

ISSN 0971-9318

HIMALAYAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN STUDIES

(JOURNAL OF HIMALAYAN RESEARCH AND CULTURAL FOUNDATION)

NGO in Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC, United Nations

Vol. 7 No. 2

April - June 2003

KAZAKHSTAN SPECIAL

The Traces of Buddhism in the Semirech'e

P. Stobdan

Ethnicity and Nation Building in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan

Manish Jha

Inter-ethnic Relations in Kazakhstan: Role of Presidency

Makhmud B. Kassymbekov

Environmental Threats to Kazakhstan's Security

Ajay Lele

Uighurs of Kazakhstan: Socio-Economic Situation

Sh. M. Nadyrov

Kazakhs in Post-Socialist Mongolia

Sharad K. Soni

HIMALAYAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN STUDIES

Editor : K. WARIKOO

Assistant Editor : SHARAD K. SONI

Copyright©Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation, New Delhi.

- * All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any means, electrical, mechanical or otherwise without first seeking the written permission of the publisher or due acknowledgement.
- * The views expressed in this Journal are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions or policies of the Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation.

SUBSCRIPTION

IN INDIA			
Single Copy	:	Rs.	100.00
Annual (Individual)	:	Rs.	300.00
Institutions	:	Rs.	500.00
& Libraries (Annual)			
OVERSEAS (AIRMAIL)			
Single Copy	:	US \$	7.00
		UK £	5.00
Annual (Individual)	:	US \$	30.00
		UK £	20.00
Institutions	:	US \$	50.00
& Libraries (Annual)		UK £	35.00

Subscriptions should be sent by crossed cheque or bank draft in favour of HIMALAYAN RESEARCH AND CULTURAL FOUNDATION, Post Box : 10541, Jawaharlal Nehru University Post Office, New Delhi - 110067 (India).

Printed and published by Prof. K. Warikoo on behalf of the Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation, BA/1G, D.D.A. Flats, Munirka, New Delhi-110067. Printed at Print India, A-38/2, Mayapuri-I, New Delhi-64 and published at New Delhi.

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Hridaya Kaul
New Delhi (India)

Prof. Harish Kapur
Professor Emeritus
Graduate Institute of
International Studies
Geneva (Switzerland)

Prof. Devendra Kaushik
Chairman
Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Institute of Asian Studies
Kolkata (India)

Prof. Amin Saikal
Director
Centre for Arab and
Islamic Studies
Australian National University
Canberra (Australia)

Prof. A.A. Aidaraliev
President
International University of
Kyrgyzstan
Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan)

Mr. Alexander Veigl
Secretary General
IOV
Vienna (Austria)

Prof. I.N. Mukherjee
School of International Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi (India)

Dr. Lokesh Chandra
Director
International Academy of
Indian Culture
New Delhi (India)

Prof. Jayanta Kumar Ray
Vice Chairman
Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Institute of Asian Studies
Kolkata (India)

Prof. Kalim Bahadur
New Delhi (India)

CONTRIBUTORS

Mr. P. Stobdan is Research Fellow, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi.

Dr. Manish Jha is Lecturer, Department of Political Science, Government College, Deogarh, Jharkhand.

Mr. Makhmud B. Kassymbekov is Chairman of the Office of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Ajay Lele is Defence Analyst.

Dr. Sh. M. Nadyrov is Formerly Head, Centre of Uighur Studies, Institute of Oriental Studies, Kazakhstan Academy of Science, Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Dr. Sharad K. Soni is Senior Research Fellow, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata.

HIMALAYAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN STUDIES

Vol. 7 No. 2

April - June 2003

CONTENTS

Editor's Page		1-2
The Traces of Buddhism in the Semirech'e	<i>P. Stobdan</i>	3-24
Ethnicity and Nation Building in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan	<i>Manish Jha</i>	25-61
Inter-ethnic Relations in Kazakhstan: Role of Presidency	<i>M.B. Kassymbekov</i>	62-77
Environmental Threats to Kazakhstan's Security	<i>Ajay Lele</i>	78-87
Uighurs of Kazakhstan: Socio-Economic Situation	<i>Sh. M. Nadyrov</i>	88-99
Kazakhs in Post-Socialist Mongolia	<i>Sharad K. Soni</i>	100-115

Editor's Page

Stretching over 1600 kms. from north to south and over 2000 kms. from the Caspian Sea in the west to China's frontier in the east, Kazakhstan in terms of area is the largest of the Central Asian Republics and the ninth largest country in the world. Its strategic importance is not only due to its central position in Eurasia sharing its borders with Russia in the north (6,447 kms.), with Caspian Sea in the west (2,320 kms.), with China (1,460 kms.), with Kyrgyzstan (980 kms.), with Uzbekistan (2,300 kms.) and with Turkmenistan (380 kms.), but also due to its abundant oil, gas and mineral resources.

In terms of its population, Kazakhstan with over 15 million is only second after Uzbekistan. However, the Republic is multi-ethnic with Russians (30%) constituting the largest minority followed by Ukrainians (3.6%), Uzbeks (2.5%), Germans (2.3%), Tatars (1.6%), Uighurs (1.4%) and others. As such, Kazakhstan has the largest non-Asian and non-Muslim population which accords it a distinct Eurasian character. The steep increase in the population of Kazakhs from 39.7% in 1989 to 53.4% in 1999, is ascribed to their higher birth rate, to the corresponding decline of Russian population from 37.8% in 1989 to 30% in 1999 primarily due to their exodus, and to the immigration of Kazakhs from other countries to their 'homeland'. In its nation-building effort independent Kazakhstan is striving to achieve the overwhelming majority for the titular nationality- the Kazakhs, and also to secure Kazakh control over the Russian majority areas in north. Kazakhstan so that the potential risk of secession by the Cossack and Russian dominated areas in the north is eliminated. Though many Kazakhs tend to be in favour of Kazakhstan being

a multi-national state, yet they would like the Russians to learn local history, language and culture. So the problem of inter-ethnic relations particularly the status of Russians remains a tenuous issue in independent Kazakhstan. Creating a common Kazakhstani identity shared by both the Kazakhs, Russians and other minorities is a challenging task for Kazakhstan's political leadership. Same is true of building the democratic institutions. Rise of radical Islam supported by extraneous forces and deterioration in ethnic relations between the Kazakhs being the titular nationality and the Slavs, are the problems that call for an amicable settlement on a long term basis.

It is with these issues in mind, that this *Kazakhstan Special Issue* of the Himalayan and Central Asian Studies is being brought out by the Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation. The historico-cultural Buddhist legacy of Kazakhstan and adjoining areas in the Semireche has been well documented by P. Stobdan. Whereas the problems of ethnicity and nation-building in Kazakhstan are analysed in depth by Dr. Manish Jha, the Kazakhstani view of the prevailing inter-ethnic relations and Kazakhstan President's policy on this issue has been presented by the learned Kazakh scholar Kassymbekov. Ajay Lele throws light on the environmental threats to Kazakhstan's security. The status of ethnic Uighur minority living in Kazakhstan has been discussed by the leading Uighur scholar of Kazakhstan, Dr. Nadyrov. The issue of migration of Kazakhs from Mongolia to post-Soviet Kazakhstan has been dealt by Dr. Sharad K. Soni.

K. Warikoo

THE TRACES OF BUDDHISM IN THE SEMIRECH'E

P. Stobdan

The spread of Buddhism in the Semirech'e and Kazakhstan has been described by most Central Asian historians as a long process of culmination between southern displacement of Eurasian nomadic tribes and the northern diffusion of Buddhism into Central Asia (100 BC - 1750 AD). The nomadic invasion from the North took place particularly at the time when Buddhism was undergoing fundamental transformation in and around Northern India. The Sakas and more particularly proto-Turkic (Yuezhi-Kushan) and the White Huns started to accept Buddhism as their state doctrine. During the I century itself some Sakas believed to have introduced early Buddhism in the region around Hindu-Kush and Tarim Basin. By II century AD, the Kushans occupied Western India. Through their bases in Gandhara and Bactria, the Kushans oriented the entire region up to Amu-Darya and south Tarim to Buddhism. During this period, the Sogdian merchants played a major role in spreading Buddhism. Of course, this part of the early introduction of Buddhism in Central Asia is well recorded. There are, however, no signs of Buddhism reaching up to the steppes of Kazakhstan during this period. It remained confined only to the present day territories of Afghanistan, Tarim Basin, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and parts of Uzbekistan.

The archaeological findings now suggest that Buddhism appeared in southern Kazakhstan sometime during VII-VIII century AD and continued to spread in different forms and from different directions up to XVIII century throughout the country. The historians now suggest that the introduction of Buddhism in Kazakhstan took place in three phases.

In the first phase (VII-VIII century AD) Buddhism reached up to the upper Syr-Darya (Ferghana). The archaeological findings especially in the Chu Valley and Semirech'e now conclude that the early

Mahayana Buddhism was introduced to the ancient towns of Suyab and Navaket by the Chinese monks, located near Kazakh-Kyrgyz border, through the process of urbanisation of these towns by Chinese merchants. The towns formed important trading points on the Silk Route. In fact, the entire part of present day South Kazakhstan can be covered under this phase.

Tibetan Buddhism, especially of the Geyluk-pa sect was founded by Tsungkha-pa in XIV-XV centuries in Tibet. By XVI century almost all the Mongol tribes including the Khalka Mongols and Oirat Mongols had come under the influence of Tibetan Buddhism. In Central Mongolia with its centre in Urga (present day Ulaan Baatar), the institution of Jebtsundhamba, also called by the Mongols as Ondur Gegen, was established. The *Chi'ng* or Manchu Dynasty (1644-1911) specially patronised and made Tibetan Buddhism the State religion of China. Later, during the XVII century, one Oirat Mongol scholar, Zaya Pandita (1599-1662) after receiving education in Tibet popularised Geyluk-pa sect among the western Mongol tribes including among Oirats, Jungars and Kamyks. It was during this phase that Tibet Buddhism of *Vajrayana* or *tantric* form reached up to central parts of Kazakhstan, perhaps to the point, where present day Karaganda town is located. In the early XVII century, almost a million Mongols of the Torgut-Kalmyk tribes, due to internecine fighting and because of Chinese suppression, migrated from western Mongolia to the bank of Volga in European continent and established there an outpost of Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhism. The Kalmyk migration took place through the Kazakh steppes and across the Ural Mountains. In what is known as Kalmykia Autonomous Republic under the Russian Federation, the Kalmyks with their capital in Ilisti, continue to practice Lamaistic Buddhism. In the recent decades, interactions between the Kalmyks and Indians have increased and there is an increasing effort to restore practice of Buddhism. In 1999, the Kalmyks, constituting today only a quarter of a million population celebrated the 400th birth anniversary of Zaya Pandita.

TRACES OF BUDDHISM IN THE SEMIRECH'E

There has been considerable amount of research work being carried out on Buddhism in the Semirech'e and Kazakhstan in the post-Soviet collapse with the sponsorship of several international bodies and local institutions. For example, B. A. Litvinski did some of the early works on the introduction of Buddhism in Central Asia. Russian scholars like B. Y. Staviski had described in greater detail the spread of Buddhism in Central Asia and the role played by Indians. The main feature does suggest that the Semirech'e did play a major role of bridge between India and East Turkistan. Much of the Buddhist findings in the Semirech'e today appear to be a part of the same culture complex that was evolved through intense interactions between Indian and Turkic people in East Turkistan. These aspects are now widely researched upon by several scholars. For example, two European researchers, Dr. Renato Sala and Dr. Jean-Marc Deom, currently associated with the Institute of Archaeology, Kazakhstan are conducting archaeological investigations in the region. Some of the new projects under the rubric the ISP - International Scientific Projects are being sponsored by the European Union and other organisations. The studies being are carried out in association of local experts, and some of these results are quite praise worthy. I would like to reproduce here some of these results with slight modifications and interpretation through my own understanding. I have had good interaction with both the scientists during the past two years and in fact undertook joint field trips to areas of archaeological importance in Kazakhstan. The followings are the details of Buddhist archaeological monuments, cultic objects, inscriptions found in the Semirech'e and Kazakhstan based on ISP studies.

(1) The Early Spread of Buddhism (VII-VIII centuries)

The highest degree of Buddhist archaeological concentrations in the Semirech'e are found in the Chu Valley (sounds like Tibetan *Chu* or water) bordering Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan border. There are mainly 4 Buddhist sites: two situated around Tokmak (Ak-Beshim and Krasnaya Rechka), and two in the vicinity of Bishkek (Novopakrovka and Novopavlovka). All together the Chu Valley complex includes 4

monasteries and 3 temples. But a Buddhist site might as well have been in South Kazakhstan, near Chimkent, Sairam region, (ancient Ispidjab), where underground cells have been found and partly excavated which could have been a Buddhist monastery.

Ak-Beshim or Red River (ancient **Suyab**): (one monastery, two temples). The medieval town of Ak-Beshim or Ordukent, 60 kilometres east of Bishkek, has been the capital of the Western Turks. During the VII-VIII AD, one of the 4 Chinese garrisons in the west was stationed here. Archaeologists have found so far three Buddhist monuments in this town.

Monastery – In 1940, A. N. Bernshtam excavated two low mounds (1,5m) at the east of the fortified Shahristan of Ak-Beshim, what he called as Karakitai quarter, and found a Buddhist monastery with a chapel. The chapel is a rectangular construction with an outside wall (14 x 8 meters) and an inside building (4 x 12 meters) surrounded by a corridor. The upper layer of the diggings revealed a fallen tiled roof (gray and red clay tiles); and walls, made in some places, of baked bricks over a bed of adobes. The partial excavation of some small rooms revealed two periods of construction. The chapel contained a large amount of clay sculptures (including a scrap of a Buddha mold and a lotus shape footing); parts of sandstone steles (piece of a lion, of a Bodhisattva face and of a lotus); and debris of multi-colored columns and plasters. The main sculpture on the pink sandstone is a sitting Buddha Sakyamuni on a lotus throne with two disciples standing on sides. The sides are broken with only one figure of disciple standing on the left. The Buddha's right hand is in preaching position (broken) while the left hand is touching the knee.

At 9 meters away from the chapel, there was found a monastery (dimension: 32 x 25 meters) made of rooms, a storage room and a kitchen. The rooms had a *kan* (central heating system with hot air circulation inside the walls); and a pitched roof made of tiles. Their semi-circular endings have Sassanian ornaments characteristic of the Tang dynasty; and on two of the tiles a Sanskrit and an Uighur

TRACES OF BUDDHISM IN THE SEMIRECH'E

inscription were discovered with signature of craftsmen. These elements having similarity to those of western Chinese findings did suggest the possibility of immigrations of Buddhist communities (Uighur) during the IX-X centuries AD. Although Bernshtam dated both chapel and monastery to the Karakitai period (XII-XIII centuries), a further analysis of Suyab materials and the Chu Valley made by L. R. Kyzlasov in the 1950s proved that there was almost no trace of Karakitai occupation in the region. The materials of the chapel and monastery (fragments in clay from ornaments, and other fragments in stone from a stele of rose-sandstone) suggested that both monuments would have been built in two periods: the first dating to the VII-VIII century AD and the second one belonging to the Karluk-Uighur time (IX-XII centuries AD).

Buddhist Temple-1. L. R. Kyzlasov excavated the site in 1953-54 AD. It is situated 100 meters south of Shahristan (palace). It is a rectangular shape (76 x 22 meters) hall with door facing eastward. The walls are 2 to 3 meters wide. It has a courtyard, 6 rooms and a temple (6.4 x 6.3 meters) with an ambulatory corridor. The temple had painted stuccoes with floral ornaments and statues, bronze gilded appliques (14 pieces) mostly of Buddha, 1 decagonal star depicting a Turko-Sogdian couple with a camel. The main figure in the temple is Buddha. The style and materials have similarity with those found in East Turkestan. Kyzlasov dated the temple construction to the period between 679 and 751 AD. According to him the Karluks may have destroyed the temple immediately in 750 AD. The monastery may have the "Big Cloud Monastery" as noted by the traveller Du Huan when he crossed the city around 750 AD. He wrote a chronicle of his travels to the West, the "Jingxing ji" (record of the Western travel). The text today is lost but fragments of it were reproduced in the "Tongdian" (comprehensive dictionary) written by his relative Du You in 778 AD. The name of this monastery "Big Cloud" leaves little doubt of its Chinese origin because we know that it was the name given to the Buddhist monasteries, which were built on the order of empress Wu Hou (Wu Zitian) after she adopted a Buddhist messianic policy on the base of the sutra of the Big Cloud (Da Yunjing) in 692 AD.

Buddhist Temple-2. L. P. Zyablin excavated this site in 1955-58 AD. It is situated inside the early medieval town, on a mound 250 meters east and 100 meters south of Shahrstan. The temple is square in shape (38 x 38 meters), with double ambulatory corridor and four entrances. The temple had fragments of painted stuccoes, a Buddha head, fragments of one arm and hand, fragments of moulded alabaster with ornaments. The temple was dated to the VII-VIII centuries AD.

Krasnaya Rechka (ancient **Navikat**): The medieval town Krasnaya Rechka is located 40 kilometres from Bishkek. In ancient times it may have been Navikat, the capital of Turk Turghesh (699-751 AD). The monuments excavated here dated to this period.

Monastery was partially excavated by A. N. Bernstam in 1940 AD and later by L. P. Kozhemiako in 1961-63. Here they found fragments of painted stuccoes with floral motives and Buddha's heads; a Chinese bronze mirror of the Tang dynasty. The complex was dated to the VIII-X centuries AD.

Temple was partially exhumed on the location of a big mound (diameter 35 to 40 meters and 5 to 7 meters high). L. P. Kozhemiako excavated it in 1961-63 and V.D. Goryacheva and K.M. Baipakov in 1979-83 and in 1996-1998. The temple is situated outside the town walls and erected on the top of a Sogdian castle-farm (V-VI centuries AD). They found in the temple clay sculptures of Buddha and Bodhisattvas. The rooms had painted walls with polychromatic motifs and frescoes. There were also Indian and Chinese style Buddhist statuettes in gilded bronze. There were also fragments of letters written in Brahmi-Sanskrit on birch bark.

Novopakrovka (ancient **Pakap?**): one monastery.

The medieval town of Novopakrovka II, located 10 kilometres south of Bishkek was partially excavated by Kozhemiako in 1953. In 1965-66, during the construction of a new building, local people found around 20 bronze gilded Buddhist statuettes in an area of the town. In the same years, V. D Goryacheva and S. Peregudova excavated some sections of this place, and identified it as a Buddhist monastery. The

TRACES OF BUDDHISM IN THE SEMIRECH'YE

layer where the statuettes have been found belongs to the VIII-IX centuries AD. Among the 20 bronze gilded statuettes there is a 'Kashmir style' bronze statuette of Buddha under an arch with Sanskrit inscriptions, and three 'Topa-Wei style' bronze statuettes, similar to Chinese statues found in Krasnaya Rechka.

Novopavlovka (ancient Dzhul?): one monastery

In Novopavlovka (or Kliuchevskoe, 10 kilometers west of Bishkek) another Buddhist building, which is also supposed to be a monastery was excavated by Bernshtam in 1941. It was situated at the northeastern corner of the medieval town of Novopavlovka on a mound, presently as a cemetery. It is composed of a rectangular construction, including many small rooms (cells). The excavations exhumed remnants of painted walls with floral designs. Bernshtam has interpreted the drawing of an old wise man as Vajrapani. On the back walls, there is the aura of Buddha, similar to the style of wall ornaments found in the monastery of Krasnaya Rechka, and some monasteries of East Turkistan. Bernshtam dated it to the Karluk time (IX century AD), but it probably belonged to an earlier period (VII-VIII centuries AD).

Issyk-Ata (Chu Valley): Rock Carvings

One of the most interesting Buddhist site in Chu Valley is the rock carving of Buddha at a site called Issyk-Ata, 80 kilometres south of Bishkek on the lower hills of Chu Valley. The figure appears to be that of *Sangyas Manla*, Tibetan version of Medicine Buddha, carved on a rock in a narrow valley. The figure is 1.5 meters in size, Buddha in a sitting position, his left hand holding a bowl with fruits and the right hand posturing towards the knee in a healing *mudra*. Around the figure, one could decipher the Tibetan Mantra of *Om-Ma-Ni-Pad-Me-Hum*. The figure is in still good condition, but the writings have been spoiled. It appears that the site was famous for hot-spring water therapy. A small stream of hot-spring water continues to flow 5 meters next to the Buddha carving. There are building constructions of old type, where people stayed for days for treatment with hot spring water. On my visit there, I did find several water tankers collecting spring water and then transported to Bishkek for bottling and sale.

Sairam (ancient **Ispidjab**, South Kazakhstan): one monastery.

The architectural remains in the town of Sairam (ancient Ispidjab, 15 kilometres south-east of Chimkent) are considered to be oldest among the Buddhist sites found in the territory of Kazakhstan. K. Baipakov and A. N. Grishenko found some of the cells in 1980s. There is an underground complex, which is not yet being explored. The complex appeared to be an underground Buddhist *monastery* and is said to be belonging to the Bamiyan period, testifying to early spread of Buddhism in the region under the Hephtalites (V-VI centuries AD). Since the archaeologists found no Buddhist materials around the site, they are being described as cells belonging to the Nestorians. Another ancient Buddhist site in the south is **Kostobe** located on the bank of Talas River near Taraz town. The site has not been excavated as yet, but the ruins are found very close to a Muslim cemetery.

Isolated Buddhist Objects: Several painted ceramics, metal and ivory works, rock engravings belonging to early period have been found at isolated places in Kazakhstan. They include:-

A Bodhisattva in Abhaya Mudra VII-VIII centuries AD has been found in an area between Talas and Chu valleys near Taraz.

Buddhist and Hinduist statuettes of Indian origin, including a Buddha sitting in lotus position inside a mandola along with some Sanskrit scriptures have been found in the Chu Valley.

On the right side of the Chu river, perhaps the ancient town of Bundjikent, archaeologists found fragments of pottery with Swastika motives, as well as a clay mould of a Stupa (VII-VIII centuries AD).

The rock carvings of sitting Buddha in lotus position with Tibetan inscriptions are found in the south of Chu valley. Similar carvings are also found on the rocks of south of Issykul Lake. Tibetans may have carved them during their occupation of the region in VIII-IX centuries AD.

In the west Semirech'e, near the town of Talgar (ancient Talkhir) an ivory statuette of standing Buddha with musicians was found.

(2) The Second Entry of Buddhism (IX-XII centuries)

Antonovka (ancient **Kailak**): Buddhist temple.

Antonovka is some 500 kilometres from Almaty towards the east, located on a piedmont of Jungarski Alatau Mountain. Historians believe that Antonovka may have been the ancient town Kaylak, then capital of the Turk Karluks (XI-XII centuries AD). The site was excavated by K. M. Baipakov in 1998-1999 and is said to be a Buddhist temple belonging to the Uighur proto-Lamaist school. It is a square structure (16 x 18 meters) located in the middle of agriculture field. The temple complex with several rooms is open to the west. It has a corridor and towers on the corners. It has architectural similarity with Buddhist buildings found in the region of Hami, Dunhuang and Kara-khoto (Etsin-gol oasis, in south-west corner of Mongolia). The archaeologists believe that it is one of the three Buddhist temples that Franciscan monk Rubruquis (Van Rubroek) visited in 1253 AD, on his way to Karakoram. Until now, no objects have been found at the site. Antonovka is now a Russian Cossack town with most people involved in agriculture. During the summer of 2000 AD, I visited the site with a group of Kazakh intellectuals. I could observe that the Cossacks preserved this historical site without causing much damage. It is in ruins, but Kazakh archaeologists intend to carry out further excavation around the place.

(3) The Final Phase of Buddhism (XVII-XVIII centuries)

As mentioned earlier, the last phase of the entry of Buddhism in Kazakhstan came through Mongolia (XVII-XVIII centuries AD). This phase is related to introduction of Tibetan Lamaistic Buddhism among the Oirat-Kalmyks Mongols. The monuments belonging to this period are mainly *monasteries* and *stupa*. The major ones include the monastery of Sumbe (in Kegen district), the monastery of Ablait (in Semipalatinsk province); and monastery of Kyzilkent located 250 kilometres east of Karaganda. They all present classical type Lamaist architecture and cult objects.

Sumbe (Narynkol - Kegen district) is on the southeastern border between Kazakhstan and China. F. Gregoriev excavated the monastery in 1992 AD. It is a square structure and has characteristics of the Tibetan constructions.

The ruins of **Ablaikit** monastery have been recorded but not yet excavated.

The monastery of **Kyzil-Kent** in Karkaralinsk district of Karaganda province so far represents the western most Buddhist monument of Central Asia. Zh. Smailov excavated it in 1986 AD. It consists of a square plan, with four side-chambers and two floors. Several Lamaist forms of Buddha and Boddhisattva, as well as Tantric cult objects similar to those widespread in Tibet and Mongolia were found here. The site is on a beautiful location next to a rocky hillock. The place is not fully excavated as yet but a private Kazakh firm KUMBEZ has recently taken up a project to restore this Buddhist monastery belonging to the 17th century.

Several Kazakh families and collectors continue to retain Buddhist relics and statues. They include statues of Zaya Pandita, Tsongkhapa, Buddha, Tara and relics like prayer wheels, Lamaistic objects etc. Many collectors occasionally approached Indian Cultural Centre in Almaty for their possible sale. More than 25 objects of gold-plated bronze statues, figurines, cult objects from the VII-IX centuries AD found in the Chu Valley are in the hands of private collectors. Many collectors in Almaty are in possession of several Buddhist statues of Mongolian and Jungar origin. I have seen people with bronze statues of Khalka Jebtsundamba of Mongolia and Vajrapani.

The Ili Buddhas

One of the most magnificent Buddhist sites in Kazakhstan is the Buddha carving in Tamgali Tas near Ili River depicting Lord Buddha and Buddhisattvas of the Tibetan Lamaistic forms. The immense figures of Buddha and Budhisattvas are carved in deep relief onto a rock face the Ili River, near Kapchagai Lake, not so far away from Almaty. The Ili River originating in East Turkistan crosses southeastern parts of

TRACES OF BUDDHISM IN THE SEMIRECH'YE

Kazakhstan before it dries up in Lake Balkash. There are no well documented local records available about the Ili rock carvings, except that a Russian scholar described it in a book on Central Asia in later nineteenth century. Later, Kazakh social scientist, Chokhan Valikhanov drew the pictures of Ili and wrote little description about the carvings in some of his writings. A Kazakh scientist Rogozhinsky Alexei from the Kazakh Institute of Archeology told me that a proper scientific research about such a monument was totally banned during the Soviet period, hence there have been no detailed works on it. Moreover, the Kazakhs generally tend to view the aspects relating to Buddhism as sign of Chinese imperialism.

In November 1999 after my assignment as the Director of Indian Cultural Centre in Almaty, this author became the first to decipher the writings on the Tamgali Tass rocks near Ili River. My presentation about the carving to the Kazakh intellectuals held at Mukhtar Auezov House in late 1999, was flashed by the local media as a historic occasion for Kazakhstan. The then Indian Ambassador to Kazakhstan, Rajiv Sikri presented a copy of the text prepared by me to the Kazakh President in December 2000. Since then Tamgali Tass Buddha has attracted a lot of attention from ordinary Kazakhs. The local authorities and educational institutions have shown lot of interest about this historical site and sought help from Indian Cultural Centre.

The Tibetan and Mongolian scriptures on the rock titling different images of Buddha indicate that they are masterworks of Central Asians who professed Tibetan or Mahayana Buddhism. The Ili figures and scriptures do not suggest that they belonged to the period earlier than XVI-XVII centuries. These perhaps came into being during the Jungarian expansion in Kazakhstan. It is also likely that these have been created either by the Uighurs of Khotan who professed Tibetan version of Buddhism prior to their conversion into Islam in X-XI centuries. More probably the Mongols of Kalmyks-Jungar tribe, who adopted Tibetan form of Buddhism in the XVI-XVII centuries, made them. Some Russian sources indicated that besides Mongols of Mongolia and Buryatia some 82,000 Kyrgyzs and 119,162 Kalmyks practiced

P. Stobdan

Mahayana Buddhism towards the end of XIX century. It may also have been the works of Kalmyk monks who immigrated to the Volga through Ili River during XVII century.

The most significant aspect of the Buddha carvings is their location on the bank of Ili River that formed an important part of the legendary Silk Route. It was natural that pilgrims, travellers, merchants, conquerors and saints may have traversed the route over the centuries. It is quite possible that this particular spot on the Ili River was a link-point on the Silk Route connecting other Central Asian Buddhist towns like Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Yarkand and Kashgar. It may also have been an important halt for the Central Asian merchants on their way to Lake Balkash.

There is no doubt that the Buddhas of Ili belonged to Tibetan form of Lamaist Buddhism. Both in their artistic style and metaphysical characteristics, the images typically belong to Vajrayana or Tantric schools that originated in Northern India, particularly known as Kashmiri Buddhism, which later flourished in Tibet and Central Asia. The site has one major rock-face overlooking the Ili River with three carved out images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

A: *Sans-rgyas S'akya-t'ub-pa la n-mo*_(adoration to Buddha Sakyamuni)



Buddha S'akya-muni (Sakyamuni Buddha)

TRACES OF BUDDHISM IN THE SEMIRECH'E

The figure 1 depicts the image of Buddha S'akya-muni written in Tibetan as (S'akya-t'ub-pa). It represents Sakyamuni at the great epoch of his life, signifying attainment of Nirvana or enlightenment under the "Tree of Wisdom". The figure conventionally represents Buddha as a man of the most perfect form and beauty. His face is normally shown as of Aryan type with placid and benign expression. The figure shows Buddha in general character, with tonsured and curly hair, wearing robes leaving the right shoulder bare without any ornaments. He is shown sitting in "the indestructible" position, with right hand touching the earth known as "Witness Attitude" (Skt., *Bhūsparsa Mudra*) and the left hand on the lap holding a begging bowl. He is seated upon a cushion of lotus flower, signifying the spot at Bodh Gaya in India. It is the commonest of all the forms of the sedent Buddha, mostly found in Burma and Sri Lanka.



Chenrezing Buddha (Avalokitesvara)

B: *Sans-rgyas hphag-pa spayan-ras-gzigs la n-mo* (adoration to Buddha compassion)

Phagspa-Chenraisi is the central figure of Ili. It is the most compassionate Buddha, known in Sanskrit as *Mahakaruna*, the one with most penetrating vision and merciful eyes. He is attributed as the great pitier or lord of mercy. The Indian Mahayana Buddhism and Tibetan Lamaism have adopted a large portion of Hindu mythology and

cosmic notion with strong metaphysical base. There exist a vast multitude of deities in the Mahayana pantheon. Chenraisi is one of the manifestations of innumerable forms of the Buddhas that exist in terrestrial, celestial and metaphysical forms. Most of them are nothing but conventional attitudes ascribed to the historical Buddha.

Chenraisi is purely a mythological creation and regarded as the spiritual son of the celestial Buddha Amitaba, or “the Boundless Light.” The Buddhologists argue that Chenraisi or Avalokita’s metaphysical creation was modeled on the Hindu Creator *Prajapati* or *Brahma*. His images bear Brahma’s attribute, the lotus and rosary, and often the vase and book. Chenraisi is the most powerful and popular of all the Bodhisattvas, and the chief patron of Tibet. The Dalai Lama is said to the reincarnation of Chenraisi.

Avalokita is being shown in various forms, ranging from four to thousand-handed images. The one on the Ili is a typical four-handed Avalokita, showing him as a prince wearing thirteen ornaments. He is sitting in the Buddha posture with cross-legged position. His front pair of hands joined in devotional *Mudra* (as clasping a jewel), while the upper hand holds crystal rosary, and the left hand holds a long stemmed lotus-flower, which opens on the level of his ear. Avalokita is also normally projected in a monstrous eleven-headed form. Unlike the four-handed, it is usually standing and with multiple hands carrying weapons to protect its votaries.



Medicine Buddha at Issyk-Ata (Kyrgyzstan)



(Sangyas Manla) (Medicine Buddha), Ili

C: *Sans-rgyas sman-gyi bla la n-mo*_(adoration to Buddha Medicine)

In short form he is called *Manla* and popularly known in Tibet as *Bedurya'I Od-kyi rgyal-po* (the king of beryl-light). *Manla* is the supreme medicine Buddha. He is known as Buddhist Esculapius, and was created on the legend of the medicine-king *Bhai-sajya guru*. In Japan, he is popularly known as the lord *Binzuru* or *Biduriya* (the beryl). *Manla* is always in the form of Buddha, garb and sedent attitude. His face and body are indigo-coloured. His right hand has a posture of “the best Bestowing” (Skt., *Varada* or *Dhana*) signifying charity, and he is holding in palm the long stemmed golden Arura fruit (myrobalans). His left hand is in “meditative” or (Skt., *Samadhi*) posture, holding a begging-bowl of Bai-dur-ya (beryl-stone). It is said that two *sutras* or texts of *Bhai-sjya guru* - one abbreviated and the other extended are commonly found in Central Asia and Mongolia.

Figure 4: Nagaarjuna

A Buddha figure with snakes covering his head perhaps depicting Nagaarjuna, who propounded the Doctrine of Madhyamika (Middle Path) is located right below on a isolated rock. The figure has been damaged due to tempering by visitors.

Figure 5: Other Buddhas

There are other isolated Buddha figures on the rocks closer to the bank of river. But there are no descriptions about it. However, the writings on the rock in Tibetan and Mongolian/Uighur scripts are clearly visible.

Besides the Buddha images, there are a number of popular Buddhist Mantras, chiefly the *Om ma-ni-pad-me Hum!!* is written in Tibetan, Pali, Uighur/Mongolian or perhaps in Manchu on a cluster of rocks in Ili. However, the ones written in Tibetan and Pali can be deciphered more clearly.



Om ma-ni-pad-me Hum (Buddhist Mantra)

The Mantra *Om ma-ni-pad-me Hum* is the six mystic syllables of Tibetan Buddhism. It literally means Om! The Jewel in the Lotus! Hum! Meaning: “Hail to whom jewel in the lotus !!”. The Mantra is addressed to Bodhisattva *Padmapani*, another expression of Avalokita seating on a Lotus Flower. This mystic formula is the essence of all happiness, prosperity and knowledge and the great means of deliverance. In Tibet, it is the most popular mystic formula. The recital and repetition of these six words could subdue evils, procure long life and obtain temporal blessings. The mere utterance of this Mantra can stop the cycle of re-birth in the six worldly realms - *Om* as gods, *Ma* as Titans, *Ni* as a man, *Pad* as a beast, *Me* as a Tantalus, and *Hum* as

TRACES OF BUDDHISM IN THE SEMIRECH'E

an inhabitant of hell. The six-word formula is said to have been originated in the XIII century. They are normally written on ribbons and inserted into the Prayer Wheels. They are also printed on stones and on cloth-flags that flutter on the rooftops. The mystic words collect wisdom and ensure the cessation of mete psychosis of re-birth.

The Ili Buddhas, though remaining a popular site for visitors, tourists and academic researchers, have so far attracted little attention of the Kazakh authorities, even though tourism potentials of these historical monuments are extremely high. Since 1999, on the initiative of Indian Cultural Centre, some has been generated among local authorities and intellectuals has been generated. I myself conducted several activities relating to Ili Buddhas including through write ups in vernacular media that helped generate greater awareness among Kazakhs about this magnificent historical site. During the summer 2001, the *Akim* of Kapchagai city invited me to discuss about the Ili project to be considered as part of the national project for ecological preservation around Lake Balkash. Interests for the preservation of the Ili Buddhas became more evident in the post-Bamiyan destruction by the Taliban. Several NGOs in Kazakhstan are actively engaged in a campaign for the preservation of Buddhist monuments. Among them include the famous Kazakh intellectual and politician Murat Auezov, who is the Executive Director Soros Foundation in Kazakhstan. Auezov has brought about greater awareness among local authorities as well as foreign diplomats stationed at Almaty about the need to preserve this beautiful monument. By early 2002, the Kazakh Institute of Archeology and Kazakh Institute of Conservation began to show more interest for its preservation. Hopefully, very soon a project for the restoration of Tamgali Tass Buddhas will be initiated through collective effort.

This leads me to mention here some of the active local organisations which take deep interest in propagating the philosophy of Buddhism in Kazakhstan. It is absolutely true that there exist no indigenou people practicing Buddhism in Semirech'e region. As mentioned earlier, Russian Tsarist Census Agency reported only 82,000 Kyrgyzs practicing Mahayana Buddhism towards the end of XIX century.

P. Stobdan

However, one does get the impression that the Kazakhs continue to cherish a more pacific culture. Their openness and liberal outlook towards life are indicative as well as a product of their adherence to compassionate values for centuries. Undoubtedly, the seeds of Indian philosophical thoughts implanted in Central Asia by the Sakas, Kushans, Sogdians and Mongols continue to grow flowers of peace and compassion wide across Inner Asian landscape. The studies conducted by scientists make it clear that Buddhism existed in Kazakhstan for centuries and was being nourished by a variety of social groups.

It is clear both from theoretical and practical point of view that the region is still a fertile ground for Indian thought and culture to flourish. In fact, in the aftermath of the Soviet disintegration, Indian culture has made a strong comeback in the form of social groups and organisations in Kazakhstan. Indian culture and philosophy are no longer a folklore or a distant historical past but a living reality for many in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Several organisations have already come up in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan after their independence, striving to restore the past values and tradition. It is here that reference to Indian culture and philosophy also becomes fundamental to contemporary Kazakhs, who are seeking to redefine their national identities. For example, Dr. Renato Sala believes that Islam is only an outward manifestation of Central Asian culture - it is the Buddhist ethos of the past that still preponderate their outlook. It is more so in Kazakhstan, where Islam has been a later starter. The young generation of Kazakhs and also ethnic Russians flock to spiritual organisations other than those of Islamic centres. For example, the Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) is one of the fastest growing religious sects in Kazakhstan. In fact, the local bodies categorize ISKCON as part of Buddhism, and consider its growth among young Kazakhs as a source of concern for them.

Almaty Buddhist Centre (ABC)

With the exception of Korean Zen Buddhist Temple in Bishkek, the Almaty Buddhist Centre (ABC) is the old Buddhist center in

TRACES OF BUDDHISM IN THE SEMIRECH'YE

Central Asia that was established in the aftermath of Soviet collapse. The Almaty Buddhist Centre was founded in 1999 by a group of 11 Kazakh scholars, who started taking keen interest in Buddhist philosophy. Its founder Sergey Soklov is the moving spirit behind the ABC and its activities in Kazakhstan. The Centre has a large membership and library containing over 200 books on Buddhism. The primary focus of the ABC is to introduce Tibetan form of Buddhism in Central Asia. The Centre has a wide network of contacts with major Buddhist institutions in the world. The Centre has done a considerable amount of work in restoring the ancient Buddhist relics and texts found in the territory of Kazakhstan. Sergey himself translated into Russian a book on Buddhism *What Colour is Your Mind* written by Tubten Choden. The ABC also organizes regular activities relating to Buddhism, including holding of meditation retreat, discourse on philosophy and publication of canonical texts. Sergey also organizes frequent pilgrimage tours for Kazakh nationals in India. He has also been popularizing the use of Tibetan medicines in Kazakhstan.

Many of the neo-Buddhists in Kazakhstan are Russian and ethnic Kazakhs who are deeply attracted to Buddhist practices. But there are other traditional Buddhists belonging to Buryat and Kalmyk communities. Together there are about 500 Buddhists living in Almaty alone. However, the Buryats and Kalmyks do not have organized forums. In late 2001, individual Buddhist activists opened two other Buddhist Centres, one each in Ularsk and Oktobe. Not so much is known about the two Centres but they are more closely associated with Buddhist institutions in Moscow. The monks belonging to Japanese sect, Fuji Guru, are conducting other Buddhist related activities in Kazakhstan. The sect does not have an organizational set up in Kazakhstan but the monks are active in propagating the values of peace and non-violence among the Kazakhs. There are many other scholars and intellectuals who are deeply involved in propagating Buddhist philosophy. For example, a scholar and writer, B.B. Rezvantsev has done wide ranging survey and collected innumerable Buddhist relics across Kazakhstan. One of his books *Following the Trails of*

P. Stobdan

Shambaly in Kazakhstan, which is under process, contains vast information about Buddhist Kazakhstan during the period VII-XIX centuries.

Yet on the other end, one finds several Uighurs in Kazakhstan who retain their Buddhist identity. Many Uighur scholars are recollecting the ancient Uighur Buddhist texts especially of medicine, astrology and philosophy. On several occasions, the Uighurs invited me for Sunday gatherings, where they chant Buddhist poems and prayers, of course in Uighur language. These groups seek foreign support for reviving Uighur Buddhism in Kazakhstan. Therefore, one can objectively conclude that Buddhism in Central Asia has not completely died down. Instead, I noticed tremendous potential for reviving this philosophy in Kazakhstan.

Institutions with Buddhist Monuments

Museum of Archaeology, Almaty, Kazakhstan

State Historical Museum of Almaty, Kazakhstan

Museum of the Kyrgyz State University, Kyrgyzstan

Museum of Kyrgyz-Russian Slavonian University, Kyrgyzstan

Important Scholars on Buddhism in Semirech'e

Professor, Karl Moldahmetovitch Baipakov (Ph.D), Director of the Institute of Archaeology named after A. Kh. Margulan, Republic of Kazakhstan, has been a Member and Director of the South Kazakhstan expedition. He excavated the Otrar oasis, Taraz region (Kos-tobe/Zhamukat, Kulan, Ornek), Chu Valley (Kranaya Rechka/Navaket). He was the Director of excavations in Northeastern Semirech'e (Sumbe/Laban, Antonovka/Kayilyk). He is Member of the editing committee of the UNESCO's publication *History of the Civilizations of Central Asia* (co-director of the Vol. V) and Member of the UNESCO project *Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue* from 1992. His scientific works consist of 18 monographs (in Russian), 2 Albums on Otrar ceramics and the Silk Road in Kazakhstan (in Russian and English), 2 textbooks for schools (in Russian and Kazakh) and 300

TRACES OF BUDDHISM IN THE SEMIRECH'E

articles including French, English, German, Korean, Chinese languages publications. Among the important ones include *Ancient Otrar*, Alma-Ata, 1972; *The Ceramics of the Medieval Kulan, Research and Excavations in Kazakhstan*, Alma-Ata, 1972; *The Ancient Towns of Kazakhstan*, Alma-Ata, 1990. Nouvelles donnees sur la culture Sogdienne dans les villes medievals du Kazakhstan (avec notes additionnelles de F.Grenet), *Studia Iranica*, t. 21(1992) 1, pp. 33-48 (in French); *The Mediaeval Towns of Kazakhstan Along the Great Silk Road*, Almaty, 1998 (in Russian); *Les villes du Moyen Age du Kazakhstan du sud et du Semirech'e*, in *Recherches archeologiques au Kazakhstan* (sous la dir. de KM Baipakoiv et HP Francfort), *Memoires de la Mission Archeologique Francais*.

Valentina Dimitrievna Goryacheva (Candidate in Archaeology) is the Director of the Chair of History and Culture, Kyrgyz-Russian Slavonic University in Bishkek. Valentina Goryacheva has worked many years on the sites of Burana (Balasagun) and Krasnaya Rechka. Among her publications include *Medieval Centers and Architectural Ensembles of Kyrghyzya*, Frunze, 1983 (in Russian) *The Early Medieval Monuments of Buddhism in Northern Kirgizia*, in *Buddhist For Peace*, no 4, Ulan Bator, 1980, p.37-43 (in English); *Excavations in the walled town of Krasnaya Rechka*, Moscow, 1979, pp.590 (in Russian); *Cults and Religious Monuments of the Pre-Islamic Central Asia*, CNRS, Paris, 1987, p.73-79 (in French)

Kusembai Baibosynov is the Deputy Director of the Zhambul Regional Historical Museum and the Head of the Department of Archaeology. His scientific works include *Svod Pamiatnikov Djambul'ski Oblasty* (Encyclopedic Record of the Monuments of the Zhambul Province), Zhambul, 1985; *Polevie Isledovaniya Arkheologicheskoi ekspeditsii Djambul'skogo oblastnogo istoriko-kraeyevedcheskogo Muzeya na territorii uroshishcha Sulutor v 1986* (Archaeological Expedition in Sulutor in 1986), Zhambul, 1986. *Kamennoe isvayanie Semirech'e* (Anthropomorphic steles of Semirech'e), Almaty, 1997.

Asan Abetekov is an archaeologist and the Director of the Centre for the Study of “Manas 1000”, State University of Kyrgyzstan. His publications include *Ancient Iranian Nomads in Western Central Asia*. In *History of Civilisations of Central Asia*, vol.2, chapter 1, Paris, 1994, Unesco, pp.23-33; *Rannie kochevniki Tianshana I ikh kulturnye sviazi s Kushanskoi imperiei*, Tsentralnaya Aziya v Kushanskuyou epokhou, t. 2, Moskva, 1975.

Renato Sala is a Mathematician from Italy and specialist in paleoclimatology and mathematical models. He has been the principal investigator of the INTAS project *Formation of the Nomadic Societies in Semirech'e during the Bronze and Iron age. The Ecological and Archaeological Investigations*. He is currently a Researcher at the Institute of Archaeology, Kazakhstan. He wrote, “The Vertical Seasonal Migrations in Northern Tianshan: Their Role in the Formation of the Northern Branch of the Silk Road,” *Izvestia* (Academy of Sciences of Kazakhstan, No 1, 1999, pp.157-167.

Jean-Marc Deom is a Researcher at the Institute of Archaeology, Kazakhstan, currently the co-ordinator of INTAS Project on *The Urbanization of Semirech'e During the Middle Ages*. He is specialized on Chinese sources and on the medieval contacts between Semirech'e and East Turkestan. His publications include, *The Central Asian Origins of the Chinese Theatre*, Problemy Izucheniya I sokhraneniya istoricheskogo naslediya, (Problems of Study and Conservation of the Historical Heritage), Almaty, 1998, pp.163-170 (in English); The Role of the Peoples of the Northern Steppes in the Diffusion of Buddhism and Performing Arts from Central Asia into China During the Early Middle Ages (I BC-IX AC), *Izvestia* (Academy of Sciences of Kazakhstan, No 1, 1999, pp.133-156.

ETHNICITY AND NATION BUILDING IN POST-SOVIET KAZAKHSTAN

Manish Jha

The core of Eurasia until recently was little noticed and neglected except by small community of scholars from the outside world. The reason may be 'historical atavism' in this area, lack of adequate literature or the outside world being barred from unhindered access and communication with them.¹ The historic changes set in motion by Mikhail Gorbachev under *perestroika* and *glasnost* generated a new kind of momentum in this region and almost overnight, a decade ago, this region metamorphosed into several 'sovereign nation state systems' which until now had been almost sequestered by the rulers of the Soviet Union since early 1920s.² The sudden historical upheaval in this region has generated a surge of interest in these countries, an interest that spans the broad spectrum of political attainment of double liberation – one from colonial domination and the other from communism.³

For the first time, they experienced the notion of nationalism, freedom to criticize ideologically, cultural and educational liberation and the heritage to be viewed as 'exclusive' community.⁴ However, this new environment has thrown unique propositions before the nascent nation-state system in the form of rising ethnic assertions. Much like other Central Asian Republics, Kazakhstan too is brimming with such notions. Ethno-nationalistic assertions and slogans like 'Kazakhstan for Kazakhs' have been running high among the titular Kazakhs. The presence of Russians, being in competing numerical strength along with the Kazakhs in the new Republic of Kazakhstan is making the situation more complex.

After acquiring their independence, with little preparation, they are in search for new formulae and socio-political foundations of national development and for their own niche in the new geopolitical space.⁵ In as much as the disintegration of the USSR took place under the
Himalayan and Central Asian Studies Vol.7 No.2, April - June 2003 25

slogan of 'ethnic nationalism', it is only natural that the proclamation of so-called 'national states' within the borders of the former Union Republics should be made on behalf of the titular ethno-nations.⁶ Today post-Soviet Kazakhstan, though ethnically heterogeneous, is being conceived as nation-state and there is a project to promote the language, culture, demographic position, economic development and political hegemony of the Kazakh ethnic group after which the state is named. This programme of "nationalisation" of political space in the region has meant that a large number of people are now left outside their own national territory or do not have one at all.⁷

In Kazakhstan, the search for national identity has taken place against a distinctive but complex demographic and cultural background. At the beginning of the Soviet era, they lacked any sense of national identity. Distinctive Kazakh identity, however, coalesced around the National Republic during the Soviet era. The compulsions of new state formation in the post-Soviet era have meant an increased emphasis on national identity.⁸ The assertion of "ethnic" identity which has accompanied the current stage of state formation, has meant the compelling political need to identify Kazakhs distinct from the Russians so as to distance themselves from the imperial Soviet past. One of the most dramatic transformation of these developments has been the change in the status of ethnic Russians from a majority group into minority with disputed identities and uncertain future.⁹ The designation of non-Russians as minorities in the former Soviet Union has undergone a dramatic reversal with the Russians becoming the "new" minorities in post-Soviet Kazakhstan.¹⁰ In post-Soviet Kazakhstan, ethnic nation is challenging the very notion of civic nationhood and much depends on the sustenance of harmonious relations between titular Kazakhs and the non-titular Russians. Kazakhstan's political stability, therefore, will depend much on the existence of harmonious ethnic relations chiefly between the natives and Slavs.

This paper makes an attempt to conceive the impact of the notion of 'ethnicity' over the body politic of contemporary Kazakhstan. It seeks to broadly discuss the ethnic and demographic composition of

ETHNICITY AND NATION BUILDING IN KAZAKHSTAN

the Republic as well as the ongoing demographic trends in its specificity which is definitely going to leave a mark on the future polity of the post-Soviet Kazakhstan. It also examines the development of relations between native Kazakhs and the Russians, tries to ascertain the conditions of new “national minorities” besides seeking the element of ‘ethnic’ in the policies, documents, formulations and intentions of the “nationalising state” of Kazakhstan. Finally, it not only examines the role of ‘ethnicity’ in the nation building exercise but also tries to ascertain as to what extent the leadership of the new Kazakh Republic has been able to maintain a balance between the rising hegemonizing aspirations of the titular Kazakh majority and the aspirations of the Russians as “new national minorities”.

KAZAKHSTAN’S ETHNIC COMPOSITION

Despite its vast territory, the population of Kazakhstan is numerically not considerable. According to 1999 census data, 14.953 million people live in Kazakhstan.¹¹ However, there are more than a hundred nationalities and ethnic groups. Kazakhs, Russians, Germans, Ukrainians, Tatars, Uzbeks and Uighurs comprise the majority of the population. As per the current population statistics of Kazakhstan, the largest ethnic groups in Kazakhstan are Kazakhs with 53.4% of the total population and the Russians with 30.0% come second.¹² The next are the Ukrainians (3.6%), Uzbeks (2.5%), Germans (2.3%), Tatars (1.6%) and Uighurs (1.4%). The share of the Byelorussians, Koreans, Azerbaijanians and Turks varies from 0.7 to 0.5% of Kazakhstan’s total population.¹³ Over the decade from 1989 to 1999, the percentage of Germans has decreased by 2.6, the Russians by 1.3, the Ukrainians by 1.6, the Tatars by 1.3 and the Byelorussians by 1.5.

Kazakhstan’s multi-ethnic community has not been created on the basis of existing ethnic groups but as a result of voluntary and sometimes forced settlement of diverse nationalities to the country.¹⁴ This highly diverse ethnic composition of Kazakhstan has a long and sometimes tragic history and is connected with the Russian migrations to the country at the expense of the indigenous population. In the past, the

country was the exclusive domain of pastoral Kazakh nomads. Russia gradually subdued and annexed Kazakhstan during the long period which lasted from the second half of the 18th century to mid-19th century.¹⁵ Soon after, the Russian government began to take away the Kazakh's summer pastures and winter quarters and replaced them first with Cossack and then with peasant settlers from the European part of the empire. The "resettlement policy" of Russian Minister Peter Stylypin led to this migration.¹⁶ The policy was to develop the new areas and to provide lands to the peasants in order to solve the worsening economic, social and demographic problems of Russia.

By 1913, about 150,000 hectares of the most fertile lands in Kazakhstan were appropriated by the settlers, whose numbers increased from 539,915 (12.8% of the total population in Kazakhstan) in 1897 to about 1.5 million (30% of the total population in 1917).¹⁷ Many Kazakh pastoral nomads were gradually ousted to the arid areas of Central and Southern Kazakhstan. Many had to migrate to other regions, settle on the land and cultivate crops or even work for the new colonists. The experts report that around one million and 150 thousand people had migrated to Kazakhstan from Russia, Ukraine and Byelorussia as a result of peasant colonization processes in pre-revolution period.¹⁸

During the whole of 19th century, the Kazakh population grew very slowly and between 1902 and 1913 it diminished by 9%.¹⁹ Then followed the uprising of 1916, the turmoil years of the revolution and civil war, during which the Kazakhs suffered much from both sides, the Whites and Reds, and the starvation of 1921-22. All these events cost the Kazakhs hundreds of thousands of lives and resulted in a sharp decrease in the country's Kazakh population. Their population fell down from 91.4% in 1850 to 57.1% in 1926.²⁰ During the 1920s the Kazakh pastoralist economy partly recovered as some of the pastures were taken away from the Russian settlers and returned to nomads and semi-nomads. Then, in the early 1930s came the traumatic events of forced collectivisation and the bloody settlement of Kazakh nomads on fixed lands. In a few years, about 550,000 nomadic and semi-nomadic

ETHNICITY AND NATION BUILDING IN KAZAKHSTAN

households were forced to settle, many in waterless arid regions where not only agriculture but even pastoralism was impossible.²¹ About 250 thousand peasants were exiled to Kazakhstan from the USSR central region during the collectivisation campaign. In the pre-war years, one million 250 thousand people had been resettled in Kazakhstan mainly from the European part of the country in order to construct industrial facilities.²²

The forced collectivisation and de-nomadisation of the Kazakhs met with widespread resistance. Many slaughtered their livestock or tried to drive them into China. Those Kazakhs who resisted were killed or deported if they did not manage to migrate abroad. All these events and the subsequent famine cost the Kazakhs between 1.5 to 2 million souls; another half a million people had to flee from the country.²³ As a result of the rural collectivisation process carried out by Stalin, the traditional nomadic way of life ceased to exist, the Kazakhs were domesticated. They became a minority in their own country and their population decreased down to 2 million 493 thousand by 1933.²⁴ Meanwhile, the Russian and Slavic migrations to Kazakhstan continued. In the 1930s and 1940s, the industrialization of the Republic stimulated these movements and in 1950s the 'Virgin Land Campaign' aimed at sowing wheat on huge tracts of land in Northern Kazakhstan brought about 1.5 to 2 million Russians to Kazakhstan.²⁵ By 1939 the number of Russians in Kazakhstan had doubled as compared to 1926. By 1979 this number had doubled again.

In addition, in the 1930s and 1940s, Kazakhstan became one of the Gulag areas – of the main territories where various groups and people like Poles, Koreans, Germans, Chechens, Ingush, Turks, Greeks and many others were deported. By 1949, there were 820,165 exiles in Kazakhstan including 393,537 Germans, 302,526 Chechens and Ingush, 33,083 Karachai, 29,497 Meskhetian Turks, 28,130 poles and 17,512 Balkans.²⁶ 350 thousand people were evacuated to Kazakhstan during World War II.²⁷ Many of them found their second home here. The secret military facilities received another 150 thousand people.²⁸ At that time, there were more Russians than ethnic Kazakhs.

In all, by 1962 the number of Kazakhs in Kazakhstan dropped to 29%.²⁹ However, during the last 30 years, their overall proportion in the Republic began to increase because of their high birth-rate and a decline in the influx of non-indigenous groups, above all of Russians.

In 1961-70, the balance of in-and-out migrations in Kazakhstan was +431 thousands people. However, in 1979-88, it was already – 789 thousand people. By 1991, the share of Kazakhs in the total population of Kazakhstan had reached 42% and by 1993 it was 43.2%, while the Russian share decreased to 36.4%.³⁰ By 1999, the proportion of Kazakhs in the total population reached 53.4% and that of Russians decreased to 30%.³¹ And there appears to be a fair chance for Kazakhs holding a fair majority in their own country after a long duration. This confidence in the ethnic future of the Kazakhs has contributed to the growth of nationalism. The ethnic situation in the country is characterized by the dynamic growth rates of ethnic awareness, an interest in the ethnic roots: language, traditions and customs.³² On the one hand, the unique multi-ethnic composition of the country has great advantages. On the other, it is fraught with the specific potential threats of rising ethnic tension and growing socio-economic competition between members of different ethnic groups. Maintaining inter-ethnic harmony is one of the fundamental conditions for development and success of reforms in a multi-ethnic state of Kazakhstan. As Kazakh President, Nursultan Nazarbayev noted that “our principled policy is based on development of all ethnic groups through compromises and strengthening of the combined sources.”³³

IN-GATHERING OF KAZAKH NATION

Ethno-demographically, Kazakhstan is not only the least harmonious of the five Central Asian Republics, but also least cohesive in terms of ethnic inheritance.³⁴ After independence, ethno-nationalist feelings like ‘Kazakhstan for Kazakhs’ have been running high among the ethnic Kazakhs, yet lack of numerical strength has made it difficult to be realised. Even the most nationalistic Kazakhs know that they are no match for the formidable Slavs in numerical terms. Population

ETHNICITY AND NATION BUILDING IN KAZAKHSTAN

increase and decrease among ethnic groups in this still Slav dominated Republic weighs so heavily that a handful of Kazakh demographers are constantly asked by the Kazakh media and government for their precious advice to increase the native population before an open battle erupts with the Russian-speaking nationalities.³⁵

Percentage Distribution of Population of Kazakhstan by Ethnic Group (1926-1995)

	1926	1939	1959	1970	1979	1989	1994	1995
Total population (in thousand)	6,193	6,139	9,295	13,009	14,685	16,463	—	—
Kazakhs	58.5	37.6	29.8	32.6	36.0	39.67	44.3	46.0
Russians	20.4	40.0	42.7	42.4	40.8	37.82	35.8	34.8
Ukrainians	13.9	10.7	8.2	7.2	6.1	5.44	5.1	4.9
Uzbeks	2.1	1.7	1.5	1.7	1.8	2.02	2.2	2.3
Tatars	1.3	1.7	2.1	2.2	2.1	1.99	2.0	1.9
Uighurs	1.0	0.6	0.6	0.9	1.0	1.13	—	—
Germans	0.7	0.8	7.0	6.6	6.1	5.82	3.6	3.1
Belorussians	0.4	0.5	1.1	1.5	1.2	1.11	1.1	1.0
Koreans	0.0	1.6	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.62	—	—
Others	1.7	4.8	6.2	4.3	4.3	4.38	—	—

Source: *Compiled from Population Censuses of 1926, 1939, 1959, 1970, 1979, 1989 (Kazanov) and FBIS-SOV, 7 September 1995.*

This led to the ‘incoming’ of Kazakh diaspora across the world to their native nation which is greatly altering the ethno-demographic composition of the Republic in favour of Kazakhs. Nazarbayev’s government has actively pursued a carefully designed national policy aimed at significantly boosting Kazakh share of the Republics’ population. It is being justified with the argument that the ethnic Kazakhs have become a minority in the land of their ancestors through no fault of their own and hence should be accorded a special status within ‘their’ modern day state.³⁶ Through migration, government plans to change the demographic balance in favour of the Kazakhs as well as to consolidate state power to ensure the territorial integrity of the Kazakh nation-state.

The Kazakh Population in Kazakhstan

Year	Thousands	%age of total population
1830	1,300	96.4
1850	1,502	91.1
1860	1,644	—
1870	2,417	—
1897	3,000	79.8
1926	3,713	57.1
1939	2,640	38.2
1959	2,755	30.0
1970	4,234	32.6
1979	5,289	36.0
1979	6,531	39.7
1992	7,297	43.2
1994	7,474	44.3
1996	7,644	45.7
1999	7,984	53.4

Sources: *Bekmakhanova, 1980, Table 28; Aziatskaia, Rossilia, 1914, 1914; 82; Censuses of 1926, 39, 59, 70, 89 and 99 and Europa – 1999).*

The global Kazakh population in 1996-97 was 12 million, with some 8 million in Kazakhstan, another, 1.9 million in China, nearly 1 million in Russia, 7,90,00 in Uzbekistan, 70,000 in Mongolia and the remaining number in other countries.³⁷ Thus there are more than 4,00,00,00 Kazakhs who live outside their motherland.

After the independence of Kazakhstan, 'home coming' syndrome has been largely visible among the Kazakh diaspora and the new Republic is also making attempts to create necessary conditions for the repatriation and reunification of the Kazakh people. By permitting dual citizenship for ethnic Kazakhs living in other states the Kazakh leadership had encouraged their migration to their newly independent 'historic homeland'.³⁸ Since 1992, Almaty has actively pursued the resettlement in Kazakhstan of nearly three million ethnic Kazakhs who lived abroad, primarily in China (1,20,000), Mongolia (150,000) Russia (600,000), Uzbekistan (830,000) and Turkmenistan (90,000). Over 60,000 Kazakhs returned to Kazakhstan from Mongolia during the first three years of independence.³⁹

ETHNICITY AND NATION BUILDING IN KAZAKHSTAN

NUMBER OF KAZAKHS IN THE WORLD 1996-97

Kazakhstan	More than 8,000.000
China	1,900.000
Russian Federation	1,000.000
Uzbekistan	790,000
Mongolia	70,000
CIS countries	50,000
Turkey	10,000
Iran	10,000
Afghanistan	10,000
Germany	2,000
France	2,000
USA	1,000
Austria	500
Great Britain	200
Sweden	More than 100
Denmark, Switzerland, Holland, Norway, Belgium, Taiwan	Less than 100 in each

As a means to achieve 'in-gathering' of the nation, the Kazakh government convened a *Qazaq Qurultay* in Almaty in September 1992, to which members of Kazakh diaspora from all over the world were invited.⁴⁰ The Qurultay adopted a resolution which appealed to all Kazakhs to unite on the territory of their historic homeland and also declared that any ethnic Kazakh who had left Kazakhstan for any reason, would be granted automatic refugee status and its concomitant privileges like finding a home and a job in the Republic. On President Nazarbayev's initiative, a standing committee was set up to accelerate the pace of Kazakhs' migration from abroad to Kazakhstan.⁴¹ Headed by the President himself, the committee has addressed many practical issues that were hampering the resettlement of the Kazakhs on the vast land of Kazakhstan. The Qurultay Resolution was implemented by a series of immigration laws. According to President Nazarbayev, more than 200,000 Kazakhs have resettled in Kazakhstan in last several years.⁴² However, the government programme to resettle ethnic

Kazakhs in Kazakhstan has been encountering serious obstacles largely as a result of state's inability to provide many immigrants with employment and adequate housing.

Furthermore, an immigration law has been passed according to which every Kazakh immigrant was granted refugee status.⁴³ The government of Kazakhstan has established Migration Department within the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. According to this Department and the World Association of Kazakhs, more than 150,000 ethnic Kazakhs arrived in Kazakhstan between 1991 and 1997.⁴⁴ They have settled mostly in Atyrau, Southern Kazakhstan, Jambul and J eskazgan oblasts. The Migration Department currently seeks to solve many problems of housing, education and employment of the Kazakh repatriates. The World Association of Kazakhs helps the repatriates by issuing a certificate of Kazakh identity and by offering them financial support. There is the Liaison Office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in Almaty, which tries to help refugees and resolve some of their problems.⁴⁵ For example, the High Commissioner has funded the building of 65 units of housing and water pipe system in the village Dostyk near the town of Turkestan in Southern Kazakhstan, especially for Kazakh refugees from Iran and Afghanistan.⁴⁶ On 13 August 1997, a new mosque in village Raimbek near Almaty was opened with the donations of Arystan Tosun representative of the Kazakh diaspora in Germany, now repatriated in Kazakhstan.⁴⁷ The Kazakh diaspora is fastly integrating into the mainstream of Kazakhstan's Society.

Proponents of this measure have argued that it was needed to facilitate the process of rehabilitation, since Kazakhs were forced to leave their native land and resettle elsewhere in the aftermath of the 1917 revolution and during the years of Stalinist repression and forced collectivisation. Sceptics have countered that the measure is part of a larger government scheme to raise the share of ethnic Kazakhs in the country's overall population and squeeze out the non-Kazakhs, particularly in light of the fact that most Kazakh immigrants have been resettled in eastern and northern Kazakhstan where the Russian population predominates.⁴⁸

ETHNICITY AND NATION BUILDING IN KAZAKHSTAN

This more than friendly attitude has stirred enthusiastic response from the Kazakhs abroad and on the other hand has put negative thrust on the Slavs of Republic. Many Russians either do not feel secure or have serious doubts about their future life. Many are leaving for Russia which in turn accelerates the process of ethno-political polarization. Russians have been leaving in the country since the early 1990s, with 200 to 300 thousand people leaving every year.⁴⁹ In the years 1993-97, more than 3 million people mostly Russians left the country and over 1.5 million entered the country.⁵⁰ Due to this migration flow, Kazakhstan has lost over 1.5 million people. The migration process has directly affected the ethnic structure of the Republic, shifting the overall demographic balance in favour of the native Kazakhs.

The nationalizing state of Kazakhstan justifies this demographic shift by invoking the argument that the ethnic Kazakhs have become a minority in their own motherland through no fault of their own, hence, they should be accorded a privileged status within their modern day-state. To them, this development will break the resistance of Russian activists against the Kazakisation of the state.⁵¹ It also justifies the present over-representation of Kazakhs in the state apparatus and in elected offices. The political clout of the Kazakhs is clearly running ahead of their demographic weight.

The higher birth rates along with the incoming of Kazakh diaspora are also seen as main factor determining the pace of nationalizing nation-building pace in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. The Kazakh demographer Azimbai Galiev forecast a rapid decrease in the Russian population in the years to come and concluded that Russian emigration from Kazakhstan is likely to promote socio-economic adaptation among those who stay behind. A loyal ethno-political population will be the result.⁵²

M. Tatimov, a senior member of Presidential Analytical Centre, has divided the nations of the world into 'young' and 'old' by the criterion of their demographic development.⁵³ In Tatimov's typology, the Russians are old nations. Whenever two 'old' nations dominate on the same territory, they will tend to engage in a kind of 'psychological cold war' for control. In Kazakhstan, however, the situation is much more favourable since one

of the two competing nations, the Kazakhs, is 'young'. The Kazakhs, therefore, according to Tatimov, will win out without engaging the Russians in direct confrontation, simply biding their time. The ethnic battle will be fought in the 'bed chamber' where the Kazakhs inevitably will be victorious.⁵⁴ The recent demographic reconfiguration whether compulsive or voluntary in the new Republic illustrates a very substantive fact that it is heading towards "politicisation of ethnicity."

The leadership of the new Republic although devoid of any history of sovereign existence is sponsoring the recovery of a neglected "nationalist" heritage including history, culture, language and political identity. They are today faced not only with constructing their present, but also redefining their pasts. Rogers Brubaker refers to these states as "nationalising states" which seek to assert the hegemony of their respective titular nation.⁵⁵ To Brubaker; "the characteristic of this stance or set of stances is the tendency to see the state as an unrealised nation-state, as state destined to be a nation-state, the state of and for a particularly nation, but not yet in fact a nation-state; and the concomitant disposition to remedy this perceived defect, to make the state what is properly and legitimately destined to be by promoting the language, culture, demographic position, economic flourishing or political hegemony of the nominally state bearing nation."⁵⁶

Therefore, Kazakhisation has come up as an idea of creating the dominance of ethnic Kazakhs in the economic, cultural, educational and political spheres of independent Kazakhstan.⁵⁷ This ethno-nationalist idea is bound to remain just an aspiration as long as there is no active support by the state. However, the new regime is promoting the politics of and for particularly core nation as a plausible and useful model for Kazakhstan and thus almost every state policy and legislation is consisting of an essential "ethnic" element.⁵⁸

EXODUS OF RUSSIANS FROM KAZAKHSTAN

Apart from the 'in-gathering' of Kazakh populace in their new motherland, one more ethno-demographic phenomenon is discernable. Despite the efforts of new regime, the process of ethno-political

ETHNICITY AND NATION BUILDING IN KAZAKHSTAN

polarization is going on. Many Russians are insecure of their future in the Republic and are leaving for Russia. According to the available data, 58.8% of the Russians and 7.4% of the Germans have left the country.⁵⁹ The number of persons who have left Kazakhstan has increased from 23,600 in 1998 to 206,000 in 1991 and to over 400,000 in 1994.⁶⁰ According to the opinion poll conducted by the Hiller Institute, 44.7% of non-Kazakhs prefer to migrate.⁶¹ It can be expected that in a few years Kazakhs will constitute an absolute majority of the population and the trend of ethnic homogenisation is likely to grow.

At present, the Russians living in the region are concerned about restrictions to their social and professional opportunities, the chance to advance their national culture and the problems of security in the event of inter-ethnic conflicts. Any organised action by the Russians in defence of their civil rights and security is negligible. They are getting politically passive because they have lost all hope of becoming rooted in the region, have in fact accepted their “non-indigenous” inferior status and are afraid to come up against uncontrollable pressure from the local majority.⁶² It is owing to this, that the Russians are set upon leaving Kazakhstan. Yet their total emigration is as unlikely as their rapid assimilation in Kazakhstan.

According to the 1989 census, the Russian population in Kazakhstan was 37.8 per cent of the overall population.⁶³ Kazakhstan had been subjected to intensive Russian settlement from the nineteenth century which stopped in the 1970s. A Soviet specialist in inter-Republic migration, Viktor Perevendentsev noted this sudden break in migration patterns. Yurii Arutyunyan of the Institute of Ethnography in Moscow believes that this dramatic outmigration from the periphery was because the “socio-professional” status of Russians in Kazakhstan was steadily declining.⁶⁴ Since 1989, the number of Russians leaving Kazakhstan has sharply increased, with nearly as many emigrating from the state between 1989 and 1991 as had left during the preceding decade. This division between the European and Kazakh community also has a clear geopolitical expression. While the Slavs constitute large majorities in the northern oblasts, the Kazaks dominate the southern

parts of the country. The north-south divide is further complicated by a town-country dimension with many Kazakhs living in the countryside in the north and many Russians residing in southern Kazakh towns. Occupationally, the Russians are employed mainly in industry, trade and services whereas Kazakhs are predominantly employed in agriculture. According to the 1989 data, 22.4 per cent of the Kazakh population and 52.6 per cent of the Russian population of Kazakhstan were engaged in industry.⁶⁵

With the independence of Kazakhstan in 1991, the spirit of 'Kazakhstan for Kazakhs' is gaining momentum. In a new situation, the Kazakhs want to do away with the predominance of Russian values, language and culture over their polity, economy and education. In Kazakhstan, the non-indigenous population is being systematically forced out of government, industries, education and the higher echelons of the army. The Russians have been faced with the serious problems of finding a new niche in the changing economic and socio-cultural situation. Insufficient knowledge of the language of the titular nationality is a formidable obstacle for Russians working in public health, education and administrative work and is the principal argument in favour of their dismissal.⁶⁶

In the former USSR, Russians enjoyed for decades the comfortable status of a people dominating all the major socio-cultural areas. The Russian language and culture were reference points for all cultures that was transmitted, from the centre to the periphery via educational system, the mass media, party and government structures.⁶⁷ Under new circumstances, Russians residing in the Union Republics have no overwhelming motivation to learn the languages of the titular nationalities and integrate into the Kazakh ethno-cultural environment. It is advantageous today to look upon Russians increasingly as colonizers particularly because of their unwillingness to learn the language and traditions of ethnic Kazakhs. The percentage of local Russians, with a working knowledge of Kazakh language is less than one per cent in the Republic.⁶⁸ Such "lack of desire" and "cultural distancing" of the Russians from the titular population has resulted in the emergence of

ETHNICITY AND NATION BUILDING IN KAZAKHSTAN

“Russians-as aliens” concept in Kazakhstan. The Russian language is being consistently forced out. It is also worth mentioning that teachers teaching in Kazakh receive an extra 15-20% to their salary.⁶⁹

Much of the resentment is also focused on Russians’ domination of managerial and technical jobs. Scholars like Nancy Lubin feel that Slavs constituted a privileged position and the indigenous population was reduced to second class position in their own Republic.⁷⁰ Over the years, trends in education indicate that a growing number of young Kazakhs aspire to compete for higher status occupations currently held by Russians and participate in the modernised sectors of society. According to Robert Lewis, this rapid increase in expectations among young indigenous Kazakhs can only be satisfied by restructuring the economy towards job creation, since many of these positions are now held by Russians or by the replacement of Russians by Kazakhs.⁷¹

The fact that a large number of Kazakhs had either perished or had been forced into exile during the Soviet period, leads to a sense of historic injustice today. Information propaganda in Almaty increasingly portrays Russians as aggressors.⁷² Even after independence, the worsening economic situation and political instability are often blamed on the Kremlin’s legacy which serves to keep anti-Russian sentiments alive. The enactment of the laws on language and citizenship, shrinking job opportunities and anti-Russian nationalistic rhetoric have evoked a painful psychological reaction among the Russians. One of the concrete manifestations of the negative turns in inter-ethnic relations is that people feel that their national pride is being affronted.

Even the more moderate sections are being increasingly alienated by such moves as the renaming of Russian towns and streets, the denigration of Russian culture by the Kazakh names etc. Rallies have also been organised in Petro Pavlovsk in support of a free economic zone with Russia and introduction of Russian as the second state language.⁷³ There were also threats of the creation of a Trans-Irtysh Republic modelled on the lines of the Trans Dniestr Republic in Moldova, if their demands were not acceded to.⁷⁴

The process of privatisation in Central Asia also has a distinctly ethnic feature, when the authorities through various manipulations have made sure that the local population get hold of assets and properties. Here, factory workers are practically forbidden to privatise their factories, as the majority of factory workers are Slavs.⁷⁵ At the same time, the rural population, which is mainly Kazakh receives larger share than the urban population.

Similarly, in Kazakhstan, all taxes are paid to the central government with the major part of taxes coming from Russian speaking North. But when distributed, most allocations go to the South.⁷⁶ The 105,000 Kazakhs who returned from Mongolia were settled in the North and the government provided full financial backing for the settlement.⁷⁷ The overwhelming majority of the Russians living in Kazakhstan are unprepared and unwilling to accept the status of an ethnic minority.

While ethnic divisions could well become a potential source of conflict, both sides have reasons for restraint. The Russians very well understand that demography is not on their side. Russians in Kazakhstan feel different from Russians on the other side of the Urals. The government realises fully well that the exodus of Russians will lead to tangible decline in their manufacturing and extraction industries. In Moscow too, there is pragmatic commitment to Kazakh-Russian relations since hostility with Kazakhstan could well act as a catalyst for deterioration of relations with Turkic Central Asians, many of whom live within the borders of the Russian federation.

The attitude of ethnic Russians in Central Asia is “complex and tense” because of their gradual drift in their political or economic positions in the Republic.⁷⁸ The ethnic identity of Russians and their attitudes to ethnic relations have changed significantly. To Leokadia Drobizheva, three factors played a role in this: (a) the shock of losing their status as the ruling nation (b) the political struggle in which leading groups want to rely on ethnic patriotism and (c) the sharp rise in ethnic competition in the social and working sphere.⁷⁹ The abrupt end of Russian dominance

ETHNICITY AND NATION BUILDING IN KAZAKHSTAN

means that they are now having to think hard about their Russian identity, something they always took for granted. Emigration sentiments are preponderant everywhere and the political inertia of the Russians in Kazakhstan is largely a result of their loss of hope regarding the prospects of their continued presence in the region.⁸⁰

The national discord and ethnic tussles in present day Kazakhstan have brought into question Soviet claims of a unique homogenous entity called the “Soviet Man” living in a single nationhood. As new “majorities” and “minorities” have emerged, the leadership of the new Republic shall have to maintain balance between their respective aspirations. By now, President Nazarbayev has been able to capitalise on this underlying spirit of inter-ethnic moderation to pursue policies which generally satisfy both the Kazakh and Russian-speaking communities.⁸¹ These are evident from various provisions of the constitution adopted in 1993 and 1995. The estimate for the 1990s is one million people, most of whom will move to Russia.⁸² Much in this respect will depend on the policies of the new Republic and their utmost sincerity in evolving Kazakhstan as a multi-cultural plural society.

ETHNICITY AND NATION BUILDING EXERCISES

Nationalising Regime

In firmly linking nationality to the notion of ethnic homeland, the practitioners of Soviet ideology generated a belief system which held that each titular nation is indivisibly connected through its putative history to a particular territory that is the natural patrimony of that nation. The collapse of the USSR has allowed political entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan to link the cultures of the titular Kazakh nation even more closely to state structures and further secure their political pre-eminence within the new citizen-polities. Rogers Brubaker has defined the politics ‘of and for particular core nations’ as plausible and useful model to describe the nation-building process in post-Soviet Kazakhstan.⁸³

Despite formulations in the constitution and other legal documents guaranteeing the equality of all citizens, nationalising policies and

practices are manifest through, the privileged status accorded to the local languages, newly revised histories and the exclusion of non-indigenous groups from the echelons of power, in post-Soviet Kazakhstan.⁸⁴ The state actors in the new Republic have been influenced by non-Russified segment of the indigenous intelligentsia who have come to be regarded as the guardians and protectors of national culture. It is they who fill the ranks of the state apparatus, championing the notion of a strong nation-state. Carrying with them the memory of past injustices, they seek to redress those grievances in the form of new nation-building measures. There has been an ethnic component to virtually every major sphere of state activity ranging from the adoption of the constitution and the establishment of foreign policy priorities to the introduction of a national currency.

Although Russians and other non-titular groups have been granted an automatic right to citizenship, certain nationalising measures intended to secure the cultural and political resurgence of the titular Kazakh nation have been openly promoted, while others have been 'tacit', informal practices carried out in accordance with the unwritten rules of the game. 'Nationalisation by Stealth' is tacitly manifest in the steady displacement and exclusion of non-titular groups from civil and social services.⁸⁵ Another common practice by the state authorities has been the issuance of official memorandums specifying that a knowledge of state language is required in order to qualify for employment or promotion, thereby effectively eliminating the majority of Slavs from consideration.⁸⁶

While nationalising policies tend to be felt by all non-titular groups, they have been a great source of psychological dislocation for the Russians in the Kazakh region. Although, many Russians look with understanding on the efforts of the titular nations to regain aspects of their cultural heritage, others consider it a violation of their human rights in citizens. Perhaps of greater concerns to the nation-building process in Kazakhstan, as Brubaker has pointed out, is the fact that events, officials, organisations, even the state as a whole are perceived as nationalising by the representatives of the national minorities and, therefore, exercise a real impact on future relations between titular and non-titular groups in Kazakhstan.⁸⁷

Kazakhisation

Another nation-building trend which is discernable is the ongoing process of Kazakhisation in the new Republic. Kazakhisation is an idea of creating the dominance of ethnic Kazakhs in the economic, cultural, educational and political spheres of independent Kazakhstan. It is not a myth but a real phenomenon in post-Soviet Kazakhstan.⁸⁸

The nomenklatura that has unexpectedly received an independent Kazakhstan in 1991 was bound to assume its contemporary, although covert, nationalist stance. Because given the growing tide of ethnic Kazakh revival, the emergence of a nationally imagined community was inevitable in the Republic which has had Kazakhs as a titular nation for 70 years.⁸⁹ This new community has displaced a political elite that failed to satisfy their nationalist aspirations and claims. This political elite headed by President Nazarbayev has assumed a covert role of nationalist missionary as is evident in his support for and pursuit of the Kazakhisation policy.

History, as a narrative of identity, has been the prime recipient of the impact of Kazakhisation. In general, the four aspects of Kazakh identity have gained prominence in the creation of this narrative.⁹⁰ Islam, an elusive nomad legacy and a passionate attachment to the land, the rising interest in the genealogical history of clan-tribal formations, the re-evaluation of Kazakh-Russian relations in the light of 'newly discovered archives material' and the state sponsored project of re-writing national history stretching from as far as two millennia to the modern times of ethnic Kazakh nationalism. Under Kazakhisation and with language revival, the Kazakhs have restarted the long-lasting and difficult reappraisal of Kazakh history, which is still very far from being complete.⁹¹

State planning and social engineering are being used to ensure the domination of the Kazakh in almost every sphere of life in the long term. The state recruitment policy is utilised to ensure a Kazakh loyal cadre in governmental, administrative and 'elected' jobs.⁹² There is growing dominance of Kazakh cultural manifestations and symbols ranging from

the total renaming of the streets in major cities, to getting ride of Russian ov/ev suffixes from Kazakh surnames, to the renaming of geographical places to Kazakh names and to the climbing use of Kazakh in the official press conferences and celebrations.⁹³

However, despite the evidence of Kazakhisation actions, the President of Republic publicly criticises the actual nation-building policy of Kazakhisation pursued by his own state apparatus. Given the concentration of actual power in the hands of Nazarbayev, arguably, we observe the actual pursuit of the Kazakhisation policy by the political elite while official documents are about the project of a supra-ethnic nation-state with only few special rights for the titular nation.⁹⁴

The post-Soviet elites in Kazakhstan have adopted the formal and legal requirements to craft democracy and establish 'civil-state' while simultaneously pursuing extra-legal measures that run counter to the intentions of the well-meaning institutional crafters.⁹⁵

Nazarbayev has carefully cultivated symbolic ambiguity, tried to combine policies that forged some degree of civicness for international audiences as well as those that advanced ethnicization of state and society for ethno-nationalist constituents – most difficult to reconcile.⁹⁶ However, this discursive frame can provide minimal reconciliation at critical moments. They are unlikely to be the durable guarantors of social stability in Kazakhstan. This ambiguous strategy of 'internationalism with an ethnic face' is glaringly manifest among the nation-building trends in post-Soviet Kazakhstan.

Biased Language Laws

Replete with symbolic meaning, the adoption of language laws granting the state status to the titular Kazakh language definitely reflects ethnic bias in the legislation. The fight for a wider use of the Kazakh language in education, culture and administrative practice relates not only to the growth of ethnic consciousness and the desire to prevent acculturation but also to the mundane motivation to place the Kazakh in more advantageous positions with respect to other ethnic groups.⁹⁷

ETHNICITY AND NATION BUILDING IN KAZAKHSTAN

The language law of September 1989 declared Kazakh to be the state language of Kazakhstan and required its eventual widespread use in public life, while the Russian language was granted the ambiguous status of being the language of inter-ethnic discourse.⁹⁸ The Slavs in the Republic were opposed to the policy of ‘Kazakhisation’ and they considered it as an ‘infringement on other people’s rights. The new constitution of Kazakhstan (1995) elevated the status of Russian from the “language of inter-ethnic communication” to an “official” language of the state. Kazakh, however, remains the sole state language.⁹⁹

The new-found equilibrium was, however, disturbed soon after when in November 1996 the lower house of the Kazakhstan Parliament passed a draft revision of the language law requiring the executive branch to draw up a list of state sector posts for which a working knowledge of Kazakh would be obligatory. The draft further stipulated that this provision would go into effect in the year 2006 for non-Kazakhs while Kazakhs would have only until the year 2001 to acquire a facility in the state language.¹⁰⁰ The Senate, however rejected the bill sending it back to the lower house for revision. The final version of the law adopted by both houses of parliament in July 1997 set no deadline for the full switch over to Kazakh in public administration.¹⁰¹ In line with the Kazakhstan constitution, the new language law states that Russian is used on a par with the Kazakh language in state organisation of organs of local self-government.

There are widespread activities of the *Qazaqtılı* organisation, a grand language planner, based on the combination of political will, government financing and favourable demography.¹⁰² “If a language like Hebrew could be revived and transformed into a modern and scientific language... why cannot the Kazakh language do the same?”¹⁰³ Thus, the certification of translation standards, language reform, the replacement of Russian words with Turkic/Arabic analogues and the like have become the daily work of this busy organisation.¹⁰⁴

The newly-acquired freedom for national assertion in the Republic could lead us to assume the existence of a native constituency that is

overwhelmingly in favour of linguistic revival. The national folklorists or the “lonely philologists and half-forgotten poets” often assume cultural leadership in national revival that take place after prolonged cultural repression.¹⁰⁵ Since the proclamation of sovereignty, Kazakh folklorists have launched a fervent campaign to counter the hegemony of Russian in public sphere. They warned that Kazakh was rapidly headed towards extinction unless immediate corrective measures were taken to restore its prestige. The nationalist slogan *nyet nazyka, nyet natsii* (a nation cannot be without its language) struck an intuitive chord among the euphoric national strata of the new Republic.¹⁰⁶ Cultural entrepreneurs were eloquent in conveying the tragedy befalling their small nation, whose ‘elders’ could not even sing lullabies or speak words of endearment in Kazakh to their ‘urban grand-children. Throughout 1992 and 1993, the metaphor of ‘death’ and ‘extinction’ of Kazakh as a result of the Soviet endorsed genocide became household themes.¹⁰⁷

Due to this, when Kazakhstan’s first Constitution declared Kazakh to be the sole state language, it was justified in ethno-national terms: “if the indigenous language is not recognized on its own historical homeland, where else does it have a chance to survive.”¹⁰⁸ However, the language planners in Kazakhstan had no answers for those 40 per cent of the Kazakhs who did not know their own language.¹⁰⁹ Abduali Qaidarov, President of the state-supported Kazakh Language Revival Society, *Qazaqtili*, called for compassion and understanding towards the unfortunate 40% of his own brethren who had been deprived of the knowledge of their language, genealogy and culture due to the assimilationist machinations of Soviet nationalities policies.¹¹⁰ “It is not their fault, only their misfortune”, stated Qaidarov.

The noted Kazakh demographer, Makash Tatimov, also addressed the issue arguing that objective changes in demography will determine the course of national revival and language shift.¹¹¹ When the Stalin era excesses and Khrushchev’s misguided Virgin Lands campaign reduced the Kazakhs to barely one-third of the total population on their own land, they had little choice but to speak the

ETHNICITY AND NATION BUILDING IN KAZAKHSTAN

language of the majority. But now, the tables have turned, the continuing exodus of Russians promises a comfortable urban niche for the native language-speakers. He is optimistic that the Kazakhs will fully restore their genetic pool by the year 2010, becoming a majority in their own state and numbering about 12 million.¹¹² He also disputed the “40 per cent syndrome” mentioned by Qaidarov, arguing that the native language proficiency of Kazakhs should be determined not by the extent of public usage, but by the extent to which the language is spoken in family settings. He estimated the number of Kazakhs who do not know their own language to be only 28 per cent.¹¹³ The unambiguous message of Tatimov is that the prospects for national revival are indeed bright and that a language shift will logically follow a demographic shift.

A shift away from Russian to one’s native Kazakh can hardly take place on short order, it typically requires a generational change. Efforts to introduce legislation have met squarely with such obstacles as lack of standardised native terminology, suitable Kazakh text books and dictionaries, shortage of qualified teachers and a methodology for teaching Kazakh in schools.¹¹⁴ There has emerged enormous pressure on the Kazakh language teachers to substitute non-Russian vocabulary for political and scientific terminology and to translate from Russian all government documents and forms into local language.¹¹⁵ For these practical reasons, by putting Russian as ‘official’ language, bilingualism has been pursued to function for the transitional stage during which Kazakh will gradually come to be adopted in everyday life.

Yet, despite the existence of such facilitating conditions as political will and government support, a serious language revival plan still remains to be implemented broadly. However, the climate of national sovereignty has offered national citizens opportunities for the first time to engage in a public dialogue that they are living in their ‘own’ state in which they can and should speak their native language without fear or embarrassment.¹¹⁶ The declining influence of Russian has brought the realisation that Russian is neither a full-fledged international language nor a substitute for one’s native tongue.¹¹⁷

The Move to Akmola: A Nationalising Shift

In November 1997, opening ceremonies were held to mark the transfer of Kazakhstani state capital from Almaty to Akmola (meaning white grave), a city centred in the north with some 300,000 inhabitants of which approximately only a third were ethnic Kazakhs. In justifying the move, Kazakhstani officials have put forth, inter alia, the following arguments, none of which alludes to an ethnic dimension: the city of Almaty has nearly exhausted its potential for growth, it lies in an earthquake zone and is plagued by air pollution, the old capital was congested, it is far removed from the country's industrial and geographical centre due to its location in Kazakhstan's extreme south-eastern corner.¹¹⁸

Although, the official reasons are entirely different, in 1997 President Nazarbayev stated in his Kazakh-language interview intended solely for the Kazakh audience, the real cause of this extremely costly move: "I have to tell the truth: we should move people there to Akmola... Therefore, the youth should be genuine patriots since we do all this for them. This is their, our Kazakh land. This is solely a Kazakh policy pursued for the benefits of the Kazakhs."¹¹⁹

The long list of official reasons notwithstanding, the planned move to Akmola is widely regarded as a means to consolidate the titular nation's hold on the state by 'diluting' the Russian-dominated northern region through the migration of Kazakhs from the South. The government plans to change the demographic balance in the northern region in favour of the Kazakhs as well as to consolidate state power there to ensure the territorial integrity of the country.¹²⁰ It is hoped that the proposed change of capital will firmly anchor and integrate the northern part of the state, thereby foiling any Russian claims to the region in future.

Ethnic Factor in Legislations

There are several other examples of policies and documents which reveal the predominance of the element 'ethnic' in governance. The Kazakh government has used all legislative instruments to suppress

ETHNICITY AND NATION BUILDING IN KAZAKHSTAN

Russian nationalist organisations such as *Lad*, *The Cossacks*, *Congress of Russian Communities* and others, on the basis that they tend to pursue secessionist, irredentist and even militant agendas.¹²¹ The city Soviet of Ust-kamenogorsk has become the main centre of resistance to the nation-building strategies of the regime. In 1990, it demanded amendments of Language Act and changes in the Declaration of Sovereignty of Kazakhstan, proclaiming that if these demands were rejected, the region would insist on territorial autonomy on the basis of the existing law of the USSR.¹²² At present, it is the *Cossack Movement* which is regarded by the government as potentially the most dangerous force threatening the unity of Kazakhstan. The joint meeting of the Cossacks of Siberia and Kazakhstan held in Omsk in early 1994, proclaimed the merger of the two Cossack unions into *Siberian Cossack Force*.¹²³ The Cossack organisations are not recognised officially and their leaders have been arrested on numerous occasions, especially after Cossack demonstrations in several northern cities and Almaty in 1994, when they demanded that Kazakhstan should join Russia.¹²⁴

Relations between Russia-based organisations and government officials in Kazakhstan have visibly deteriorated in recent years. The activities of *Edinstvo*, *The Society for Slavic Culture* and *The Russian Community of North Kazakhstan* have been banned; high profile Russian activists like Boris Suprunyuk of the *Russian Community of Kazakhstan* have been arrested on charges of inciting inter-ethnic discord. Cossack organisations have been singled out for particularly harsh treatment.¹²⁵

The economic sector is undergoing a major privatisation process with the crucial participation of foreign capital. Although, the government is bound to pursue a policy of equal opportunities for all ethnic groups as well as foreign investors within the context of the globalising world economy, a recent development unveils the real nature of Kazakhisation. The Kazakh leadership is determined to preserve the state's control over the most promising and strategic oil and gas industry.¹²⁶ The Kazakh elite has assumed full control of this vital industry since it would serve as an economic basis of Kazakh political

Manish Jha

dominance in the longer term.¹²⁷ In addition, in April 1998 President Nazarbayev announced his plan to curb the privatisation process of oil and gas industries in order to preserve some national assets for future generations and so as to preserve the ethnocentric power of the native Kazakhs.¹²⁸ Similarly, it is now widely held belief that the Kazakhstan authorities have deliberately driven certain Slavic enterprises and collective farms to the verge of bankruptcy in order to enable Kazakh-controlled investment groups to privatise them at low prices.¹²⁹

State planning and social engineering are used to ensure the domination of the Kazakhs in the long term. The state recruitment policy is utilised to ensure Kazakh loyal cadres in governmental, administrative and elected jobs. Thus in 1994, ethnic Kazakhs were almost 75 per cent in both the Cabinet of Ministers and Presidential Administration.¹³⁰ The representation of the native Kazakhs in the police, the army, the National Security Committee and the newly created intelligence agency is also rising.¹³¹ Presently eighty percent of the staff of the Kazakh President's office are ethnic Kazakhs.¹³² There are several such implications which tend to reflect the presence of "ethnic" element in the governance of new nationalising Republic of Kazakhstan.

Fragile Ethnic Peace

Although inter-ethnic relations in Kazakhstan have not blown into a full fledged war, yet they continue to remain tense and fragile. During the disturbances in Alma Ata in December 1986, occurred due to replacement of ethnic Kazakh Secretary Kunayev by an ethnic Chuvash from Russia, Gennady Kolbin, almost 10,000 people took to the streets in Alma Ata. Some two hundred people were injured in the firing and several people were killed. Within two days, the riots spread to twelve other cities in the Republic. Troops were hurriedly brought in to control other towns, where martial law was declared until the demonstrations subsided. By that time at least 17 people had been killed, including three members of the security forces. Chimkent and Jambul, two of the worst hit towns were to remain under martial law until the end of 1987.¹³³ During the disturbances, the blue collar

ETHNICITY AND NATION BUILDING IN KAZAKHSTAN

Russian civil population participated in putting down Kazakh demonstrations.

After these events, Kazakhstan's stability and ethnic peace remained fragile. In October 1990, when President Nazarbayev persuaded or rather forced, some leaders of the Kazakh major opposition groups in Alma Aata to declare a two-year moratorium on demonstrations in the capital, others promptly staged a demonstration against the moratorium. In June 1992, the opposition resumed demonstration, which this time took an anti-government character.¹³⁴

The ethnic peace in Kazakhstan is very relative and exists mainly because of the quantitative parity of the two major ethnic groups. However, the worsening economic situation and growing unemployment has clearly strengthened Kazakh malevolence towards other ethnic groups in the Republic.¹³⁵ In July and August 1990, Kazakhs clashed with Chechans in the Dzhabul raiton.¹³⁶ In the beginning of 1992, activists of Kazakh organisations *Azat* forced Chechens and Ingush living in the Novyi Mir settlement in the Taldy-Kyrgan oblast to sell their houses for a mere trifle and to leave Kazakhstan immediately. Meskhetian Turks living in the Enbekshikazakhskii raion received the ultimatum from the local Kazakhs to leave the raion in three months.¹³⁷

Solzhenitsyn's proposal to annex Northern Kazakhstan published in "How We Should Build Russia" led to the protests from a wide spectrum of Kazakh intelligentsia and youth and also to the demonstrations in Alma Ata on September 21-23, 1990.¹³⁸ The Kazakhs reminded the Russians that the Omsk Oblast in the Russian federation was once Kazakh territory. A new momentum amongst Russians in the North is gaining ground. In December 1992, some 15,000 Russians demonstrated in Ust Kamenogorsk demanding that Russian be recognised along with Kazakh as a state language and that dual citizenship with Russia be given to Russians.¹³⁹ The Cossack movement among Russians is quite formidable presently, as they seek to protect Russians' interest in the Republic. Many of the workers demonstrations in mines and extraction industry which is essentially

economic in character often take ethnic colour and the Kazakhs often blame Russians for their misfortunes.

Despite the evidence of Kazakhisation actions presented above, Nazarbayev has tried to balance the overall situation by satisfying the demands of Kazakh nationalists and by soothing the Russians and has been able to preserve the inter-ethnic peace in such a volatile situation. It could well be observed that the actual pursuit of the Kazakhisation policy by the political elites is moving ahead, while the official documents claim the project of a supra-ethnic nation-state with only few special rights for the titular nation.¹⁴⁰ There has been an ethnic component to virtually every major sphere of state activity in Kazakhstan. However, realization of negative consequences of ethno-nationalism has forced the state to move away from it and turn to the politics of formation of the united nation in Kazakhstan.¹⁴¹

The new constitution of Kazakhstan is dedicated to “We... the people of Kazakhstan”. The Republic is made a democratic, secular, law-based unitary state with a presidential system of rule.¹⁴² The rights and liberties of the individual are recognised and guaranteed in the Constitution. No one may be subjected to discrimination on grounds of origin, sex, race language, religion or place of residence. Freedom of speech and creativity are guaranteed.¹⁴³ All are entitled to use their native language and culture. Censorship is prohibited. Any action capable of disrupting inter-ethnic accord is deemed unconstitutional. Restriction of civil rights and liberties on political grounds is not permitted in any form. Human and civil rights and liberties may be restricted only by law and only to the extent that is necessary to defend that constitutional system and to safeguard public order.¹⁴⁴ Civil and political solidarity of all citizens is assumed as a basis of the state. Legal basis for providing equity of rights and freedom of all citizens regardless of their ethnic or religious identity has been created.¹⁴⁵

Officially, national policy of Kazakhstan is based on the clear and distinct principles like: search for inter-ethnic interaction, social stability as a basis for fair solution to the question of nationality, supremacy of law and strengthening of national independence and active policy of integration.¹⁴⁶

ETHNICITY AND NATION BUILDING IN KAZAKHSTAN

Nowadays, there are 3,474 Kazakh high schools, 2,514 Russian high schools, 2,017 mixed Kazakh and Russian high schools, 78 Uzbek high schools, 13 Uighur high schools, 3 Tajik and 1 Ukrainian high school in Kazakhstan.¹⁴⁷ In addition there are a number of Sunday schools where children can learn their mother-tongue at the request of their parents. During the year 2000, there were over 200 Sunday schools teaching 25 languages of the nations living in Kazakhstan.¹⁴⁸

Some cities have the so-called schools of national revival. For instance, children in a school in North Kazakhstan can study ten languages like Armenian, Polish, German, Hebrew, Tatar, Bashkir, Chechen, Ingushian, Ukrainian and Azerbaijani.¹⁴⁹ In these schools, along with their mother tongues children can study literature, folklore, history of their nations and the world religions.

A sufficient number of textbooks for national schools as well as various books are published in Uighur, Uzbek, Russian and other languages. Upto 30 books in the languages of the ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan are published by the state every year.¹⁵⁰ The Kazakh mass media has very close contacts with the various diaspora. At present magazines and newspapers in 11 national languages are issued.¹⁵¹ The major editions are the Korean, the German, the Ukrainian, the Russian and the Uighur newspapers. Kazakh Republican Television produces an education program called “Our Home is Kazakhstan” which is devoted to history and culture of various ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan.¹⁵²

The Assembly of Nations of Kazakhstan, which was established in 1995 under the initiative of President Nazarbayev plays an important role in the maintenance of inter-ethnic harmony in the country. The Assembly is comprised of all the national and cultural centres and all the representatives of the ethnic minorities living in the country. It has a status of consulting and advisory body to the President of the Republic.¹⁵³ The Assembly has the following objectives: assistance in maintenance of the inter-ethnic harmony, development of proposals on state policy promoting development of friendly relations in Kazakhstan,

assistance in their religious and cultural revival and concern for the diverse national interests in the national policy.¹⁵⁴

Today over 300 Republican, regional, district and city national and cultural centres are running across the Republic. In principle, the centres are designed as the basic units of ethno-cultural self-government. According to Nazarbayev, “they constitute the hearts of preserving national self-consciousness, the organisational mechanism for supporting and developing national traditions, cultures and the original spirituality of the nations and national groups. These national-cultural centres must take initiative in achieving harmony among people not only of different nationalities but also religious confessions.”¹⁵⁵

Nevertheless despite the positive factors in multi-ethnic relations, one should keep in mind that the balance that reached in the multi-ethnic relations is not constant.

Rather, the new Republic of Kazakhstan has chosen the graduate incremental process of Kazakhisation. They have crafted strategies to adopt the formal legal requirements of a civil society while simultaneously pursuing extra-legal measures that run counter to the intentions of well meaning institutional crafters.¹⁵⁶ The institutional protections are genuinely minimum as the real politics of ethnic divisions lies beyond the scope of the legally ‘civic’ designations. The political elites offer minimal forms of institutional accommodation for its ethnic minorities. Preferential treatment of ethnic Kazakhs in practical quest for building a Kazakh identity for the Republic by reinterpreting history and popularising the call “Kazakhstan for Kazakhs’ etc. have definitely contributed to a large scale out-migration of ethnic Russians in 1990s. Likewise, the politics of language preference was eventually settled with a compromise in which Russian was upgraded to the level of ‘official language, yet coercive elements of Kazakh language promotion (such as the requirements that all state officials pass proficiency exams in Kazakh by 2005) are still continuing. Despite formulations in the constitution and other legislative acts guaranteeing the equality of all citizens, nationalising policies and practices are manifest in the

ETHNICITY AND NATION BUILDING IN KAZAKHSTAN

iconography of the new regimes, the privileged status according to local languages, newly revised histories and the exclusion of non-eponymous groups from the echelons of power.¹⁵⁷ There has been an ethnic component to virtually every major sphere of state activity. The state as a whole is being perceived as nationalising by representatives of the national minority and, therefore, exercises a real effect on relations between titular and non-titular groups.

The establishment is looking for different ways to ensure both the territorial integrity of Kazakhstan and the success of its strategies of building a nationalising regime, i.e., they are trying to combine discursive policies that in practice are difficult to reconcile. Apparently, the multi-ethnic composition of Kazakhstan is one of the reasons why President Nazarbayev argues for civil accord and inter-ethnic accommodation in the Republic. He constantly emphasised that no one ethnic group should have privileges in the Republic.

So far, Nazarbayev has proved to be a very skilful politician who is capable, if not to defuse inter-ethnic tension, then to keep it under control. His authoritarian regime remains the only effective instrument to prevent ethno-political polarisation and instability in the region.¹⁵⁸ However, it is unlikely to be durable guarantor of social stability. The question of power-sharing between different ethnic groups in Kazakhstan still remains unresolved. A virtual absence of consociational structures makes developing a bargaining political culture a particularly difficult task. Indeed, the central challenge of cultural pluralism has not disappeared in Kazakhstan.¹⁵⁹ Under such conditions, the ethnic Russian northern regions could be the site of autonomy or separatist movements that could provoke tensions.

The competition for political participation, economic opportunities and cultural status virtually ensures that ethnicity will remain an important criterion for political organisation and that ethnically based claims will maintain a prominent place on the agenda of the state. Devoid of plural democratic traditions, institutions and intentions in the new Republic, the authoritarian type of regime in Kazakhstan could only

ensure stability in the region and exercise sufficient control over the ethno-political situation to avoid inter-ethnic clashes while the new nation-state is in the making.

CONCLUSION

It could thus be maintained that post-Soviet Kazakhstan is definitely heading towards 'nation-state' model of nation-building through different overt or covert practices like Kazakhisation, through recreating ethno-nationalistic identity, through nationalising regime or through policy of internationalism with an ethnic face. As nationalising regime, the Kazakh leadership has accorded a higher status to its titular Kazakh nation which remains sharply distinguished from the rest of the citizens. As a result, hidden informal practices and the unwritten rules of nationalisation often contradict – and in certain instances directly contravene – the civic principles enshrined in the constitution and other official documents. They are pursuing the long term process of 'Nationalisation' along with that of 'Harmonisation'. Whereas the official objectives indicate the future of Kazakhstan as 'civic nation', yet the empirical trends indicate the future as 'ethnic-nation'. They have adopted the policy of 'Nationalisation by stealth' and it seems that it is going to continue till Kazakhs attain the level of demographic superiority and grow with their distinctive mature national identity.

REFERENCES

1. Svat Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia* (Cambridge University Press, London: 2000), p.ix.
2. *Ibid.*, p.ix.
3. *Ibid.*, p.303.
4. S.A.M. Adsheed, *Central Asia in World History* (London: 1993), pp.7-8.
5. Valery A. Tishkov, *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and after the Soviet Union* (Sage Publication, London), p.134.
6. *Ibid.*, p.137.
7. Anita Sengupta, "Minorities and Nationalising States in Central Asia", *International Studies*, Vol.34, No.3, p.270.
8. *Ibid.*, p.272.
9. *Ibid.*

ETHNICITY AND NATION BUILDING IN KAZAKHSTAN

10. *Ibid.*
11. Adel E. Abhishev (ed.), *Kazakhstan in Focus: Ten Years of Independence* (Centre for Foreign Policy and Analysis, Almaty: 2002), p.7.
12. *Ibid.*, p.45.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.* p.43.
15. Anatoly M. Khazanov, "The Ethnic Problems of Contemporary Kazakhstan", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol.14, No.2, p.244.
16. Adel E. Abhishev, *op.cit.*, p.43.
17. Anatoly M. Khazanov, *op.cit.*, pp.244-245.
18. Adel E. Abhishev, *op.cit.*, p.44.
19. Anatoly M. Khazanov, *op.cit.*, p.245.
20. *Ibid.*, p.246.
21. *Ibid.*
22. Adel E. Abhishev, *op.cit.*, p.45.
23. *Ibid.* p.247.
24. Adel E. Abhishev, *op.cit.*, p.47.
25. Anatoly M. Khazanov, *op.cit.*, pp.246-247.
26. *Ibid.*, p.247.
27. Adel E. Abhishev, *op.cit.*, p.46.
28. *Ibid.*
29. Anatoly M. Khazanov, *op.cit.*, p.247.
30. *Ibid.*, pp.247-248.
31. Adel E. Abhishev, *op.cit.*, p.45.
32. *Ibid.*, p.45.
33. *Ibid.*
34. Janabel Jiger, "When National Ambitions Conflicts with Reality: Studies on Kazakhstan's Ethnic Relations," *Central Asian Survey*, vol.15, no.1, p.7.
35. *Ibid.*, p.7.
36. Graham Smith, Law, Vivien, Andrew Wilson, Annette Bohr and Edward Allworth, *Nation-Building in Post-Soviet Borderlands : The Politics of National Identities* (Oxford University Press, London: 1998), pp.156-157.
37. Sham-ud-Din (ed.), *Nationalism in Russia and Central Asian Republics: Unfinished Democratic Revolution* (Lancer Books, New Delhi: 1999), p.345.
38. Graham Smith, *op.cit.*, p.157.
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*, p.157.
41. Jiger Janabel, *op.cit.*, pp.7-8.

42. *Ibid.*
43. Gulnara Mendikulova, "The Kazakh Diaspora: From Central Asia to the West" in Sham-u-Din (ed.), *Nationalism in Russia and Central Asian Republics: Unfinished Democratic Revolution* (Lancer Books, New Delhi: 1999), pp.352.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*
46. *Ibid.*, pp.352-353.
47. *Ibid.*
48. Graham Smith, *op.cit.*, p.157.
49. Adel Abhishev, *op.cit.*, p.48.
50. *Ibid.*, p.48.
51. *Ibid.*
52. Pal Kolsto, "Anticipating Demographic Superiority: Kazakh Thinking on Integration and Nation Building", *Eurasian Studies*, Vol.50, No.1, 1998, pp.62-63.
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*, p.62.
55. Anita Sengupta, *op.cit.*, p.286.
56. *Ibid.*, pp.286-287.
57. Azamat Sarsembayev, "Imagined Communities: Kazakh Nationalism and Kazakification in the 1990s", *Central Asian Survey*, vol.18, no.3, 1999, p.331.
58. Graham Smith, Law Vivien, *op.cit.*, p.139.
59. Yougjin Zhang, Rouben Azizian (ed.), *Ethnic Challenges beyond Borders: Chinese and Russians Perspectives of the Central Asian Conundrum* (St. Anthony's College. Oxford: 1998), p.65.
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Ibid.*
62. Valery A. Tishkov, *op.cit.*, pp.129-131.
63. *Ibid.*, p.116.
64. Anita Sengupta, *op.cit.*, p.276.
65. Valery A. Tishkov, *op.cit.*, pp.117-121.
66. *Ibid.*, p.123.
67. *Ibid.*, p.125.
68. Anita Sengupta, *op.cit.*, p.274.
69. Yongjin Zhang, Rouben Azizian (ed.), *Ethnic Challenges beyond Borders: Chinese and Russian Perspectives of the Central Asian Conundrum*, (St. Anthony's College Oxford: 1998), p.95.
70. Anita Sengupta, *op.cit.*, pp.274-275.
71. *Ibid.*, p.276.

ETHNICITY AND NATION BUILDING IN KAZAKHSTAN

72. Anita Sengupta, *op.cit.*, p.282.
73. *Ibid.*, p.284.
74. *Ibid.*
75. Yongjin Zhang, Rouben Azizian, *op.cit.*, p.96.
76. *Ibid.*
77. *Ibid.*
78. Anita Sengupta, *op.cit.*, p.292.
79. *Ibid.*, p.291.
80. Valery A. Tishkov, *op.cit.*, pp.133-134.
81. Anita Sengupta, *op.cit.*, p.284.
82. Valery A. Tishkov, *op.cit.*, pp.133-134.
83. Graham Smith, Vivien Law, *op.cit.*, p.139.
84. *Ibid.*
85. *Ibid.*, pp.142-143.
86. *Ibid.*, p.142.
87. *Ibid.*, pp.141-142.
88. Azamat Sarsembayev, "Imagined Communities: Kazak Nationalism and Kazakification in the 1990s", *Central Asian Survey*, vol.18, no.3, 1999, p.331.
89. *Ibid.*, p.332.
90. *Ibid.*, p.330.
91. *Ibid.*
92. *Ibid.*, pp.333-334.
93. *Ibid.*, p.334.
94. *Ibid.*, p.337.
95. *Ibid.*, p.73.
96. *Ibid.*, p.88.
97. Anatoly M. Khazanov, *op.cit.*, p.255.
98. *Ibid.*, pp.255-256.
99. Bhavna Dave, "National Revival in Kazakhstan: Language Shift and Identity Change", *Post-Soviet Affairs*, vol.12, no.1, 1996, p.51.
100. Graham Smith, *op.cit.*, p.151.
101. *Ibid.*
102. Azamat Sarsembayev, *op.cit.*, p.334.
103. *Ibid.*
104. *Ibid.*
105. Bhavna Dave, *op.cit.*, p.53.
106. *Ibid.*
107. *Ibid.*, pp.53-54.

Manish Jha

108. M.M. Arenov, S.K. Kalmykov, "The Present Language Situation in Kazakhstan", *Russian Social Science Review*, Moscow, vol.38, no.3, 1997, p.62.
109. Bhavna Dave, *op.cit.*, p.54.
110. *Ibid.*
111. *Ibid.*
112. *Ibid.*, pp.54-55.
113. *Ibid.*, p.55.
114. Graham Smith, *op.cit.*, p.150.
115. Eden Naby, "Ethnicity and Islam in Central Asia", *Central Asian Survey*, vol.12, no.2, post-Soviet Affairs, vol.12, no.1, p.70.
116. Bhavna Dave, *op.cit.*, p.70.
117. *Ibid.*, p.71.
118. *Ibid.*, p.156.
119. Azamat Sarsembayev, *op.cit.*, p.335.
120. *Ibid.*
121. Azmat Sarsembayev, *op.cit.*, p.337.
122. Yougjin Zhang, Rouben Azizian, *op.cit.*, p.64.
123. *Ibid.*
124. *Ibid.*
125. Graham Smith, *op.cit.*, p.158.
126. Azmat Sarsembayev, *op.cit.*, p.336.
127. *Ibid.*, pp.336-337.
128. *Ibid.*
129. Graham Smith, *op.cit.*, pp.49-50.
130. Azmat Sarsembayev, *op.cit.*, pp.333-334.
131. *Ibid.*, p.334.
132. Yougjin Zhang, Rouben Azizian, *op.cit.*, p.94.
133. Ahmad Rashid, *The Resurgence of Central Asia: Islam or Nationalism* (Oxford University Press, Islamabad: 1994), p.117.
134. *Ibid.*, p.253.
135. *Ibid.*, pp.253-254.
136. *Ibid.*
137. *Ibid.*, p.254.
138. *Ibid.*
139. Ahmad Rashid, *op.cit.*, p.131.
140. Azmat Sarsembayev, *op.cit.*, p.337.
141. Shams-ud-Din, *op.cit.*, p.245.

ETHNICITY AND NATION BUILDING IN KAZAKHSTAN

142. The Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Adopted on September 6, 1995), Almaty, 1995, pp.127-129.
143. *Ibid.*, pp.131-138.
144. *Ibid.*
145. *Ibid.*
146. Adel E. Abhishev (ed.), "Kazakhstan in Focus: Ten Years of Independence", *Centre for Foreign Policy and Analysis*, Almaty, 2002, pp.45-46.
147. *Ibid.*
148. *Ibid.*, p.46.
149. *Ibid.*
150. *Ibid.*, pp.46-47.
151. *Ibid.*, p.47.
152. *Ibid.*
153. *Ibid.*
154. *Ibid.*
155. Edward A.D. Schatz, "Framing Strategies and Non-Conflict in Multi-Ethnic Kazakhstan", *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, London, vol.6, no.2, 2000, p.81.
156. *Ibid.*, pp.72-74.
157. Graham Smith, *op.cit.*, p.139.
158. Yougjin Zhang, Azizian Rouben, *op.cit.*, p.65.
159. Edward A.D. Schatz, *op.cit.*, p.90.

INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS IN KAZAKHSTAN

Role of Presidency

Makhmud B. Kassymbekov

The optimal solution of issues concerning inter-ethnic and inter-confessional relations has always been one of the central agendas of the government in any multi-ethnic society. In Kazakhstan, the presidential form of government initially supported inter-ethnic concord. The President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, N. A. Nazarbaev, has been continuing as head of the policy planning since independence.

Why was the necessity of paying specific attention to the issue of inter-ethnic concord? What were the sources which determined that at the beginning of independence and construction of state legislation, this problem would acquire a status of general national meaning for Kazakhstan? In order to answer these questions it is necessary to refer to the history as the present situation in the country has its historical premises.

Since 19th century almost the entire territory of Kazakhstan has been under the influence of the national policy of the Russian empire. The process of migration of Russian people and other nationals to Kazakhstan can be divided into several stages. The first stage remained confined to the Tsarist policy of developing oriental regions, and then followed the huge programs of collectivization, industrialization, and development of virgin and barren land. Thus, during Kazakhstan's colonization in pre-revolutionary period, 1,150,000 persons came to Kazakhstan from Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. During collectivization 250,000 repressed people from the central regions of the former Soviet Union were sent to Kazakhstan. Later, industrialization of Kazakhstan in 1920s and 1930s prompted the migration of 1,200,000 people to Kazakhstan particularly from the European parts of the Soviet Union.

As it is known, Kazakhstan became a place where several nationalities were forced to migrate. About 800,000 Germans, 185,000

INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS: ROLE OF PRESIDENCY

Koreans, 102,000 Polish, 507,000 Chechen, Ingush, Karachayev and other north Caucasian peoples were deported at different periods of time. Further in 1940s, Crimean Tatars, Turks, Greeks, Kalmyk and other ethnoses were also sent to Kazakhstan. As a result of the deportation of these people, the overall population of Kazakhstan increased by 1.5 million. During the second world war about 350,000 people were forced to migrate to Kazakhstan. In 1950s, 1.5 million people came there to work for the realization of a massive agricultural program on development of virgin and deserted lands in the north and north-eastern Kazakhstan. Inflow of working force in the Republic was also due to natural migration as well. Thus, since the beginning of 20th century 5,600,000 people moved to Kazakhstan, including 3.5 million in the last 40-50 years alone, excluding those who fell victim to forced migration and took shelter in the Republic.

With the increase in the number of migrating people to the Republic there was a decrease in the number of Kazakh population itself. Besides, there had been great losses of Kazakh people during 1916-1945. A terrible consequence of Stalin's collectivization was witnessed in 1930-1932 when 1.5 million Kazakhs died of hunger. As a result, 1.3 million Kazakhs moved abroad in those years. Whereas in 1930, 5,873,000 people lived in the Republic, by 1933 their population dropped to 2,493,000 mainly because of human losses. Steady decrease in the number of Kazakhs in the overall population became critical in 1962, when it was recorded as just 29%. Only at the end of 1986, the population of Kazakhs due to natural increment was found to be equal to the number of Russians – the biggest ethnic group in the Republic. In general, these are indicators of the dynamics of migration to Kazakhstan during the past 100 years.

Kazakhstan, called in Soviet epoch as "People's Friendship Lab", is still a multi-ethnic state. According to the 1999 population census, out of more than 100 different ethnic groups in the Republic, Kazakhs constituted 54% with Russians down to 30%, and other ethnic groups comprising 26.6%.¹ The process to activate national self-consciousness started in the early days of independent Kazakhstan. And the leadership

of the country had to admit it with all power structures of central and local executive authorities being directed to neutralize any possible conflict.

According to generally accepted opinion ethnic consciousness among Kazakhs started from the second half of 1991 and reached its peak in 1992. From the second half of 1992 and the beginning of 1993 it started decreasing. Thereafter, at the end of 1993 and in the beginning of 1994 Slav population of Kazakhstan started raising their voice for the realization of freedom of expression and preservation of their interests. National self-consciousness among ethnic minorities and communities developed after Kazakhstan opened itself to the world, which led to the growth of a number of national cultural centers, public movements and unions.²

Analysing the great changes that took place during the initial period of independence, President Nazarbaev in his book *In the Flow of History* (Almaty, 1999) highlighted the growth of national self-consciousness among the Kazakhs and stressed the need to find the Kazakhstani model of national identification of the citizens. Thus he speaks of two levels of identity. The first level refers to formation of the people of Kazakhstan as one civil and political entity. He emphasizes the necessity of forming, first of all Kazakhstani people, and not the Kazakh super-ethnic identity. He distinguishes between the two approaches, first directed towards the formation of one ethnic generality and the other towards a civil generality. Therefore, as some authors stated that the discussion by some scientists on the Kazakh nation is premature.³ The second level of identity refers to the national identity of local Kazakhs and those Kazakhs who are coming from abroad.

The presidential strategy towards “Kazakhstan-2030” is of great significance for the formulation of national state policy. It is targeted on ensuring inner political stability and consolidation of the society. Considering various aspects of the consolidation of the society, the main purpose should be the formation of one civil society for various ethnic and religious groups of Kazakhstan.⁴ Like other post-Soviet

INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS: ROLE OF PRESIDENCY

multinational states, Kazakhstan too is using in its national state policy the strategy of formation of people “from above”. It means, the special role in this process is incurred by the state. In particular, the government and other state bodies make the intermediate term and short-term programs of actions on the basis of long-term priorities for “Kazakhstan-2030” strategy.

The distinctive feature of the ethno-political situation in Kazakhstan can be seen through relationship between the country’s two biggest ethnos - Kazakhs and Russians. Their societies are called “centralized” or bi-ethnic, and these two ethnic groups have been approximately equal in numbers. The other ethnos referred to are the national minorities. As the researchers believe “the greatest potential for the conflict is exactly in such systems as the dominant groups put forward the claims on the exclusive control of nation-wide institutes more often. These political claims become the reason of polarization of this or that co-citizenship on ethnic (racial, religious) principle, as it takes place, for example, in Southern American Republic, Angola, Sri-Lanka, Fiji.⁵

Despite peaceful coexistence between the two large ethnos in Kazakhstan, their relationship has a complicated, multi-level, and sometimes even contradictory character. The clash of interests among ethnic groups in the Republic has several reasons. Firstly, they are related to the issue of authority, language, citizenship etc. And when they are in conflict, many issues in the socio-economic sphere, such as introduction of private land ownership and privatisation of state property partly assume national colour. For example, the debate over the law on languages has been going on since its adoption in 1989. It aggravated at the time of the adoption of normative certificates (acts) regulating the language policy. It further sharpened in 1990 during the discussion and adoption of the Declaration on the state sovereignty of Kazakhstan, in 1992 -1993 during the debate and acceptance of the new Constitution of the Republic, and in 1994-1995 during discussion on President Nazarbaev’s proposed modifications in the law on languages and Constitution.

A number of local researchers are critical of the ways and models for national consolidation, and also of the basis, structure and ways of integration of ethnic groups of Kazakhstan into a multi-ethnic nation. In their view, macro-social structure of Kazakhstani model of national consolidation is composed of such components as authoritarianism, social integration through titular community dominance and archaic way of ethnic self-identification.⁶

During a sociological research conducted in 1999 and 2000, the respondents specified infringement of rights of some ethnic groups, especially in Astana and Almaty. Such infringement of rights can be seen while they go for employment, for work promotion, for establishment of own business and for admission in the University. The representatives of the Chechen, Uzbek, German and Ukrainian minorities are largely affected by such problems. On the other hand, assuming extreme development of the inter-ethnic relationship and occurrence of the conflict, the behaviour of Kazakhstani respondents can be as follows: 21.6 % will not interfere with the conflict; 21.1 % will demand from the authorities to take precautionary measures; 11.9% will take part in the public movement or increase their activity in order to protect their people; and 11.3% will leave the country. The research also shows the existence of dangerous tendency i.e., 7.9 % of the respondents seek to protect rights of the ethnos with arms in their hands.

There are differences in opinion about reasons for possible participation of people in the conflict between the nationalities. They are as follows:

- The main issue of concern for the Chechen, Kurd and Ukrainian communities is the infringement of their political rights;
- Chechens, Koreans and Ukrainians would promote their activities;
- Offensive words and actions cause negative reaction from Korean, Kurd and Uighur ethnic groups.

INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS: ROLE OF PRESIDENCY

The motivation for activities to protect national interests is much less among the representatives of two main ethnic groups- the Kazakhs and Russians.⁷ In the opinion of local researchers, the relationship between ethnic groups can be interpreted as a competition among ethnic groups, which is mainly expressed in political and cultural spheres.⁸ However, bi-ethnic structure of the population of the Republic becomes even more evident, if other Slavic groups such as Ukrainians and Belarussians are added to the Russians. There are objective reasons for that. Firstly, these people and their ancestors came to Kazakhstan through Russia, and due to their ethnic ties, majority of them during the collapse of the Soviet Union was close to the Russian people in terms of culture and mentality. Secondly, the territorial affinity factor and influences of Russia objectively induce these Slavs to come closer to Russian ethnic group that allows them to struggle more effectively for promoting both their general Slavic as well as the specific interests.⁹

President Nazarbaev has been constantly educating Kazakhstani people about peace and binding force in the country. “Russians and Kazakhs live together for many centuries, and all of them have common destiny on this land. It is understood in Kazakhstan. Ordinary people have nothing to share. 35 % of population of Kazakhstan are Russians, and 40 % are Kazakhs. By the way, Turk speaking people and Muslims make the majority. And the representatives of about hundred nationalities and peoples are the citizens of the republic. There are no reasons to make them quarrel in Kazakhstan. If there is any flash of national conflict, it will be brought in from the outside, and will be done by the enemy of both Russian and Kazakh people only. It is possible to go on the way of reforms, improve life of people, build market economy only in stable political conditions. If not, you can put off all reforms and get involved in war only.”¹⁰

According to another sociological research conducted by “BRIF” agency in 1998, in the Republic the percentage of Kazakhstani in the long term and stable development of the inter-ethnic relationship is very high. 63.3 % of the respondents believed that the relationship would

stay at a former level in future; 9.8 % considered that it would improve in future and only 16.8% stated that it would worsen. The distinction between the ratio of optimistic and pessimistic expectations at the levels of various ethnic groups are as follows: Kazakhs - 2:1, the Slavic - 1:5, other nationalities - 1:2. A significant part of respondents believed that stability in the inter-ethnic relations in Kazakhstan can be provided by flexible and calculated policy of the management of the country.¹¹ As far as the language issue is concerned, each party has its own arguments. The Kazakhs think that the Russian language with the status of the state language would reduce the Kazakh language to a secondary status as was the case during the Soviet period. According to the research findings, 59 % of the Kazakhs agree with this proposition, while 16% do not think so. And the Russians viewed the refusal to give the Russian language the status of state language as the language and ethnic discrimination. On the whole, 23% of respondents attributed the existence of discrimination to the language factor and 47% denied its presence. 35% of Uighurs, 28% of Belarussians, 27% Ukrainians and 14% Tatars pointed to the existence of discrimination. About 50% of the respondents denied discrimination.¹²

The multinational content of population is reflected in language preferences and the religious beliefs of the citizens. The most widespread languages are Kazakh and Russian. However, only 13% speak Kazakh fluently, while 85% speak Russian. It is interesting to note that only 8.5% among Russians speak Kazakh, while one third of Turk language speaking people (the Uzbeks, Tatars, Uighurs) speak Kazakh fluently. Half of the respondents during the course of research, preferred to communicate in Russian, and one third in Kazakh. The same situation of these languages prevails in mass media and literature. About 32.3 % to 38.2% of Kazakhstani use Kazakh speaking mass media, and about 74% to 80% use Russian. Fiction in Kazakh language is read by only 27.9%. Russian Kazakhstani read almost nothing in Kazakh language (only 1% to 2%). That the respondents wanted to give their children language training, is interesting. Majority of them admitted learning Kazakh is necessary (50 on all file). 86 of the

INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS: ROLE OF PRESIDENCY

Kazakhs agreed to that, and among Russians 21 admitted to learning Kazakh as necessary and desirable.¹³ Most of the people learning Kazakh are in Central (11%) and East Kazakhstan (11%). Among the representatives of Russian nationality who learn Kazakh, are in West (20%) and East Kazakhstan (18%). Among the representatives of other nationalities 23% of the respondents learn Kazakh language.¹⁴

In the Northern regions which are dominated by the Russian population, Russian language is used. And, it is evident both in schools and higher education institutions, as also in administration management. In some regions of the Republic with strong Russian ethnic presence, the domination of Russian language was reflected in the distribution of dialect and frequency of their use in speech. The Russian speaking people mostly Russians perceive the conduct of language policy as a measure by the Kazakhs to induce the Russians to leave the country. In the southern areas populated mostly by Kazakhs, the tendency of the spread of Kazakh is appreciable. In these regions the number of Kazakh schools is growing. And recently administration of the region has declared that all office-work would be conducted in the state language.

The fact that different language groups are inequally settled in various regions of Kazakhstan, is reflected in priorities of state language policy. It became especially critical after the independence of Kazakhstan. Language problems became a political issue in public life. Depending on dominant linguistic groups, a real threat of separatism has arisen in the regions of Kazakhstan. In order to avoid such an eventuality and to provide inter-ethnic stability, the leadership of the Republic decided to have a balanced language policy. The state language policy in new conditions became the integral element of the process of democratisation of political system. The leadership of Kazakhstan has decided to have constitutional provisions for the rights and opportunities for all ethnic groups and communities to use and develop their languages.

In many countries the simultaneous co-existence of several languages is found, and there are several cases, where other colloquial

language coexists with the official state language, reflecting their historical place. As many researchers point out, language is not only the symbol of national identity, it also has several socially differentiated functions. The problem of compatibility of different languages existing in multi-ethnic states in practice finds a quite acceptable solution, when each language occupies naturally set position for itself.

Presence of various ethnoses in the Republic stipulates the realization of state language policy, provides interaction of national cultures and its further development. Now in the schools, training of children is conducted in 9 languages: Kazakh, Russian, Uzbek, Uighur, Tajik, Ukrainian, Tatar, German and English. During the past few years, almost in all regions the number of students studying in Kazakh has gone up as compared to 15.5 % in the 1995-1996 academic year. About half a million children in the kindergartens of Kazakhstan are brought up in 7 languages - Kazakh, Russian, Uzbek, Uighur, Tajik, Ukrainian and German. Over three million of children and teenagers study on their native languages. Moreover, in places where national communities historically live, learning of 14 native languages is additionally organized. On the basis of educational institutions of Orthodox and Catholic churches, there are Sunday schools which operate successfully. And for few years now, the week of languages of Kazakhstan is being conducted each year. September 22 is officially named as the Day of languages of Kazakhstan's people. The revival of national languages and traditions is one of the main tasks of Assembly and national-cultural centers. With their joint efforts the festivals of friendship of the peoples, forums, holidays of cultures of all ethnoses, living in the republic have been held during the past decade.

So far as the religious and confessional affinity of multi-ethnic population of Kazakhstan is concerned, it presents a motley picture. The dominant religions are Islam and Russian Orthodox church from all religious associations in the Republic. Besides, there are various sects of non-traditional confessions, which are supported by active foreign organisational and financial assistance. According to the reports of state structures on religious associations there existed 2300 religious

INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS: ROLE OF PRESIDENCY

associations as on January 1, 2001, of which 1375 were officially registered. There were 2005 religious institutions buildings of which 1275 were Muslim. Inside Kazakhstan 240 missionaries (foreign citizens or persons without citizenship) were working. According to a survey conducted in 1995, 39.7% respondents called themselves believers, 55.9% as agnostics, or tolerant to feelings of the believers and religious cults in general.

The local population is generally hostile to the representatives of non-traditional faiths. Interestingly the survey found that the people of old age believed that the youth should follow only traditional religion of its people. In other words hostile, tolerant, neutral or friendly reaction in relations to the adherents of other faiths is defined differently by people belonging to the different ages and regions rather than to a nationality.¹⁵

The Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On freedom of creed and religious communities” adopted on January 15, 1992 provides for the constitutional right on freedom of conscience. The present law has ensured the right of the citizens to free expression of religious feelings, on distribution of religious rights and belief. It has released religious communities from state control. For the first time in the existence of Kazakhstan, freedom of creed became an objective reality. However, later on when the number of non-traditional sects started increasing, the local bodies of authority got concerned. It led to the reconsideration of a number of rules of the special law “On freedom of creed and religious communities”. The Ministry of Culture, Information and Public Consent offered to make some amendments to the existing Law in March 1998. The amendments were aimed at strengthening state control, to regulate the activity of religious organisations and to prohibit the missionary and advertising propaganda activity of foreign religious groups and organisations. However, there was opposition to the proposed changes, these were seen to be an infringement of the rights of non-traditional believers as compared to the traditional currents - Islam and Orthodox Church. As a result, the proposed restrictive amendments to the Law on religion were withdrawn for the moment.

In the ethnically polarised Kazakhstan society, the state authorities, while trying to control the transformation of conflicting interests into ethnic conflicts, carry out centrist policy. The policy aims at the stability of ethnic-political situation, reducing the intensity of conflict, and suppression of dangerous tendencies in the inter-ethnic relations. However, as the local researchers emphasize, it is not possible to achieve ethnic-political stability in conditions of conflicting ethnic groups' interests through the administrative methods. The stability of inter-ethnic relations can be achieved only the exclusivity of ethnic groups is overcome and if the society takes an approach to achieve a new level of integration.¹⁶

The choice in the party between integration or differentiation will define the stability of multi-ethnic Kazakhstan society. The experience of developed democratic countries with multi-ethnic population demonstrates that poly-ethnicity favourably influenced their socio-economic, political and cultural development. As many experts emphasize, the synthesis of cultures of various ethnoses gives impetus to economy and in all spheres of society. Nevertheless, along with positive experience there are a number of negative cases, when multi-ethnicity caused destruction. In this case competition between the ethnic groups for exclusive or privileged access to the basic resources caused active mobilization of these groups, sometimes leading to uncontrollable negative consequences. That is why, in multi-ethnic Kazakhstan the question of how the national policy of construction is very critical for stability of the society and the state.

We should emphasize that the authority in Kazakhstan is oriented towards modern understanding of a nation as co-citizenship. In the third session of Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, President N. A. Nazarbaev said: "The Creation of new identity will be successful only if the ideas of democracy, freedom, plurality, human rights, civil society find the correspondence to national ideas. To my mind, it is possible only on joining two large ideological subjects - political independence and internal democratisation of Kazakhstan. The formula of search for a new identity, new self-determination of the people of Kazakhstan is

INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS: ROLE OF PRESIDENCY

externally simple, but is extremely complicated from the matter of realisation. This formula is as follows: Only democratic Kazakhstan can be independent. And, with no political independence there will not be a real democracy in Kazakhstan. And the third component in this formula can become formation of a political civil generality in Kazakhstan, a civil generality, instead of mythical super-ethnos.”

It is time for us to resolve this important issue. People of Kazakhstan are considered as a political generality of the citizens of different nationalities, not as a new ethnic generality. At this stage of our development, exactly this statement of the issue is considered to be realistic.¹⁷ This policy statement made by the leadership of Kazakhstan really corresponds to modern, democratic principles of national policy of the multi-ethnic state. This idea is in conformity with the modernist concept of nation building, which is opposed to other understanding of a nation and nation building – primordialism underlining importance of an ethnic factor.

In order to trace the evolution of national policy of Kazakhstan for the last ten years, one can see a shift from ethnic oriented policy to the recognition of priorities of modernist understanding of nation building. The specifics of such a shift can be found in changes of normative regulation of national policy being formulated in law from time to time. Originally, in the Constitution of 1993 the announced national policy of the Republic had ethnic-oriented character. In the preamble of the Main Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan it was admitted as “the self-determined Kazakh nation, providing equal rights to all citizens” (article 47). Declaration on the state sovereignty and Declaration on state independence of Kazakhstan adopted earlier also had similar character, where the special status of the Kazakh nation was emphasized.

Certainly, the adoption of such normative statements was important at an initial stage of establishment of Kazakhstan as an independent nation, as it gave a strong emotional charge for consolidating the Kazakh people, and strengthened the consciousness

Makhmud B. Kassymbekov

of the present generation for shouldering responsibility of the historical destiny of the Kazakh people. Nevertheless, as subsequent events have shown, emphasis on ethnic-oriented policy in the multi-ethnic state did not correspond to democratic transformations. It was unacceptable from the point of view of preservation of political unity of the country. Its continuation could lead to intensification in inter-ethnic tensions. It showed contradictions in the formulation of priorities of national policy given the objective realities of multi-ethnic Republic. These contradictions were successfully resolved through referendum of the Constitution in 1995, where there was no division of the people into a titular nationality and other nationalities.

It is also important that the specified changes in realisation of national policy of Kazakhstan coincide with the chosen course on construction of democratic political system. Otherwise, the declaration of principles of building the nation state in conditions of a multi-ethnic society could contradict with the democratic principles. The President of Kazakhstan realises that “it is impossible to decide the national question once and for ever. Even the safest democratic countries of the world could not do that. We need to refuse from solving the national question finally, and to proceed with the essentially other strategy. There is no need to try to erase the objectively arising contradictions. Our strategy should provide policy, avoiding the development of the contradictions and to prevent the bloody conflicts.”¹⁸

N. A. Nazarbaev in his book *In the Flow of History* offers to use the native people of Kazakhstan as explorers of channels connecting the people of Kazakhstan with culture of their historical native land, in order to develop all citizens of Kazakhstan socially, economically and spiritually. It is necessary to keep the historically formed multi-national structure of our society, says Nazarbaev, because it enriches the culture of the people mutually. In order to steadily develop in the present conditions, it is necessary for Kazakhstan to keep economic, political and cultural communication with other countries that would lead the citizens of Kazakhstan to learn the languages and cultures of other people and cooperate with them. There is no need to be afraid that the

INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS: ROLE OF PRESIDENCY

original culture of the Kazakhs would disappear, get dissolved under influence of other cultures. On the contrary, it would be enriched. Moreover, the policy aimed at self-isolation, preservation, even with an idea of revival of traditional culture would only radicalise the ethnoses. Therefore, it is necessary to revive, to keep, to develop culture of all the people of Kazakhstan.

President Nazarbaev speaking at the First forum of the people of Kazakhstan (1992) for the first time floated the idea of creating a prototype of such mechanism as public body of consolidation of the citizens of all nationalities. As a result, in 1995, the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan – an institute with legal status in the field of national policy was established. It was created to harmonise the public relations, preservation of inter-ethnic, inter-confessional and civil consent in the Republic.

Now the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan plays important role in national policy, joining the national-cultural centers of various ethnic groups living in the Republic. The Assembly helps in keeping peace and consensus in the country. But, as was announced in his statement at the 7th session of Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan by the President N. A. Nazarbaev, “it is a common stamp, and it is necessary to fill it with specific content corresponding to features of the moment each time”.¹⁹ Accordingly the President of the Republic assigned four tasks to the Assembly. Firstly, to strengthen work on teaching of Kazakhstan patriotism that should serve to expand the social cultural base of reforming a society through the Assembly and national cultural centers. Secondly, to increase the status of the Assembly itself through activation of the social initiative of Assembly and national cultural centers as intermediaries in dialogue between the state and civil society. Thirdly, the Assembly should organise work on clarifying the role of religion in socio-political life of our society. It should be realised through the creation of Council of the religious leaders in Assembly. And lastly, the Assembly was not to allow the politicisation of inter-ethnic relations. Here the Head of the state sees a key role of the Assembly in keeping peace and concord in inter-ethnic

relations. Thus, the main task of Assembly should consist not in the usual reaction to events, but in creating system of preventive measures and recommendations, so that the inter-ethnic relations did not turn into a political problem.

During the ten years' period of its independent development, Kazakhstan has passed through the difficult way of establishing new national policy. Certainly, in the beginning, there was temptation to manipulate the national policy to conduct a hidden agenda of preferences at the state level in favour of a titular nation. However, in our Republic, the leadership of the country led by N. A. Nazarbaev took a more reasonable course having chosen path of democratisation of the national policy. As one of the political biographers of the Kazakhstan President writes, N. Nazarbaev constantly focuses Kazakhstani people on strengthening peace and concord in the country. "In his point of view all people are equal in rights, the creators of Kazakhstan state legislation. You can say about Nazarbaev that he is able to see and to recognize a certain superiority of other people as Abai earlier did. He is in favour of equality and brotherhood. It is deep and intrinsic feature of his personality. The one, who does not have this quality is not capable to rise up to recognition of the superiority of other people, simultaneously feeling and realizing the superiority of himself. Nazarbaev aspires to equality, because he cannot feel himself other way in this context of relations."²⁰

REFERENCES

1. "Who are we, how many of us?", *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, 3 March 2000.
2. A. Galiev, E. Babakumarov, Z. Zhansugurova, I. Peruashev, "The Inter-ethnic Relations in Kazakhstan: Ethnic Aspect of Personnel Policy", *Sovremennyy Kazakhstan: Economy, Politics, Society*, Almaty, 1997, T.2, p.42.
3. A. N. Nysynbaev and R. K. Kadyrzhanov, *Institute of Presidency as the Factor of Stabilization of the Inter-ethnic Relations*, Institute of Presidency in the New independent states, Almaty, 2001, p.144. (in Russian)
4. N. A. Nazarbaev, "Kazakhstan – 2030: Prosperity, Safety and Improvement of Wealth of all Kazakhstani" (the Message of the President of the country to the people of Kazakhstan), *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, 11 October 1997.

INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS: ROLE OF PRESIDENCY

5. V. A. Tishkov, "Ethnicity, Nationalism and State in Post-communist Society", *Sociology Issues*, Nos.1-2, 1993, p.18.
6. *Kazakhstan Society and Social Forecasting: Sociological Measurement*, Almaty, 2001, pp.65-80. (in Russian)
7. G. T. Telebaev, "Social-Political Safety of the Country: The Tendencies and the Forecasts", *Kazakhstan - Spectrum 2001*, No.1, pp.13-19.
8. R. K. Kadyzhanov, *Consolidation of Political System of Kazakhstan: Problems and Perspectives*, Almaty, 1999. Ch.4, pp.95-127. (in Russian)
9. A. Galiev, A. Babakumarov, Z. Zhansugurova, I. Peruashev, *The Inter-ethnic Relations in Kazakhstan: Ethnic Aspect of Personnel Policy*, Almaty, 1994, p.192
10. O. Vidova, *Nursultan Nazarbaev. A Portrait of the Man and Politician*, Almaty, 1998, p.192.
11. M. M. Arenov and S. K. Kalmykov, "Ethnic-Social Reality of Kazakhstan", *Socis*, 1998, No.3.
12. M. M. Arenov and S. K. Kalmykov, "Sociological Notes on Language Situation in the Republic", *Mysl*, No.3, 1995, p.52.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 49-54.
14. *Statistical Review of Kazakhstan*, Almaty, No.2, 2000, pp.33-45.
15. K. Kusherbaev, A. Nazarbaev, N. Sadykov, "Level of Religiosity and Confessional Orientation of the Population of the Republic of Kazakhstan" (Informational analytical report), *Sovremenny Kazakhstan: Economy, Politics, Society*, Almaty, 1997, T.2, pp.258-276.
16. Kadyrzhanov, n.8, p.124.
17. *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, 30 April 1996.
18. V. A. Nikiforov, M. K. Kanafina, *A Role of Ethnos-Confessional Relations in Stable Development of Kazakhstan*, Almaty, 2000, pp.187-188.
19. *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, 1 December 2000.
20. Vidova, n.10, pp.307-308.

ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS TO KAZAKHSTAN'S SECURITY

Ajay Lele

The questions of national and international security have been traditionally seen as exclusively military issues. Military considerations have dominated the security policy decision-making of states. Today, however, new environmental and social problems, which threaten the well being of people all over the world, are gaining importance in security thinking. These new problems cannot be solved by the military means.¹

Central Asia, is a unique region remarkably varied in topographical and terrain features and climatic conditions. This is a region rich in natural resources but at the same time the region is vulnerable to various natural disasters like drought, soil erosion, flash floods etc.

The ecosystems of Central Asia, whether in the steppe, the deserts or the high mountains, are exceptionally fragile. In the past, the local inhabitants, nomadic and sedentary, treated the land with respect, husbanding it carefully to protect it from the damaging consequences of overuse. In the latter part of 20th century, however, much of Central Asia has been intensively developed and as a result, its carrying capacity has been strained to the point of imminent collapse.²

All Central Asian nations are generally linked by many common traits determined by history and geography. However, following the disintegration of the Soviet Union almost every country was left alone and was expected to survive by developing its own political and economic identity. Every country was expected to formulate its development strategy. While formulating these policies most of them failed to recognize the geography specific requirements of the region. Naturally these countries failed to factor the environmental parameters in their policies. At the same time these countries had carried the past

ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS TO KAZAKHSTAN'S SECURITY

baggage of the Soviet era that had already disturbed the environmental balance of the region. Kazakhstan is one such country whose environment suffers a lot from the decisions made during and after Soviet era.

Kazakhstan is a land-locked country and shares its borders with Russia, Iran, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and China. The continental position of Kazakhstan in the center of the Eurasian continent is its distinctive feature, and is reflected in the entire physical and geographical make-up of the territory, its hydrogeography, and its plant and animal life. The geographical position between the Siberian taiga and Central Asian deserts, and between the Caspian Sea, which is the biggest inland water body of the continent, and the highest mountains of the Tianshan, results in a great variety of natural conditions and sites.³

Kazakhstan is a vast tableland bordering the Caspian Sea to the west and southwest, containing the Aral region of the Karakum Desert in the centre, and rising to high mountains in the southeast along the border with Kyrgyzstan and China. Lowlands account for more than a third of the country's total area, and hilly plains and plateaus for nearly half, while the rest is mountainous. Steppes and deserts dominate the landscape, with little forest. The Irtysh and other major rivers in eastern Kazakhstan run northwest into Siberia, while in the west the Ural River flows into the Caspian Sea and in the south the Syr Darya barely reaches the Aral Sea. Much of southern and western Kazakhstan needs additional water supplies, since the Syr Darya already suffers from both depletion and chemical pollution owing to its overuse for irrigation in those regions. The Aral Sea, which is shrinking from the diversion of the Syr Darya and other feeder rivers, lies partly in west-central Kazakhstan. The climate is sharply continental (marked by extremes), especially in the plains and valleys, with hot summers and cold winters. Precipitation ranges annually from about 10 inches (250 mm) in the north to 18 inches (450 mm) in mountain ranges in the south, with much lower levels in the deserts.⁴

The country has a population of approximately one and half crores and its climate is continental with cold winter and hot summers and covers an arid and semiarid landmass.⁵ The country is facing severe environment related problems for many years. After independence (1991) following factors also could have contributed towards the environmental degradation of the region. They are: the rapid and massive intensification of agricultural output; introduction of harmful and inappropriate industrial technologies; the steep demographic growth (concentration of more population in pockets); loss of traditional skills and knowledge.⁶

After 1994, the Kazakhstan government has taken many steps to improve the environmental balance of the region. However, many environmentalists are still having the opinion that the efforts made towards preserving the natural environment in Kazakhstan are unsatisfactory. This could be mainly because the government had to save the resources and because of bad economic situation could not make adequate investments towards taking measures for protecting the environment.

During the cold war period, the territory of Kazakhstan was considered huge and wild, perfectly acceptable to situate nuclear test sites and space vehicle launching grounds. The industrial growth in the area took place without giving due importance to the environment related concerns. This pre-independence spoil and economic compulsions of post-independence period has contributed greatly towards damaging the environment.

Post-1991, the degradation of the environment has mainly taken place due to industrial pollution (emissions of pollutants from stationary sources), pollution caused by various means of transportation, unplanned and unscientific methods of waste water discharge into natural water bodies, and mismanagement of underground water resources. Also the land resources continue to degrade and thousands of hectares of agricultural land are being withdrawn from use every year. The soil in a number of regions is contaminated with pesticides and industrial toxicants.⁷

ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS TO KAZAKHSTAN'S SECURITY

The environmental problems of Kazakhstan are not restricted to a particular area in the country but they are well spread and their nature is dependent on the human activities in the region. In the Karaganda industrial area, slag heaps take up enormous areas of fertile land. This region is one of the worst for cardio-vascular illnesses, high blood pressure and lung disease. Similar problem exists in Aktyubinsk. Here polluting substances are produced by the city's chemical plants, which make ferrous alloys and oil products. The region of Chimkent is also a victim of industrial pollution. One of the most important regions of phosphorite mining in the world is the Karatau-Zhambyl industrial area. From here wind carries the dust from the phosphate quarries over enormous distances, and the exhausted quarries are left as open sores on the body of the earth.⁸

The human activity in the area has put considerable pressure on the natural environment in the Caspian region. The concentrations of hydrogen sulphide and sulphurous gases are several times higher than the acceptable level, especially near the Tengiz oilfield. The pollution of the northern shore of the Caspian sea and its tributaries, the river Ilek, Emba and Ural, with oil products has resulted in mass deaths of waterfowl, illness in sea animals, and a sharp decrease in the number of sturgeon. It is also reflected in the health of people living in the region.⁹

Lake Balkhash, which has great ecological and social significance, is shrinking rapidly. According to the scientists, the main reason for this could be the diversion of inflowing rivers for irrigation purposes as the primary cause for the lake's decline. Lake Balkhash is divided by a low ridge into two basins, only the eastern basin is saline. The basins' differential salinities can be easily explained. The southwestern basin receives 80 percent of all the water coming from the inflowing rivers and thus maintains a positive water balance; the eastern basin receives only 20 percent of all inflows and as a result has a negative water balance. Since 1970, the salinity of the water in the eastern basin has risen from 4 to 5.2 grams per liter. The water level has fluctuated some 3 meters during the past 100 years, but the general drop that has been observed since 1960 is expected to continue.¹⁰

All the industrial process, which takes place on the river Ili and its tributaries automatically tells upon the ecology of Lake Balkhash. This lake supplies 10,000 tonnes of high quality fish products a year. It is predicted that if no immediate measures are taken, then the current rate of pollution could lead to the transformation of the western part of the lake into an industrial reservoir, and its eastern part into saline dust, and finally to the total loss of the lake's value to the fishing industry.¹¹

More than Lake Balkhash, the worst affected lake in the Central Asian region is the Aral Sea, which is located in the southwestern parts of Kazakhstan. This is a unique example of what befalls salt lakes and their environs in dry regions when people divert the inflowing rivers and streams. Before 1960, the Aral Sea was the fourth largest lake in the world. After 1960, following massive diversions of water for irrigation from its two major inflowing rivers, the Amu and Syr darya, the water level of the lake began to drop dramatically and its area decreased. From a height of 53 meters above sea level in 1960, the water level dropped some 15 meters over the next 30 years. Today, the water level continues to fall. The area of the lake halved and its volume decreased by two-thirds during last thirty years. Simultaneously, the water's salinity tripled. These changes have spawned a succession of detrimental environmental effects. The receding water exposed large expanses of the salty lake bed. Dust and salt particles blown from this bed have affected human health, increasing the incidence of emphysema and other respiratory diseases, besides leading to decrease in agricultural productivity in adjacent regions. The local commercial fishery industry has collapsed. Soil salinization has increased significantly, the continental climate has become even more extreme, and deltas and islands that once supported a wealth of wildlife and waterfowl have simply disappeared.¹²

By contrast, the water level of the Caspian Sea, which lies in the western parts of Kazakhstan, has been rising steadily since 1978 for reasons that scientists have not been able to explain fully. At the northern end of the sea, more than a million hectares of land in Atyrau oblast have been flooded. Experts estimate that if current rates of

ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS TO KAZAKHSTAN'S SECURITY

increase persist, the coastal city of Atyrau, eighty-eight other population centers and many of Kazakhstan's Caspian oil fields could be submerged by 2020.¹³

In Kazakhstan, environmental tests conducted recently noted that cases of blood disease, tuberculosis, and other diseases are four times more common in the Caspian area than on average in Kazakhstan. Although the tests showed that the environmental contamination in the northeast Caspian is less than what has been recorded previously, water, which has been contaminated by oil products in Kazakhstan, is still used for drinking water. This contamination is cited as a main reason for intestinal infections in Kazakhstan's coastal areas.¹⁴

The gravest environmental threat to Kazakhstan comes from radiation, especially in the Semey (Semipalatinsk) region of the northeast, where the Soviet Union tested almost 500 nuclear weapons, 116 of them above ground. Often, such tests were conducted without evacuating or even alerting the local population. Although nuclear testing was halted in 1990, radiation poisoning, birth defects, severe anemia, and leukemia occur in the area.¹⁵

Kazakhstan's environment was ravaged by the Communist experiment in central planning. Experts estimate that roughly 1.5 million people in Kazakhstan today – almost one in every 10 citizens – is grappling with the effects of over 500 nuclear bomb tests conducted in Semipalatinsk during the Soviet era. Decades of industrial waste also are posing serious hazards. According to a United Nations Environmental report, 20 billion tons of industrial waste, 7 billion tons of which are toxic, have accumulated on Kazakhstani territory.¹⁶ Even today the radiation continues to adversely affect the health of the local population. According to the Semipalatinsk parental center, only 10 percent of pregnant women in some rural areas nearby are healthy due to weakened immunity systems.¹⁷

Apart from these problems Central Asian region in general and Kazakhstan in particular is expected to face grave challenges in near future because of the expected demographic displacements. These

displacements are expected not because of any security problem but because of environmental compulsions. The entire Central Asian region is expected to encounter these problems in near future because of the melting of the glaciers. It has been found that glaciers are withdrawing in this part of the world. This trend started approximately 150 years ago. But in the past 15 to 20 years an acceleration of this withdrawal is becoming more obvious.

Almost all Central Asia's water comes from the rain, snow, and ice of humid mountains of eastern Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and adjoining region. This water feeds two great rivers, the Amudarya and the Syrdarya. During last few years over this area although the precipitation has declined, ice melt from the mountain glaciers has risen. Thus the flow in some mountain rivers- those fed by summer rain and the melting of winter snow-has decreased significantly over recent decades. But the flow in other mountain rivers-those fed by runoff from ice melt in glaciers-has increased. In short the glaciers are melting and shrinking. As the glaciers continue to melt, total flow from the mountains into the great rivers will stay high¹⁸. It may even rise further and may create problems for the civilization staying in the nearby vicinity.

As per the scientific evidence, there has been relatively small rise of temperature of about 0.5 degrees Celsius over the last 60 years or so in some parts of Kazakhstan. But it is actually sufficient to melt the glaciers quite considerably. So between about 1955 and 2000 in the northern Tien Shan, the glaciers have been reduced from something like 270 square kilometers in size to about just over 200 square kilometers in size. And that is caused by precipitation changes perhaps, but also by temperature rises. Most glaciers in Kazakhstan - like those in South America and Africa - are expected to disappear completely over the next 20 years. The shrinking and anticipated disappearance of the glaciers has potentially catastrophic consequences for communities that rely on ice melt for water for irrigation, drinking, and hydroelectric and nuclear power stations. Many rivers in the upper ranges of the Tien Shan are glacier fed. The glaciers' disappearance, will affect the livelihood of millions of people in Central Asia.¹⁹

ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS TO KAZAKHSTAN'S SECURITY

For many years the world focus over this region has got restricted towards oil and gas reserves and environmental issues were largely ignored. However, now many local and international environmental activists have started projecting the ecological problems of this region at various forums. Many NGOs have started addressing the environmental issues of this region. Naturally the state administration has also started paying increasing attention to the concerns of environmental activists. NGOs have succeeded in convincing the government about the importance of green technologies. The government has appointed a working group to make policy recommendations on these issues.²⁰

Various regional efforts are also undertaken to address this problem at macro level. Central Asian countries are paying special attention to effectively tackle the environmental problems. The heads of states have signed a number of agreements and declarations targeted at addressing environmental problems in the region. The Issyk-Kul and Nukus Declarations (1995) aim at setting regional plans for sustainable development and fulfillment of international conventions on the Caspian and Aral regions. In 1997, the Almaty Declaration, which advocates the development of a comprehensive program for environmental security in the region, was signed. In 1998 in Bishkek, *Agreements On Co-operation in Environmental Protection and Effective Natural Resources Management*, and on *Co-operation on Preservation of the Tien Shan Biodiversity* were signed. In the same year, ministers signed a joint declaration on the preparation of a regional environment protection plan. A Central Asian Regional Environmental Center has been created as a legal entity to coordinate the work of government and non-governmental organizations.²¹

Environmental organizations in Kazakhstan have long pushed for better management of the country's many Soviet-era uranium mines and former nuclear missile test sites. As per them, government authorities are not equipped to regulate the country's unstable uranium industry and outsized nuclear waste legacy. By any measure, the country's 21-person nuclear regulatory body, the Committee on Atomic Energy, faces daunting challenges. With a quarter of the world's uranium supply,

Kazakhstan has amassed more than 230 million tons of radioactive waste at over 500 locations. In recent years, the government has also shut down a plutonium-producing fast breeder reactor. Kazakhstan's unresolved nuclear legacy has caught the attention of security-conscious international partners, including the United States. Washington has supported Kazakhstan's radioactive waste program with millions of dollars in technical and financial assistance. Still, Kazatomprom estimates that an additional \$1.1 billion is needed to clean up the country's nuclear stockpile.²²

Kazakhstan reportedly produces more greenhouse gases than any of the other four Central Asian Republics. It relies on coal and gas for 90 percent of its electricity generation and on hydroelectric power for the other 10 percent. To avoid further damage to the environment Kazakhstan should look for cleaner sources for production of electricity. Kazakhstan's hot, windy climate makes it a logical choice for solar and wind-based energy, but institutional and financial barriers have so far kept renewable energy sources out of the mix.²³

To sum up, Kazakhstan's environmental problems need immediate attention. Currently local government is making limited efforts to tackle this problem. However, what needs to be done is a concentrated effort with the involvement of international organizations. There is a need to create a great amount of public awareness and formulation of development strategy based on green technologies. Satellite and computer technology should be used extensively for air pollution tracking and environmental forecasting.

Kazakhstan produces oil, gas, coal and many other mineral resources and the production mechanism of these resources contaminates and pollutes the atmosphere. The country is full of contaminated sites due to nuclear experimentation. Glaciers in the vicinity of Kazakhstan are melting due to excessive global warming and major lakes are shrinking due to badly planned irrigation schemes. All these problems are putting tremendous amount of pressure on the country's environment. Today, there is a need for creation of an

ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS TO KAZAKHSTAN'S SECURITY

effective infrastructure towards the use of land and water resources. There is a need to control demography based environmental requirements. There is a need to restructure the development plan and process of industrialization based on green technologies. Most importantly, there is a need to do away with the slow methods of reforms in environmental sector.

REFERENCES

1. Tero Lausala, *Climate Change-Perspectives on an Evolving Security Threat*, Publications of the Finish Young Pugwash Group IV, Helsinki 1998, p.1.
2. Shirin Akiner et al, *Sustainable Development in Central Asia*, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1998, p.51.
3. www.grida.no/prog/cee/enrin/htmls/kazahst/kazakh
4. http://members.tripod.com/~Cesa_1988/Kazakh.htm
5. [www. Kazakhstan - Countrywatch_com.htm](http://www.Kazakhstan-Countrywatch_com.htm)
6. Shirin Akiner et al, n2, p.51.
7. www.grida.no/prog/cee/enrin/htmls/kazahst/kazakh
8. Shirin Akiner et al, n2, pp.159-160.
9. *Ibid.*
10. http://gep.iatp.org.ua/lake%20_pol.htm
11. Shirin Akiner et al, n2, p.160.
12. http://gep.iatp.org.ua/lake%20_pol.htm
13. <http://www.kazakhstan-gateway.kz/healthandsports/>
14. <http://greennature.com/article572.html>
15. <http://www.kazakhstan-gateway.kz/healthandsports/>
16. <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/environment/articles/eav072503.shtml>
17. <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/environment/eav091403.shtml>
18. www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/6309.htm
19. www.eurasianet.org/departments/environment/articles/eav091203.shtml
20. www.eurasianet.org/departments/environment/articles/eav072503.shtml
21. www.kazakhstan-gateway.kz/healthandsports/
22. www.eurasianet.org/departments/environment/articles/eav012803.shtml
23. www.unwire.org/UNWire/20030717/449_6674.asp

UIGHURS OF KAZAKHSTAN

Socio-Economic Situation

Sh. M. Nadyrov

The pattern of inter-ethnic relations in Kazakhstan has been affected due to the socio-economic transformations. As per the national policy of the President of Kazakhstan in this regard, the State pays attention and takes care of the problems of Kazakhstan's multinational society which in return would stimulate the people of the Republic to contribute to reinforcing of inter-ethnic unity. The Uighur population in Kazakhstan has been following this approach in order to preserve inter-ethnic stability, sense of Kazakh patriotism and a high feeling of responsibility towards the State.

Among the people of Kazakhstan, the destiny of the Uighurs has been difficult, contradictory and unfortunately tragic. This is not only because, in the 20th century the Uighurs became a victim of geopolitical games of the Communist government, but also due to the historical role which Uighurs alongside with other minorities played and still continue to play in the life of the Central Asian people. The total Uighur population in the world today stands at 10 million, of which, according to the official Chinese statistics, 9 million Uighurs are living in the Republic of China. Besides Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan where they live in compact groups, Uighurs are also found in Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Germany, the USA, Canada, Australia, and for the past few years in Sweden, Switzerland and other countries of the world.

The Uighur population of Kazakhstan is estimated to be more than 210,000, mostly concentrated in the Almaty region and also in the Zhambyl and Southern Kazakhstan regions. The contemporary Uighur population is basically composed of those Uighurs who had moved from the Eastern Turkestan to the Semirechye territory in the second half of the 19th century and from those who abandoned Kazakhstan during the

UIGHURS OF KAZAKHSTAN: SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION

revolution, civil war, and the collectivization period and then came back between 1955 and 1961.

The origin of contemporary Uighur people has been identified with their historical motherland – the Eastern Turkestan (Uighurstan), actually representing the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region of the Chinese People’s Republic (XUAR). Two main roots of the Uighur stock in the opinion of social scientists were Turk and East-Iranian, tracing back to the Gunn epoch. In the historical past, the Uighurs and their ancestors were said to be responsible for many state formations in Central Asia, primarily on the territory of the Eastern Turkestan. In antiquity it was the Gunn mandatory power state, oasis towns – the Eastern Turkestan States, in the Middle Ages – the Uighur Gaogun Khan State, the Uighur Kaganats, the Turfan Uighur Idikut State, the Karakhanids State, the Uighur Gandzhou State. The progress of natural sciences and engineering led to the idea of constructing hydraulic complex based on engineering structures such as *karizes* constructed by the Uighurs since antiquity, which are functioning even today. The structure represents an underground irrigation channel system which is so amazing that it can be compared only with the Great Chinese wall or Egyptian Pyramids. During the medieval period, the Uighurs achieved significant political and cultural progress thus becoming cultregers in the Turk world. A vast part of Turk’s written material on culture consists of *orhono-Yenisei* - written monuments of the Uighurs as well as written monuments from Turfan etc. Uighurs played a significant role during the rule of the Mongol empire occupying high political and cultural positions in all states created by the Mongols. The *12 mukams* is said to be the highest creation of the Uighur musical culture.

The Uighur statehood further progressed in the later middle ages when the new States appeared in Eastern Turkestan-the Mogulistan State and the Jarkend Khan State. However, the Cinn or Ch’ing (Chinese) conquest of Eastern Turkestan broke off natural progress of the Uighur statehood as it was converted into a colony and later included into the Chinese empire. Since the beginning of the conquest, the Uighurs were involved in continuous national liberation struggle

against the conquerors which led to the formation of several independent Uighur States at the end of the 19th century such as the Uighur Yetishar State and the Iliskiy Sultanat, and in the 20th century there came into being two Eastern Turkestan Republics, one in 1933 and the other in 1944-1949. Thus in the very heart of Eurasia due to temporary and dimensional interaction of different cultures and civilisations, the Uighur culture appeared to have become pride of the mankind. However, we are far from idealising the Uighur culture and its role in the Turk world and, therefore, we would like only to discover its unique history and culture due to its being the universal property which requires to be developed and enriched.

The destruction of one of the Uighur States – the Iliskiy Sultanat (1864-1817) caused the mass resettlement of the Uighurs in the Semirechiye Province. In fact, in 1871 the Iliskiy Sultanat territory – the Kuldzha territory – was occupied by the Russian army and was temporarily incorporated into the Russian empire. This happened when in 1870 the Kyziy Kazakhs began to proceed towards Kuldzha. The Kyziy province chief Tazabek in April 1871 took shelter in Kuldzha and the Iliskiy Sultanat refused to surrender him to General Kolpakovsky within the stipulated time which finally led to the Russian occupation of the territory of Iliskiy Sultanat. This unprecedented event in which the statehood and independence of the Iliskiy Sultanat were sacrificed in order to save the brothers with the same origin, language and religion, proves that the deep rooted common Turk identity among both the Uighur and Kazakh peoples always remained intact as can be witnessed through their continuous common struggle against conquerors.

History testifies that the way Uighur States that appeared and disappeared during the millennium, stood like a “great Uighur wall” which protected the Turk world from foreign aggression and in the last 200 years from Cinn or Ch’ing (Chinese) conquest. The contemporary XUAR of the Chinese People’s Republic due to its being part of the Central Asian region and the Turk world is now considered to be a bridge-head for developing mutual economic relations between China and Kazakhstan as well as other Turk CIS countries.

UIGHURS OF KAZAKHSTAN: SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION

In the history of the mankind there have been few people who have survived such trials. Though the Uighurs lost almost everything, they have been able to preserve their language and historico-cultural heritage. A century of humiliation in terms of the subjugation of national dignity and traditions, continued during the communist regime as well. The Uighurs of Kazakhstan not only passed through genocide, civil war, years of Stalin reprisals and difficulties of Great War in the Soviet Union, but also fell victim to recalcitrant behaviour of the Kuomintang and horrors of “cultural revolution” in China. However, the problems of the Uighurs of Kazakhstan (and of the whole CIS) were not given due attention because of the official policy. Earlier in 1918 there had even been a mass shooting of the Uighur population provoked by the white army which was called “atu” (shooting). The USSR experience has shown that the policy concerning the inter-ethnic relations did not work properly. It is known that in the former Soviet Union some representatives of the Uighur origin and other minorities were considered as inferior citizens of the country, and were often embarrassed in terms of their origin and language by other ethnic groups.

Taking into account such difficult and complex history of the Uighurs of Kazakhstan, the first and the most important problem that has already been studied at the state level and needs to be resolved is the problem of restoring the dignity of the Uighur people. It is necessary to underline that Kazakh government has now been paying attention to the problems of Uighur people. It has exhorted the Uighurs to help convert Kazakhstan into a prospering state so that they could also be able to achieve success in all spheres of socio-economic and cultural life. The second problem is how to inspire the Uighur people of Kazakhstan to have confidence in the State and understand that Kazakhstan is their motherland, a native place for their children, grandsons and great-grandsons. Motivating Uighurs towards identifying themselves as Kazakh nationals is far more important because their ancestors have lived in Kazakhstan for centuries in conditions of spiritual and intellectual discomfort.

However, Kazakhstan is a unique country where the ethno-social situation has contributed much to the development of Uighur ethnoses and their language. Today in the Republic, use of Uighur language in education is being encouraged besides the simultaneous development of other cultural values and standards. The main advantage is that the ethnic identity has not been lost, and education becomes one of the means to form the national self-consciousness. When the cultural and language interests are realised, they help maintain the ethnic identity and fulfil national cultural demands. At present in almost 64 schools, teaching is being conducted in Uighur language. Fifteen of them are completely Uighur schools including 3 urban and there are 31 mixed schools. Uighur classes are being held in other schools as well. The number of Uighur children studying in these schools stands at 21,000. For more than 15 years the teachers of Uighur language and literature have been successfully working at the AGY's (the Institute named after Abai) Uighur faculty. There are Uighur faculties at the Dzharkent and Isyk pedagogical institutes as well. Besides, the Uighur language and literature departments have been opened in the city and company institutes for the improvement of teaching methods. The lab of Uighur language and literature has been set up at SII (NII). The lab is working on the preparation and publication of textbooks and other scientific manuals.

Thus, there is a systematic process of imparting education on the Uighur language and literature in Uighur schools. But, nevertheless, Uighur students have been attending Russian and Kazakh schools and, therefore, a number of Uighur schools are on the verge of closing down. The reason is the lack of Uighur teachers with specialisation in maths, physics, chemistry, foreign language, geography etc. Absence of special programs to prepare teachers on such subjects for Uighur schools as well as shortage of textbooks and absence of methodical manuals for teachers contribute negatively to the growth of education in Uighur schools. These problems of Uighur schools necessitate the study of Kazakh and Russian languages which requires elaborate programs and funds that together may increase the prestige of national

UIGHURS OF KAZAKHSTAN: SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION

schools in general, and Uighur schools in particular. However, the destiny of the graduates of Uighur schools as well as absence of specialised teachers are really the problematic issues that need to be tackled immediately.

A significant result of the use of language is the development of Uighur literature, culture and art including the publication of republican newspaper *Uighur Avazy* and its appendix (liner) *Yeny Hayat* printed in Arabic alphabet and issued in 10,000 copies. Besides, a department of Uighur literature in the Union of Kazakhstan's Writers, is unique in the world. Uighur Theatre of Drama and Musical Comedy are also there. In Kazakhstan, recently a remarkable development has taken place in the field of art as some artists are depicting the original culture and history of the whole people. These artists have created *Myn Ay* gallery that unfortunately is not working properly as it does not have its own premises. Even the well known private art collection of A. Akimbek suffers from the similar situation.

Religion has been and still forms the basis of Uighur spiritual culture. Today almost every Uighur *Makhallya* has its own *moskey* and there are more than fifty of them constructed by Uighurs themselves and with their own resources. All this testifies not only to the high level of adherence to the Islamic religion and its fortifying role among the Uighurs, but also confirms that Islam is the way of life of the Uighur people. The Uighurs elect their Imam among the representatives of their *Makhallya*, thereby completely meeting the canons of the *Shariat*.

In recognition of the historical role the Uighurs played in the Turk world, in 1949 the government of Kazakhstan under the initiative of the Kazakh scientist K.I. Satpayev created a department of the Uighur-Dungan culture known as *Ah* that has been developed into the Institute of Uighur Studies. In 1995 it was reorganised as the Centre for Uighur Studies within the Institute of Oriental Studies. The status of institute was changed taking into account the importance of Uighur Studies as a part of Turk and Oriental Studies. However, dissolution of Oriental Studies affected negatively the Uighur Studies and it lost its specificity.

All this concerns the scientists of the Republic and requires certain attention from the State and the Ministry of Sciences. Though, the Uighur Studies as the science developed in the middle of the past century in Russia and Western Europe, its origin lay in Kazakhstan. In fact, at the Centre for Uighur Studies there are about 40 scholars including 2 doctors and 20 candidates of sciences. In total there are more than 60 candidates of sciences and about 20 doctors of Uighur nationality in the whole Republic.

The Centre for Uighur Studies has a wide area of scientific and international relations. The post-graduate students from XUAR of China, as well as scientists studying Uighur culture from USA, England, France and other countries are interested not only in the history and culture of the Uighurs in general, but in particularly in their place and role in Kazakhstan. The Centre has tie ups with a number of institutes and committees in the XUAR of China. Besides the traditional historical and philological as well as socio-economic and political issues, the Uighur Studies seeks to resolve problems directly related to reinforcing the economic sovereignty, statehood and national security of our motherland.

In the context of national security, protection of unity and inter-ethnic relations of the people living in Kazakhstan assumes importance. Future progress of this process alongside others depends on perfecting legal aspects concerning minorities without which it is difficult to imagine the democratic development in the unique conditions of Kazakhstan. What are the directions of perfecting the legal basis of national policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan and how do they contribute to benefit ethnic minorities?

Whereas the constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan proclaims to defend human rights, the modus operandi of the realisation of such rights has not been adjusted properly. Therefore, the issues concerning the Kurds, Russians or other nationalities and more recently the Uighurs have often been raised by the media. Even though these problems may not be in existence, these are raised due to the absence of legal mechanisms for regulating inter-ethnic relations.

UIGHURS OF KAZAKHSTAN: SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION

The socio-economic progress of the people depends on the creation of normal inter-ethnic relations. However, there are unfortunately some forces which seek to create instable situation. For instance, one Mykhaylov while publishing 10 of his Voyage Notes in the newspaper *Arguments and Facts*, wrote about the famous Uighur lands, and in particular about the land of Kashgar, but he did not mention the ethnic group - Uighur.

Of late the issues concerning terrorism or extremism are being discussed quite often around the world. In Kazakhstan too unfortunately it is the Uighur terrorism which is being talked about. Even after Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbayev, the Kazakh President and the Prime Minister Kasymzhomart Tokayev during their speeches gave an objective estimation of the history and culture of the Uighurs of Kazakhstan, some mass media organisations only highlight tendentious information about the Uighurs.

As a result due to some historical circumstances the whole Uighur people, have recently been forced to live in conditions of economic, social and political discomfort, contrary to their will. And this is an alarming sign that for unknown reasons some media representatives forget that the Uighurs too are the citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan, like others. Usually when a crime is committed media blames the criminal as being of European, Asian or Caucasian origin and says nothing more than that. However, the Uighurs are an exception, who are highlighted negatively largely due to the fact that media do not apply in practice the presumption of innocence for the Uighurs of Kazakhstan. The result is that the Uighur people remain vulnerable and fall victim to the outrage of the law enforcement agencies and the mass media. Without any substantiation whole lot of Uighurs become accused of crime against the State, based on insinuation or false denunciation. What is terrible is that in such insinuations there is a hint on taking preventive measures against potential terrorists. An example of such imprudent measures taken by the representatives of the law enforcement agencies is the so-called “square-wave stripping” which happened in the spring of 2000 in the districts where a large section of Uighurs live in the Almaty city.

It is well known that if no enemy is found, Uighurs are treated in the same fashion. I myself as a scientist, who have been the chief of the Centre of Uighurs Studies at the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Kazakhstan take this opportunity boldly to tell that the Uighurs of Kazakhstan can never think of any kind of separatism or extremism. Yet the press, for example in the *New Breed* newspaper, Dosym Satpayev does not stop talking about the Uighur factor as a threat to national security.

However, question arises that who is not interested in a stable political situation in Kazakhstan? To whom it is favourable? Certainly there are few circles in different countries which are probably unsatisfied with the developments taking place in political and economic stability in Kazakhstan. It is possible that they would try to intensify tension not only in the south but also in territories bordering Kazakhstan. And this may prove to be very dangerous for Kazakhstan in particular and the Central Asian region in general.

It is paradoxical that in Kazakhstan there had never been any social and political reasons for extremism and separatism, though some vain attempts to create an image of being enemy of the Uighurs of Kazakhstan were made. Despite the fact that the crime does not have national origin, but has a social cause, some people in the media circles attempt to give it the face of nation intentionally. Unfortunately similar situation characterises the condition of Uighurs in the neighbouring Kyrgyzstan. The impression is that the Uighur problem proceeds from outside. It would, therefore, be desirable to pay special attention to adjust the legal aspects of the national policy of Kazakhstan. There will always be such problems of one or the other kind, if there is lack of any state mechanism to resolve them. The anxiety is also growing due to the legal aspects of the inter-ethnic relations which have not been elaborated and thus could delay the process of socio-economic transformation and creation of a lawful state in the country. Many people are interested to know how far the political and economic processes in XUAR have affected the mood of the Uighurs of Kazakhstan? And what development took place in the political life of

UIGHURS OF KAZAKHSTAN: SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION

the people of Kazakhstan in the past few years, in particularly among the Uighur population?

It is necessary to point out that in Kazakhstan after the disintegration of the former Soviet Union some political organisations were not allowed to be registered by the Ministry of Justice, if their program documents included the foundation of independent Uighur State on the XUAR territory. They quietly realised that their legal activity had been reduced to propagation of ideas of independence. Now the activities of these organisations have sharply gone down. However, it is also to be mentioned that the leaders of these movements have never been engaged in any political activity. At the same time among these movements there have been some activities which can be considered as provocative and even not conducive to the interests of the Uighur people. It is thus clear no political force is now existing that could essentially be taken into account for supporting Uighurs. Their influence on the Uighur public of Kazakhstan has slowly receded. Probably, knowing the true situation the competent organs disregard activity of the above mentioned organisations and their leaders. But certainly there is also a possibility that these organisations could be somehow utilised by the interested circles through mass-media and would be treated as a destabilising factor within the scale of the whole Central Asian region.

On the other hand, during the period of economic transformation several funding organisations to assist culture, education, art, science etc. came to the forefront. Among them such public funds as *Pana*, a feminine public fund *Nazugum*, *Ana mekteb*, the fund for culture assistance *Bostan* etc., have remarkably been contributing to the development of different aspects of Uighur people.

At the same time there are many unresolved problems among youth, women and retired people, which are inseparable from common problems of our State. They include unemployment, crime, drug addiction, prostitution etc. An obvious absence of the representatives of ethnic minorities, including Uighurs in the state structures needs urgent

attention. These problems are to be resolved in the context of national problems through combined efforts.

It is certain that state help and support to the Uighurs of Kazakhstan will prove to be beneficial to the interest of the country. The historical experience demonstrates that use of their work in such spheres as agriculture, production and services and, certainly culture and art would have positive results in the long run. Their contribution in art and culture in the context of universal values will enrich not only the people of Kazakhstan but also the whole Central Asian region.

Therefore, the success in resolving the problems of Kazakhstan's Uighur people will mostly depend firstly on the national policy conducted by the state and, secondly, on the economic transformation in the Republic. Besides, there are particular problems concerning the Kazakhstan's Uighur people that should be resolved at all levels including the state, ministries, *akimats* (semi-regional, urban and regional) etc. and are not a prerogative of public organisations. These points are:

1. The problems related to preserving and developing language, culture, tradition and customs will be resolved if socio-economic bases for their functioning are created including questions on education, publishing activities, extending timings for radio and TV broadcasts, clerical work on Uighur language in Uighur dominated areas.
2. The appointment policy should allow the presence of ethnic minorities, including the Uighurs in the administrative and other services of all ranks.
3. The dynamics of natural development of the Uighur population should be reflected in the demographic reports of CSU, which since 1991 has not been presented without any reason. It not only hinders in scientific studies but also the solution of problems in the field of economy.
4. The Centre of Uighur Studies, should be activated by giving it the legal status and financial independence, within the framework of the national programs of research and development.

UIGHURS OF KAZAKHSTAN: SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION

5. Special programs in the field of education for the representatives of the ethnic minorities, including the Uighurs of Kazakhstan, need to be started with assistance of international and Kazakhstan organisations.

In view of the above mentioned problems, it is necessary to underline that the Uighurs of Kazakhstan consider themselves to be able to manage different bodies of the Republic since they are living in a transition period, when there have been changes in socio-economic formations. Also there has been a radical change in our views, principles and mentality which have adjusted more to universal values. The transition has never been mild and our people realize that there are difficulties ahead. But a large section of the Kazakh people including the Uighurs have already understood the importance of economic transformation. We are in the process of foundation of a new state and its internal and external policy as well as reinforcement of an elaborated concept of statehood. Nevertheless the solution of these problems is connected with inter-ethnic issues which are to be resolved. We believe in the words “friendship of the peoples”, and the Kazakh President too considers it as a secret behind the success and welfare of all the people in the country. It is clear that the Kazakh society should work much to make the laws functioning, i.e., they can not be mechanically acquired and should pass through minds and hearts of our citizens. And this is the task in the coming days.

KAZAKHS IN POST-SOCIALIST MONGOLIA

Sharad K. Soni

Despite obstacles in very many ways, post-socialist Mongolia has lately emerged as one of the countries which has been making all round progress in its socio-economic and political reforms. It is also evidenced by the fact that the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan during his official visit to Mongolia on October 16-17, 2002 praised Mongolia's success in democratic and other reforms.¹ It has thus come a long way since it opted for democracy and market reforms in 1989 under the influence of the then Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. However, as it happened in several East European and Central Asian countries following the collapse of the former Soviet Union, Mongolia too faced severe challenges both at the domestic as well as international fronts. Departure from socialism in favour of democracy has not been an easy task for a country like Mongolia which remained under the Soviet grip for almost seventy years. Socio-economic and political reforms brought about several key issues at the forefront which required more than anything else a commitment to resolve them both on the part of Mongolian leadership and the people as a whole. Post-Socialist Mongolia has shown eagerness towards this commitment and government policies have been framed in such a way that it could benefit both the nation and the people irrespective of race, religion, social origin or ethnic identities etc.

During its transition to a democratic state structure in the 1990s Mongolia adopted several key documents which confirmed that at least in the area of ethnicity, the country preferred to be different from its two neighbours – Russia and China. It opted for neither the federalism of Russia nor the multi-culturalism of China, rather a unitary state system.² Article 2 of the current constitution adopted on January 13, 1992 states: "Mongolia is a unitary state [and]...shall be divided into administrative units only."³ This kind of stand seems to have been an "oblique reference" to

KAZAKHS IN POST-SOCIALIST MONGOLIA

Mongolia's only one sizeable ethnic minority, the Kazakhs who have no place for separatism, if at all it happens in future.

The Kazakh migration to the Mongol territory began as far back as in 1860s onwards, mainly originating from the present Xinjiang-Uighur Autonomous Region of China. More than a century later in the early 1990s they began to migrate to the newly independent Central Asian Republic of Kazakhstan, and until 1994 approximately 40 per cent of all Kazakhs had already deserted Mongolia. However, after 1994 emigration of Mongolian Kazakhs to some extent came to a standstill and a new phenomenon emerged, i.e., the beginning of a minor re-migration back to Mongolia. In the current scenario when Mongolia is no more a socialist country it is significant to note here that in spite of the large scale emigration, Kazakhs still form the largest ethnic minority in Mongolia.

It is in this backdrop that this paper seeks to trace the origin of ethnic Kazakhs in Mongolia, their migration to Kazakhstan, re-migration back to Mongolia and the current scenario of their socio-economic and political status.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The history of the Kazakhs in Mongolia is characterised by frequent waves of migrations due to the circumstances of the day. Ethnically, Kazakhs are of Turkic descent who developed a distinct ethnic identity in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. Initially, Russian imperial expansionism during the 17th-19th centuries led to the displacement of a large number of Kazakhs. Moving eastwards and beyond, some Kazakh tribes reached the high pastures of Tien Shan (Heavenly) mountains and into Xinjiang region of north west China where they continued to live a pastoral nomadic life-style until the Manchus put pressure on their precious grazing lands. In fact, for the Manchu-Ch'ing rulers, Xinjiang was the first line of defence in the north-west China against foreign intrusion and "the concern for defence was directed both at the Uighurs, Kazakhs, and other tribes of Central Asia and at the Russians who continued their relentless drive to the east."⁴

However, Xinjiang could not remain isolated from the troubles besetting China due to the Taipei rebellion and other uprisings of the 1850s. China badly needed additional revenue to tackle such uprisings and, therefore, the Ch'ing court raised taxes from the non-Chinese peoples of the Xinjiang region, which resulted in bringing the predominantly Muslim population to the verge of rebellion.⁵ This might have been one of the reasons that led to the Kazakh migration elsewhere in order to escape the trouble in the region. Besides, heavy snowfall during the close of the 19th century also caused the exodus of a few Kazakh families from Xinjiang to the east of the Altai mountains.⁶ Whatever might have been the reasons, it is true that beginning in the 1860s the Kazakhs from Xinjiang started migrating across the high Altai Mountain passes to the Mongolian territory and settled down in the western part particularly in the areas today known as Bayan-Ölgii *aimag* (province).⁷

Thus, the first Kazakhs are known to have crossed the Mongolian border in the 1860s. Later, some small groups of Kazakhs from the Russian Altai and eastern Kazakhstan fleeing the October revolution of 1917 and the civil war of 1920s in Russia too entered western Mongolia. It is to be noted that in 1921 when Bogd Khaan theocracy was proclaimed in Mongolia, even a few Kazakhs who were living there expressed their allegiance to him.⁸ Further in the 1930s and 1940s there had been few other major Kazakh movements from Xinjiang into Mongolia because of the frequent riots in Xinjiang.⁹ It seems that most of the Kazakhs came to Mongolia in the pre-1940 period and also well before the communist take-over in China, since already in 1940 the Mongolian government created a separate administrative unit for the Kazakh minority, i.e., the *aimag* of Bayan-Ölgii.

Between 1930s and 1940s the turbulence in Xinjiang due to the civil war, rebellions and revolts witnessed an ever growing influx of Kazakh refugees into Mongolia and Bayan-Ölgii *aimag* remained a true destination for taking refuge to the fleeing Kazakhs. In July 1942 itself an estimated 359 people from 69 Kazakh families were reported to have fled to Mongolia where “they sought asylum because they were

KAZAKHS IN POST-SOCIALIST MONGOLIA

victims of pillage and robbery, and they applied for Mongolian citizenship.”¹⁰ This was followed by another wave of Kazakh migration on a large scale and “within several months more than 2,200 people from 330 families fled to Mongolia and settled down in different areas.”¹¹ However, at the same time China was accused of attacking Kazakhs fleeing from Xinjiang into Mongolian territory. Though the former Soviet Union protested to China in 1944, the Chinese denied the charges.¹² Over the years by establishing themselves in Mongolia the Kazakhs not only treated the country as their home but their extended family. They seasonally grazed livestock in Mongolia which contributed greatly to the benefit of the nation.

Today Kazakhs in Mongolia are concentrated mostly in the western region of the country that includes six provinces (*aimags*)-Bayan-Ölgii, Khovd, Uvs, Zavkhan, Gobi-Altai and Bayankhongor. In sharp contrast to the rest of the country, Western Mongolian population is comprised mainly of the Western Mongolian groups of Oirats, and Turkic speaking minorities such as Kazakhs. Under the Manchu-Chinese rule, Mongolia (then known as Outer Mongolia) was divided into four *aimags* of the Khalkha Mongols and the special district of Kobdo (also known as Sain Jayagato Khan *aimag*) in the far northwest, each divided into several banners (*khoshuu*). While the *khoshuu* of the four Khalkha *aimags* were hereditary territories of the Mongolian nobility, in the special district of Kobdo most of them were inhabited by specific ethnic or tribal groups belonging to the old Western Mongol confederation.¹³ Following the establishment of the People’s Republic of Mongolia in 1924, the *khoshuu* were abandoned and the *aimags* gradually split up into *sums* (districts) and these in turn into *bag* (the smallest Mongol administrative unit). In 1931 the special district of Kobdo was divided into two *aimags*- the Khovd and the Uvs. In 1938 the Mongolian government discussed the question of the national minorities in Khovd *aimag* and eventually decided to establish “a completely new democratic administration” for the Kazakh dominated area.¹⁴ Following this decision, in 1940, out of the western parts of Khovd and Uvs *aimags* the Bayan-Ölgii *aimag* was formed

as a separate administrative unit for the Kazakh national minority.¹⁵ Outside the Bayan-Ölgii *aimag*, the main concentration of Kazakh population is found to be in the neighbouring Khovd *aimag* where one *sum* (district) by the same name Khovd is largely dominated by the Kazakhs. In this area, the Kazakhs are said to have started coming in the 1930s, partly from Xinjiang and partly from Bayan-Ölgii.¹⁶

DISTRIBUTION OF KAZAKHS WITHIN MONGOLIA

As per the latest census, which was conducted in 2000, Mongolia's total population has been recorded as 23,73,493 (about 2.4 million). The figure has quadrupled from half a million at the beginning of the 20th century. The major ethnic group in the country is Khalkha Mongols accounting for a total number of 19,34,674 or 81.5 per cent of the entire population. Among the remaining ethnic groups, Kazakhs have the largest share with a total number of 1,02,983 or 4.3 per cent followed by Durved, Bayad, Buriad, Dariganga, Dzakhchin, and Uriankhai each representing between 1.1 and 2.8 per cent of the total population. While showing the comparative figures for 1989 and 2000, Table 1 presents the distribution of population by major ethnic groups.

Although a sizeable number of Mongolian Kazakhs in the post-socialist period migrated to Kazakhstan, they still constitute the most numerous ethnic minority group in Mongolia. In fact, a higher birth-rate among Kazakhs than any other ethnic group has been the single most factor for increased percentage of their population until 1989 when it started declining. Whereas the Kazakh population registered an increase from 4.3 per cent in 1956 to 5.9 per cent in 1989, in 2000 it was reduced to 4.3 per cent, i.e., coming back again to the 1956 level (when the census was conducted for the first time by an established organisation). According to the latest Population and Housing Census of Mongolia, total number of Kazakhs in the country stands at 1,02,983, of which 51,869 are males and 51,114 are females.¹⁷ This figure has further been divided into urban and rural areas. The Kazakhs living in urban areas account for 36,294 including 18,202 males and 18,092 females, while in rural areas they number 66,689 inclusive of

KAZAKHS IN POST-SOCIALIST MONGOLIA

33,667 males and 33,022 females.¹⁸ The data reveals that although difference between number of Kazakh males and females is very less, there is much difference between Kazakhs living in urban and rural areas. The higher Kazakh concentration in rural areas points to pastoralism being still the most prevalent occupation among the Kazakhs, though agriculture is also being practiced side by side.

TABLE 1
Distribution of Mongolian Population
by Major Ethnic Groups

Population	1989		2000	
	In Number (‘000)	In Percentage	In Number (‘000)	In Percentage
Ethnic Group				
Khalkha	1610.4	78.8	1934.7	81.5
Kazakh	120.5	5.9	103.0	4.3
Durved	55.2	2.7	66.7	2.8
Bayad (Bait)	39.2	1.9	50.8	2.1
Buriad (Buryat)	35.4	1.7	40.6	1.7
Dariganga	29.0	1.4	31.9	1.3
Dzakhchin	23.0	1.1	29.8	1.3
Uriankhai (Tuvan)	21.3	1.0	25.2	1.1
Other ethnic groups	53.1	2.6	82.6	3.5
Total by ethnic groups	1987.1	97.1	2365.3	99.6
Total Mongolian Citizens (both ethnic and other groups)	1987.3	97.2	2365.4	99.7
Foreign Citizens	56.7	2.8	8.1	0.3
Total Population	2044.0	100	2373.5	100

Source: 2000 Population and Housing Census of Mongolia: The Main Results, p.50.
http://www.nso.mn/census/mainresults/chap_04.pdf

Table 2 shows the total number and percentage of Kazakh population during the period from 1956 to 2000 as per the census records of 1956,1963,1969,1979,1989 and 2000. The variation in ethnic Kazakh population after 1989 occurred principally due to their migration from Mongolia to Kazakhstan in the early 1990s. There has been a decline of almost 17,500 in the number of ethnic Kazakhs in 2000 as compared to

1989 figure, though the overall Mongolia's resident population increased (Table 1). Due to the decline in the population of both Kazakhs and foreign citizens there was a corresponding increase numbers claiming Khalkha ethnicity, from about 79 per cent in 1989 to about 82 per cent in 2000.

TABLE 2
Kazakh Population in Mongolia in Select Years

	Total number	Percentage
1956	36,700	4.3
1963	47,700	4.7
1969	62,800	5.2
1979	84,300	5.3
1989	1,20,500	5.9
2000	1,03,000	4.3

Source: For the figures of 1956 and 1963, X. Nyambuu, *Mongolin ugsaatni ziiy. udirtgal* (Ethnography of Mongolia and the Mongols: An introduction), Ulaanbaatar, 1992, p.24 ; for the figures of 1969 and 1979, *National Economy of the MPR For 65 Years*, Ulaanbaatar, 1986, p.90; for the figures of 1989 and 2000, *2000 Population and Housing Census of Mongolia*, p.50.

As noted during the previous censuses, in 2000 also the vast majority of Kazakhs were found to be living in the Western region, particularly in the Bayan-Ölgii *aimag*, which alone accounts for more than 78.4 per cent of the Kazakh population. It signifies that the Kazakhs are concentrated in all *sums* in the Bayan-Ölgii *aimag*. Thus, apart from being the most numerous, the Kazakhs are the only minority in Mongolia forming the majority of one *aimag*. Moreover, 88.7 per cent of the total population of Bayan-Ölgii city is composed of Kazakhs. Besides, about 10 per cent of the Kazakh population of Mongolia live in Khovd *aimag*. While the majority of Kazakhs continue to live in the traditional *aimags* to the extreme west, more recent migration eastward to the urban areas has resulted in significant growth in their numbers, especially in Mongolia's capital Ulaanbaatar. At the time of the 2000 census, 6.3 per cent of country's total Kazakh population lived in Ulaanbaatar alone with significant settlements in Darkhan-Uul, Tuv, Selenge, Orkhon, Khentii and Uvs *aimags*.¹⁹ In

KAZAKHS IN POST-SOCIALIST MONGOLIA

Ulaanbaatar, whereas the number of Kazakhs increased from 3,200 in 1969 to 5,600 in 1979, it further grew in 1989 to reach the figure of 9,000 thus becoming the second largest ethnic group in the Mongolian capital.²⁰ The Kazakhs also live in the industrial cities of Choibalsan, Darkhan and Erdenet as well as in the coal mining area of Nalaikha near Ulaanbaatar. Most of them are employed in factories besides being in different occupations and working as state-employees in the *aimag* centres. They are said to have left Bayan-Ölgii, in the 1960s and 1970s in search of jobs due to overpopulation in this western *aimag*.

A disproportionate number of Kazakhs are also traced among the relatively highly paid workers in the coal mines of north-central Mongolia. These Kazakhs might have come to this area either due to “limited opportunities in the narrow valleys of Bayan-Ölgii *aimag* or government efforts to favour a potentially restive minority, or both”.²¹ In terms of age structure, it is noticeable that unlike other ethnic groups the Kazakh population is much younger.²² Table 3 shows that 43 per cent of the Kazakh population comes under 15 years of age as against 36 per cent of the overall Mongolian citizens in the same age group. This reflects the higher fertility rate among Kazakh ethnic group.

TABLE 3
Distribution of Kazakh Population by Age Group in %
in the year 2000

Age group	Percentage of Kazakh citizens	Percentage of total Mongolian citizens
0-14	42.5	35.8
15-24	20.6	21.1
25-34	15.5	17.0
35-44	10.1	12.6
45-54	04.6	05.9
55+	06.7	07.6
Total	100	100

Source: 2000 Population and Housing Census of Mongolia: The Main Results, p.52, http://www.nso.mn/census/mainresults/chap_04.pdf

KAZAKH MIGRATION FROM MONGOLIA

With the beginning of Soviet-style reforms and restructuring through *Iltod* and *Orchilan baigalalt* in Mongolia and the ensuing economic crisis in the early 1990s, many Kazakhs decided to move to the newly independent Central Asian Republic of Kazakhstan. In this stride they were encouraged by Kazakhstan government's willingness to promote Kazakh diaspora by encouraging them to move back to their country of origin. This was evidenced at the First World Kurultai (assembly) of Kazakh people held in 1992 when the authorities urged ethnic Kazakhs wherever they were, to return to Kazakhstan and promised them a number of benefits and simplified citizenship procedure. As a result, in 1993 the quota for ethnic Kazakhs willing to come to Kazakhstan was fixed to 10,000 families or 50,000 persons. But in the following years it was reduced to 7000 families in 1994 and 5000 families in 1995. Further reduction in the immigration quota was revealed during 2000 and 2001 when the Kazakh government fixed it for only 600 families or 3000 persons. A sharp reduction in the immigration quota seems to have been influenced by unchecked migration of a large number of ethnic Kazakhs known as *oralmans* meaning "people who came back" from across Asia into their homeland. Until 1996, an estimated 154,941 ethnic Kazakhs returned to Kazakhstan that included 84,828 persons from other CIS countries, 62,126 from Mongolia, 640 from China and 418 from Afghanistan.²³ However, official data for the period from the end of 1992 to the beginning of 2001 put the figure at a total of approximately 181,400 immigrant Kazakhs, of which 158,400 came under immigration quota.²⁴ The migrants included 106,800 from other CIS countries; 63,900 from Mongolia; 4,800 from Iran; 2,600 from Turkey; 1,100 from China; 771 from Pakistan and 83 from Saudi Arabia.²⁵ According to a recent estimate, so far a close to 260,000 ethnic Kazakhs have moved to Kazakhstan.²⁶

Despite setting each year quota for the number of Kazakhs eligible to return to Kazakhstan, the arrival figure far exceeds the quota. According to International Organisation for Migration (IOM), in 2001 more than 10,000 families arrived in Kazakhstan as against permissible

KAZAKHS IN POST-SOCIALIST MONGOLIA

limit of 600 families.²⁷ The migration quota is normally fixed on the basis of financial situation of Kazakhstan and there is no denying of the fact that the desire to migrate is mainly connected with economic considerations as Kazakh economy is getting better year by year. Described as the “economic power house of Central Asia,” Kazakhstan has registered a “double-digit growth over the past three years, and GDP is forecast to rise 8 per cent in 2003.”²⁸ Surely, better economic conditions have once again shown signs of positive response from the Kazakh government on several concrete problems related to migration issues. In his opening remarks at the Second World *Kurultai* of Kazakhs held on 23 October 2002, President Nursultan Nazarbayev announced the government plans to increase quotas for immigration. As such in accordance with 2003 quota, 5000 families of ethnic Kazakhs are to be allowed to settle permanently which would further be increased to 10,000 families in 2004 and to 15,000 families in 2005.²⁹ Nazarbayev’s statement provides a clear view of his government on resolving as far as possible the problems of *orlamans* when he said:

“...the number of those, desiring to come to historic homeplace is much higher. But everyone should understand that the state is unable to resolve all their problems. People come to Kazakhstan over quotas. And the authority branches got a task to do everything possible for the citizens to settle. Kazakhstan has overcome the hardships of transitional period. The country’s economic strength has grown. But to make the state richer and stronger is the task [of] those residing in the republic and abroad [and they] have to resolve it together.”³⁰

Praising the Kazakhs living in Mongolia he said that they have preserved their traditions and “*orlamans* from that country have brought to Kazakhstan many interesting traditions.”³¹ At the same time he also noted that numerous centres of Kazakh culture operating abroad should not only focus on the resolution of their own problems, but they must contribute to development of contacts with Kazakhstan. Now it remains to be seen that how far Nazarbayev is successful in his effort of bringing Kazakhs around the world together for preserving their cultural heritage and traditions.

Considering the above data, the biggest number of ethnic Kazakhs who migrated to Kazakhstan comes from Mongolia. In fact, the two countries have concluded several agreements to facilitate the return of Mongolian Kazakhs to Kazakhstan where they are given opportunities for employment and housing.³² Under labour contracts they are working as skilled/unskilled labour and also as specialists. They also started working as herdsmen in the rural areas of Kazakhstan since this was thought to be the most suitable job for Kazakhs from Mongolia. Some of the Mongolian Kazakh migrants obtained the status of foreign workers in Kazakhstan and so retained their Mongolian citizenship. It is to be noted that in the initial period of migration, thousands of Muslim Kazakhs sold off their assets in Mongolia with a view to settle in Kazakhstan.³³ In 1995 an inter-state accord was signed between Mongolia and Kazakhstan by which Kazakhs were given a legal right to live in either of the two countries they had chosen.³⁴ Perhaps such an accord generated for the first time an opportunity for the Kazakhs living in Mongolia to settle down in a place of their choice. On June 21, 2000, President Nazarbayev issued a special decree granting Kazakh citizenship to 1882 Mongolian Kazakhs who settled down in Kazakhstan after emigrating from western Mongolia in the early 1990s.³⁵ However, an estimated 30,000 immigrant Mongolian Kazakhs are still awaiting their documents to be fully processed for Kazakh citizenship. It is also to be noted that both the Mongolian and Kazakh governments are seriously involved in negotiating the simplification of procedure for settling citizenship issues and the visa regime for ethnic Kazakhs who want to migrate from Mongolia.

However, the number of Mongolian Kazakh migrants in Kazakhstan has now declined due to the emergence of quite a new phenomenon, i.e. a minor re-migration back to Mongolia since 1994. As there are no reliable figures, it is very difficult to estimate the number of Kazakhs who returned to Mongolia. But between 10,000 and 20,000 of them are known to have returned to Mongolia during 1994 and 1995. With the worsening of economic situation in Mongolia in 1996, emigration to Kazakhstan again started mostly from the *aimag*

KAZAKHS IN POST-SOCIALIST MONGOLIA

centre of Bayan-Ölgii, though this time not on a large scale. It is also significant to note here that the out-migration was more pronounced among the inhabitants of urban areas as compared to rural areas. Thus, among the Mongolian Kazakhs the emigration to Kazakhstan reduced the overall urban exodus to rural areas, which was commonly documented in other provinces of Mongolia following the economic transition. Economic problems marred the Kazakh city-dwellers so much so that the impoverished ones preferred to migrate to Kazakhstan than becoming pastoralist again by merely shifting to countryside within Mongolia itself. Though the situation has changed today than what was in the 1990s and there are now few Kazakhs who think of migrating to Kazakhstan, it is hard to predict as economic situation in Mongolia too is not conducive while that of Kazakhstan is becoming better.

SOCIAL STATUS OF KAZAKHS IN MONGOLIA

The social status of Kazakhs as a minority within the Republic of Mongolia seems to have been free from any systematic discrimination. They enjoy equal rights today as in the past. During purges in the 1930s they suffered in the same way as was the case with all ethnic groups in the country and most of the Muslim clergies disappeared as did the Buddhist lamas. But there has never been any ethnic inspired suppression of Kazakhs by the Mongolian government. Somehow they enjoy superior social status compared to other minority communities due to being the only one having a limited cultural and political autonomy. In all the Kazakh majority areas the local administration has largely been dominated by Kazakhs. The Kazakhs are the only minority in Mongolia who have the medium of instruction in schools in their own language as can be witnessed in the whole of Bayan-Ölgii as well as in the Khovdsum. Besides, they have their own newspaper and periodicals in Kazakh as well as Kazakh radio and television broadcasts, theatre and music.³⁶ Bilingual Kazakhs, i.e., those who have expertise in both the Mongolian and Kazakh languages, join the Mongols in professional and bureaucratic life on an equal footing. Kazakhs of the Altai region have traditionally hunted from horseback with trained golden eagles and, therefore, pictures of eagle-bearing Kazakhs are common in Mongolian tourist literature.

The destruction of ecclesiastical structures during the socialist period in Mongolia resulted not only in the elimination of religious leadership but also in the destruction of the lamaistic monasteries and mosques particularly in the 1930s. Today religion has a growing influence in the society but there is little evidence of religious activity among the Mongolian Kazakhs, who are originally Sunni Muslims. There are still only few strong adherents to Islam among the Kazakhs and the number of people praying regularly in mosques is very small. But at the same time it cannot be denied that resurgence of Islam elsewhere in Central Asia soon after its independence has had no impact on Mongolian Kazakhs. It is evidenced by the fact that since the beginning of democratisation in Mongolia there has been a worsening situation in ethnic relations due to increasing nationalism among Kazakhs and Mongols alike. Some Kazakhs demanded autonomy or even independence for Bayan-Ölgii *aimag*,³⁷ which if at all again happens in future may not be conducive for harmonious relations between the Kazakh minority and Mongol majority in the country. Nevertheless, the re-migration of Kazakhs from Kazakhstan has again not been hindered by the Mongolian government, which always had an ambiguous attitude over the emigration of the Kazakhs who are esteemed as hard workers. Besides, most Kazakhs regard Mongolia as their native country and, therefore, home-sickness has often been regarded as the main reason for the re-migration back to Mongolia. But according to a recent research conducted among the Mongolian Kazakhs in Mongolia as well as Kazakhstan, a clear divergence in individual and community identity has been found to have developed between the two geographic camps. At the preliminary level the research findings conclude:

“Those remaining in Mongolia express high levels of territorialisation to both Mongolia as a whole and to smaller scales of place within Mongolia (i.e. the Kazakh *aimag* of Bayan-Ölgii, specific *summons*/counties or towns and cities), while those that have migrated to Kazakhstan express a commitment to remain in Kazakhstan but retain strong attachments to smaller scales of place in Mongolia.”³⁸

KAZAKHS IN POST-SOCIALIST MONGOLIA

To conclude, although Mongols of both the socialist and the post-socialist Mongolia have been praised for being a peaceful people, they are not disinclined towards the Kazakh emigration as they perceive it as a relief from any potential inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions between Muslim Kazakhs and Buddhist Mongols in future. The economic and social uncertainty, if not tackled, may also contribute to worsening of ethnic relations between the two communities. Dominant Muslim Kazakh factor particularly in Bayan-Ölgii *aimag* would remain intact as ever, which would not allow the Buddhist Mongols to outnumber Kazakhs at least in this western part of the country. However, a further emigration to Kazakhstan will depend much on the future economic development of both the countries, and Kazakhs of Mongolia will not let lose the opportunity in maintaining this alternative as long as possible. So far as Mongolia-Kazakhstan relations are concerned, issues concerning Mongolian Kazakhs would remain a key factor in facilitating both the ongoing and future development of friendly ties including the bilateral economic and trade cooperation between the two sides. Evidently, a Kazakh Foreign Affairs Ministry report too has noted that “the key problem” in relations between the two countries remains to be the migration of ethnic Kazakhs living in Mongolia.³⁹ Despite all these hiccups one common point is the nomadic way of life among both the Mongols as well as Kazakhs and that may prove to be the main factor for the benefit of the two communities.

REFERENCES

1. *The Mongol Messenger*, <http://www.mongolmessenger.mn.mm01.htm>, 1 March 2003.
2. See, Henry G. Schwarz, “Mongolia in the Era of Ethnicity”, *Mongolica* (Ulaanbaatar), vol.9, no.30, 1999, p.662.
3. See, *The Constitution of Mongolia* (Taipei: Mongolia and Tibetan Foundation, 1992), pp.1-31.
4. Morris Rossabi, *China and Inner Asia; From 1368 to the Present Day* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), pp.167-168.
5. *Ibid*, pp.170-171.
6. Baabar, *Twentieth Century Mongolia* (Cambridge: The White Horse Press, 1999), p.396.

7. See, Peter Finke, "The Kazaks of Western Mongolia", in *Contemporary Kazaks*, I. Svanberg (ed.), New York: St. Martin Press, 1999, pp.103-139.
8. Baabar, n.6, p.396.
9. For more details see, Linda Benson and Ingvar Svanberg, "The Kazakhs in Xinjiang", in *The Kazakhs of China: Essays on an Ethnic Minority*, Linda Benson and Ingvar Svanberg (eds.) (Uppsala, 1988), pp.1-106.
10. Baabar, n.6, p.397.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Robert R. Rupen, *Mongols of the Twentieth Century*, Pt.1 (Bloomington, 1964), p.258.
13. Owen Lattimore, "Mongolia", in *China Year Book-1938* (Shanghai: The North China Daily news & Herald Ltd., n.d.), p.26.
14. B. Shirendyb et al, *History of the Mongolian People's Republic*, Translated by William A. Brown and Urgunge Onon (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University, 1976), p.343.
15. *Ibid.*, p.344.
16. Peter Finke, "Common Property to Open Access: Changing Pastoral Land Tenure in Post-Socialist Mongolia", 2000, <http://dlc.dlib.indiana.edu/documents>
17. *2000 Population and Housing Census of Mongolia: The Main Results*, p.128. http://www.nso.mn/census/mainresults/chap_04.pdf
18. *Ibid.*, pp.129-130.
19. *Ibid.*, p.51.
20. Dashzhav, *Ulaanbaatar xotin xiin am* (Population of the Town of Ulaanbaatar), Ulaanbaatar, 1994, p.30.
21. "Mongols and Kazakhs", <http://drlee.org/mongol/r43.html>
22. *2000 Population and Housing Census of Mongolia: The Main Results*, p.51. http://www.nso.mn/census/mainresults/chap_04.pdf
23. US Committee for Refugees: 1997 Country Reports: Kazakhstan, <http://www.refugees.org/world/countryrpt/scasia/1997/kazakhstan.htm>
24. "Large Group of Repatriates Recieves Kazakh Citizenship But Problems Remain Acute", *KIBHR Information Newsletter*, No.3, 1-8 April 2001, http://www.bureau.kz/bulletin_eng.html
25. *Ibid.*
26. See Alfred Kueppers, "Ethnic Kazakhs Find Titular Homeland to be Economic Haven," 22 April 2003, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/culture/articles/eav042203.shtml>
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*
29. See, *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, 24 October 2002, http://www.kazpravda/archive/24_10_2002/p_e.html

KAZAKHS IN POST-SOCIALIST MONGOLIA

30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*
32. Sharad K. Soni “Perspectives on Mongolia-Central Asia Relations”, in *Jadavpur Journal of International Relations* (Calcutta, 1995), p.176.
33. K. Warikoo, “Emerging Order in Central Asia”, *World Focus*, Vol.14, nos.3-4, 1993, p.8.
34. *Summary of World Broadcasts*, FE/2214, 30 January 1995.
35. See, *Kazakh Report*, 23 June 2000, <http://www.rferl.org/bd/ka/reports/archives/2000/06/230600.html>
36. Alan J.K. Sanders, *Mongolia: Politics, Economics and Society* (London: Frances Printer, 1987), p.46.
37. Schwarz, n.2, pp.662-663.
38. See, Alexander C. Diener, “One Homeland or Two?: Territorialisation of Identity and the Repatriation Decision among the Mongolian-Kazakh Diaspora”, <http://www.irex.org/programs/iaro/research/01Diener.pdf>
39. See, Justin Burke, “BBC 06/11/01: Mongolian Envoy Examines Kazakh-Mongolian Relations”, <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/mongolia/hypermail/200106/0003.html>

HIMALAYAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN STUDIES is a quarterly Journal published by the Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation, which is a non-governmental, non-profit research, cultural and development facilitative organisation. The Journal is devoted to the study of various issues pertaining to the Himalayan and trans-Himalayan region in South and Central Asia or parts thereof, connected with its environment, resources, history, art and culture, language and literature, demography, social structures, communication, tourism, regional development, governance, human rights, geopolitics etc.

While the principal concern of the Journal will be on its focal area, i.e., from Afghanistan to Myanmar including the Central Asian states of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, China, Mongolia, Nepal, Bhutan and the Indian Himalayan States of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttaranchal and North East states; papers with a broad sweep addressing environmental, social, cultural, economic, geopolitical and human rights issues are also welcomed.

The objective is to make a scientific appraisal of the issues confronting the Himalayan and adjoining region in South and Central Asia or parts thereof, and to make specific policy oriented studies and need based recommendations as the means to promote the human, educational and economic advancement of the peoples of the region besides preserving and enriching their ethno-cultural, literary and historical heritage. Promotion of human rights, social justice, peace, harmony and national integration are the other key areas in which the Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation has been active.

**CONTRIBUTIONS FOR PUBLICATION AND ANY ENQUIRIES
SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO :**

Prof. K. WARIKOO

Editor and Secretary General,

Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation,

Post Box- 10541,

Jawaharlal Nehru University Post Office,

New Delhi - 110067 (India)

Tel. : 0091-11-26162763, 0091-11-26179408

Fax : 0091-11-26106643 E-mail : warikoo@nde.vsnl.net.in

Books for review should be sent to the same address.

Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers R.No. 67256/97

***HRCF* PUBLICATIONS**

AFGHANISTAN FACTOR IN CENTRAL AND SOUTH ASIAN POLITICS

Edited by K. Warikoo (New Delhi, 1994. 73pp.)

SOCIETY AND CULTURE IN THE HIMALAYAS

Edited by K. Warikoo (New Delhi, 1995. 316pp.)

CENTRAL ASIA : EMERGING NEW ORDER

Edited by K. Warikoo (New Delhi, 1995. 352pp.)

JAMMU, KASHMIR AND LADAKH : LINGUISTIC PREDICAMENT

Edited by P. N. Pushp and K. Warikoo (New Delhi, 1996. 224pp.)

**ARTISAN OF THE PARADISE : A STUDY OF
ART AND ARTISANS OF KASHMIR**

By D.N. Dhar (New Delhi, 1999. 230pp.)

GUJJARS OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Edited by K. Warikoo (Bhopal, 2001. 317pp.)

BAMIYAN: CHALLENGE TO WORLD HERITAGE

Edited by K. Warikoo (New Delhi, 2002. XVIII, 313pp. 61plates)

THE AFGHANISTAN CRISIS: ISSUES AND PERSPECTIVES

Edited by K. Warikoo (New Delhi, 2002. 523pp.)

MONGOLIA-INDIA RELATIONS

By O. Nyamdavaa (New Delhi, 2003. 228pp.)

CHILD LABOUR REHABILITATION IN INDIA

Edited by Bupinder Zutshi & Mondira Dutta (New Delhi, 2003. 257pp.)



HIMALAYAN RESEARCH AND CULTURAL FOUNDATION

Post Box-10541, Jawaharlal Nehru University Post Office,
New Delhi-110067 (India). BA/1G, D.D.A. Flats, Munirka, New Delhi-110067.

Tele: 0091-11-26162763, 0091-11-26179408, Fax: 0091-11-26106643

E-mail: warikoo@nde.vsnl.net.in