



Kazakhstan. Tokayev. Reboot

ANALYTICAL REPORT

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Analytical report

Nur-Sultan
2020

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Introduction

On March 19, 2019, Nursultan Nazarbayev, who had governed the Republic since 1989, left the post of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan ahead of schedule. This event gave a start to the process of transition of presidential power and opened a qualitatively new stage in the development of Kazakhstan. At the same time, the most pressing issue was not so much the issue of power succession as the task of ensuring the continuity of the official political course and preserving the strategic foundations of the country's development.

Among the newly independent states, Kazakhstan has almost become a pioneer in the formation of political experience in changing the country's leadership. On the one hand, the foundations of sovereign statehood, market economy, domestic and foreign policy laid down under the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan – Elbasy (Leader of the Nation) Nursultan Nazarbayev – suggest that Kazakhstan will develop inertial for a long time. On the other hand, it is important for the new leadership of the Republic to maintain political stability in the country in the current conditions, to ensure the work of state bodies at all levels in the established format and to receive support for their undertakings from society.

It is significant that the topic of Nursultan Nazarbayev's possible resignation from the post of President of the RoK and his transfer of power to his successor from among the most trusted persons (the so-called "Successor" Operation") began to be discussed in the expert community and the media sometime in 2000. Over the years, a number of different versions, hypotheses and possible scenarios have been put forward on this issue, including the approximate dates of the event and specific individuals who, according to the authors, are suitable for the potential successors of the Head of State.

It is obvious that the discussion of this theme was influenced by certain processes and events in the political life of Kazakhstan and the determining factors. Among them, in particular, one can note the adoption in 2000 of the Constitutional Law "On the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan", introduction in 2007 of a provision in the Constitution of the RoK, granting Nursultan Nazarbayev, as the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the right of being re-elected indefinitely, granting him the status of Leader of the Nation in 2010, holding special presidential elections in 2011 and 2015, making new amendments to the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2017, etc.

Along with that, discussions concerning the candidates for the potential successor of Nursultan Nazarbayev and possible scenarios for the transit of power gave rise to all kinds of expectations. It was specifically typical for foreign experts and mass-media interested in obtaining the most objective assessments of probable risks for the

established relations of Kazakhstan with the corresponding foreign countries and activity in the Republic of foreign investors.

Apparently, this trend continues to the present. Despite the change of the leadership of Kazakhstan in the order established by the Constitution of the RoK through the transfer of presidential powers to the Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, and the subsequent consolidation of his status as Head of State in accordance with the results of the early presidential elections held in June 9, 2019, domestic and foreign expert and media circles continue to express different views on the prospects for the further development of the country, the activities of the new President of Kazakhstan, the relationship within the ruling establishment, etc. For example, there is an opinion that as a result of the transition of power in Kazakhstan, a kind of “dual power model” has been established in the country.

In light of all of the above, this report is focused on the provision of an objective assessment of the political changes taking place in Kazakhstan in the context of the transit of presidential power and the activities of the new leadership of the country.

1. Why Tokayev?

Peculiarities of the transit of power in Kazakhstan

As already mentioned, the matter of continuity or transition of presidential power in Kazakhstan, has been discussed for a very long time. In addition to the above, Nursultan Nazarbayev during his tenure as President of the Republic of Kazakhstan had to disprove for several times the speculated assumptions about his early resignation and transfer of power to one or another representative of the immediate environment, including members of the family.

Nursultan Nazarbayev: "I'm not going to leave my post yet. I am going to work as long as people trust me. As long as Kazakhstan, our country and people need me. As long as I enjoy confidence and people support me in elections, I'm going to work. Concerning the successor, all of that are water cooler conversations. There are no successors." (Shayakhmet B. "Nazarbayev denied speculations on the "Successor" operation once again", "Radio Azattyk", June 7, 2008)

Thus, the issue of presidential succession has been removed from the official political agenda for a long time. However, starting from 2013, the Head of State himself began to voice his point of view on this issue from time to time. We can note the following messages, which he sent to his fellow citizens and foreign policy partners through the media:

1. On the responsibility of longtime politicians regarding the situation after their departure and the promises of a peaceful transfer of power [1].
2. About that the transit of power will necessarily take place within the framework established by the Constitution of the RoK, with the presidential elections [2].
3. On the refusal to ensure the continuity of power in favor of their children, the resolution of this issue strictly according to the Constitution and unclear prospects of their participation in the presidential elections in 2020 [3].
4. On the completion of his presidency in 2020 and unclear prospects to run for the next term, due to the factors of people's trust and health [4].

Already after his resignation from the post of President of the RoK, Nazarbayev said that he had been preparing for such a decision for more than three years [5]. Thus, he showed great responsibility not only for his activities as Head of State, but also for its future. Specific measures to prepare the authorities for transit were taken in 2017–2019, including the following measures:

1. Introduction in March 2017 of amendments and additions to the Constitution of the RoK aimed at redistribution of powers from the President to the Government and the Parliament. Thus, the movement from the super-presidential vertical of power to its presidential format began. At the same time, a provision was inserted in the constitutional law that “the fundamental principles of activities of the Republic, laid down by the Founder of independent Kazakhstan, the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan – Elbasy, and his status are unchanged” (paragraph 2, Article 91) [6]. Thus, the preservation of basic priorities and guidelines of the official political course of Kazakhstan in the long run is guaranteed by the Constitution.
2. Introduction in December 2017 of an amendment to the Constitutional Law “On the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan – Elbasy”, which gives him the right to head the Security Council of the Republic of Kazakhstan for life.
3. Adoption in May 2018 of the Law “On the Security Council of the Republic of Kazakhstan” which significantly strengthened the status and powers of this body, as well as Elbasy as its Chairman.
4. Appeal in February 2019 to the Constitutional Council to interpret the provision on the termination of the powers of the President of the RoK with the subsequent receipt of an explanation from this body on the right of the Head of State to resign on the basis of his own will.
5. Implementation in February-March 2019 of staff reshuffles at the highest echelons of state power and, as a consequence, changes in the balance of forces within the ruling establishment. In particular, new Prime Minister, Chairman of the National Bank, State Secretary and Prosecutor General were appointed.

Having thus prepared a serious political and legal framework for his future political activity in the capacity of national leader, Nursultan Nazarbayev left the post of Head of State. He justified this decision by the need to ensure the coming to power of a new generation of leaders who will continue the transformations held in the country in the context of a changing world [7].

The main reason in this case should be considered the implementation of the process of transit of power in the country with the direct participation of Nazarbayev and in politically favorable conditions. A similar process that took place in neighboring Uzbekistan in 2016 after the death of the first president of the country, Islam Karimov, could have had some impact in this situation. In addition, as a politician with vast experience, Nazarbayev once again took the lead in anticipating negative trends in the global economy and politics, predicted by some experts, which could somehow affect the political life of Kazakhstan during the change in the country’s leadership.

On March 20, 2019, in accordance with paragraph 1 of Article 48 of the Constitution of the RoK, the powers of the President of the State were accepted by Chairman of the

Senate of the Parliament Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. Although this provision of the constitutional law also provides that the Chairman of the Majilis of the Parliament and the Prime Minister may also be candidates for the powers of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Later, in his interview to the Khabar TV channel, Nazarbayev said that he considered several people as his potential successors, but in the end he chose the candidacy of Tokayev.

Nursultan Nazarbayev: "I know him, he knows my work. Secondly, he is competent. Thirdly, he got acquainted with many people in the diplomatic filed. Many diplomats from other countries know him. He used to work in Geneva, in the United Nation; he headed the Senate, and knows the procedure for laws' preparation. If you remember, I appointed him in the Government where he worked for more than two years." (R. Dyusengulova. "Considered the candidacy of several people – Nursultan Nazarbayev told about the transit of power", "Tengrinews.kz", 11.10.2019)

Most likely, the active promotion of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to the position of the future President of the RoK began with his re-election in October 2013 as the Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament of the RoK. Notably, he, being the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations since March 2011, has interrupted his career in this leading international organization.

Extract from the biography of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev: He was born on May 17, 1953. In 1975, he graduated from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO). In 1983–1984, he trained at the Beijing Linguistic Institute (PRC). In 1992, he graduated from the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. He holds a Doctorate in Political Science, the dissertation subject is: "Foreign Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the Period of Formation of the New World Order" (2001).

He began his labor activity in 1975 in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR and was sent to work at the Soviet Embassy in Singapore. In 1979–1985, he worked in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR. Then he was sent to the Soviet Embassy in China where he worked until 1991 in the capacity of Second Secretary, First Secretary and Councilor.

In 1992, he was appointed Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan. In 1993, he became First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the RoK. In 1994, he was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs of the RoK. In March 1999, he became Deputy Prime Minister of the RoK. In October 1999, he was appointed Prime Minister of the RoK.

In January 2002, he became Secretary of State – Minister of Foreign Affairs of the RoK. In the period between 2003 and 2007 he held the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs of the RoK.

In January 2007, he was elected Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament of the RoK. In 2008, as speaker of the Upper Chamber of the Kazakh Parliament, was elected Vice-President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

In March 2011, appointed Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Director General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, and Personal Envoy of the United Nations Secretary General at the Conference on Disarmament. He also served as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

In October 2013, he was elected Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament of the RoK.

It should be noted that the person of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev as a potential candidate for the post of President of the Republic of Kazakhstan was considered by the expert community of Kazakhstan for a long time.

“Among all potential successors of the Head of State, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev suits substantially all leading influence groups and individual powerful persons in the ruling establishment (4.82 points). He is also ahead of two leaders of the rating – Imangali Tasmagambetov and Serik Akhmetov — in terms of confidence from the President of the RoK (5.19 points). The 3rd rank for possible recognition and support from external players also counts in favor of Tokayev (4.79 points). The only thing is that he is inferior to most anticipated presidential contenders in terms of political leverage (3.61 points). Probably, this is dependent on the relatively soft style of Tokayev’s activity in the political and power system of the country, lack of own economic resources, maximum course of his career in the foreign policy sphere and his current stay abroad” (“Ranking of potential successors of the President of the RoK”, “Sayasat.org”, 4.04.2013.)

In the Ranking of Managerial Elite of Kazakhstan compiled quarterly by the Center for Social and Political Studies “Strategy”, positions of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev in 2013–2018 varied as follows [8]:

Table 1. Ranking positions of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev according to estimates of the Center for Social and Political Studies “Strategy”

No.	Period	Ranking position	Authoritativeness	Efficiency	Good perspectives	Average score
1	4 quarter 2013	5	4,67	4,29	5,33	4,76
2	4 quarter 2014	7	4,69	4,44	4,88	4,67
3	4 quarter 2015	11	4,93	4,20	4,67	4,60
4	4 quarter 2016	16	4,41	3,86	4,32	4,20
5	4 quarter 2017	8	4,96	4,65	4,92	4,85
6	4 quarter 2018	8-9	4,91	4,09	4,77	4,59

It is most likely that Tokayev’s relatively high positions in 2013 in the considered ranking were largely associated with the factor of his unexpected return to the post of Speaker of the Senate of the Republic of Kazakhstan. In subsequent years, a consistent decline in these ranking indicators was mainly explained by the increasing influence of other eminent persons in the ruling establishment of the country. However, in 2017–2018 there was recorded an increase in the positions of popularity of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, which can be attributed to the observed processes of preparation for the transit of power in the country.

Taking into account the aspects of the political system of Kazakhstan, relations within the ruling establishment and personal background of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, it’s possible to highlight the following qualities that contributed to his nomination as President of the RoK:

1. High level of trust on the part of Nursultan Nazarbayev whose nominee he has been and continues to be from the very beginning of his political career in sovereign Kazakhstan.
2. Affiliation with the so-called “old guard” of managers who were formed from the first years of Kazakhstan's independence and who differ in their extraordinary abilities to manage in various spheres and levels.
3. Gaining and development of leadership experience in central authorities of legislative and executive branches. Among the most important aspects, it stands to mention that Kassym-Jomart Tokayev held a position of Prime Minister of the RoK in 1999–2002. The primary results of his work in this high executive position are such as overcoming crisis processes and bringing the state economy to the trajectory of positive dynamics, GDP growth up to 13.5%, and increasing the level of employment and income of the population.

- Tokayev himself gained serious managerial experience and competences in social and economic issues, management of various parts of the public administration system and forming up teamwork in the government.
4. Implementation of the public policy in all positions held since the beginning of his career in Kazakhstan.
 5. Distance from leading influence groups in the ruling establishment, which allows taking a neutral position in various intra-elite conflicts and, as a consequence, to be considered by the rest representatives of the establishment as an acceptable, compromise player.
 6. Lack of any assets and interests in the field of economy and business, which eliminated the need for their preservation, increase, lobbying, etc.
 7. Non-participation in any political, corruption or other scandals that may have a negative effect on personal reputation.
 8. High level of eminence, authority, personal and professional contacts on international scale, which creates a favorable environment for the promotion of national interests of the state and his own positioning among leaders of foreign countries and international organizations.
 9. Good understanding, due to long-term activities in the sphere of foreign policy and stay abroad, of the experience of development of different countries in the world and possibilities of its borrowing for the development of Kazakhstan.
 10. Affiliation with the community of creative and scientific intelligentsia, which determines Tokayev's authority and support of his activity among this social group.

It is also worthy of note that as early as June 2018, while giving an interview to Hardtalk program on the BBC, Tokayev noted that “Frankly speaking, I do not believe that President Nazarbayev will run for the presidential election in 2020. Because he’s a very wise man and is absolutely reasonable. I think that in 2020 we will have presidential elections with candidates other than President Nazarbayev... Of course, it depends on President Nazarbayev himself – whether he will run for the presidential election. But I have to say openly that I do not believe that he will do it.” [9]. More than likely, it was voiced by him in agreement with the President of the RoK in order to probe the mood among foreign partners of Kazakhstan on the upcoming change of the country's leadership.

Following acceptance by Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of the powers of the Head of State, the next stage in the process of transit of power in Kazakhstan was the appointment and subsequent holding of early presidential elections. Although, in accordance with paragraph 1 of Article 48 of the Constitution of the RoK, he could govern the country until April 2020, when his predecessor's presidential term was due to expire. It is evident that for the new President of the RoK, who had no previous experience of passive electoral

participation, such a decision has become a kind of challenge and at the same time an indicator of his awareness of the political expediency and responsibility to his fellow citizens.

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev: "Since taking office as President, I have travelled to the regions; I know the mood of people. I meet with the intelligentsia, labor collectives, entrepreneurs, investors, and international figures. My conclusion is that we are on the right track. Our wise people are united. The state, as the supreme value of our Independence, is unshakeable. For this reason, I am firmly convinced that early elections of the Head of State are absolutely essential. In order to ensure social and political harmony, to move forward with confidence, to solve the tasks of socio-economic development, it's necessary to remove any uncertainty. Besides, the situation in the world is changing rapidly and not in the best way for us. We must reaffirm the continuity, predictability and stability of our domestic and foreign policies. We must continue to work on the effective and successful implementation of social programs and strategy of Elbasy. This can only be done through direct expression of the will of the people in the elections. Kazakhstan is a democratic state. And the President will be elected according to the will of the people" (Extract from the Address to the citizens of the country, 9.04.2019).

An important moment in the election campaign of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev was the official nomination of his candidacy to the President of the RoK from the "Nur Otan" party. Before that, some observers did not exclude the likelihood that someone else from the closest associates and even members of Nursultan Nazarbayev's family would run instead. However, the latter, in his speech at the XIX extraordinary congress of the party he leads, held on April 23, 2019, noted that Tokayev is the most worthy candidate for the highest position in the country, and also instructed to organize the work of the Republican Public Campaign Headquarters in his support [10].

On June 9, 2019, with the voters turnout of 9,274,110 people (77.5% of the total number of voters registered on the respective lists), 6,539,715 voters (70.96%) voted for Tokayev [11]. Analysis of the course and results of these elections allows us to identify the following main factors contributing to his election as Head of State.

First, the equal acceptability of his person as for the principal supporters of the continuation of the official political course, making up a stable electorate of the ex-president, as well as for the citizens who expect positive changes in politics, economy and other spheres of life of the society and the state from the change of the Republic's leadership, but without any negative consequences for themselves and the country as a whole. Therefore, the former supported him in the elections as the successor to Elbasy, and the latter as an expresser of their respective expectations.

Secondly, Tokayev had no serious competitors among both the ruling establishment and the opposition. Personal support of Nazarbayev ensured an intra-elite consensus on his candidacy. While the Kazakh opposition, which is distinguished by its dissociation based on ideological, political, tactical and even interpersonal motives, was unable to unite its efforts to nominate and support a single candidate, as was the case during the 2005 presidential elections.

Thirdly, the speech of the Head of State with the nationwide agenda focused on almost all strata and groups of the country's population, reflected in his election program "Wellbeing for everyone! Continuity. Justice. Progress". Whereas other candidates for the President of the RoK actually addressed certain categories of voters. Thus, Amirzhan Kossanov focused on the protest electorate, and mainly on its Kazakh-speaking part; Zhambyl Akhmetbekov – to socially vulnerable groups of society, Daniya Yespayeva – to business communities, Toletay Rakhimbekov – to population of rural settlements and workers of the agricultural sector, Amangeldy Taspikhov – to workers of industrial enterprises, and Sadybek Tugel – to representatives of the indigenous ethnic group from the intelligentsia, oralmans, women and youth. As a result, only Tokayev was able to unite a significant part of the heterogeneous Kazakh electorate in its support.

In general, the political significance of these presidential elections, despite their early nature, was expressed in the following way:

1. Elimination of a certain political and legal vacuum in the power system, formed with the resignation of Nursultan Nazarbayev from the post of the Head of State.
2. Ensuring the continuity of presidential power not in the "family-dynastic" version expected by many observers, but in the format of rotation of top management personnel and in the constitutionally established order.
3. Prevention of a split in society and in the ruling establishment with the potential risks for the stable development of the country.
4. Intensive activation of the society, including the creation of new socio-political associations ("Oyan Qazaqstan", "Respublika", "HAQ", etc.), which contributes to the revival of political life in Kazakhstan.
5. Increasing the level of legitimization of the presidential power and strengthening the position of the new President of the RoK in the country and at the international level. In turn, this allowed removing all ambiguous questions and assumptions regarding the continuity of presidential power and the official political course of the country.

“Over the years, we have made great progress in our bilateral relations, and I am confident that the spirit of our cooperation will be strengthened. It’s encouraging that U.S. business continues to open up new opportunities for expanding economic cooperation with Kazakhstan.” The Head of the White House noted that the U.S. will continue to work together to promote an expanded strategic partnership with Kazakhstan. “I look forward to working with you to promote our deepened strategic partnership to address common challenges. The United States values its strong partnership with Kazakhstan and will continue to work with you and the people of Kazakhstan to advance our common interests in Central Asia and at the global level. I wish you every success in your work.”
(Extract from the Congratulatory Telegram of U.S. President Donald Trump to President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, 25.06.2019)

2. Between continuity and progress. Political agenda of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev

As the key principles of his political course Kassym-Jomart Tokayev initially identified the following:

1. Continuity, which implies effective continuation of the political course of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan – Elbasy Nursultan Nazarbayev, and preservation of all positive achievements in the interests of further development of the country.
2. Justice intended to ensure equal rights for all citizens regardless of their social, ethnic, religious or other affiliation, and to enable each of them to achieve personal success and improve their well-being.
3. Progress based on the capacity for renewal in all spheres of society, the implementation of creative changes for the benefit of people and pursuit of Kazakhstan to become one of the leading countries in the world [12].

In the Plan of Action approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated June 20, 2019 on implementation of the election program of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan “Wellbeing for everyone! Continuity. Justice. Progress” and proposals received during the nationwide campaign “Birge”, these principles received specific content in the form of certain measures for their practical implementation. In particular, this refers to political and administrative transformations.

Continuity means not only the commitment of the Head of State to his predecessor’s political strategy, but also the implementation of his decisions on various issues, including concepts adopted at different times, government programs and other official documents. Within this context, observance of this principle implies the adoption of the following measures meant for the short and medium terms.

1. Achievement of key national indicators of the Strategic Development Plan of the RoK until 2025 on the way towards accession into the 30 most developed countries in the world.
2. Implementation of the National Plan “100 Specific Steps” to implement the Five Institutional Reforms of Elbasy.
3. Strengthening the mechanisms for ensuring social harmony, national unity and the provisions of the Constitution of the RoK on the equality of rights of all citizens.
4. Formation of society’s immunity to radical ideology and zero tolerance of extremist manifestations on social, cultural, ethnic and religious grounds.
5. Adoption of the new Concept of Foreign Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan aimed at continuing the course of ensuring a multi-vector and balanced foreign policy [13].

In turn, the progress harmonically complements the continuity in terms of improvement and further development of various mechanisms of functioning of the political system, economy and social sphere of Kazakhstan. The key direction of the progress achievement is the transformation of the political system, including:

1. Maintenance of activity of the National Council of Public Trust.
2. Development and approval of the Concept of Civil Society Development until 2025.
3. Introduction of advanced international standards for transparency in the process of government decision-making with the active participation of the Parliament, public organizations and the media, and taking into account public opinion polls.
4. Making suggestions regarding improvements to the multiparty system, including the development of measures to stimulate parties that can generate constructive ideas to strengthen the capacity of the state.
5. Improvement of the procedure for development, public discussion and adoption of regulatory legal acts.
6. Development of measures for further development of local self-government bodies, providing mechanisms for citizens' participation in the decision-making process and control over their implementation.
7. Studying the possibilities of transferring state functions to a competitive environment.

Within the scope of another important direction – “Progressive Kazakhstan in a Changing World”, foreign policy measures are envisaged, such as follows:

1. Promoting international initiatives of Kazakhstan aimed at strengthening regional and global security.
2. Protection and promotion of the national interests of the country within the framework of multilateral structures and bilateral cooperation with foreign states.
3. Protection of rights and interests of Kazakhstani natural and legal persons abroad.

With regard to the principle of justice, its implementation implies the following administrative transformations as part of the formation of a modern, effective State:

1. Development of a set of measures to increase the responsibility and accountability of civil servants in the implementation of government programs and the use of budget funds.
2. Development of proposals on improvement of the public administration system, including the redistribution of powers between different management levels, based on a comprehensive functional analysis of the activities of government agencies and subordinate organizations.

- 3.** Introduction of a mechanism of accountability and controllability to society of all subordinate organizations of state bodies, national holdings and national companies.
- 4.** Increasing the level of automation and transparency of the budget planning process.
- 5.** Carrying out a pilot project on the “participation budget” at the local level.
- 6.** Making proposals on the results of completion of the fourth level of the budget in all rural settlements.
- 7.** Creation of permanent public and online reception desks in each central and local executive body, maintaining personal blogs by the top decision-makers of state bodies and quasi-public sector.
- 8.** Analysis of the quality and accessibility of public services and the development on its basis of a set of measures to address the identified system issues.
- 9.** Development of a set of measures to ensure transparency and efficiency of the personnel growth system in the public administration system based on the principle of meritocracy, career progression of the best employees.
- 10.** Amendments and additions to the Assessment system for central and local government bodies in terms of the introduction of an assessment block to achieve key performance indicators [14].

In addition, in his Address to the people of Kazakhstan, the President of the RoK took a stand for continuing the process of party-building, cooperation of the state with political parties and groups pursuing a constructive policy, ensuring effective feedback from the population, reducing the number of civil servants and employees of national companies, strengthening public consensus and improving legislation on rallies [15].

As relating the latter measure, it should be pointed out that its adoption was a reaction of the new leadership of the country to a series of protests that took place in the form of unauthorized rallies and pickets in different cities of Kazakhstan in March-October 2019. This issue was one of the first raised by Kassym-Jomart Tokayev after his assumption of office as Head of State. Notably, this issue was one of the first raised by Kassym-Jomart Tokayev after taking office as Head of State.

Specifically, in his interview to the Euronews TV channel, the President first of all expressed his understanding of the social and economic problems that contribute to the manifestation of protest moods in the society and promised to take necessary measures to resolve them. Secondly, he called for a dialogue between government officials and representatives of protest movements. And, thirdly, he stated that “...a law will be adopted, according to which people who want to come to the demonstration to express their opinion, will apply to the appropriate authorities, and they will be given a special place to gather and express their opinion.” [16].

In the present-day conditions of the development of Kazakhstan, such statements of the Head of State have become a serious indicator of the movement towards a dialogue between the state and society and the implementation of political changes. Moreover, they have been expressed in practice through the holding by various public associations in June-November 2019 in the cities of Almaty and Nur-Sultan, on the basis of coordination with local authorities, of six rallies on the issues of political reforms, freedom of peaceful assemblies, and gender equality in labor law. In particular, the opposition movements “Oyan”, “Qazaqstan” and “Respublika” held rallies without impediments.

As for the modernization of the public administration system, the Head of State made changes to the structure of the Government of the RoK through the formation of the Ministry of Trade and Integration and the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources. In addition, the “Syrbar” Foreign Intelligence Agency was reorganized through accession to the National Security Committee of the RoK, the Agency for Civil Service Affairs and Anti-Corruption was reorganized through division into two departments according to its main areas of activity, and the National Bank of the RoK with the separation of the Agency for Regulation and Development of Financial Market.

It’s natural that the change of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan led to personnel changes in the top government echelons. Having his own vision of the country’s leadership and an unconventional management style, Tokayev at the same time resolves this issue in accordance with the current conditions for the development of our state. On the one hand, the importance of ensuring the smooth functioning of the system of public authority and administration determines the holding in the front of most central government agencies and regions of the country of the executives appointed by Nazarbayev. On the other hand, the political agenda set by the Head of State requires the arrival to various leadership positions of people with new views and approaches.

Balancing in the human resources management between these two lines, the President, in the process of forming his team, relies mainly on the following groups of senior executives:

1. Representatives of the “old guard” of executives among nominees of Nursultan Nazarbayev, to whom he belongs (State Secretary Krymbek Kusherbayev, Deputy Prime Minister Berdibek Saparbayev, etc.).
2. Representatives of the Diplomatic Service (Head of the Office of the President of the RoK Nurlan Onzhanov, Chief of the Office of the Prime-Minister of the RoK Galymzhan Koishibayev, Minister of International Affairs Mukhtar Tleuberdi, etc.).
3. Representatives of the young generation of executives (First Deputy Head of the Administration of the President of the RoK Maulen Ashimbayev, Minister of Education and Science Askhat Aimagambetov, Chairman of the Agency for Civil Service Affairs Anar Zhailganova, etc.).

In addition to the above, the Head of State is inclined to take ambiguous solutions in personnel issues when it is required by the interests of improving the situation in one or another sector of public administration. In this connection, the three-time change of the Head of the Administration of the President of the RoK and two-fold change of the State Secretary became indicative.

For the purpose of gradual renewal of the managerial staff at the initiative of the Head of State, the formation of the Presidential Youth Personnel Reserve began on a competitive basis. Its participants may be people under the age of 35, with higher education and at least 5 years of labor experience, applying for vacant managerial positions in the public administration and quasi-public sector.

Selection to this reserve was carried out during September-December 2019 in six stages (acceptance of documents, testing abilities of candidates, verification of testing, candidates' potential assessment, interviews with members of the expert commission and consideration of candidatures in the National Commission on Youth Personnel Reserve under the President of the RoK). Initially, 13,212 citizens expressed their interest in participating in it. As a result, taking into account the restrictions on the number of participants and the results of passing by them through each of the selection stages, 300 persons were enrolled in the reserve. They included 106 representatives of the private sector, 98 employees of the quasi-public sector and 96 civil servants. The average age of reservists is 31 year [17].

Although enrollment in the Presidential Youth Personnel Reserve is not a condition for mandatory appointment to any position during their stay in it, the Head of State instructed the Agency for Civil Service Affairs to resolve in the coming years the issue of employment of citizens who will be in its first composition.

At the same time, the status and powers of the First President of the RoK – Yelbasy Nursultan Nazarbayev as the Chairman of the Security Council of the RoK and the Chairman of the “Nur Otan” party which has the position of a parliamentary majority, and his vigorous activity in the country and at the international level result in ambiguous assessments in the Kazakhstani and foreign expert and journalistic spheres. This is especially true of the relations between the current and former leaders of Kazakhstan, the level and spheres of influence of each of them.

Bearing all this in mind, Nazarbayev, after his resignation from the post of Head of State, repeatedly declared that there was no “dual power” in Kazakhstan, and expressed his support for Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and his activities at the head of the country. This support is expressed primarily in giving advice to his successor on certain issues, as well as ensuring consensus in society and among the elite of the country concerning his personality. Herewith, there is no direct interference from Elbasy in the activities of the President of the RoK.

Nursultan Nazarbayev: "I consider him the most prepared person who will continue the initiated work and ensure continuity... All my work will consist in the support of the activities of the president elected and ensuring the transit in a calm atmosphere, as well as continuing the initiated work." ("Nazarbayev: world politicians supported my decisions on the transit of power", "Sputnik Kazakhstan", 16.05.2019)

In general, contributing to the nomination of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to the post of the President of the RoK, Nursultan Nazarbayev is objectively interested in further strengthening his position in this status. First, in the interests of preserving the set strategic framework of development of Kazakhstan and the stable functioning of the system of system of public authority and administration, which entails the normal and unobstructed performance of his functions by the President of the RoK as a key institution of this system. And, secondly, from the point of view of his own prestige as a national leader capable of ensuring effective continuity of the political course set by him, by efforts of Tokayev. In this regard, the activity of Nazarbayev in the status of Yelbasy has, to a greater degree, an ideological sense, rather than an institutional repetition of the position of the Head of State.

3. Towards dialogue with society. Phenomenon of the “Hearing Government” and the National Council of Public Trust

One of the important distinctive qualities of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev as a politician is his openness and willingness to interact with various representatives of the Kazakhstani and foreign public. As well, he uses popular social media sites for this purpose. Thus, since 2011, he has been actively keeping his Twitter account, and in 2019 he opened an Instagram account. With the aid of social media sites, the Head of State provides feedback to the population, promptly responds to various events and informs fellow citizens about his activities.

This quality has been also actively used within the framework of the political course run by the Head of State. Since the very beginning of his leadership of the country, he called on the Cabinet ministers, akims (governors) at all levels, and law enforcement officials to improve to improve interaction with citizens and properly respond to their requests.

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev: “For us, it is very essential to be aware and respond in a timely manner to the social feeling of ordinary people. To have finger on the pulse. This has always been our priority, and especially in pre-electoral period. Akims should promptly respond to public demands and conduct explanatory work. It’s essential to actively work via social media: to create groups in messengers, clearly explain the conducted policy, moderate and control the situation... This increases the confidence of citizens in government institutions. Akims of regions should meet people and visit all population centers not only at reporting meetings, but also on a permanent basis” (“Tokayev instructed akims to work in social media sites”, “Tengrinews.kz”, 27.03.2019)

The Virtual Reception Office of the President of the RoK (<http://vqb.gov.kz>) has been operating since April 22, 2019. It allows each citizen for sending requests to the Head of State and receiving legally binding answers. Only within 3 months from the moment of opening this reception office, it received about 1,500 appeals which were subsequently considered by authorized employees of the Administration of the President of the RoK [18].

In the course of his election campaign, Tokayev initiated the conduction of the Republican campaign “Birge” from May 13 to June 7, 2019, which provided interested citizens with the opportunity to voice their concerns and offer their options for solving

them by sending them to the public reception offices of the then candidate for President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. As a result of this campaign, Tokayev received more than 500 thousand proposals and wishes. Later, they and the provisions of the election program of the Head of State formed the basis of the list of 106 measures within the framework of 19 directions, entrusted to implementation by authorized state bodies. Moreover, 228 Tokayev's public reception offices that took up more than 21 thousand citizens, were working during the election campaign throughout the country [19].

In his first Message to the people of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev put forward the concept of the "Hearing State", presenting a mechanism for ensuring a permanent dialogue between the authorities and society which promptly and effectively responds to all demands of citizens. It is obvious that the practical implementation of this concept shall be carried out in the following way.

First of all, on June 12, 2019, the National Council of Public Trust under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan was established. The prime object of its activities is the development of proposals and recommendations on topical issues of the state policy on the basis of extensive discussion with public members. The competence of the Council includes such tasks as conducting a public evaluation of draft concepts, government programs and regulatory legal acts, consideration of significant strategic issues with due consideration to the opinion of civil society, ensuring a constructive dialogue between representatives of the public, political parties, nongovernmental sector and government bodies [20].

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev: "Our citizens are extremely concerned about the development of dialogue between the authorities and society. Such dialogue should be based on the recognition of pluralism of opinions. We may have different opinions, but we're a single nation. This is the principal point. For this reason I decided to create the National Council of Public Trust. The Council will consist of members of the entire society, including young people... The authorities are obliged to fulfill their promises to the people. This is its main mission. So and in no other way we may strengthen the unity of the nation and stability in the country." (Extract from the Speech of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at the official ceremony of inauguration of the elected President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 12.06.2019).

It should be noted that the expert and journalistic environment compared the National Council of Public Trust to such policy dialogue mechanisms as the standing Meeting on elaboration of proposals on further democratization and development of civil society (2002–2003), the National Commission on Democracy and Civil Society under the President of the RoK (2004–2005) and the State Commission on Development and Concretization of the Program of Democratic Reforms (2006–2007).

However, the specified structures, operating during the Presidentship of Nursultan Nazarbayev, had quite another political purpose, including an attempt to establish a dialogue between the authorities and the opposition. At the same time, their work was designed for a short-term perspective. Finally, only the State Commission for the Development and Concretization of the Program of Democratic Reforms was directly presided by the Head of State himself. The remaining structures were headed by representatives of the Administration of the President of the RoK or the Government of the RoK.

The concept of creation and activity of the National Council of Public Trust is qualitatively different.

First, this agency has initially been headed by the President of Kazakhstan himself. In addition, he personally participates in all of its meetings, as well as periodically holds meetings with other members of the Council on various issues of the activities of this body. In doing so, the Head of State assumed full responsibility for the work of the Council and the practical implementation of the decisions taken by him on various issues.

Secondly, for more than a month since the creation of the Council on behalf of the Head of State, authorized representatives of government agencies have held meetings and consultations on the structure of this agency. As a result, the Council was composed of 47 members, including the President himself, two representatives of his Administration, the Commissioners for Human Rights and for Children's Rights, for Protection of the Entrepreneurs' Rights, and of 41 representatives of political parties, NGOs, mass media and the expert community, which are well known and have certain authority in the country. In addition, representatives of community councils of the Republican and local levels and other persons may be included in the National Council of Public Trust.

Thirdly, the activities of the Council have a clear systematic basis. So, its sessions are held as may be necessary, however, at least three times a year, and, depending on the agenda, may have a general plenary or thematic nature. However, the main activities between meetings are carried out by the working groups of the Council. As a result of the organizational meeting of the National Council of Public Trust, held on August 28, 2019, three working groups were established – on political, economic, social and cultural modernization.

Fourthly, decisions of the Council shall be taken on a collegial basis by a majority vote of the total number of its members present at the relevant meeting. Herewith, the vote of the President as the Chairman of this body is decisive only in case of equality of votes of other members of the Council.

The first session of the National Council of Public Trust chaired by the President of the RoK was held on September 6, 2019. In his speech, the Head of State, in particular,

expressed his commitment to implementation of political reforms without running ahead, thoughtfully and gradually on a discussed and coordinated basis [21]. Also, 11 members of the Council spoke at the meeting. As well, the basic proposals on the issues of political, socio-cultural and economic modernization from the working groups were voiced there.

In addition, from August 28 to November 5, 2019, 6 meetings of the President of the RoK with 16 members of the Council were held in Nur-Sultan and Almaty with the discussion of various issues put in the agenda of this body. As well, a series of workshops also took place in the Administration of the President and the Government to consider certain proposals of the Council members with their direct participation.

As a result of the events held under the aegis of the National Council of Public Trust in August-November 2019, 67 proposals on the part of the Council members have been formulated, summarized and submitted to the Administration of the President of the RoK for further work.

Table 2. Individual proposals of members of the National Council of Public Trust

No	Direction	Proposed actions
1	Political modernization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of amendments and additions to the legislation regulating the procedure for organizing and holding rallies • Improvement of the applicable legislation on political parties, on elections, on the Parliament and the status of its deputies, and on the media
2	Economic modernization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of civil society representatives into the boards of directors of socially significant enterprises of the quasi-public sector • Exemption of micro- and small businesses from income taxes on core business activities • Involvement of unused farming land in production activities and space monitoring for the purpose of their identification • Liberalization of legislation on investment funds and requirements to assets for sale • Development of the General Register of the Country's External Debt
3	Socio-cultural modernization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of the Strategy for Cultural Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2020–2030 • Formation of new cultural tourism destinations • Taking measures aimed at improving the status of teachers • Acceleration of the process of introduction of the autonomy of the county's high institutions • Development of the draft law "On the State Language" • Ensuring the provision of housing for low-income families on a social rental basis • Development of the draft law "On Bankruptcy of Natural Entities"
4	Judicial and legal reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the draft Concept of the penal reform in the Republic of Kazakhstan • Ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aimed at commuting the death penalty to life imprisonment • Decriminalization of Article 130 "Defamation" of the Criminal Code of the RoK • Amendment of Article 174 "Incitement of social, national, tribal, racial, class or religious discord" of the Criminal Code of the RoK • Improvement of legislation on advocacy
5	Civil sector development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a Plan on transfer of some state functions to non-governmental organizations • Joining of Kazakhstan to the Open Government Partnership initiative
6	Regional policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the draft Concept of local self-government in the Republic of Kazakhstan • Introduction of a system for evaluating the efficiency of performance of local executive bodies by the population

In the course of the second session of the National Council of Public Trust held on December 20, 2019, the Head of the State summed up the interim results of the work of this body and pointed out specific measures that made up the first package of political, economic and social reforms. The political and legal block of relevant reforms included the following:

1. Introduction of the notification principle of organizing peaceful assemblies.
2. Reduction of registration barriers required for establishing political parties, including reduction of the minimum number of party members from 40 thousand to 20 thousand people.
3. Introduction of a mandatory 30% quota for women and youth on the electoral lists of political parties.
4. Legalization of the parliamentary opposition institution.
5. Ensuring the accession of Kazakhstan to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
6. Humanization of Article 174 of the Criminal Code of the RoK (Incitement of social, national, clan, racial, class or religious discord).
7. Decriminalization of Article 130 of the Criminal Code of the RoK (Libel) and its transfer to the Code of Administrative Offences [22].

Thus, the President of the RoK has shown his adherence to principles and consistency in the matters of conducting relevant political and socio-economic transformations that were announced by him earlier. At that, the relevant decisions were based on the proposals of the members of the National Council of Public Trust, which promotes the authority of this body as a generator of socially significant initiatives. In the near future, measures from the first package of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's reforms will be implemented through the development and adoption of relevant laws and by-laws.

Another important direction of implementation of the "Hearing State" concept is the improvement of mechanisms of interaction between government bodies of different level and the population. At the same time, Kassym-Jomart started developing this area from himself and bodies directly subordinated to him. Apart from the Virtual Reception Room, in July 2019, the Appeals Monitoring Division has been established in the Office of the President of the RoK. Herewith, its Head Aida Balayeva also has the status of Assistant to the Head of State, which increases the level of work of this unit with the relevant appeals of citizens.

In 2019, the Administration of the President of the RoK received more than 22 thousand appeals of citizens. Among them, more than 6 thousand appeals were received through the Virtual Reception Office of the Head of State. Apart from that, the Assistant to the President of the RoK – Head of the Division for Appeals Monitoring and its employees were receiving citizens with a total number of 1.3 thousand people for the

period of August-December 2019. As well, these receptions were held in the travelling format in eight regions and cities of republican status [23].

“Our current task is the formation of effective feedback from the population. The task of the government bodies is to meet the criteria of the "hearing state", to process in detail each received appeal, to actively explain in lay terms the information on the ongoing programs and policies pursued by the government bodies. Unsatisfactory answers to the applicants, such as run-around applies and forwarding of appeals from one government body to another, eventually contributed to a decline of public trust to the authorities. We must completely exclude such practice... Even a negative answer, in my opinion, should be made available to citizens in an accessible and substantiated way so that they have no doubts" (Kuzekbai A. Aida Balayeva: Government bodies must meet the criteria of the "Hearing State", "Kazinform", 31.10.2019).

In general, the commitment of the President of the RoK and his team to openness, dialogue with the society, creation of new and improvement of existing mechanisms of interaction of government bodies at all levels with citizens and non-governmental structures completely justifies itself, boosting the level of public confidence in the leadership of the country and its support of the official political course.

4. President in action.

Decisions for topical matters

From the moment of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's accession to the Presidency of the Republic of Kazakhstan, sufficiently great deal of work has been done in the country and at the international level. Only in Kazakhstan from March 20 through December 31, 2019, he has carried out the following:

- a) 178 different events of official and unofficial nature, including 20 meetings of different levels on topical issues of development of Kazakhstan and its individual regions;
- b) 163 meetings with officials of government bodies and quasi-state structures, representatives of political parties, public associations, business circles, scientific and creative intelligentsia and expert community of Kazakhstan with discussion of the situation in different spheres and regions of the country;
- c) 25 trips to certain regions of the country.

The emergency trip of the Head of State on June 24–25 to Arys city of Turkestan region became one of the most notable, where an emergency event occurred in the form of explosions of ammunition followed by a fire on the territory of the military unit. As a result, four people died and even more people received various injuries. The regional authorities were forced to evacuate almost the entire population of the city.

Under these circumstances, the President instructed the ministers of defense, internal affairs and the akim of Turkestan region to urgently take measures on elimination of the consequences of this emergency, to find out the causes of the explosions and ensure the safety of residents of Arys. That very day, he personally flew to this region for getting an overview of the situation in the city and development of the relevant instructions for the implementation of the necessary liquidation and reconstruction works. In Arys, the Head of State got acquainted with the course of evacuation works and conditions of accommodation of people in evacuation points, and instructed to provide them with hot meals, medical care, etc. Later he visited the hospital in Shymkent, where he met with the victims of the explosions and wished them a speedy recovery.

At the instruction of the Head of State, a special fund for raising money was created to help victims in Arys, which received 213 million KZT. Notably, Tokayev himself gave a good example for his fellow citizens by transferring a certain amount of money from personal funds to this fund [22]. In respect to a group of members of the command staff of the Armed Forces of the RoK for improper performance of the assigned duties and major deficiencies in the work that led to the occurrence of the concerned emergency situation, punishments in the form of awarding severe reprimands and dismissals were applied. The President also instructed the Prosecutor General to ensure the objectivity

and legality of the criminal investigation in connection with explosions in Arys city and to bring to justice all those responsible.

In general, in the situation with the emergency in Arys, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev proved himself as a mature national leader, taking a close look at all details in connection with the occurrence of this emergency situation and the elimination of its consequences, aware of the personal responsibility for the relevant activities of his subordinate government agencies and their officials, and showed concern for the affected fellow citizens.

While responding to other relevant issues of vital activity of the Kazakhstani society and developing his “Hearing State” concept, taking into account the demands, opinions and suggestions of citizens, the President also made a number of decisions during his activity in the interests of various strata and groups of the population. Among them, the following are particularly noteworthy:

1. Adoption on June 26, 2019 of the Decree “On Measures to Reduce the Debt Burden of Citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan”, according to which the Government and the National Bank were instructed to pay off debts on loans of low-income citizens in second-tier banks and micro-financial organizations. The latter category includes multi-child families, families with disabled children or those who have lost their single wage earner, as well as orphaned children in the amount of more than 629 thousand people.
2. Instruction to double the salary of secondary school teachers.
3. Freezing the establishment of new public companies and entities of the quasi-state sector in the interests of reducing state participation in entrepreneurial activity and creating good conditions for the private sector development.
4. Instruction to introduce the practice of dismissing top decision-makers of government bodies in case of corruption crimes committed by their subordinates.
5. Exemption of micro- and small businesses from paying taxes and introduction of a prohibition against their inspection by authorized government agencies for three years starting in 2020.
6. Instruction to postpone until 2023 the introduction of mandatory payment by employers of a 5% contribution to the Unified National Pension Fund.
7. Instruction to address the issue of targeted use by working citizens of a part of their pension accruals for the purchase of housing, education, etc.
8. Instruction to take unused agricultural land out of irresponsible landowners (“large landowners”).
9. Prohibition against the implementation of the government's initiative, unpopular in the society, concerning the introduction taxes on non-cash transfers of citizens.

10. Instruction to cancel mandatory registration of foreign citizens with the migration police.
11. Prohibition against the construction of a ski resort in the Kok-Jailau plateau near Almaty, which has been actively opposed for several years by a large group of members of the public. It's worthy to note that this decision also received a positive response from the United Nations' Under Secretary and Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Europe, Olga Algayerova [23].
12. Instruction on reduction by 40% of the quota for recruitment of foreign employees in 2020, as well as on reduction of foreign personnel in the 4th category (trade jobs).
13. Instruction on granting citizens the right to show certain documents in electronic rather than hard copies.

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev: "We have entered a new phase of the country's reformation. We should carry out the set tasks qualitatively. Every resident of our country should feel positive changes. I demand operative work and achievement of specific indicators from the government bodies. It is unacceptable to carry out reforms for the sake of reforms. Every minister and akim should have a list of key performance indicators. They will serve as the basis for determination of the level of achievement of their specific goals. Members of the Government, heads of state bodies and regions, state companies and institutions are entrusted with personal responsibility for the effective implementation of reforms". Personal responsibility for the efficient implementation of reforms is imposed on members of the Government, heads of governmental bodies and regions, public companies and institutions." (Extract from the President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's State of the Nation Address, September 2, 2019)

It's evident that during the short period of his Presidency, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has successfully adapted to the new political role, forming his own style of management and format of interaction with subordinate officials of government bodies, as well as with parliamentarians, representatives of business circles and civil society institutions.

5. At the international level, in a new status. Foreign policy activities of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, who hailed from the diplomatic service system and has extensive experience of relevant work, pays special attention to the issues of foreign policy of Kazakhstan. During the above-mentioned period of his tenure as Head of State, he has carried out:

- a)** 12 overseas trips, including state visits to China, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan and official visits to the Russian Federation and Germany;
- b)** 129 meetings with officials of foreign states and international organizations, representatives of foreign business circles and the public, including 37 meetings with heads of state and government of certain countries;
- c)** 34 telephone conversations with heads of state, government and parliament of foreign countries and heads of international organizations;
- d)** participation in 28 formal and informal events while abroad.

At the international level, the most important event was the participation of the President of the RoK in the 74th session of the UN General Assembly (New York, September 23–26, 2019). In his speech at the General Debate of the event, he, particularly, spoke up for the promotion of the Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World, the settlement of the problems around the Joint Comprehensive Action Plan on Iran and the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula exclusively through political means, and the establishment of the UN Center for Sustainable Development Goals under the auspices of the new UN Office in Almaty with a mandate to assist the countries of Central Asia and Afghanistan [24].

On the platform of this leading international organization, Tokayev also presented the key contours of the political course implemented by him in Kazakhstan. In addition, on the sidelines of the 74th session of the UNGA, he held a series of meetings with the heads of certain states, as well as with the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. The latter, in turn, expressed his positive attitude of Kazakhstan's contribution to international efforts to resolve regional conflicts, and specifically within the framework of the Astana Process on Syria.

During the participation of the President of Kazakhstan in other international events, he expressed his opinions and suggestions taking into account the specifics of relevant international organizations, as well as the interests of Kazakhstan within the framework of its participation in their activities.

Table 3. Key ideas from the speeches of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at international events

No	Event	Holding date	Venue	Ideas of the President of the RoK
1	Meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council	May 29, 2019	Nur-Sultan (Kazakhstan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration of good results by the Eurasian integration despite certain difficulties • Need for implementation of infrastructure megaprojects, digital agenda and use the potential of the “Astana” International Financial Center in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) • Need for joint efforts to ensure access of goods to new markets and elimination of barriers in trade and transit
2	Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)	June 14, 2019	Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of extension and establishment of full-fledged relations with key multilateral structures of Eurasia (EAEU, ASEAN, BRICS, EU) • Need for forming a pool of modern technology parks, including holding the Forum of Young IT Specialists of the SCO countries hosted by the Astana Hub International Technology park of IT-startups • Need to establish an SCO Information Security Centre • Importance of the active participation of SCO in the activity of the world community for environmental protection and the establishment of a permanent platform for cooperation in this area
3	V Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA)	June 15, 2019	Dushanbe (Tajikistan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for gradual transformation of CICA into a full-fledged regional organization • Importance of building under the aegis of CICA a full-fledged collective security system capable of carrying out international mediation • Need for creating a special fund for financing of CICA projects, programs and other activities • Need for strengthening the capacity of the CICA analytical centers by way of their transformation into a permanent dialogue platform

No	Event	Holding date	Venue	Ideas of the President of the RoK
4	Meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council	October 1, 2019	Yerevan (Armenia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of maintaining sustainable economic growth of the EAEU member states in conditions of the instability of the world economy through real and mutually beneficial cooperation, integration and cooperation • Need for removing barriers at the common domestic market of the Union • Importance of accelerating the development of the unified transit system and creating attractive conditions for development of advanced technologies
5	Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)	October 11, 2019	Ashgabat (Turkmenistan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of developing trade and economic cooperation and lowering the existing barriers • Need for enhancing cooperation in the spheres of digital technologies, electronic commerce, free trade in services and tourism • Consideration of the issue of introduction of a uniform regime within the CIS under the conventional name “Commonwealth Visa” in analogy with the Schengen Agreement type

Within the framework of bilateral intergovernmental cooperation, the most intensive contacts at the highest level were those between the presidents of Kazakhstan and Russia. This took place during the official visit of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to the Russian Federation (Moscow, April 3), his participation in the meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club (Sochi, October 3) and the XVI Forum of Kazakhstan and Russia Interregional Cooperation (Omsk, November 7). In the course of these events and negotiations between the leaders of the two countries, the positive dynamics of the development of strategic partnership and comprehensive cooperation between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation was generally noted and the intentions of further promotion of this process were expressed.

Following the results of the official visit to the Russian Federation and the activities of the XVI Forum of Interregional Cooperation, the Program of joint actions in the area of Russian-Kazakh production cooperation, the intergovernmental agreement on gas supply of the Baikonur complex, the Conception of the Program of cross-border cooperation “Kazakhstan-Russia”, the Program of joint actions between the Ministry of Industry and Infrastructural Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Transport

of the Russian Federation on the functioning of border crossing points on the Kazakhstan-Russian border, etc. were signed.

The state visit to China made on September 11–12, 2019 has also become a landmark for the President of the RoK. President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping confirmed the interest of their countries in the development of eternal, strategic and comprehensive partnership [25]. Following the results of the visit, intergovernmental agreements on cooperation in the field of aviation search and rescue of civil aircrafts and on the project of providing a supercomputer to the Kazakhstani side by the Government of the PRC, the Memorandum of Understanding between the Governments of the two countries on the implementation of the Cooperation Plan for linking the New Economic Policy “Nurly Zhol” and the construction of the “Silk Road Economic Belt”, etc. were signed.

The issues of bilateral cooperation between Kazakhstan and the U.S. were discussed during the meetings of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and United States Under Secretary of State David Hale who arrived in Nur-Sultan on August 21, 2019 to participate in the meeting of heads of foreign policy establishments of the U.S. and Central Asian countries in the “C5 +1” format, and U.S. President Donald Trump on the sidelines of the 74th session of the UNGA. The parties expressed their interest in expanding the Kazakh-American strategic partnership, as well as in ensuring regional and global security and restoring the situation in Afghanistan.

Prospects for further development of relations between Kazakhstan and the European Union were considered during the meetings of the President of Kazakhstan with President of the European Council Donald Tusk and the EU Special Representative for Central Asia Peter Burian held in the capital of Kazakhstan on May 31 and August 15, 2019, respectively. Their importance is mainly caused by the signing of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the EU in 2015 of the Agreement on Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation, as well as the adoption by the European Union of its new Strategy in Central Asia.

A separate direction of international activity of the Head of State is his interaction with various foreign media. So, during 9 months of his tenure, Tokayev gave 16 interviews to national and foreign media. In particular, to periodicals “Kommersant”, “Rossiyskaya Gazeta”, “Russia” TV channel and directly to journalist Alexey Pivovarov (RF), “UzA” News Agency (Uzbekistan), White House Chronicle TV program and Wall Street Journal newspaper (USA), Israel Hayom periodical (Israel), Deutsche Welle television and radio broadcasting company (Germany), Euronews TV channel and Bloomberg agency [26].

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev: "It is necessary to search for effective formulas against fragmentation of security in Asia. Today we see a "patchwork quilt" from various bilateral alliances, regional and sub regional institutions. In Asia, as they say in China, people sleep on the same bed, but see different dreams... The Asian economic miracle may prove to be just a "giant with feet of clay" without a comprehensive solution of multi-sided security challenges. Lack of collective endeavors may lead to the "Asian Time of Troubles" with dire consequences for the whole Globe instead of the "Asian Age of Prosperity." (Extract from the Speech at the Meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club, 3.10.2019)

In general, the foreign policy activity well-known to Kassym-Jomart Tokayev with his assumption of the post of President of the RoK has become qualitatively new. From the very beginning, it was important for him to solve the following main tasks within its framework.

First, to bring to the attention of key foreign partners of Kazakhstan the application of the principle of continuity proclaimed by him regarding both the continuation of the foreign policy of the country on the basis of multivectorness and pragmatism, as well as the strict observance of all agreements and arrangements reached earlier at the bilateral and multilateral levels.

Secondly, to build constructive and discretionary personal and business relations with heads of state or government of other countries and heads of international organizations.

Thirdly, present in the most positive light the processes taking place in Kazakhstan after the change of the country's leadership, with the aim not only to preserve, but also to expand mutually beneficial political and economic cooperation with concerned external stakeholders, including current and potential investors.

Thanks to his professionalism, earlier established international contacts and confident performance of the functions of the Head of State, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev manages to solve these tasks quite successfully.

6. Interim results

Despite the ambiguousness of the processes taking place in Kazakhstan in the conditions of transit of power and their perception by the Kazakh and international community, the Republic guided by the new Head of State Kassym-Jomart Tokayev is going through a rather interesting stage of its development, which combines elements of evolution and reboot. We can note the following main intermediate results of this process:

One can note the following primary interim results of this process:

1. The change of the country's leadership was marked by a reboot of the political system of Kazakhstan. As a matter of course, the super-presidential model of governance, formed in accordance with the personal and political potential of the First President of Kazakhstan – Elbasy Nursultan Nazarbayev, is being transformed towards strengthening not personalist, but institutional origins, according to the formula “Strong President – influential Parliament – accountable Government.”
2. The reboot also touched upon key approaches to further development of Kazakhstan and carrying out political, social and economic transformations necessary under current conditions. If Nazarbayev’s approach was his famous affirmation “First economy, then politics”, then Tokayev’s one is “Successful economic reforms are no longer possible without modernization of the social and politic life of the country.” In this regard, in his first Address to the people of Kazakhstan, the President of the RoK emphasized the implementation of political reforms as part of the formation of a modern effective state.
3. The reboot is also going the path of the relationships between the state and society, in accordance with the principle “Different Opinions, One Nation” and the concept of “Hearing State”. In this situation, a critical point is the fact that Kassym-Jomart Tokayev is consistent in fulfilling his promises, as reflected in his election program. Notably, he made his most important decisions exactly after taking office of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan in accordance with the results of the elections, having legitimate grounds for this, and not during the election campaign to mobilize the electorate. This circumstance also drives up the level of confidence of Kazakhstanis in the Head of State. In this case, the responses of a large number of citizens to his call for dialogue are also indicative, which was expressed in their appeals to the President of Kazakhstan through various channels.
4. Another reboot line is a new social policy based on reorientation of the functioning and development of the national economy for increasing the level of welfare of all Kazakhstanis and equitable distribution of the public revenue. At the same time, there is a goal to ensure that the system of social protection

- of the population does not contribute to the growth of dependency and paternalism among citizens, but motivates them to work and self-sufficiency.
5. Being a member of the Bureau of the Political Council of the “Nur Otan” party, Tokayev, however, does not try to use the party as a key political resource in support of his official line. Such a resource is the National Council of Public Trust created by him, which membership reflects different views, ideas, positions, social and political interests. In turn, this body helps the Head of State to present himself as an exponent of national interests and the interests of the entire Kazakhstani society in all its diversity, rather than partisan or group ones.
 6. The unique character of the National Council of Public Trust also resides in the fact that it is a mechanism enabling a dialogue not only between the authority and society, but also between different segments of society itself. The representatives of different political parties, non-governmental organizations, business circles, mass-media and expert community, who have joined it, will, primarily, have to learn to interact constructively with each other and make coordinated stances on various issues. The intense and productive activity of the working groups of this body shows that the movement takes certain and effective steps in this direction. The Council is thus expected to set a good example of dialogue and coordinated work of the rest of society and its institutions.
 7. The sitting and former Presidents of the country have built normal working relations which contributes to the consolidation of the ruling establishment of Kazakhstan and the functioning of the system of public authorities and governance in a stable way. Political support from the National leader Nursultan Nazarbayev for the activities of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev as the Head of State is one of the important factors of successful performance of this activity in conditions of transit of power.
 8. Using his strong experience of managerial work at different positions in the system of public authority and administration of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev rather quickly mastered methods and mechanisms of the activity as Head of State. Herewith he demonstrates his ability to respond to various processes and events in a timely manner and to make prompt, however balanced and adequate decisions.
 9. The vigorous activity of the President of Kazakhstan in the area of foreign policy contributed to his rapid and successful entry in the circle of top decision-makers of countries of the world and international organizations. In turn, this circumstance allows preserving and developing in the future the positive dynamics of relations between Kazakhstan and leading foreign policy partners. Notably, the range of visits abroad and international conversations held by Kassym-Jomart Tokayev during his tenure as the Head of State shows persistence in following the principle of multivectorness in building and implementing the foreign policy course of the country. Also, within the

framework of this area of governmental activity, the emphasis on the promotion and protection of national interests of Kazakhstan has become more clearly traced.

All this already appears to be a good basis for further effective implementation by the sitting President of the Republic of Kazakhstan of his declared political course.

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