

## KAZAKHSTAN'S EXEMPLARY DEVELOPMENT FUNDAMENTALS

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### **Abstract**

*This paper investigates the origin of the development oriented will of the Government of Kazakhstan and sheds light onto the political decisions made by the country's leadership during transition to market economy that resulted in enhanced economic growth and socio-political development since independence. It concludes that interdependence, constitutional governance, and non-ideological strategies have been important factors of growth for Kazakhstan.*

**Key words:** *interdependence, transition, constitutional governance.*

Kazakhstan's exemplary social, economic, and political accomplishments since 1992 have been grounded in three development fundamentals: (1) policies of *regional and global interdependence* as a foundation of successful national independence; (2) cultivation and measured growth of *constitutional governance institutions*; and (3) strategic formulation and broadly shared implementation of *non-ideological development plans*. All three of these basic features of Kazakhstan's successful development model are exemplified in on-going practices of its *Agency for Civil Service Affairs* and in creation of the *Regional Hub of Civil Service in Astana*, which are highlighted here.

These three basics of Kazakhstan's extraordinarily successful development have been and remain woven intricately into a shared culture of civilized advancement. Together, they have been applied with broad respect for situational differences and changing dynamics. Through often-difficult months and years, accompanied by some faults that have been largely overcome by impressively disciplined efforts, Kazakhstan has been confronted with some importantly opposite values and conflicting means to advance them. Wisely, it has mostly embraced such *Contradictions as Wise Paradoxes* of a broadly and deeply multi-cultural nation. Thus,

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instead of taking a path of ideological narrowness, Kazakhstan has advanced a model society that seeks to *multiply constructive values and harmonize with them many varied means to accomplishment*.

Advancing forward, guided by the ambitious *Strategy Kazakhstan 2050* and dynamic *Kazakh Yeli culture*, the nation promises to continue its vital global leadership roles. Woven into all three of Kazakhstan's development fundamentals in support of its future success domestically and internationally, the classic values of constitutional governance need to be central: *Search for Human Dignity and Search for Reasonableness via a Rule of Law*. While each of the three sets of basics in Kazakhstan's model of success are separately discussed below, it is crucial to understand that they are woven together as a sustaining whole cloth of civilized advancement.

### ***Regional and Global Interdependence as Kazakhstan's Foundation of Independence***

Kazakhstan immediately gained center-stage as a responsible international leader upon its emergence in 1992 as an independent nation by renouncing and removing nuclear weaponry. While it was initially heavily dependent on international assistance (via the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund [IMF], Europe's Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States [TACIS], the U.S. Agency for International Development [USAID], etc), it sought vigorously with UNDP and other support to avoid a culture of indiscriminant and crippling *dependence*. Embrace of *interdependence and global leadership responsibilities* became Kazakhstan's successful path to secure advanced nationhood. It has sought *and earned* global leadership responsibilities in the United Nations and in aspiring embrace of standards of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). During the same years, it has continued on paths of regional interdependence in the *Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)*, a regional Customs Union, and development of inter-nation trade and transportation networks across all its borders in recognition of practical geo-political, social, and economic realities. *Through its informed embrace of these often-paradoxical realities, Kazakhstan has become a preeminent example of wise escape from ideology.*

Creation in 2013 of the *Regional Hub of Civil Service in Astana* is a vital example of *responsible interdependency as a path of shared advancement among nations*. This path strengthens them against both damaging dependency and isolating independence that shrinks opportunities for growth. Before returning to this current development in Civil Service, however, it is important to reflect upon other examples of domestic and international challenges that Kazakhstan has successfully overcome by its embrace of interdependence among people and nations as a path for shared advancement.

A prime example worth remembering came early in the 1990s, when pensioners and many others in Kazakhstan (as in several other nations in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia) were suffering from intolerable social and economic conditions. Long before the collapse of the Soviet Union and lingering into 1994–95, *laissez faire ideology* became controlling in the IMF, the World Bank, the OECD, and the USAID. Yet, suffering nations in transition to Market Economies commonly became dependent on them and significantly controlled in return. Dominant Western ideology of those years reflected U.S. President Reagan's dictum that "Government is the Problem" of societies, not a facilitator of solutions. Imposition of that "free economic enterprise" doctrine as a condition of international assistance resulted in Russian privatization of many state enterprises before creation of a workable Rule of Law to facilitate a successful *Market Economy*. Corruption and *oligarchy* followed. Russia has suffered greatly as a consequence. With that background, observe that, when Kazakhstan's people suffered dreadfully in transition years, President Nazarbayev rejected powerful IMF pressures and other *laissez faire* ideologies and embraced an emerging doctrine of *Facilitative Government*. By such leadership, he rescued suffering people from disaster and advanced much-needed unity required for nation building throughout Kazakhstan.

I met briefly with President Nazarbayev during that challenging time. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the newly installed U.S. Presidency of Bill Clinton were rejecting *laissez-faire* ideologies and embracing three dimensions of *Facilitative Government*, all of which Kazakhstan has increasingly sought to apply, as follows:

*Facilitation of Social Self Governance and Civil Society Institutions.  
Facilitation of Workable Market Economics via Rule of Law Institutions.  
Facilitative Government — nationally, provincially, and locally — grounded  
in professionally expert public institutions, most particularly responsible  
Civil Service, Research and Educational Institutions, and Military and  
Security Services.*

These *Facilitative Government* concepts were powerfully embraced by the World Bank in its *World Development Report 1997: The State in a Changing World* (ISBN: 978-0-8213-3770-7). The IMF was slower in acceptance of them. Also, under the rubric of *New Public Management (NPM)*, Commonwealth nations and the OECD continued for years to follow theories and practices that remained dismissive of Facilitative Government and strongly supportive of extensive, *laissez faire* privatization. An early example of such IMF impacts in Kazakhstan was an effort to privatize state-owned telecommunications via sale to a private international business, following practices imposed on Russia. That sale was terminated. Kazakhstan, instead, sought gradually to put in place Rule of Law institutions to facilitate extensive private enterprise in oil and mineral extraction, banking and finance, and other dimensions of the economy. Some failures and corruption occurred. However, a Market Economy has largely flourished under developing rules to facilitate successful private enterprise.

Clearly, such successes of Facilitative Government requires professionally expert Civil Servants to accomplish public services without intrusions of incompetence and corruption. That development of Civil Service has taken years of devoted work in Kazakhstan, as was explained at the 2013 Astana Economic Forum by Alikhan Baimenov, Chairman of the Agency for Civil Service Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan (published in October 2013 in the *Regional HUB of Civil Service's Electronic Journal*, pp. 21-27, under the title "Modernisation of Civil Service: challenges and solutions.").

### ***Cultivation and Measured Growth of Constitutional Governance Institutions***

Kazakhstan's path to today's impressive Civil Service advancement — in the relatively short span of only two decades, compared to

lengthier processes in most nations—attests to both devotion and endurance required to develop and sustain constitutional government and related institutions.

Consider the *astonishing decrease of the number of political appointees by eight times and the extensive professionalization and rise in expertise of Kazakhstan's Civil Service* within the past very few years. *This is an unsurpassed accomplishment in institutionalization of constitutional government.* That sort of fundamental change requires topmost national leadership. President Nursultan Nazarbayev and professionals who have implemented his vital policy merit global recognition for this historic development.

Beyond such distinctive political leadership at the top, capable human resources and advanced-knowledge technologies and systems are required to formulate and implement institutions of Constitutional Governance and Facilitative Government. To develop these capacities during the past 22 years, *Kazakhstan has practiced a principle of Intergenerational Interdependency and Human Resources Development.* Talented youths have been educated at topmost educational institutions abroad; Kazakhstan has substantially enhanced higher education internally; and, most crucially, splendidly educated and self-disciplined youths have been appointed to positions of vital importance with opportunities for enhanced professional expertise and influence. Yerbol Orynbayev, presently Aide to the President of the Republic and Kazakhstan, is an exemplar of this wise practice.

Bridging across three-plus generations of political and professional human resources in public service, Alikhan Baimenov is an example of *in-and-out* embrace of responsibility within government, of ever-loyal opposition, and of sustained cultivation and measured growth of Constitutional Government. That sort of complex political dynamic is essential to development of constitutional institutions, and President Nazarbayev's enduring presence has both contributed to and facilitated it. Yet, ultimate intergenerational change has remained among the great tests of constitutional government throughout history, and Kazakhstan is now wisely embracing that prospect by strengthening its constitutional institutions generally.

Professionalization of Civil Service is the prime example. Of special importance is Kazakhstan's recent creation of *Corps A*, consisting of the topmost 0.6% of its Civil Service members. Supported by both general and specialized training and development, the Executive Corps now corresponds in expertise and professionalism to other most respected public services globally.

*Intergovernmental Relations* among Kazakhstan's national, provincial, and local jurisdictions is another vital arena of instructive strengthening of Kazakhstan's Constitutional Governance. International organizations, particularly USAID, exerted pressures during the 1990s for extensive *decentralization* of KZ national government and *broad devolution* of responsibilities and authority to provincial and local governments. Knowledgeable observers generally recommended against such premature dispersion of power, calling instead for measured development of constitutional government capacities, including Civil Service and other Rule of Law institutions at all levels. A realistic concern in those early years was breakup of Kazakhstan as a nation through empowerment of oligarchs and warlords and/or incursions of across-borders forces. Today, those worries have subsided.

Astana's development as the national capital and as a North Central metropolis of distinction is now understood as an extraordinarily wise nation-building move. Earliest months and years there were challenging. The UNDP was the only international organization that initially supported full-time professional experts in the new Capital, requiring their brokerage among World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and other support organizations. However, with sustained developmental strategy and tactics, Kazakhstan rapidly reached an essential *turning point* for Astana's success.

Strengthening Almaty's governance capacities and supporting its cross-sector development as a broadly entrepreneurial business and cultural metropolis have been winning strategies as well. Metropolitan growth of Shimkent and Aktobe, balanced by other developments throughout Kazakhstan, now make strategic dispersion of responsibilities and authority realistic. Effective Civil Service continues as an essential requirement of such constitutional development.

### *Strategic Formulation and Shared Implementation of Non-Ideological Development*

Strategic and tactical development planning and sustained implementation—*Kazakhstan 2030 and now Strategy Kazakhstan 2050*—have been and now are decisive in Kazakhstan’s successful advancements. It is important to observe, however, that these plans were built on strong foundations of Kazakhstan’s past and on its wealth of human and natural resources. *In short, Kazakhstan embraced its historical and natural path dependency as riches on which to build—not resources to be frittered away in responses to international organizations and other external pressures.*

Literacy in Kazakhstan slightly exceeded that of the United States and most other nations when the UNDP and KZ officials first invited me here in the 1990s. Presently, at a 99.6% level according to the United Nations, it still exceeds such nations as France, Germany, and the USA. Furthermore, advanced research and learning in arts, sciences, and technologies in Kazakhstan surpassed all other parts of the Soviet Union beyond Moscow and Leningrad before the breakup in 1992. Kazakhstan has wisely built on that heritage. Subsequent advances in learning and knowledge applications have been and remain basic pillars of strategies for the future. Clearly, among aims of Kazakhstan 2050, attainment of OECD performance levels considerably before that date appears promising.

*Path dependencies—cultural roots and dynamics of change—are particularly relevant in advancements of both Rule of Law and Civil Services. In my very brief 1990s work with Kazakh law experts who were refining Civil and Public Law provisions, it was crucial to link developments with foundations of Kazakh jurisprudence. Alikhan Baimenov was among informed sources to me in that effort. Constitutional Law simply cannot be imposed by foreign lawyers and other short-term interlopers. It must be deeply rooted in the varied soils of a nation’s cultures as well as fertilized by constitutional jurisprudence of international merit.*

That reality is also fundamental to Civil Services at local, provincial, and national levels. As a richly multicultural and geographically large nation, shared standards of Civil Service are vital to unity and advancements of Kazakhstan as a major nation. At the same time, situational variations are essential. *Balancing differentiation in values and practices of varied agencies and localities with shared integration among constitutional institutions is fundamental to public administration.*

Impressively, performance of the Agency for Civil Service Affairs demonstrates understanding of that complexity.

Beyond its riches of human resources and cultures, Kazakhstan's natural resources are enormous blessings. External exploitation of those resources involved many hazards in early years, and challenges remain that are beyond the scope of this analysis. It is essential to note, however, that natural resources extraction and other present resources are insufficient for present aspirations, let alone the future. The 2013 *Sustainable Development* theme of the Sixth Astana Economic Forum emphasized that. Kazakhstan's leaders clearly understand it. Impressively, *Strategy Kazakhstan 2050* and President Nazarbayev's detailed 2014 *State of the Nation Address* call for *essential diversification* of Kazakhstan's near-term and future economy. Those developments, in turn, require support of *Facilitative Government* institutions and, especially, *dynamic expertise and performance among Civil Servants*.

Impressively, the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan and its Research Institute and educational and training programs have been created to meet these needs. Institutionalization of the Agency for Civil Service Affairs has been accomplished as a foundational framework of Constitutional Government of Kazakhstan, sustaining the nation on promising paths for future advancements.

### ***Conclusions: Factors in Kazakhstan's Impressive Development Model***

*Interdependence* among nations and sustained embrace of responsibilities for global leadership were identified at the outset of this analysis as foundations of Kazakhstan's successful national independence. That model behavior accounts for its quick rise to global prominence. Creation of the *Regional Hub of Civil Service in Astana* is typical of Kazakhstan's actions. Reflecting on its internal practices since 1992, *intergenerational interdependence*—highly valuing and preparing youths for leadership, conjoined with respect for senior experience and historical paths of the Nation—was noted above as powerfully important also. Clearly, interdependent behaviors are vital qualities of Kazakhstan's culture and vital factors in its advancement.

*Constitutional Governance* and cultivation of governmental and political institutions in support of its development have been vital actionable measures taken by Kazakhstan, and they remain in dynamic growth modes. In key respects, Kazakhstan has followed paths recommended by Aristotle. When Western powers and some international development organizations were pushing CIS nations into both destructive *laissez faire* economics and undisciplined popular elections as principal marks of democracy, Kazakhstan resisted. Favoring challenging search for constitutional government—whether chiefly monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy—Aristotle had concluded that non-constitutionally grounded popular democracy amounts to Mob Rule. His research favored mixed and imperfect (non-ideological) constitutional forms, subject to Rule of Law, as paths to responsible civilization. Also, he embraced contradictory realities as natural and wise paradoxes. Embrace of such complexity has been recommended since Classical Times. Development of such understanding in development of constitutional institutions has largely engaged Kazakhstan, with some troubling faults along the way. Aristotle also observed in Classical Times that such challenging problems are inevitable in searching for foundations of human dignity and reasonableness. The Agency for Civil Service Affairs is a fitting example of such wisely sustained search. It is an outcome of many years of difficult development efforts. In updated Aristotelian fashion, it is now a key institution of Kazakhstan’s constitutional framework and an exemplar for other nations.

*Non-Ideological, Strategic Development Planning and Implementation* have been sustained paths of Kazakhstan’s astonishing success. Drawing on its historically diverse and shared cultures, its extraordinary levels of disciplined learning and talents, and deep resilience and strengths of its people to succeed despite exceedingly hard times, *KZ 2030* and now *Strategy Kazakhstan 2050* are ambitious but realistic paths into the future.

In brief, interdependence, growth of constitutional institutions, and non-ideological strategies and their sustained implementation have propelled Kazakhstan to both domestic success and global leadership. Combined, these three elements constitute a model for continued exemplary advancement.