**SUMMARY**

**of the Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) on “6D020200 - International Relations” by Makasheva Zhanat on “The National Interests as a Factor in the Implementation of the Sovereignty of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the context of the Emerging World Order”**

**The Relevance of the research topic.** The issues of sovereignty and national interests of the Republic of Kazakhstan are always in the center of attention of mass consciousness and scientific and expert circles. The theory of realism and other theories of international relations emphasize that the sovereignty and national interests of any state are always subject to certain threats and risks. This conclusion is undoubtedly a phenomenon that applies both to the large states of the modern world, and to medium and small states. Threats and risks to the sovereignty and national interests of a state can in most cases come from other states, but can also come from non-state or quasi-state actors, such as terrorist organizations.

This period of feeling a low level of threats and risks to the sovereignty and national interests of the Republic of Kazakhstan lasted for 10-15 years until the mid-2000s, which led to a gradual increase in the perception of threats to the population and threats to the country’s sovereignty and national interests by society and the political elite. Changes in the public consciousness of Kazakhstan were largely associated with the assessment of Russia’s policy in the post-Soviet space. In Kazakhstan, as in other countries, Russia’s policy in the post-Soviet space was assessed as hegemonic, aimed at strengthening the newly independent states as a sphere (region) of Russia’s special influence, increasing pressure on their independence and territorial integrity. This policy of Russia manifested itself most openly in relation to Georgia and Ukraine, which were subjected to Russian aggression and annexed their territories.

From the mid-2000s to these days, Kazakhstan, like other post-Soviet states, has been under pressure from Russia on the sovereignty and national interests of Kazakhstan. As indicated in the terminology of the theory of regional security by Barry Buzan and Ole Wever, the process of securitization in relation to Russia began to intensify in Kazakhstan, that is, the process of perception by society of a threat from a neighboring country. Pressure on sovereignty is perceived as a threat to the territorial integrity of Kazakhstan, an attempt to change the national identity of Kazakhstan and its multi-ethnic society, limiting the freedom to implement the country’s multi-vector foreign policy is discussed in society.

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which began on February 24, 2022, has significantly increased Russian pressure on the sovereignty of Kazakhstan. In turn, as events show, Kazakhstan’s desire to protect its sovereignty and national interests is growing. For Kazakhstan, as President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev noted, the principle of territorial integrity and all other principles of international law are very important as the basis of the system of modern international relations. The conflict of Russia and Ukraine strengthens the national identity of Kazakhstan, the unity of a multinational society and state.

**The Object of Study.** Kazakhstan’s foreign policy and security in the context of the changing geopolitics of the Russian Federation and its impact on the geopolitics of other countries in the region.

**The Subject of Study.** The policy of asserting and strengthening the sovereignty and national interests of Kazakhstan at the regional and global level in the context of changing geopolitics of Russia and the transformation of the world order.

**The Goal of the Study.** Analysis of the state, threats and risks to the sovereignty and national interests of Kazakhstan in the context of changing geopolitics in Russia and the transformation of the world order.

To achieve this goal, the following **Tasks** are set:

- Analyze the theoretical and conceptual foundations of territorial integrity as a fundamental national interest of Kazakhstan’s sovereignty;

- Substantiate national identity as the most important condition for the existence of the nation, state, its sovereignty and security of Kazakhstan;

- Reveal the multi-vector foreign policy of Kazakhstan as the most important condition for the sovereignty and assertion of the national interests of Kazakhstan;

- Analyze the historical background of interstate relations between Kazakhstan and Russia;

- Show the complex and contradictory nature of relations between Kazakhstan and Russia in matters of sovereignty and national interests of Kazakhstan;

- Reveal the policy of protection and strengthening of territorial integrity as the main priority of internal and foreign policy of Kazakhstan;

- Reveal the impact of the transformation of the world order model on the perception by the Kazakhstani society on threats and support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country;

- Analyze the impact of the current geopolitical situation on the public perception of the risks for the sovereignty of Kazakhstan;

- Conduct an expert survey to identify the transformation of public consciousness on the most important issues of sovereignty and national interests of Kazakhstan.

**Chronological Framework of the Study.** It covers the period from 1991, when the Republic of Kazakhstan gained independence, to the present days.

**The Degree of Study of the Topic.** Since the independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the issues of its sovereignty and national interests have been in the focus of attention of the scientific and expert community in Kazakhstan and abroad. The research traditions of Kazakhstan have developed as one of the states of Central Asia and the Eurasian space. This makes it possible to study issues of sovereignty, security and national interests of Kazakhstan through the prism of its relations with Russia and China. In addition to the regional aspect, in order to study the issues of sovereignty, national interests and security of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the global aspect of these issues is important, primarily through the prism of the geopolitical conflict between the United States, China and Russia, which has recently escalated and, in addition, because of Russia’s war against Ukraine.

The above concepts are based on the works of foreign scientists, including Akiner S., Allison R., Anchesi L., Busygina I., Dave B., Idan A. and Shaffer B., Laruel and Peyrouse, Olcott M.B., Stevens S.A. etc.

As Kazakhstani and foreign experts have repeatedly pointed out, the intensification of the geopolitical confrontation between these great powers increased pressure on the sovereignty of the Republic of Kazakhstan, made it difficult to realize its national interests and put its national security in front of threats and threats. risks, including aspects such as national identity and territorial integrity, it was necessary to study the resulting problems.

This Thesis was based on the work of foreign experts who made a great contribution to the expert analysis of the concept of sovereignty from a theoretical point of view. Here we mention works that reveal the traditional idea of ​​sovereignty as the main symbol of the state, including Hinsley F.H., James A. and so on. Regarding this issue, it can be noted that in modern scientific literature there is a revision and criticism of the traditional understanding of sovereignty. This criticism, in particular, is connected with the rethinking of the concept of the nation state, its place in relations with the nation, regional and global international institutions. In this regard, Barkin J.S. and the work of B. Cronin, R. Dayermond, L. Glanville, S. D. Krasner, Z. Laidy, and others. Their reviews helped to reveal the level of knowledge of the topic.

The contribution of the local scientists to the study of sovereignty, national interests and national security of the Republic of Kazakhstan is significant. In this regard, Akimbekov, E. Aliyarov, E. Baidarov, K. Bayzakova, A. Ermekbaev, Zh. Zardykhan, R. Kadyrzhanov, O. Kasenov, F. Kukeyeva, S. Kushkimbaev, M.E. Tukumov and others are very relevant in the disclosure of topics.

**The Source Base.** Various sources were used in the dissertation:

State-legal, including the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan, state concepts and programs on issues of sovereignty, national security, national interests of Kazakhstan, annual messages of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the people of Kazakhstan, speeches and articles of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan K.K. Tokayev and other statesmen of the country;

Diplomatic, including materials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the multi-vector foreign policy of Kazakhstan;

**Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of the Study.** The main methodological basis of the dissertation is the theory of realism in international relations. The main statement of this theory is the formula “The state as the main actor in the system of international relations”. Therefore, the main concepts of the theory of realism are “state”, “sovereignty”, “national interests”, “security”, “national power” and many others. In our thesis, these concepts are used to study the sovereignty and national interests of Kazakhstan. To this end, sovereignty and national interests are analyzed through the prism of the concepts of territorial integrity, national identity and multi-vector foreign policy of Kazakhstan.

Since the sovereignty and national interests of Kazakhstan are studied through the prism of geopolitical transformation in the modern world, the main methodological tools of the dissertation include the geopolitical approach, theory of regional security, “center-periphery”. In this regard, the concepts of “balance of power”, “geopolitical model of the world” and a number of others play an important role in the work. Thanks to this, it became possible in the dissertation to analyze the impact of geopolitical transformation on the most important elements of the sovereignty of Kazakhstan - its territorial integrity, national identity and foreign policy.

**Findings:**

- It was revealed that the policy of protecting and strengthening territorial integrity is the main priority of the domestic and foreign policy of Kazakhstan in the current conditions of intensification of the geopolitical situation in the Eurasian space;

- It was substantiated that the formation of the national identity of a multi-ethnic society, aimed at building a single civil nation, is the most important condition for the existence of a nation, a state, its sovereignty and security of Kazakhstan;

- It was revealed that a multi-vector foreign policy, despite the complication of its implementation in the conditions of geopolitical confrontation, is the most important condition for the sovereignty and assertion of the national interests of Kazakhstan;

- The evolution of complex and contradictory relations between Kazakhstan and Russia in matters of sovereignty and national interests of Kazakhstan in the context of the transformation of the world order was revealed;

- It was substantiated that in the conditions of confrontation between the great powers, in order to realize its national interests, Kazakhstan has to share the risks in relations with Russia and other actors of world politics;

- It was revealed that the transformation of the model of the world order has caused changes in the perception by Kazakhstan society of threats and support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country.

**Defense provisions:**

- In the context of the changing geopolitical situation around Kazakhstan, the need to protect its national interests in order to strengthen the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state should be analyzed through the prism of the theory of geopolitics, political realism, theory of regional security, “center-periphery”. This will explain the processes that influence the adjustment of the multi-vector foreign policy as the main principle of the foreign policy strategy of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Particular attention should be paid to the “shared risks” approach with the Russian Federation in the context of the formation of a new geopolitical reality. In the context of the formation of a new geopolitical reality, it is very important to use the method of “common risks” to explain Kazakhstan’s relations with Russia.

- Despite the presence of a strong political and legal framework and integration, relations between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation, which have moved from strategic partnership to allied relations (The Concept of Kazakhstan’s Foreign Policy for 2020-2030), the need to study possible risks for the national security of Kazakhstan in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict is becoming more urgent.

- Taking into account the multi-ethnic composition of Kazakhstani society, it can be assumed that possible threats from external actors (RF) not only raise the issue of allied relations with Russia, but can also help strengthen Kazakhstani identity, which affects the process of nation-building in the state.

- The peculiarity of the problems stated in the dissertation does not allow to operate with documentary and statistical data, since all events occur in a rapidly changing process. Therefore, the use of an expert survey in modern realities seems to be a fairly effective method for assessing threats and supports for the sovereignty and national interests of Kazakhstan.

- According to the results of the survey, one of the factors for strengthening the national identity in the Republic of Kazakhstan may be the strengthening of the consolidation of society in the face of possible external potential threats. However, this requires additional verification using an extended time period and an expert base.

**Theoretical and Practical Significance of the Research.** In scientific and theoretical terms, the dissertation contributes to the theory of international relations in the aspect of the study of sovereignty and national interests in Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

In the applied aspect, the provisions and conclusions can help deepen the understanding of the conceptual foundations of Kazakhstan’s foreign policy. The provisions and conclusions of the dissertation can be used in teaching disciplines in international relations and regional studies at the universities of Kazakhstan.

**Approbation of Thesis.** The dissertation thesis was discussed and presented for defense at the Department of International Relations of the Faculty of Postgraduate Education at Kazakh Ablai Khan University of International Relations and World Languages. In total, 5 articles were published on the content and main results of the dissertation work. 3 articles have been published in academic journals, approved by the Committee for Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as 2 articles included in the Scopus database.

**Structure and Scope of the Study.** The structure of the dissertation consists of designations and abbreviations in accordance with the goals and objectives of the study, introduction, three chapters, nine subchapters, conclusion, list of references, as well as twenty-seven diagrams and one expert appendix.