATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN UNDER KASSYM JOMART TOKAYEV¹

ABSTRACT

Derussification of the post-Soviet area was initiated with the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the Republic of Kazakhstan under the first President Nursultan Nazarbayev, the removal of elements of Russianness was uneven and limited. The change to the presidency in 2019 brought changes in this aspect. The main focus of the paper is to analyze the measures taken by the new head of state Kassym Jomart Tokayev between 2019 and 2023, bearing the hallmarks of derussification in political, economic and social aspects. The aim of the study is to determine whether the new president has intensified the process of the derussification of the republic. It was possible to find the answer by analyzing policies centered around language, history, security and the economy in terms of neutralizing Russian influence.

Keywords: Kazakhstan, Russia, derussification, Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kassym Jomart Tokayev

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INTRODUCTION

After the disintegration of the State of the Councils in the Republic of Kazakhstan, there was a slow process of kazakhization and a derussification of socio-political life. The literature lacks expert definitions of these terms. Hence, in order to explain what the process of derussification is, it is necessary to start from the notion of russification. According to Seans C. Brazal, 'Russification' is a term used to describe efforts to impose Russian language, ideals and beliefs on non-Russian communities throughout pre-revolutionary Russia and the Soviet Union². A slightly broader explanation can be found in the Encyclopedia of History, which outlines the characteristics of the Russification process: (1) the abolition of local authorities and the introduction of Russian state institutions in their place; (2) the replacement of local education with structures subject to central management in St Petersburg³. Based on the definition provided, derussification is the action taken by national elites to reduce the importance of the Russian language in culture, education and everyday use.

Kazakhization is an informal term coined after the collapse of the USSR, in response to the need to restore a role in the socio-political life of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the indigenous elite and the Kazakh language⁴. From a scientific point of view, Kazakhization is the counterpart of Soviet korienization, i.e. measures aimed at training and promoting representatives of local nationalities to managerial positions, introducing the national language in office work, education and publications⁵.

The definitions presented make it possible to pose the thesis that Kazakhization is an indigenous variety of derussification supplemented by the aspect of limiting the number of ethnic Russians in the administrative apparatus of the state.

In the case of Kazakhstan, this phenomenon was initiated in 1991 and still remains unfinished. Three key factors influenced the slow-down of derussification. The first was the prevalence of Russian language use. After the collapse of the USSR, for 62.8% of ethnic Kazakhs Russian was their first language, which blocked a rapid transition of the education system and administration to service in Kazakh, as this would have excluded not only the Russian minority but also the overwhelming majority of representatives of the titular nation⁶:

² S.C. Brazel, *Russification Efforts in Central Asian and Baltic Regions*, Alabama 2012.

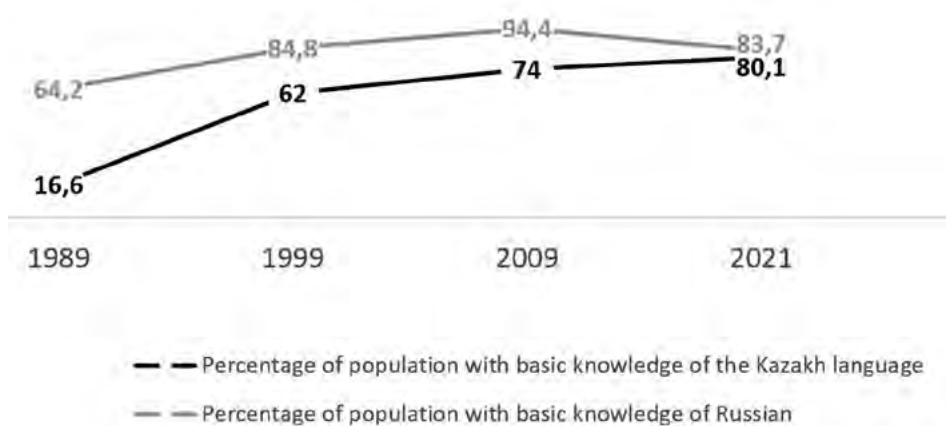
³ "Русификация," in *Encyklopedia szkolna. Historia*, Warszawa 1993, pp. 539-541.

⁴ Э. Сулейменова, "Русификация и казахизация как языковая гомогенизация многоязычного Казахстана [E. Suleymenova, "Rusifikatsiya i kazakhizatsiya kak yazykovaya gomogenizatsiya mnogoyazychnogo Kazakhstana,]" *Russian Language Journal*, vol. 60, no. 1 (2010), pp. 231-232.

⁵ С. Казиев, "Политика коренизации и проблемы межэтнического доверия в Казахстане (1923-1936 гг.)," *Омский научный вестник* [S. Kazyiev, "Politika korenizatsii i problemy mezh-etnicheskogo doveriyav Kazakhstane (1923-1936 gg.)," *Omskiy nauchnyy vestnik*], vol. 2, no. 136 (2015), pp. 29-32.

⁶ Н. Ивашенко, "Русский язык в Казахстане: развивается или исчезает?" [N. Ivashchenko, "Russkiy yazyk v Kazakhstane: razvivayetsya ili ischezayet?"] *Exclusive*, 24 March 2023, at <https://exclusive.kz/russkij-yazyk-v-kazahstane-razvivaetsya-ili-ischezaet/>, 22 February 2023.

Chart 1. Knowledge of the Kazakh and Russian languages over the period 1989-2021.



Sources: A. Манаков, “Владение русским языком титульными народами Республик России и стран Ближнего Зарубежья” *Псковский региональный журнал*, vol. 17, no. 3 (2021), p. 79; С. Васильев, “Казахстан: русский язык и политика,” *Фонд поддержки и защиты прав соотечественников, проживающих за рубежом*, 1 February 2013, at https://pravfond.ru/press-tsentr/stati/kazakhstan_russkiy_yazyk_i_politika_104/, 22 February 2023.

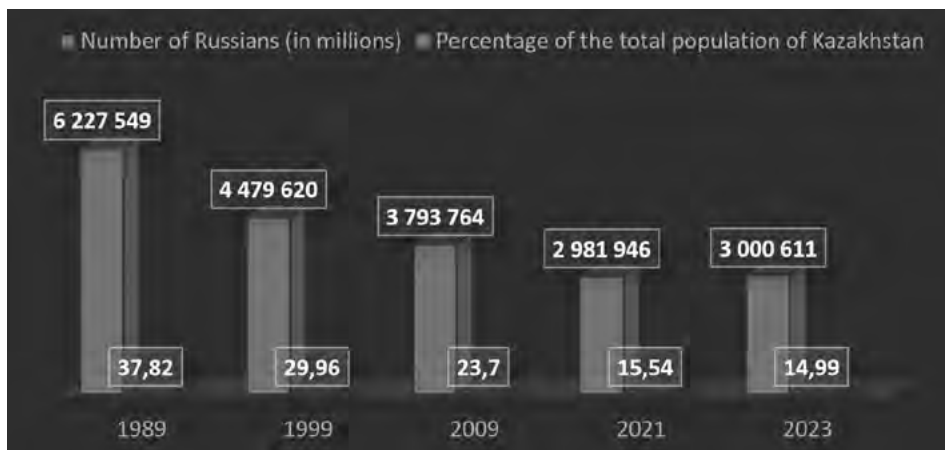
Over the course of four censuses, a trend of strengthening the importance of the Kazakh language is evident. In this case, there is a close correlation with the increase in the share of ethnic Kazakhs in the overall population structure of the state. According to the 2021 data, Kazakhs accounted for 70.4% of the population, and assuming that all representatives of this ethnos speak Kazakh, it means that 9.7% of Kazakh language speakers belong to representatives of other ethnos. According to the 2023 survey, 95% of the population speaks Kazakh at a basic level, which would entail a gigantic success in teaching in just two years. However, the results of the survey are not reliable, as it mentions that one in four representatives of the Russian minority knows Kazakh. This would mean that the actual degree of knowledge of Kazakh, assuming that representatives of all other ethnoses know Kazakh, could not be more than 88%.

The second obstacle was the number of Russians. According to the 1989 census, Russians accounted for 37.4% of the population (6.06 million), while Kazakhs accounted for 40.1% (6.49 million)⁷. In addition, in the regions located in the North where they made up more than 60% of the population, separatist tendencies emerged, which would intensify in the event of accelerated derussification⁸.

⁷ Государственный комитет СССР по статистике. Информационно-издательский центр, *Население СССР по данным всесоюзной переписи населения 1989г.*, Москва [Gosudarstvennyy Komitet SSSR po statistike. Informatsionno-izdatel'skiy tsentr, *Naseleniye SSSR po dannym vsesoyuznoy perepisi naseleniya 1989g.*, Moskva] 1990.

⁸ K. Pachucki-Włosek, “Russian Minority and the Security of the Republic of Kazakhstan,” *Bezpieczeństwo. Teoria i Praktyka*, vol. 46, no. 1 (2022), pp. 67-80.

Chart 2. Population of Russians in the Republic of Kazakhstan from 1989 to 2023.



Sources: Dane ze spisów powszechnych 1989, 1999, 2009, 2021; Численность населения Республики Казахстан по отдельным этносам (на начало 2023г.).

It was only the systematic decline in the Russian population after 1991 that allowed the argument to be launched about the need to recognize the Kazakh ethnos as the leading language and culture due to their numerical dominance.

Unfortunately, this was met with a strong response from the Kremlin. “The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation of 15 July 2008” included a provision to protect the interests of the Russian diaspora using all possible means, including military intervention⁹. The fear of military consequences became the third factor inhibiting the derussification process.

Despite the difficulties outlined, since 1991 the authorities have carried out activities aimed at cascading the public sphere, which have been characterized by varying degrees of intensity in specific years.

The change in the position of president in 2019 – Nursultan Nazarbayev stepped down after 28 years and was replaced by Kassym Jomart Tokayev – made it possible to lean into the question of the two leaders’ approach to the presence of Russian elements in Kazakhstan’s politics, economy and society. The main research objective of this article is to find an answer to the following question: **is there an observable intensification of activities bearing the hallmarks of derussification in the period of Kassym Jomart Tokayev’s presidency compared to the presidency of Nursultan Nazarbayev?** If so, in which aspects of socio-economic-political life is an increase in announcements and activities aimed at reducing Russian influence evident? In order to obtain an answer to the question posed, the actions taken by both presidents, whose main intention was to derussify Kazakhstan, were analyzed. Excerpts from the presidents’ statements

⁹ “Концепция внешней политики Российской Федерации,” *Президент России* [“Kontseptsiya vneshney politiki Rossiyskoy Federatsii,” *Prezident Rossii*], 15 July 2008, at <http://kremlin.ru/acts/news/785>, 22 February 2023.

on the issue in question, published in the most popular Kazakh Russian-language media, were used as the main source.

KAZAKHSTAN'S ACCELERATED DERUSSIFICATION PROCESS AFTER 2019 – SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES FROM THE NAZARBAYEV ERA

The new leader, in his address to the nation on 2 September 2019; “Constructive public dialogue is the basis for Kazakhstan’s stability and prosperity”, indicated the main qualities he would follow in implementing reforms. In the context of deradicalization, the key points were pragmatism, according to which reforms would be carried out in a way that would not destabilize the political situation, and the phasing of changes in a thoughtful and gradual manner. At the same time, the president announced the need to strengthen national unity, which could not take place without intensifying the Kazakhization of the minorities living in the Republic of Kazakhstan, with the proviso that their voice would not be left out of the decision-making process on the future of the state¹⁰. The announcements made emphasized the desire to continue the slow reduction of Russian *soft power* in Kazakhstan, as had been the case under Nursultan Nazarbayev, a phenomenon acceptable to the Kremlin.

In order to examine the evolution of Tokayev’s views on the acceleration of derussification and Kazakhization in the Republic of Kazakhstan, it is necessary to analyze the changes in terms of domestic, foreign and economic policy.

Elements indicative of the derussification of kazakhstan in the context of internal and external politics

Language policy

Since 1991, Kazakhstan has taken initiatives to spread the Kazakh language in the education system and in everyday use. In the case of education, however, this is never at the declarative level at the expense of the Russian language, which is also confirmed by President Tokayev’s statements:

*This is a very tough and important issue. My position is: firstly, there must be Kazakh and Russian languages. They are very important for our children. And only in the next place should English be taught*¹¹

¹⁰ “Конструктивный общественный диалог – основа стабильности и процветания Казахстана. Послание Главы государства народу Казахстана от 2 сентября 2019 года,” *Ебилет* [“Konstruktivnyy obshchestvennyy dialog – osnova stabil’nosti i protsvetaniya Kazakhstana. Poslaniye Glavy gosudarstva narodu Kazakhstana ot 2 sentyabrya 2019 goda,” *Yebilet*], at <https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/K1900002019>, 22 February 2023.

¹¹ “Токаев о трехязычии: Сначала казахский и русский, потом английский [Tokayev o trekh”yazychii: Snachala kazakhskiy i russkiy, potom angliyskiy],” *Tengri News*, 27 March 2019, at https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/tokaev-trehyazyichii-snachala-kazahskiy-russkiy-angliyskiy-365910/, 22 February 2023.

*Kazakh and Russian should be taught from the first grade, while English should only be taught from the fifth grade*¹²

*Currently there are discussions in society about teaching Kazakh and Russian languages in schools. Let me be clear: we need to educate children who speak both Kazakh and Russian well. This is in the interest of the younger generation*¹³

Meanwhile, the actions taken are contrary to the official message. The process of Kazakhization is affecting all levels of education, from kindergartens to universities. In line with the president's recommendations, from 2022/2023, Kazakh language classes have become compulsory in Russian-speaking kindergartens, while from 2024, all kindergartens are obliged to switch to Kazakh as the language of instruction¹⁴. In primary schools, from the 2023/2024 school year, the frequency of state language examinations has increased from two throughout the education cycle – in grades 9 and 11 – to five – in grades 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10¹⁵.

Derussification in education is being carried out through a gradual process of strengthening the importance of English, which is linked to the move away from the trilingual education system initiated by President Nursultan Nazarbayev in 2012 as part of the Kazakhstan 2050 development program¹⁶. Confirmation of this phenomenon is the increase in the number of hours of English from grade three from the 2023/2024 school year, and not from grade five as declared by the president in 2019¹⁷. At the same time, the teaching of Russian from grade 1 onwards has been abolished, which has a diametric effect on the spread of the Kazakh language to all children in compulsory education¹⁸. At university level, intensive training of young

¹² Ibid.

¹³ “Токаев считает, что дети Казахстана хорошо должны знать и русский, и казахский,” *Интерфакс* [“Tokayev schitayet, chto deti Kazakhstana khorosho dolzhny znat’ i russkiy, i kazakhskiy,” *Interfaks*], 1 September 2022, at <https://www.interfax.ru/world/860211>, 22 February 2023.

¹⁴ “Как учат казахский в детских садах Казахстана?,” *Вестник Кавказа* [“Kak uchat kazakhskiy v detskikh sadakh Kazakhstana?,” *Vestnik Kavkaza*], 23 February 2023, at <https://vestnikavkaza.ru/news/kak-ucat-kazahskij-v-detskikh-sadah-kazahstana.html>, 23 February 2023.

¹⁵ “С 2023 года в школах Казахстана будут сдавать экзамен по казахскому языку,” *Радио Азаттык* [“S 2023 goda v shkolakh Kazakhstana budut sdavat’ ekzamen po kazakhskomu yazyku,” *Radio Azattyk*], 10 November 2022, at <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/32124099.html>, 22 February 2023.

¹⁶ Море: А.С. Сырымбетова, Р.М. Жумашев, Д. Ныгметулы, С.А. Шункеева, Б.А. Жетписбаева, “Казахстанская модель трехязычного образования (методологические подходы, принципы и основные стратегии обучения трем языкам),” *Вестник Новосибирского государственного педагогического университета* [L.C. Syrymbetova, R.M. Zhumashev, D. Nygmetuly, S.A. Shunkayeva, B.A. Zhetpisbayeva, “Kazakhstanskaya model trekh’yazychnogo obrazovaniya (metodologicheskiye podkhody, printsipy i osnovnyye strategii obucheniya trem yazykam),” *Vestnik Novosibirskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo universiteta*], no. 4 (2017), pp. 72–92.

¹⁷ “В школах Казахстана увеличат количество часов обучения английскому языку [V shkolakh Kazakhstana uvelichat kolichestvo chasov obucheniya angliyskomu yazyku],” *Forbes*, 3 September 2022, at https://forbes.kz/news/2022/09/03/newsid_283705, 22 February 2023.

¹⁸ “В Казахстане отменили изучение русского языка с первого класса,” *Радио Свобода* [“V Kazakhstane otmenili izucheniye russkogo yazyka s pervogo klassa,” *Radio Svoboda*], 16 August 2022, at <https://www.svoboda.org/a/v-kazahstane-otmenili-izuchenie-russkogo-yazyka-s-pervogo-klassa/31991050.html>, 22 February 2023.

cadres fluent in English is underway to ensure a gradual reduction in the use of Russian-language specialized vocabulary in favor of English-language¹⁹. This is explained by the desire for increased access to modern IT programs, essential in the digitization of the state, for the majority of whom English is the primary language of operation²⁰.

Tokayev's statements regarding the widespread use of Kazakh in the public space are marked by aspirations to reduce the role of the Russian language, as evidenced by the following quotes:

*I hope that the Kazakh language will become the language of inter-ethnic communication*²¹

*While strengthening the position of the Kazakh language, the status of the Russian language should not be compromised*²²

*It is better to learn the Kazakh language late than not to learn it at all*²³

*Willingness to learn the Kazakh language is a duty for anyone who connects his or her future with Kazakhstan*²⁴

The passages quoted illustrate the president's inclination not only to abolish the status of Russian as the state language enshrined in the 1995 Constitution, but also to diminish its role in contacts between ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan. This represents

¹⁹ “Об утверждении Государственной программы по реализации языковой политики в Республике Казахстан на 2020-2025 годы. Постановление Правительства Республики Казахстан от 31 декабря 2019 года № 1045. Утратило силу постановлением Правительства Республики Казахстан от 16 октября 2023 года № 912,” *Ебилет* [“Ob utverzhdenii Gosudarstvennoy programmy porelizatsii yazykovoy politiki v Respublike Kazakhstan na 2020-2025 gody. Postanovleniye Pravitel'sta Respubliki Kazakhstan ot 31 dekabrya 2019 goda № 1045. Utratilo silu postanovleniyem Pravitel'sta Respubliki Kazakhstan ot 16 oktyabrya 2023 goda № 912,” *Yebilet*], at <https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/P1900001045>, 22 February 2023.

²⁰ “Об утверждении Государственной программы ‘Цифровой Казахстан’. Постановление Правительства Республики Казахстан от 12 декабря 2017 года № 827. Утратило силу постановлением Правительства Республики Казахстан от 17 мая 2022 года № 311,” *Ебилет* [“Ob utverzhdenii Gosudarstvennoy programmy ‘Tsifrovoy Kazakhstan’. Postanovleniye Pravitel'sta Respubliki Kazakhstan ot 12 dekabrya 2017 goda №827. Utratilo silu postanovleniyem Pravitel'sta Respubliki Kazakhstan ot 17 maya 2022 goda № 311,” *Yebilet*], at <https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/P1700000827>, 22 February 2023.

²¹ О. Рамазанов, “Казахский станет языком межнационального общения – Токаев [O. Ramazanov, “Kazakhskiy stanet yazykom mezhnatsional'nogo obshcheniya – Tokayev],” *Tengri News*, 2 September 2019, at https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/kazakhskiy-stanet-yazykom-mejnatsionalnogo-obshcheniya-tokaev-378033/, 22 February 2023.

²² “Укрепляя позиции казахского языка, не следует ущемлять статус русского языка – Токаев [“Ukreplyaya pozitsii kazakhskogo yazyka, ne sleduyet ushchemlyat' status russkogo yazyka – Tokayev],” *Kazakhstan Today*, 25 June 2020, at https://www.kt.kz/rus/state/ukreplyaya_pozitsii_kazakhskogo_yazyka_ne_sleduet_ushchemlyat_1377900556.html, 22 February 2023.

²³ А. Алихан, “‘Лучше поздно, чем никогда’: Токаев призвал учить казахский язык [A. Alikhan, “‘Luchshe pozdno, chem nikogda’: Tokayev prizval učit' kazakhskiy yazyk],” *Politik*, 5 January 2021, at <https://politic.kz/verhi/9908-luchshe-pozdno-chem-nikogda-tokaev-prizval-uchit-kazakhskii-yazyk>, 22 February 2023.

²⁴ “Будущее нашей страны – в государственном языке [Budushcheye nashey strany – v gosudarstvennom yazyke],” *Kyzylorda News*, 3 September 2021, at <https://kyzylorda-news.kz/ru/uncategorized-r/bwdwshhee-nashey-strany-v-gosudarstvennom-jazyke-123738>, 22 February 2023.

a dramatic change from Nursultan Nazarbayev, who never undermined the existing language order. In addition, the head of state has made it clear that there is no place on Kazakh soil for people who want to be citizens of the republic but do not speak the state language. The expression of the ultimatum to the resisters is a key step in accelerating derussification.

Historical-symbolic policy

During the Nursultan Nazarbayev period, a number of measures had already been launched to contribute to the derussification of historical memory. One of the key elements was to fill in the so-called blank spots of history and to build a new interpretation of the assessment of the Soviet period.

In 1993, the law "On the Rehabilitation of Victims of Mass Political Repression" was adopted²⁵. This process still remains unfinished, which has become a priority for President Tokayev. In order to accelerate this process, on 24 November 2020 the Head of State established the State Commission for the Full Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repression, which is tasked with finding: all victims of collectivization and the Great Famine (1919-1921, 1930-1933), the Great Terror (1937-1938); those tried for membership of the Turkestan Legion; Red Army soldiers held in German captivity during the Second World War²⁶.

2021 marked the 105th anniversary of the uprising against tsarist rule. As part of the celebrations, which were postponed to 2022 due to the pandemic, numerous exhibitions were organized in urban and rural centers to publicize the history of the *Alakh* movement, which brought together the Kazakh elite with the common goal of achieving the broadest possible autonomy from Russia²⁷.

The rhetoric adopted is geared towards demolishing the myth of the big brother and presenting the Russians as the oppressors. One example is the demands for international recognition of the 1930-1933 famine, during which half of the population died, as genocide, as was done in the case of the Great Famine in Ukraine²⁸. At the same

²⁵ "Закон Республики Казахстан от 14 апреля 1993 года № 2143-XII 'О реабилитации жертв массовых политических репрессий' (с изменениями и дополнениями по состоянию на 01.05.2023 г.)," *Параграф* [Zakon Respubliki Kazakhstan ot 14 aprelya 1993 goda № 2143-XII 'O reabilitatsii zhertvmassovykh politicheskikh repressiy' (s izmeneniyami i dopolneniyami po sostoyaniyu na 01.05.2023 g.), *Paragraph*], at https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=1001939, 22 February 2023.

²⁶ "О Государственной комиссии по полной реабилитации жертв политических репрессий. Указ Президента Республики Казахстан от 24 ноября 2020 года № 456. Утратил силу Указом Президента Республики Казахстан от 22 января 2024 года № 438," *Ебилет* ["O Gosudarstvennoy komissii po polnoy reabilitatsii zhertv politicheskikh repressiy. Ukaz Prezidenta Respubliki Kazakhstan ot 24 noyabrya 2020 goda № 456. Utratil silu Ukazom Prezidenta Respubliki Kazakhstan ot 22 yanvarya 2024 goda № 438," *Yebilet*], at <https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/U2000000456>, 22 February 2023.

²⁷ Море: Т. Журтбая, *Движение Алаш. Сборник материалов судебных процессов над алашевцами*, Алматы [T. Zhurtbaya, *Dvizheniye Alash. Sbornik materialov sudebnykh protsessov nad alashevtsami*, Almaty] 2011.

²⁸ Море: А. Грозин, "Голод 1932-1933 гг. в Казахстане: феномен мифологизации истории как составная часть глобальной информационной войны" *Постсоветский материк*, vol. 1, no. 13 (2017), pp. 107-125.

time, Kazakh rhetoric implicitly condemns Russia as the culprit by emphasizing that senior leadership positions in the republic were staffed by Russians during the period in question²⁹. At the same time, Kazakhstan in the international arena has launched an information campaign on how Kazakhs tried to help the peoples exiled to their lands during the Stalinist period³⁰. The main aim of the education is the desire to spread beyond the borders of their own country the historical right that Kazakhs, despite living in the Land of the Radas, did not participate in building the machinery of mass repression. This narrative is reinforced by annual communiqués issued by *the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan* on the anniversary of the deportation of Caucasian peoples, Koreans, Germans, Poles and Crimean Tatars³¹.

It was impossible to cross out the entire Soviet legacy and say that everything was wrong. This is due to the fact that the years of Kazakhstan's existence within the USSR also represent a technological leap and a process of formation of the institutions on which the independent state is based³². Hence, it was necessary to find positive aspects, which was achieved by making a demarcation between pre-1964 and post-1964 events. The cut-off date was based on the year in which Dinmukhamed Kunayev, who initiated the Kazakhization process of the republic, took over as first secretary of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan. Since his death in 1993, Kunayev's memory has been nurtured through the creation of more streets under his patronage and the construction of new monuments, but the Tokayev period has seen an increase in the glorification of this figure. This is reflected in the decision in May 2022 to rename the city of Kapshagay in May 2022 to Kunayev (kaz. Конаев)³³.

As part of derussification, public holidays of Soviet origin are being downplayed. During the Nazarbayev period, this was done by creating alternative holidays on similar dates. A manifestation of this policy was the establishment of 7 May as Defenders

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ More: А. Балыкова, А. Сисекешова, "История депортации народов в Казахстан в 30-50 годы XX века," *Евразийский Союз Ученых* [A. Balykova, A. Sisekeshova, "Istoriya deportatsii narodov v Kazakhstan v 30-50 gody XX veka," *Yevraziysk*], vol. 12, no. 21 (2015), at <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/istoriya-deportatsii-narodov-v-kazakhstan-v-30-50-gody-hh-veka>, 22 February 2023.

³¹ "Посвящённый депортированным корейцам мемориал открыли в Костанайе" [Posvyashchënnnyy deportirovannym koreytsam memorial otkryli v Kostanaye], *ELKZ*, 8 October 2022, at https://el.kz/ru/posvyashchennnyy-deportirovannym-koreytsam-memorial-otkryli-v-kostanaye_52290/, 22 February 2023; Ч. Майсеит, "Память хранит все – Ахмед Мурадов" [Ch. Mayseit, "Pamyat' khranit vse – Akhmed Muradov"], *EL.KZ*, 23 February 2023, at https://el.kz/ru/pamyat-hranit-vse-ahmed-muradov_65675/, 22 February 2023.

³² More: М.Ш., "Формирование национальной идентичности республики Казахстан: особенности и противоречия," *Современная Европа* [M.Sh. Kabaziyev, "Formirovaniye natsional'noy identichnosti Respubliki Kazakhstan: osobennosti i protivore," *Sovremennaya Yevropa*], no. 7 (2022), pp. 221-231.

³³ "О переименовании города Капшагай Алматинской области в город Конаев," *Официальный сайт Президента Республики Казахстан* ["Opereimenovaniy goroda Kapshagaya Almatinskoy oblasti v gorod Konayev," *Ofitsial'nyy sayt Prezidenta Respubliki Kazakhstan*], 3 May 2022, at <https://akorda.kz/ru/o-pereimenovaniy-goroda-kapshagaya-almatinskoy-oblasti-v-gorod-konayev-341933>, 22 February 2023.

of the Fatherland Day, just two days before Victory Day. During the celebrations, the national symbols of independent Kazakhstan play a key role, and not, as in the case of Victory Day, the red flag with the hammer and sickle. Since 2018, initiatives have been taken to eliminate the St George ribbon from common use in favor of a ribbon in the colors of the national flag³⁴.

President Tokayev is also trying to transform the overtones of Victory Day. During the Nazarbayev period, due to his annual participation in parades in Moscow and adoption of Kremlin rhetoric, 9 May had the character of a joyous holiday. Meanwhile, the idea of the new head of state is for 9 May to take on a formula like that of neighboring Uzbekistan. There, 9 May is a Memorial Day, with a reflective dimension, to honor the thousands of Uzbeks who lost their lives during the Second World War³⁵. This is evidenced by the cessation of military parades in Kazakhstan itself from 2020 and the non-participation in celebrations in Moscow³⁶.

In addition, as part of the break with Soviet traditions, the belief among Kazakhstan's population that 1 May is no longer a holiday of an international character – International Worker's Day – but of a national character – has been strengthened since 1996. 1 May in the republic is celebrated as Kazakhstan People's Unity Day³⁷.

An extremely important element in the derussification of the historical sphere is the removal of street and place names of Russian origin. The biggest boom in this aspect came in the 1990s, when Shevchenko was renamed Aktau, Guriev was renamed Atyrau, Celinograd was renamed Akmola, Zhambyl was renamed Taraz, Aktiubinsk was renamed Aktobe. The process was subsequently abandoned. One of the reasons was to neutralize the threat from separatism in the northern areas until the emergence of aggressive statements by Russian politicians undermining Kazakhstan's sovereignty and territorial integrity:

Kazakhstan simply did not exist...

Northern Kazakhstan was not populated at all...

*In fact, the territory of Kazakhstan is a great gift from Russia and the Soviet Union...*³⁸

³⁴ “Демонстрация символов тоталитарных режимов: где запретили георгиевскую ленту [Demonstratsiya simvolov totalitarnykh rezhimov: gde zapretili georgievskuyu lentu],” *BBC News*, 21 April 2022, at <https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-61131224>, 22 February 2023.

³⁵ “Праздники в Узбекистане [Prazdniki v Uzbekistane],” *Advantour*, at <https://www.advantour.com/rus/uzbekistan/holidays.htm#6>, 22 February 2023.

³⁶ Д. Колесниченко, “Четвертый год подряд. Казахстан не будет проводить парад 9 мая для ‘экономии бюджетных средств’ [D. Kolesnichenko, “Chetvertyy god podryad. Kazakhstan ne budet provodit’ parad 9 maya dlya ‘ekonomii byudzhetykh sredstv’],” *New Voice*, 24 April 2023, at <https://nv.ua/world/countries/kazakhstan-otkazalsya-ot-parada-k-9-maya-nazvali-prichinu-poslednie-novosti-50319849.html>, 22 February 2023; А. Вайскопф, “Казахстан: вместо ‘Бессмертного полка’ – ‘Поклонись героям’ [A. Vayskopf, “Kazakhstan: vmesto ‘Bessmertnogo polka’ – ‘Poklonis’ geroyam’],” *DW*, 9 May 2022, at <https://www.dw.com/ru/kazakhstan-vmesto-bessmertnogo-polka-poklonis-gerojam/a-61739118>, 22 February 2023.

³⁷ “Официальные праздники в Казахстане [“Ofitsial’nyye prazdniki v Kazakhstane],” *Advantour*, at <https://www.advantour.com/rus/kazakhstan/national-holidays.htm>, 22 February 2023.

³⁸ А. Мамашулы, “Большой подарок. Высказывания российских депутатов о территории Казахстана вызвали возмущение,” *Радио Азаттык* [A. Mamashuly, “Bol’shoy podarok! Vyskazyvaniya

*We advocate the restoration of a united homeland. This means that we consider the people of Kazakhstan as our nation*³⁹

These words became the catalyst to put the issue of renaming streets and localities back on the agenda. In 2021 alone, as many as 68 localities and 572 streets and districts in districts located in the north of the country were renamed, the highest result in the history of independent Kazakhstan. For 2022-2025, a list of more than 3,000 localities with foreign names was created for which renaming is necessary⁴⁰. The list also included a bastion of the Russian minority – the North Kazakhstan region with its capital in Petropavlovsk, which demonstrates the desire to bring about the derussification of topographical names even in the face of protests from the Kremlin⁴¹.

The situation was further exacerbated by a law adopted by the Majilis in 2022 abolishing the obligation to place inscriptions in Russian in public spaces⁴². This law did not introduce new solutions, but only sanctioned the steps taken since 2017 characterized by the placement of new signage only in the Kazakh language, and if there is a need for bilingual writing, English-language names are preferred⁴³. Thanks to these measures, signs confirming the fact of the presence of a large Russian-speaking population, whose existence is used by Russia in raising the argument of its right to interfere in the internal affairs of neighboring states under the pretext of protecting the rights of the Russian-speaking population, are disappearing from the urban landscape.

Security policy

Back in 1992, Kazakhstan became a signatory to the Tashkent Agreement, which was transformed into the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) in 2002.

rossiyskikh deputatov o territorii Kazakhstana vyzvali vozmushcheniye,” *Radio Azattyk*], 15 December 2020, at <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/kazakhstanis-reaction-to-the-statements-of-russian-deputies-about-the-kazakh-territory/31002411.html>, 22 February 2023.

³⁹ “Депутат ‘Единой России’: Казахи – это русские, Казахстан – сепаратистская территория,” *КазТАГ* [“Deputat ‘Yedinoi Rossii’: Kazakhi – eto russkiye, Kazakhstan – separatistskaya territoriya,” *KazTAG*], 22 December 2020, at <https://kaztag.kz/ru/news/deputat-edinoy-rossii-kazakhi-eto-russkie-kazakhstan-separatistskaya-territoriya>, 22 February 2023.

⁴⁰ А. Сатбаева, “Около 3 тысяч улиц и населенных пунктов переименуют в Казахстане [A. Satbayeva, “Okolo 3 tysyach ulits i naselennykh punktov pereimenuyut v Kazakhstane,”] *Tengri News*, 13 February 2023, at https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/okolo-3-tyisyach-ulits-naselennyih-punktov-pereimenuyut-491040/, 22 February 2023.

⁴¹ “В Казахстане предложили отказаться от советских названий областей [V Kazakhstane predlozhili otkazat’sya ot sovetskikh nazvaniy oblastey],” *RBC*, 1 March 2023, at <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/01/03/2023/63fef1829a7947431fefb52b>, 22 February 2023.

⁴² “Реклама и субтитры на казахском языке: Токаев подписал закон о визуальной информации [Reklama i subtitry na kazakhskom yazyke: Tokayev podpisal zakon o vizual’noy informatsii],” *New Times*, 30 December 2021, at <https://newtimes.kz/obshchestvo/142449-reklama-i-subtitry-na-kazakhskom-iyazyke-tokayev-podpisal-zakon-po-vizualnoi-informatsii>, 22 February 2023.

⁴³ Т. Назарук, “Только на казахском и английском – управление по развитию языков не видит нарушения закона в табличках с QR-кодом в Костане,” *Наша Газета* [T. Nazaruk, “Tol’ko na kazakhskom i angliyskom – upravleniye po razvitiyu yazykov ne vidit narusheniya zakona v tabllichkakh s QR-kodom v Kostanaye,”] *Nasha Gazeta*, 24 September 2018, at <https://www.ng.kz/modules/news/article.php?storyid=32383>, 22 February 2023.

Entering into a military treaty with the Russian Federation was mainly driven by pragmatic motives. The border between the two countries is 7599 km⁴⁴. Entering into another military alliance would have required strengthening it, which is not logistically possible for the Kazakhstan Army of only 65,000 soldiers.

In 2016, the military alliance adopted “the Collective Security Strategy of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation until 2025”. The document envisaged: the development of a common position proclaimed in the international arena on ensuring global and regional security; cooperation with other military alliances to ensure stability in CSTO member states; consolidation of efforts to curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and increased arms control; development of military-technical cooperation; and strengthening of activities towards the development of the CSTO Anti-Terrorist Force⁴⁵.

The strategy adopted in fact strengthened the Kremlin’s control over decisions taken by member states. Meanwhile, “the Military Doctrine of the Republic of Kazakhstan” envisages building an autonomous defense system and limits the role of the CSTO to a minimum. Cooperation with the organization is mentioned only in two places and refers only to such aspects as: exchange of experience and conducting joint exercises, anti-terrorist and peacekeeping operations⁴⁶.

The intervention of the CSTO military in Kazakhstan in January 2021 clearly demonstrated that the organization is a tool for Russia to exert pressure and control the process of internal change in the member states. Besides, the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine clearly demonstrated that the most important member of the alliance does not adhere to the principles contained in “the Collective Security Strategy of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation until 2025”, which prompted Kazakhstan to initiate a process of weakening Moscow’s role in its own and the regional security system.

With regard to the national security system, undertakings have been made to reduce Russia’s position as a supplier of modern military equipment. While this is impossible with regard to combat aircraft, as Kazakhstan does not have sufficient resources and infrastructure base to produce aircraft on its own, the goal has been achieved with regard to armored vehicles. Thanks to intensive cooperation with the Turkish Republic,

⁴⁴ С.В. Голунов, “Проблемы пограничной политики республики Казахстан,” *Вестник Волгоградского государственного университета* [С.В. Golunov, “Problemy pogranichnoy politiki respubliky Kazakhstan,” *Vestnik Volgogradskogo gosudarst*], vol. 11 (2006), pp. 114-125.

⁴⁵ “СТРАТЕГИЯ коллективной безопасности Организации Договора о коллективной безопасности на период до 2025 года,” *Организация Договора о коллективной безопасности* [“STRATEGIYA kolektivnoy bezopasnosti Organizatsii Dogovora o kolektivnoy bezopasnosti na period do 2025 goda,” *Organizatsiya Dogovora o kolektivnoy bezopasnosti*], 18 October 2016, at https://odkb-csto.org/documents/statements/strategiya_kollektivnoy_bezopasnosti_organizatsii_dogovora_o_kollektivnoy_bezopasnosti_na_period_do_/#loaded, 22 February 2023.

⁴⁶ “Военная доктрина Республики Казахстан,” *Официальный сайт Президента Республики Казахстан* [“Voyennaya doktrina Respubliki Kazakhstan,” *Ofitsial’nyy sayt Prezidenta Respubliki Kazakhstan*], at https://www.akorda.kz/ru/security_council/national_security/voennuyu-doktrinu-respubliki-kazakhstan, 22 February 2023.

the Tarlon armored vehicle is being produced in the country, which has inhibited purchases of Russian BTR-80 vehicles⁴⁷.

An even more visible manifestation of the derussification of Kazakh security policy is the decline in confidence in the good intentions of the ally, which is evident in the increase in military exercises along the border with Russia both on land and at sea⁴⁸.

The experience of the 1990s has shown that a key factor in Russia's influence on internal security issues is the question of the presence of the Russian minority and, consequently, the functioning of Orthodox Church structures. With regard to the Orthodox religion, a good solution would be the creation of an autocephalous church along the lines of the changes carried out in Ukraine. For the time being, there are no indications that would force consideration of such a scenario. The hierarchs, headed by Metropolitan Aleksandr, show loyalty to the Kazakh state, as demonstrated by their failure to echo Patriarch Kirill's rhetoric regarding the war in Ukraine⁴⁹. The threat from the Russians is neutralized by trying to show them that Kazakhstan recognizes them as full citizens on the same terms as ethnic Kazakhs⁵⁰. To reinforce this message, the XXIX Session of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan issued a special resolution on the indivisibility of the Kazakh ethnos⁵¹. Initiatives to stimulate assimilation are intended to neutralize the possibility of a resurgence of separatism in the face of ongoing derussification efforts.

In the case of the derussification of regional security, expanding training cooperation with neighboring countries and NATO allies in close proximity has become a tool for achieving this goal. Confirming examples are the systematic joint exercises with Pakistan since 2017 and with Uzbekistan since 2021⁵². Uzbekistan, which has not been a member

⁴⁷ E. Teslova, B. Eruygur, "В Казахстане нацелены на развитие военно-технического сотрудничества с Турцией [V Kazakhstane natseleny na razvitiye voyenno-tekhnicheskogo sotrudnichestva s Turtsiyey]," *AA*, 1 March 2023, at <https://www.aa.com.tr/ru/>, 22 February 2023; "В РК планируют начать производство бронированных колесных машин 4x4 [V RK planiruyut nachat' proizvodstvo bronirovannykh kolesnykh mashin 4x4]," *Kazakhstan Today*, 16 July 2022, at https://www.kt.kz/rus/state/_1377936780.html, 22 February 2023.

⁴⁸ "Армия Казахстана провела комплексные учения на Каспии ["Armiya Kazakhstana provela kompleksnyye ucheniya na Kaspii]," *Informburo*, 2 August 2022, at <https://informburo.kz/novosti/armiya-kazakhstan-provela-kompleksnye-ucheniya-na-kaspiei>, 22 February 2023.

⁴⁹ "Глава государства принял митрополита Астанайского и Казахстанского Александра," *Официальный сайт Президента Республики Казахстан* ["Glavagosudarstva prinyal mitropolita Astanayskogo i Kazakhstanskogo Aleksandra," *Ofitsial'nyy sayt Prezidenta Respubliki Kazakhstan*], 1 July 2022, at <https://www.akorda.kz/ru/glava-gosudarstva-prinyal-mitropolita-astanayskogo-i-kazakhstanskogo-aleksandra-164545>, 22 February 2023.

⁵⁰ "Токаев: русские в Казахстане – неотъемлемая часть нашей страны [Tokayev: russkiye v Kazakhstane – neot'yemlemaya chast' nashey strany]," *Sputnik*, 3 June 2020, at <https://ru.sputnik.kz/20200603/tokayev-russkie-kazakhstan-14143432.html>, 22 February 2023.

⁵¹ N. Nazarbayev, *Era niepodległości*, Warszawa 2018, p. 178.

⁵² А. Богатик, "Казахстан и Пакистан проводят совместные антитеррористические учения," *Каравансарая* [A. Bogatik, "Kazakhstan i Pakistan provodyat sovmetstnyye antiterroristicheskiye ucheniya," *Karavansaraya*], 1 December 2017, at https://central.asia-news.com/ru/articles/cnmi_ca/features/2017/12/01/feature-02, 22 February 2023; P. Risbekkizi, "Учения 'Региональное

of the CSTO since 2012 and is open to building a military regional alliance, is a particularly important partner in building an independent security policy from Russia⁵³.

Another way of deracinating the regional security system is to undermine the effectiveness of CSTO. These actions involve President Tokayev himself, who, during an extraordinary session of the CSTO Collective Security Council on 14 September 2022, expressed the opinion that the CSTO could not solve the Karabakh problem on its own, and therefore the problem must be elevated to the UN agenda⁵⁴. Only one year after this declaration, Azerbaijan regained control of Karabakh by force. Azerbaijan's victory contributed to Kazakhstan's view of the weakness of the organization being shared by Armenia, a member of the CSTO, which was counting on Russia's support to maintain the status quo. On the other hand, however, the exclusion of Russia from the process confirmed that Moscow's involvement, in a conflict that had lasted more than 30 years, was only delaying the timing of its resolution⁵⁵. This turn of the Karabakh conflict may in future generate doubts for another two CSTO members Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which have a border dispute with each other⁵⁶. In this case, Moscow, not wanting to alienate either side, has to adopt a wait-and-see position, which in the long run will lead to a loss of confidence in one of the parties anyway. A discouraged party may become another stakeholder alongside Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan for a regional security alliance bypassing Russia.

Economic policy

On 20 May 2015, President Nursultan Nazarbayev announced "the Plan of the Nation – 100 concrete steps". According to the plan, Kazakhstan was to intensify efforts to attract foreign investment in sectors other than mining. Activity in the agricultural, processing and transport sectors was particularly welcome⁵⁷. Russia's interest mainly in

сотрудничество-2022' и их последствия для региона [Ucheniya 'Regional'noye sotrudnichestvo-2022' i ikhposledstviya dlya regiona], *Ankasam*, 27 August 2022, at <https://www.ankasam.org/>, 22 February 2023.

⁵³ Н.П. Пархитко, К.П. Курылев, Д.В. Станис, "Военно-политическое и военно-техническое сотрудничество государств Центральной Азии," *Военная мысль* [N.P. Parkhit'ko, K.P. Kurylev, D.V. Stanis, "Voyenno-politicheskoye i voyenno-tekhnicheskoye sotrudnichestvo gosudarstv Tsentral'noy-Azii," *Voyennaya mysl*], no. 7 (2020), pp. 28-29.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

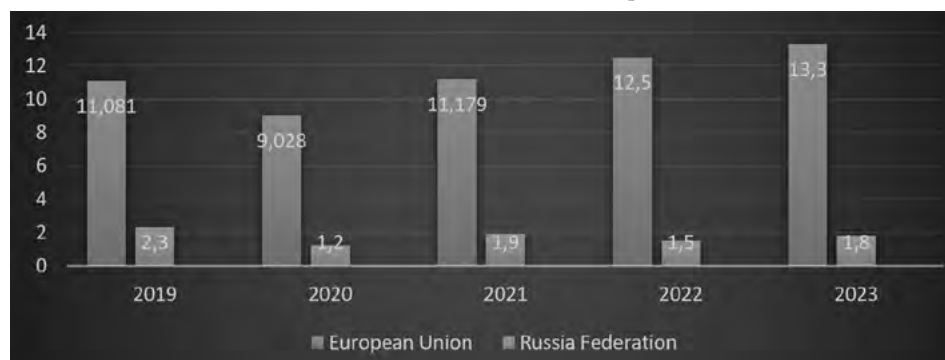
⁵⁵ K. Strachota, "Koniec Górskiego Karabachu. Polityczne trzęsienie ziemi na Kaukazie Południowym," *Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich*, 28 September 2023, at <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2023-09-28/koniec-gorskiego-karabachu-polityczne-trzesienie-ziemi-na-kaukazie>, 22 February 2023.

⁵⁶ K. Strachota, "Walki na granicy kirgisko-tadżyckiej," *Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich*, 19 September 2022, at <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2022-09-19/walki-na-granicy-kirgisko-tadzyckiej>, 22 February 2023.

⁵⁷ "План нации – 100 конкретных шагов. Программа Президента Республики Казахстан от 20 мая 2015 года," *Ебилет* ["Plan natsii – 100 konkretnykh shagov. Programma Prezidenta Respubliki Kazakhstan ot 20 maya 2015 goda," *Yebilet*], at <https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/K1500000100>, 22 February 2023.

the mining sector led to expanding contacts with European countries. This has allowed the Russian Federation to downgrade its importance as one of the most important investors, as evidenced by the data in the chart:

Chart 3. Investment volume between 2019 and 2023 expressed in USD billion.



Sources: “Об инвестициях в основной капитал в Республике Казахстан (январь-июль 2023г.),” *Бюро национальной статистики* [“Ob investitsiyakh v osnovnoy kapital v Respublike Kazakhstan (yanvar'-iyul' 2023g.)” *Byuro natsional'noy statistiki*], 17 August 2023, at <https://stat.gov.kz/ru/industries/business-statistics/stat-invest/publications/5199/>, 22 February 2023; “Составлен топ-10 стран инвесторов в казахстанскую экономику [Sostavlenn top-10 stran investorov v kazakhstanskuyu ekonomiku],” *Forbes*, 4 April 2022, at https://forbes.kz/finances/investment/sostavlenn_top-10_stran-investorov_v_kazahstan-skuyu_ekonomiku/, 22 February 2023.

The data presented in the graph shows that there has been a steady increase in investment from the European Union Member States since 2020, while fluctuations and difficulties in maintaining the upward trend are evident for Russia. However, it should be borne in mind that the European Union's result is the sum of the investments of the 27 member states, which, compared to Russia's result on its own, is not an impressive result. However, it should be noted that as of 2022, Russia does not appear in the top 3 most important investors. The ranking is as follows: Netherlands, USA, Switzerland, Belgium, Russian Federation, South Korea, China, France⁵⁸. The increasing inflow of capital from Western countries creates the prospect of implementing their business models into Kazakhstan, which will help lay the groundwork for the loosening of economic relations with their northern neighbor.

As part of the Kazakhstan 2050 strategy announced by President Nursultan Nazarbayev in 2012, it was necessary to diversify supply routes⁵⁹. The main conceptual idea

⁵⁸ “Какие страны больше всего инвестируют в экономику РК,” *Капитал* [“Kakiye strany bol'she vsego investiruyut v ekonomiku RK,” *Kapital*], 30 December 2022, at <https://kapital.kz/economic/111778/kakiye-strany-bol-she-vsego-investiruyut-v-ekonomiku-rk.html>, 22 February 2023.

⁵⁹ “Стратегия ‘Казахстан-2050,’” *Официальный информационный ресурс. Премьер-министра Республики Казахстан* [“Strategiya‘Kazakhstan-2050,” *Ofitsial'nyy informatsionnyy resurs. Prem'yer-Ministra Respubliki Kazakhstan*], at <https://primeminister.kz/ru/gosprogrammy/strategiya-kazakhstan-2050>, 22 February 2023.

was to expand trade with Europe, which is being meticulously pursued by Kassym Jomart Tokayev, as evidenced by the charts below:

Chart 4. Export volumes between 2019 and 2023 expressed in USD billion.



Sources: “Основные показатели внешней торговли Республики Казахстан по странам (январь-декабрь 2023 г.),” Бюро национальной статистики [“Osnovnyye pokazateli vneshney trgovli Respubliki Kazakhstan po stranam (yanvar’-dekabr’ 2023 g.),” *Byuro natsional’noy statistiki*], at <https://stat.gov.kz/ru/industries/economy/foreign-market/spreadsheets/>, 22 February 2023; “Внешняя торговля Республики Казахстан 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022,” Бюро национальной статистики [“Vneshnyaya trgovlya Respubliki Kazakhstan 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022,” *Byuro natsional’noy statistiki*], at <https://old.stat.gov.kz/official/industry/31/publication>, 22 February 2023.

The data presented shows a systematic increase in the export of goods to European Union countries. The same trend is also observable in relation to the Russian Federation. However, it should be remembered that the stimulation of exports to Russia is influenced by the economic sanctions imposed for the armed aggression against Ukraine. Russia is buying from Kazakhstan what it used to buy from Western countries.

The main products that are generating an increase in exports to the EU are oil and natural gas, which are being supplied in greater quantities due to member states ceasing to purchase energy resources from Russia. Until the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, Kazakh oil was also reaching the European market, but through Russian infrastructure. Kazakhstan is now taking measures that are geared towards reducing Russia’s role as a re-exporter of raw materials.

Confirmation of the materialization of this intention became President Tokayev’s July 2022 order obliging oil and energy companies to increase oil sales using alternative routes bypassing Russian Federation territory. This resulted in an agreement between Kazakh operator KazMunaiGas and Azeri company SOCAR in December 2022. According to this, Kazakhstan is to export 1.5 million tons of oil in 2023 using the Baku Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline. In addition, the Azerbaijani side proposed extending the contract by another 5 million, which were transported via the Baku-Supsa oil pipeline⁶⁰. A convincing factor for increasing crude exports using Azerbaijani

⁶⁰ “Азербайджан и Казахстан обсуждают транспортировку 5 млн тонн нефти – СМИ,” *КазТАГ* [“Azerbaydzhan i Kazakhstan obsuzhdayut transportirovku 5 mln tonn nefti – SMI,” *KazTAG*], 8 April

infrastructure is the fact that Baku only counts on profits from transit, which means that it will not block the free transport of Kazakh oil in order to put pressure on Kazakhstan's political elite as Moscow does⁶¹. In addition, there are observable attempts to increase exports of agricultural produce to the European market because of the greater profits to be made from this than from sales to the Russian market. Hence, the expansion of the network of warehouses and transshipment points in the Caspian ports is underway. One example is the construction of a terminal in the port of Kuryk in the Mangystau region adapted for food transport with a capacity of 1 million tons with a storage capacity of 25,000 tons and the expansion of the existing terminal in Aktau⁶².

The weakening of Russia's economic influence is also discernible in terms of the internationalization of projects that have hitherto been carried out in cooperation with Moscow. The Kazakhs, recognizing the impediments to access to modern technology for Russian companies, are making a slow withdrawal from cooperation on the issue of nuclear energy development. In November 2022, President Tokayev met with the general director of *Electricite de France*. After the meeting, the Kazakh side expressed its full appreciation of the degree of safety of French technology, which was never declared about Russian technology⁶³. The Americans, on the other hand, offered Kazakhstan participation in the FIRST program, which offers the possibility of building small modular reactors to provide energy for specific cities and neighborhoods with much less money than one large project⁶⁴.

In increasing the importance of the overland transport route through Turkmenistan, it is necessary to expand cooperation with foreign transport companies due to the equipment limitations of the domestic sector. It is not in Russia's interest to support this direction, as this will contribute to limiting their role as the main transit country for Kazakh goods in the European direction. This is why Kazakhstan is seeking

2023, at <https://kaztag.kz/ru/news/azerbaydzhan-i-kazakhstan-obsuzhdayut-transportirovku-5-mln-tonn-nefti-smi>, 22 February 2023.

⁶¹ More: К. Соколов, "В Новороссийске остановили отгрузку казахстанской нефти из-за шторма [K. Sokolov, "V Novorossiyske ostanovili otgruzku kazakhstanskoy nefiti iz-za shtorma]," *RBC*, 21 February 2023, at <https://www.rbc.ru/business/21/02/2023/63f4b0d49a794767ff572fb8>, 22 February 2023

⁶² "В порту Курык (Казахстан) построят терминал мощностью 1 млн тонн в год [V portu Kuryk (Kazakhstan) postroyat terminal moshchnost'yu 1 mln tonn v god]," *Port News*, 11 February 2021, at <https://portnews.ru/news/308781/>, 22 February 2023.

⁶³ "Касым-Жомарт Токаев провел серию встреч с руководителями крупных французских компаний, *Официальный сайт Президента Республики Казахстан* ["Kasym-Zhomart Tokayev provel seriyu vstrech s rukovoditelyami krupnykh frantsuzskikh kompaniy," *Ofitsial'nyy sayt Prezidenta Respubliki Kazakhstan*], 30 November 2022, at <https://www.akorda.kz/ru/kasym-zhomart-tokayev-provel-seriyu-vstrech-s-rukovoditelyami-krupnykh-francuzskih-kompaniy-30105349>, 22 February 2023.

⁶⁴ А. Смолин, "Казахстан будет учиться эксплуатации АЭС у США [Kazakhstan budet uchitsya ekspluatatsii AES u SSHA]," *Orda*, 17 July 2022, at <https://orda.kz/kazakhstan-budet-uchitsja-jekspluatatsii-ajes-u-ssha/>, 22 February 2023.

membership of the International Road Association, which will allow the development of an all-access road charter that can be used by all interested⁶⁵.

Investment in port expansion and strengthening contacts with Azerbaijan underline that Kazakhstan's determination to make the idea of a Caspian transport corridor a reality is greater than in the 1990s, when the topic was on the international agenda. In addition, the current scenario is simpler to realize, as it does not require the construction of a gas pipeline along the bottom of the Caspian Sea, but is based on the transport of raw materials using container ships⁶⁶.

Diversification of the supply direction does not include imports, as can be seen in the graph below: much less money than one large project:

Chart 5. Import volumes from 2019 to 2023 expressed in USD billion.



Source: "Основные показатели внешней торговли Республики Казахстан по странам (январь-декабрь 2023 г.)," Бюро национальной статистики ["Osnovnyye pokazateli vneshney torgovli Respubliki Kazakhstan po stranam (yanvar'-dekabr' 2023 g.)," *Byuro natsional'noy statistiki*], at <https://stat.gov.kz/ru/industries/economy/foreign-market/spreadsheets/>, 22 February 2023; "Внешняя торговля Республики Казахстан...".

Russia retains a crushing advantage over the European Union in terms of imports. This is due to two conditions that are unalterable. The first is geographical proximity. Transporting goods from Russia is cheaper and does not require overcoming geographical barriers in the form of seas, which in turn lengthens the supply chain and the number of means of transport needed to ship goods. The second aspect is price. Russian products are cheaper than European ones.

As a result, Kazakhstan, in order to slow its growing dependence on Russian imports, is taking measures that hinder the expansion of integration into the Eurasian

⁶⁵ Ж. Мухамедиярова, "Национальный комитет Всемирной дорожной ассоциации намерены создать в Казахстане," *Казинформ* [Zh. Mukhamediyarova, "Natsional'nyy komitet Vsemirnoy dorozhnoy assotsiatsii namereny sozdat' v Kazakhstane," *Kazinform*], 14 March 2023, at https://www.inform.kz/ru/nacional-nyy-komitet-vsemirnoy-dorozhnoy-associacii-namereny-sozdat-v-kazakhstane_a4045468, 22 February 2023.

⁶⁶ P. Turowski, "Fiasko projektu Nabucco w następstwie walki o kontrolę nad szlakami transportowymi z południa," *Bezpieczeństwo Narodowe*, vol. 22, no. 2 (2012), pp. 141-149.

Economic Union. The clearest example is the maintenance of a transit fee charged by Kazakhstan's railways five times higher than Russia's, which makes it difficult for Russia to trade with Kyrgyzstan, but also Tajikistan, which is not a member of the organization⁶⁷. Another move is to reduce the supply of the ruble on the domestic financial market due to the fall in its value, which affects the exchange rates of the other EEU member states. One manifestation is the Tokayev memorandum allowing Kazakh banks to dispose of ruble deposits coupled with a restriction on the ability of incoming Russians to open accounts after the announcement of partial mobilization if they do not have savings in so-called hard currencies – euros, dollars, Swiss francs, British pounds. In addition, from January 2023, the possibility of converting large amounts of rubles into tenge at exchange offices was blocked⁶⁸.

The second action is the rejection of the idea of settling foreign trade between EEU member states in national currencies, which was manifested by leaving the CIS International Monetary Committee, due to the artificial raising of the ruble exchange rate against the currencies of the other integration participants, which would generate losses for the Kazakh economy⁶⁹. Another clear example of the desire to increase independence from the Russian financial market was the refusal, as one of the first countries, to introduce the new Russian payment system 'MIR' in its own banking sector. However, it was allowed to operate them with the proviso that all transactions carried out in this system would be monitored in cooperation with the Americans, in order to reduce suspicions of Russia helping to circumvent international sanctions⁷⁰.

The measures outlined show that during the Kassym Jomart Tokayev period, instead of reducing the barriers to economic unification, new ones are being created that weaken economic ties with the Russian Federation. They contradict Nazarbayev's long-standing integration policy, manifested in participation in organizations consolidating the markets of the post-Soviet area countries.

⁶⁷ К. Потаева, Е. Клочкова, "РЖД просит Казахстан снизить стоимость транзитных перевозок зерна," *Ведомости* [K. Potayeva, Ye. Klochkova, "RZHD prosit Kazakhstan snizit' stoimost' tranzitnykh perevozok zerna," *Vedomosti*], 14 November 2022, at <https://www.vedomosti.ru/business/articles/2022/11/15/950110-rzhd-prosit-kazakhstan-snizit-stoimost-perevozok-zerna>, 22 February 2023.

⁶⁸ "Казахстан отказывается от взаимной конвертации рубля и тенге [Kazakhstan otkazyvayet-syaot vzaimnoy konvertatsii rublya i tenge]," *BFM.RU*, 9 January 2023, at <https://www.bfm.ru/news/516704>, 22 February 2023.

⁶⁹ "Казахстан перейдет на рубли в таможенных расчетах с Россией и Белоруссией," *Интерфакс* ["Kazakhstan pereydet na rubli v tamozhennykh raschetakh s Rossiyei i Belorussiyey," *Interfaks*], 18 March 2022, at <https://www.interfax.ru/business/830034>, 22 February 2023; "Казахстан вышел из соглашения СНГ о валютном комитете," *Капитал* ["Kazakhstan vyshel iz soglasheniya SNG o valyutnom komitete," *Kapital*], 8 July 2022, at <https://kapital.kz/finance/107119/kazakhstan-vyshel-iz-soglasheniya-sng-o-valyutnom-komitete.html>, 22 February 2023.

⁷⁰ Ж. Рофе, "США разрешили банкам Казахстана обслуживать карты 'Мир' [Zh. Rofe, "SSHA razreshili bankam Kazakhstana obsluzhivat' karty 'Mir'"], *DW*, 9 December 2023, at <https://www.dw.com/ru/banki-kazakhstana-polucili-razresenie-ssa-na-operacii-s-kartami-mir/a-64047616>, 22 February 2023.

SUMMARY

Derussification in the Republic of Kazakhstan has been a continuous process since the declaration of independence. However, during the period of the government of Kasym Zhomart Tokayev, an increase in the intensification of activities aimed at eliminating Russianness from the socio-political and economic life of the state is observable, which is part of the answer to the research question posed.

Intensified derussification is observable in the state's language policy. This is confirmed by the removal of Russian from pre-school education and the reduction of its role in primary schools and universities. In contrast to the trilingual education system proposed by Nazarbayev, the solutions pushed by Tokayev aim at a complete Kazakhi-ization of the education system. New to his predecessor are the announcements of an attempt to strip Russian of its status as the language of inter-ethnic communication. Nazarbayev feared that attempts at change would end in Russian interference. Tokayev also shares these fears, but the mere announcement of his readiness to change this is already a heroic feat and opens up the debate on the revision of the status of the Russian language in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

With regard to the derussification of historical policy, the distinguishing feature vis-à-vis its predecessor's initiatives is the effort to demolish the myth of the big brother and decry the significance of Soviet holidays. The new historical policy emphasizes the scale of the suffering experienced by the Kazakh ethnos during Moscow's management of the republic. In contrast, during the Nazarbayev period, direct blaming of Russia was avoided. Another confirmation is the attempts to change the collective memory about the 9 May celebrations. During the Nazarbayev period, it was a joyous holiday and celebrations were modeled on Russian solutions. The canvas is now becoming Uzbekistan, which celebrates 9 May as a day of reverie for the dead of World War II. Street renaming is not a new solution, but it has taken on a scale unprecedented in the history of independent Kazakhstan.

To a lesser extent, there is an observable dynamization of deradicalization with regard to security and economic policy. Admittedly, Kazakhstan is trying to reduce its independence in terms of equipment and training from Russia and is taking initiatives to create a military alliance composed of Central Asian states. Despite friction with Russia within the OUBZ, the organization remains a pillar of international security cooperation for Kazakhstan. It is not expected that there will be significant changes in this aspect in the coming years. In economic policy, the derussification process is based on attempts to reduce the importance of the Russian partner. They are related not only to the diversification of supply directions, but also to the introduction of regulations that slow down the process of Kazakhstan's economic integration with Russia within the Eurasian Economic Union. Something that could not have been thought of during the Nazarbayev period, who was a great supporter of integration within the Eurasian Economic Union, which is another element testifying to the strengthening of the economic derussification of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

In summary, after Kassym Jomart Tokayev took power in 2019, derussification accelerated in the sphere of language and historical-symbolic politics. With regard to security and economic issues, measures are being taken that prepare the ground for derussification in the future. It fell to the new president to complete the derussification process initiated by Nursultan Nazarbayev. A condition conducive to this is the fact that he does not have to face the problems faced by his predecessor.

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