

Әметбек Д.

*С.Демирел университеті, халықаралық қатынастар және әлеуметтік ғылымдар кафедрасының аға оқытушысы, PhD, [dinmukhammed.ametbek@sdu.edu.kz](mailto:dinmukhammed.ametbek@sdu.edu.kz)*

## **SULEYMAN DEMIREL'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE FORMATION OF NAZARBAYEV'S IMAGE OF TURKEY**

**Аңдатпа.** Бұл мақалада Қазақстан президенті Нұрсұлтан Назарбаевтың Түркия туралы түсінігінің қалыптасуына Түркияның президенті Сүлейман Демирелдің қосқан үлесі талқыланды. Тұрғыт Өзалдың президенттік кезеңінде қалыптасқан оң үрдіс Сүлейман Демирелдің президенттік кезінде де өзінің сабақты жалғасын тапты. 90-жылдардың орталарынан бастап, Түркия экономикалық және саяси дағдарыста болса да, бұл Түркияның Қазақстан сыртқы саясатындағы орны туралы Назарбаевтың түсінігіне кері ықпал етпеді. Өйткені бұл кезеңде Назарбаев Түркияның мүмкіншіліктерінің шектеулі екендігіне көзін жеткізген еді.

**Кілт сөздер:** Назарбаев, Демирел, Қазақстан Түркия қатынасы, мәдени байланыс.

Nazarbayev's image of Turkey, although as many other Kazakhs he was aware that Turks share common culture and language, nevertheless, was not different than that which was indoctrinated according to the official ideology. Turkey, as a country which was in the western bloc during the Cold War and as a NATO member, had enemy image in the Soviet Union. Besides, it was generally described as backward country.

The change of this negative image of Turkey to positive one was realized when Nazarbayev visited Turkey on the invitation of Turkish president Turgut Özal in October 1990. It is important to note that this was the first visit of Nazarbayev to a foreign country as the head of sovereign state [1]. The matter is that the visit took place just after Kazakhstan released the Declaration on State Sovereignty of Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic on 25 October 1990. As it would be in the case of independence a year later, the invitation of Turgut Özal was perceived as strong signal to recognize Kazakhstan's statehood. Nazarbayev indicates that although the Soviet Union still existed, he was welcomed according to the protocol of the head of state [1]. These kinds of signals are generally given to show that the guest is highly respected by the host. If we take into account that this was a first visit of Nazarbayev to Turkey the value of the respect is well understood. Here we should underline the personal role of Turgut Özal. His initiatives, charisma, decisiveness contributed a lot to the formation of image of Turkey in the mind of Nazarbayev. It means that personal relations between leaders of states can play significant role in bilateral relations.

Nursultan Nazarbayev confesses “of course I was impressed with the real life in Turkey, with progressive development of its economy and community. It was contrary to the official perception about this country in the USSR.” [1]. This statement means that the previous image of Nazarbayev on Turkey is replaced by the new image. Nazarbayev was not only impressed by the warm welcome of President Özal, but also with the real conditions in Turkey. This positive image of Turkey led to close cooperation between two countries. As Nazarbayev would recall later, “Exactly during that visit we cast the basis of further interaction with Turkey.” [1].

Close relations on the presidential level was continued by President Süleyman Demirel. Nazarbayev met with Demirel on October of 1990, in his first visit to Turkey. At that time

Demirel was the leader of strong opposition party. On May of 1993 Süleyman Demirel was elected as the 9<sup>th</sup> president of Turkish Republic. Nazarbayev describes it as a zenith of long carrier of 69-aged outstanding politician [2]. Touching upon the relation between Özal and Demirel, Nazarbayev notes that “Once Demirel was Özal’s teacher, but then their paths diverged.” Then he adds that “despite the disagreement between these prominent politicians the common work wasn’t damaged. Each of them made an invaluable contribution to the development of Turkish state.” [2].

Demirel continued his active foreign policy toward Turkic world as the head of the state. He made his first visit on this position to Turkic states, first to Cyprus then to post-Soviet Turkic republics. Demirel frequently visited Kazakhstan. Although the euphoria of the first meetings was lost, Demirel’s visit to Kazakhstan continued to contribute to positive image of Turkey in Nazarbayev’s view. Demirel, as Özal, tried to utilize every opportunity to show that Turkic world is important for Turkey. One of the diplomatic gestures to express the importance of the guest was displayed during Nazarbayev’s official visit to Turkey in 1994. As it is noted by Muhtar Qul-Muhammed, when the plane of Kazakh president entered Turkey’s air space four jets of Turkish air forces accompanied the guests’ plane as a gesture of respect until Esenboğa airport. In the airport, president Demirel himself met the guests [3].

Süleyman Demirel continued Özal’s initiatives on gathering the leaders of Turkic speaking countries. The second summit which was planned in Azerbaijan in 1993 did not take place due to the instability there. In 1994 Turkic summit was hold in Istanbul with the invitation of Demirel. Having learnt the lessons from the first summit, this time Istanbul declaration emerged in the result of the consultations of all parts. In addition until the summit in 1994 the reality of Turkic world was recognized by international politics and internalized by the domestic politics. On 12 July 1993 TÜRKSOY, the organization which will deal with cultural affairs in Turkic world, was established. So leaders of Turkic states came together with more readiness and real expectations than it was in the first summit. As it was put by Nazarbayev in his speech in the second summit “Suspicion in inter-state relations is slowly replaced by trust and mutual understanding. Confrontations in the old frontlines of the Cold War are replaced by partnerships.” [4].

During his official visit to Turkey which was first after inauguration of President Demirel, Nazarbayev used more confident statements. After signing Friendship and Cooperation Agreement between Kazakhstan and Turkey Nazarbayev described bilateral relations as ‘brother relations’ and stated that Turkey is supporter of Kazakhstan. He underlined “We rely on you.” [5].

When we analyze the speech of Nazarbayev in the summit we clearly see how Eurasian identity of Kazakhstan shapes Kazakh president’s policy. Nazarbayev indicates that he perceives with satisfaction the dialogue between Russia and USA [4]. It is obvious that positive trend in Russian-US relations and cooperation between Russia and Turkey positively affects Kazakh foreign policy generally and Kazakh-Turkish relations particularly. Under this circumstance, even cooperation with NATO for Kazakhstan is promising. Nazarbayev touched upon this subject in his speech in the summit. «Let’s analyze the ‘Partnership for Peace’ program which aims to facilitate interaction for peace and security between us and NATO countries including Turkey which plays an important role. We understand and support the main principles of the doctrine. It is first of all wide-range cooperation and attempt to diminish the accumulated distrust in the issues of planning security and defense.» [4].

One of the main issues discussed in Nazarbayev's speech is integration. Having noted that one way of global development is to search for and implement models of integration, Kazakh president states that institutionalized models of integration prove the fact that framed ideological and other forms of imposed inter-state unions which were dominant once upon a time are replaced with integrations based on more firm commonalities of interests of developments [6]. In more precise way, integration should be open and free from ideological confrontations. Further, Nazarbayev expresses his views on Turkic integrations, Eurasian Union and Economic Cooperation Organization. Concerning the project of Eurasian Union which was in fact pronounced by Nazarbayev himself in the spring of that year, he clearly states that "it is not revival of the old Soviet Union." According to Nazarbayev, "The project is designated to the wellbeing and humane values of millions of people who share hundred-year common history, the traditions of co-existence, cultural heritage and common destiny." [4]. In fact Nazarbayev's confidence in the second Turkic summit is stemming from the fact that by pronouncing Eurasian Union he gave strong message to Russia that Kazakhstan will remain close partner of Moscow. That is why he was more assertive in the issue of integration within Turkic world.

Concerning the Turkic integration Nazarbayev stated that the time to establish a union which unites Turkic countries has come. He expressed his belief that this union is not directed against anyone and it will not be a military one. Nazarbayev underlined "The aim of the union is to establish peace and to increase well-being of people." [5]. This statement is aimed to assure Russia and Russian population of Kazakhstan who are concerned that Kazakhstan is distancing from Russia. In the press conference after the summit Nazarbayev reiterated that the aim of the union is to revive spiritual values, to develop economy and to help each other in building modern statehood [6].

In his speech in the summit Nazarbayev having indicated that the common history among Turkic people creates available conditions to develop cooperation in different spheres, states "Besides, this kind of cooperation does not limit our attempt to develop wide-range relations with other states and with our traditional partners." [4]. Nazarbayev underlines special place of Kazakhstan which cannot be oriented solely on Turkic world. Further Nazarbayev calls to explore not only cultural commonalities while establishing relations but also learn more about peculiarities of the countries. As an example he says that Kazakhstan can explain how different people living in the country are enriching the cultural palette of Kazakhstan [6]. By this Nazarbayev reminds that Kazakhstan's culture is not only composed of Turkic culture but also includes other cultures namely Slavic one. Based on this reality Nazarbayev states that while reviving cultures and languages of people the main responsibility is cast upon society itself rather than state. "It is because during this process misperception of the role of state can lead to harm in the balance among different nationalities in the country." [4]. In this way Nazarbayev is saying that Kazakhstan in its relations with Turkic world should take into account external and internal balances.

While discussing the Economic Cooperation Organization in his speech, Nazarbayev states "To reach maximum efficiency from the work we should think to include partners from Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization and the Commonwealth of Independent States, first of all Russia, into the actions of the ECO." [4]. There is perception that leader of Kazakhstan expresses Russian interest in the absence of Russia. However, it should not be forgotten that Kazakh leaders expresses Turkish interests in the absence of Turkey as it was in Eurasian Summit in 2012 when Nazarbayev proposed to include Turkey as the member of Eurasian Customs Union. This situation displays Kazakhstan's Eurasian that is Slavic-Turkic

identity. To come back to Turkic summit, no doubt that the second summit further strengthened Turkic component of Kazakhstan's Eurasian identity.

During Demirel's presidency five Turkic summits in Istanbul (1994), Bishkek (1995), Tashkent (1996), Astana (1998), and Baku (2000) took place. Although the euphoria of the first years passed, we should confess that these summits were effective tools to remind that the people of these states are united by common Turkic world. Especially from Kazakhstan's view these summits were perceived as the recognition of the Turkic roots of Kazakhstan. When we analyze the declarations of the summits, we find out that there is internalization of Turkic identity. Although in the first declaration heads of states express that they share common history and culture, there is no word 'Turkish' or 'Turkic'. Instead, leaders refrained with term 'Eurasia' which is geographical term, and politically neutral one. In Istanbul declaration of 1994 the phrase 'Turkish dialects' was added. In Bishkek declaration of 1995 the term 'Turkic people' was coined; in Tashkent declaration of 1996 the term 'Turkish-speaking countries' entered into circulation.

In these summits leaders emphasized common values and exchanged views on regional and international problems. At the same time it became the forum where parties declared their support to each other's internal and foreign policies. In Istanbul Declaration of 1994 which was signed after the second summit of Turkic speaking countries, Nazarbayev besides other leaders "noted with satisfaction the efforts made by related countries on the issue of transferring of oil and gas pipelines via Turkey to Europe and Mediterranean Sea." [7]. In Bishkek Declaration of 1995 and Tashkent Declaration of 1996 leaders of Turkic states "underlined the necessity of international cooperation in the struggle against terrorism and separatism that recognize no boundaries." [8]. In Astana Declaration of 1998 to the list of threat, besides terrorism and separatism, fundamentalism was added [9]. In Baku Summit of Turkic speaking countries held in 2000 leaders denoted the importance of Istanbul Declaration and Agreement on Baku-Tiflis-Ceyhan Great Oil Pipeline signed on 18 November of 1999, and the importance of Intergovernmental Declaration on the principles of realization of Turkmenistan-Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey-Europe Trans-Caspian Natural Gas Pipeline. In addition Turkic leaders 'renewed their propositions on the building of peace, stability and security in South Caucasia and Central Asia which were pronounced in the OSCE Istanbul Summit and other meetings, and confirmed their belief that these propositions will contribute to regional and global peace.' [10].

In all these summits Demirel as the head of Turkey, and as the eldest among presidents, was respected. In Baku Summit of Turkic speaking countries held in 2000 Turkic leaders "emphasized the important role of Turkey's President Süleyman Demirel in establishing and strengthening of understanding and trust among leaders of Turkic speaking countries, and in the development of friendship and brotherhood among those countries, and in convergence and solidarity of Turkic peoples; and expressed their gratitude." [10].

Speaking on the fifth anniversary of the Kazakhstan independence Nazarbayev thanked Süleyman Demirel who was attending that ceremonial meeting. Declaring Kazakhstan's strategy in foreign policy Nazarbayev noted that "In recent years the active economic and political dialogue of Turkic states, interrupted by totalitarian isolation, was restored. Here there is a big contribution of our honorable guest President of Turkey Süleyman Demirel. This is the rising element in world politics and Kazakhstan actively supports the strengthening of integration in

this direction.” [11].<sup>8</sup>The presence of Turkish president on fifth anniversary of Kazakhstan’s independence was good gesture from Turkish side. As Nazarbayev stated, “Between two nations there formed big friendship, and Kazakhstanis know the value of that friendship and are proud of it.” [1].

Nazarbayev says that there are friendly relations between him and Demirel. He underlines that there are only very few examples of constant and fruitful relations among head of states [2]. Nazarbayev and Demirel were in contact and frequently exchanged views on regional and global affairs until the death of the later. Nazarbayev generally met with ex-President Demirel when he visited Turkey. It is worthy to mention that there is a university in Kazakhstan named after Süleyman Demirel.

In the final analysis, Demirel confirmed Nazarbayev’s perception of Turkey formed in early 1990s. Although during 1990s Turkey experienced political and economic instabilities, this did not change the perception of Turkey as he was well aware of limits and handicaps of Turkey.

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