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AMERICAN SOFT POWER PROJECTION IN KAZAKHSTAN

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Abstract. Despite the critical view of Joseph Nye’s “soft power” policy, American politicians are increasingly considering this concept as an indispensable means to influence the world. The crucial importance of soft power is outlined in the global strategy of the United States as for its ability to make states want to follow the Western values and liberal model of world order. In turn, the blurry sense of liberal value’s influence on the Kazakh government provoked the authors to research quantitative and qualitative indicators of an aforementioned theme. Utilizing of soft power instruments toward Kazakhstan is far beyond the hard edge, but despite we tried to specify the questions around research and find replies basing on empirical data.

Key words: *Soft Power, Liberal World Order, Civil Society, Elite, Culture, Education, Business, Kazakhstani Youth.*

ҚАЗАҚСТАНДАҒЫ АМЕРИКАНДЫҚ «ЖҰМСАҚ КҮШТІҢ» ПРОЕКЦИЯСЫ

Әйгерім Бахтиярова, Санат Көшкімбаев

Аңдатпа. Джозеф Найдың “жұмсақ күш” саясатына сыни көзқарастардың басымдылығына қарамастан, бүгінгі таңда американдық саясаткерлер аталмыш концепцияны әлемге әсер етудің таптырмас құралы ретінде қарастыруда. “Жұмсақ

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күштің” маңыздылығы мен өзектілігі Америка Құрама Штаттарының жаһандық стратегиясында мемлекеттерді батыс құндылықтары мен әлемдік тәртіптің либералды моделін ұстануға итермелеу қабілеті тұрғысынан көрсетілген. Өз кезегінде либералдық құндылықтардың Қазақстанға ықпалы туралы бұлыңғыр түсінік авторларды жоғарыда аталған тақырыптың сандық және сапалық көрсеткіштерін зерттеуге итермеледі. Қазақстанға қатысты АҚШ-тың жұмсақ күш құралдарын қолдануы әр алуан болып келеді, сол себепті авторлар зерттеуге қатысты сұрақтарды нақтылауға және эмпирикалық мәліметтерге негізделген жауаптарды табуға тырысты.

Түйін сөздер: жұмсақ күш, либералды әлемдік тәртіп, азаматтық қоғам, элита, мәдениет, білім, бизнес, қазақстандық жастар.

ПРОЕКЦИЯ АМЕРИКАНСКОЙ «МЯГКОЙ СИЛЫ» В КАЗАХСТАНЕ

Айгерим Бахтиярова, Санат Кушқумбаев

Аннотация. Несмотря на критичность и двойственность восприятия “мягкой силы” Джозефа Ная, американские политики все чаще рассматривают данную концепцию в качестве незаменимого инструмента влияния на мир. Важность и актуальность “мягкой силы” изложены в глобальной стратегии Соединенных Штатов с точки зрения ее способности побуждать государства следовать западным ценностям и либеральной модели мирового порядка. В свою очередь, размытое представление о влиянии либеральных ценностей на Республику Казахстан побудило авторов исследовать количественные и качественные показатели рассматриваемой темы. Использование инструментов американской “мягкой силы” в отношении Казахстана представляется разнообразным. По этой причине авторы попытались конкретизировать вопросы, касающиеся исследования, и найти ответы на основе эмпирических данных.

Ключевые слова: мягкая сила, либеральный мировой порядок, гражданское общество, элита, культура, образование, бизнес, казахстанская молодежь.

Introduction

In recent times, there has been growing interest in rethinking of “soft power” approach in the foreign affairs of the United States. Some scholars and politicians on both sides raise a query about whether the concept of “soft power” has every reason to believe in its preference for use compared to the military-economic pressure. Among the scholars, successors of Mearsheimer’s school of offensive realism consider that in an anarchic system of international relations, the actors should rely on their military power, supporting the idea of the imminence of war by Waltz’s school of neorealism. When it comes to

political figures, we explored how former U.S. President Donald Trump adopted a critical turn toward multilateralism and, through the “hard-power budget” policy, slashed funds for the activity of USAID, the core-place of soft power policy formation and other initiatives focused on maintaining sustainable development all over the world [1]. However, such a rigid stance of the U.S.’ 45th president does not prevent the soft power ringing valid up to these days.

Even more, in his late academic pursuits, Joseph Nye argued that when the faith in communism has disrupted behind the Iron Curtain, it crashed down on the range of various

reasons. In this way, it is worth paying tribute to the arsenal of soft power policy that seduced people's consciousness with liberal values [2]. But despite the Soviet threat has come to an end, the modern world is fraught with the aggravation of geopolitical interests between the powers and the emergence of new threats such as terrorism, pandemics, environmental disasters, and menace to peace. In response to these challenges, we are witnessing how the U.S. continues to work on its positive image, becoming a core of humanitarian assistance to countries in need, widely proclaiming democratic values, and inspiring others to dream through scholarships, exchanges, and various opportunities for youth. Thus, it seems that the strengthening of American attractiveness both inside and outside of the government is a goal of acting head of state Joe Biden, Nye argued [3].

A vivid example of the cultivating of soft power policy is the U.S. cultural and humanitarian engagement in Kazakhstan formalized with the United States Strategy for Central Asia 2019-2025: Advancing Sovereignty and Economic Prosperity. Although the U.S. has limited influence on Kazakhstan compared to Russia, the billion-dollar investments in the local economic sector (growth by 87.7% for the first half of 2021) enable the United States to be at the forefront of the strategic partnership [4]. These data indicate that if the energy factor is an engine of governments' bilateral relations, soft power policy is a gentle approach to win the hearts and minds of Kazakhstan's people for a greater rapprochement.

Generally, much ink has been spilled on American interests in Kazakhstan. The current views of scholars on the motives of U.S. policy rely on the following outputs: first, in terms of the soft power policy, the strategy of the United States is intended to nurture a pro-American elite, which would make it possible to pursue a policy beneficial to Americans; secondly, in a global sense, others assert that surrounded by two great powers Kazakhstan is a place to maneuver for

establishing the balance of power in Central Asia, and all the constituents of American soft power focused on the strengthening of Kazakhstan's sovereignty and deterrence from any attempt to reintegrate states under the banner of the once collapsed Soviet Union.

We do not initially seek to challenge or support one of the existing opinions, and the main aim is to see the accurate picture based on quantitative and qualitative indicators of American soft power projection in Kazakhstan. We will try to reflect the correlation between the soft power policy of the United States and the development of Kazakhstan's potential. Nevertheless, there is one feature that scientists should consider, and it is that the "soft power" itself is brutal to measure and control. The difficulty in determining the mechanisms of influence of "soft power" on other states to achieve the outcomes has become even more discussed among scholars all over the world. Therefore, we must admit that it is problematic to find an obvious correlation, as it happens in the exact sciences, but we will try to find a relationship through the categories as culture, education, and business.

To reach the aim set in this paper, we have realized the tasks below. First, we considered the critical points of "soft power" policy evaluating its vitality through the scholarly literatures, then we tried to measure the practical orientation of the proposed concept. Third, we covered the real American soft power projection cases in Kazakhstan in the academic, cultural, and business sectors. Finally, we tried to find out which benefits let us consider that the American soft power approach is a power that plays in favor of the United States.

Research methods

This paper does not claim to be the world's foremost authority, and the aim is to comprehensively analyze the American soft power projection in Kazakhstan relying on the case-study method. For wide-ranging analysis, the authors relied on specific research of scholars

and institutions based on the comparative study, systematized reports, and speeches of the United States and Kazakhstan officials in terms of the article's theme.

As a resource base, this research covers the explorations of such American scientists as John Mearsheimer and Joseph Nye, and the outcomes from the Global Soft Power Index 2021 reported by Brand Finance, also includes the analysis of the Institute for International Cultural Relations at the University of Edinburgh, the data of "Bolashak" program in the framework of JSC "Center for International Programs", etc.

In addition, using a deductive approach, we were able to identify accurate indicators from general arguments about American soft power policy, which allowed us to consider particular cases more specifically.

Critical analysis of "soft power": literature review

Since American scientist Joseph Nye coined the "soft power" concept, most different opinions clashed, opposing each other. The principal contradiction lies in the assessment that scientists were skeptical about the novelty of this idea, appealing that a gentle approach in states' foreign policy has always existed. Go back to the origins and genesis, the idea of "soft power" appeared in ancient times, as evidenced by the writings of the ancient Chinese philosopher Lao-Tzu, who claimed that the paradox is that whatever is soft will overcome whatever is rigid and stiff. Meanwhile, in his research, quoting the Italian thinker Niccollo Machiavelli, about the importance of striking fear to people's minds rather than being loved, Nye noted that it is better to achieve both in our today's global information age [5].

Describing the nature of power, Nye considered the several ways to exert the behavior of actors by coercing or attractiveness. If we believe that the powerfulness of a state is measured by its territory, economic and military strength, it seems as the government may have the capability to reach the outcomes. However,

what is more interesting, in the history of humanity, we have witnessed how the powerful governments experienced a loss and collapse despite their potential to win the war. Because of such paradox, Nye argued that endowed with the best power, countries do not always reach their desired outcomes. That is one of the reasons he invented a new political concept to contribute to the governing effectiveness of the United States.

Many criticize Nye for the vagueness of the definition and insufficient scientific rigor of his works. Indeed, "soft power" turns out to be a rather broad concept: it seems challenging to outline its precise boundaries. The claim that the U.S. exerts influence through soft power does not tolerate criticism, Niall Ferguson argued. According to him, the culture as one of the soft power resources does not demonstrate the full ability to be influential in foreign affairs. American movies, art, music, and lifestyle can be attractive in Korea or Hong Kong, but they may have opposing views in Middle East countries because of the contradiction in mindset and religion. That is why the critics come around this concept's effectiveness [6].

However, in response to such critical analysis, Professor Mark Neimark opposes the perception of soft power as only a cultural and humanitarian resource of the state, explaining that it is measured by many other factors of influence such as an attractive economic model, legitimate government, and even professional military force. In his research, he attempts to systematize the ways of the impact of "soft power" as follows. First, the economic attractiveness of one specific government grows the interests of the target countries. Then there is a need to study the development model of this country based on its culture. As a result, recipient countries form the information field through specific knowledge describing the cultural features of a prosperous nation. Finally, by increasing the positive image, there is a rising opportunity for the strengthening "soft power" policy concerning the target countries [7].

Thinking so, the author believes that the policy of “soft power” should be a part of the purposeful actions of the state, as it is justified. Another American scientist Dr. Richard D. Hooker, Jr., argued that despite the specific that the soft power is blurred for being controlled, in conjunction with military and economic power, it has every right to be concerned as a part of the global strategy of the United States [8].

In terms of the academic pursuits about the U.S. soft power policy in Kazakhstan, we made a thorough analysis of native scientists’ view on this subject, Western perception, and the research of Russian scholars as well.

A lot has been reviewed by native researchers on U.S. interests in Kazakhstan, but the issue of the American soft power projection in Kazakhstan is still insufficiently explored. Among the authors we have perused the monograph of diplomat Yerkin Tukumov known as “Discovering America: a view from Kazakhstan”, who agreed that graduates of American universities can be viewed as a soft power that certainly plays in favor of the United States. He argued this assertion because graduates from U.S. universities then become distributors of American values in their homelands, thereby contributing to the strengthening of United States influence worldwide. Notably, that about \$22 billion, or 30-36% of the global educational market, comes to the U.S. budget annually from international students, which shows how American higher education as a tool of soft power is undoubtedly an advantage in global terms [9].

The research works of the famous scientist Murat Laumulin is noteworthy, who in the author’s article “Central Asian policy of the United States under President Barack Obama” includes the “soft power” in the arsenal of affecting tools for profound influence on the region’s states, including Kazakhstan, through the funds, American corners, and information platforms, indeed [10].

Also, a deep analysis is observed in the

article by authors Andrey Shenin and Aigerim Raimzhanova entitled “Genesis and Evolution of the U.S.-Kazakhstan Relations in the 1990s”. This paper claims that Kazakhstan received dividends from the partnership with the United States in terms of economic growth through investment, but at the same time, the United States experienced specific difficulties on the way to spreading democratic values due to the confrontation with Moscow and Beijing, as well as the geographical remoteness of the region [11]. In our view, such assertion of the scholars illustrated how in Kazakhstan there is a clash of economic interests and the struggle for ideological dominance between great powers, which also means the struggle for the minds and hearts of youth in Kazakhstan.

The analytical base of the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan provided accurate information regarding the subject matter covered. Hence, we exerted U.S. humanitarian aid indicators from the Fact Sheet “Kazakhstan-USA: current issues of cooperation”, which gave a broad picture of the U.S. soft power policy in Kazakhstan [12].

Russian scholars observe a skeptical perception of the U.S. soft power to Kazakhstan, who see more shades of “color and velvet revolutions” aimed at regime change and maintaining their national interests. Hence, according to Alexander Naumov from Lomonosov Moscow State University, “soft power” is a destructive technology for organizing nonviolent coups [13]. The same idea is analyzed in more detail by such Russian authors as D. Alexandrov, I. Ippolitov, D. Popov, who believe that the American establishment uses “soft power” to influence foreign states from within and manipulate other people’s consciousness, citing examples from the situation in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine [14]. Summarizing their researches, authors consider that due to the strong positions of Moscow and Beijing in Central Asia, including Kazakhstan, and therefore the complexity of

direct interference in the internal affairs of these states, Washington relies on the policy of “soft power”. Another follower of this opinion is Dmitry Suslov, a researcher from the Higher School of Economics, according to whom the policy aimed at regime change is one of the elements of the American “soft power” [15]. Of particular interest was D. Popov’s book “Central Asia in U.S. Foreign Policy” in the period between 1991-2016, in which the author also relies on the opinion that “soft power” is a tool for strengthening U.S. dominance in the world, considering it as manipulation of mass consciousness [16].

Marlene Laruelle and Dylan Reis from the Institute of European, Russian and Eurasian Studies at George Washington University conducted a thorough analysis on the American soft power projection in Kazakhstan. In a new article published in the Central Asian Survey journal, the scholars argued that the United States is positively assessed in terms of the soft power policy, influencing the choice of Kazakh people through its education benefits and values. What is more interesting is that it can make Kazakh youth more pro-American, while the older generation can be nostalgic for the past era of the once collapsed Soviet Union [17]. That is how soft power works.

Generally, the strive of the United States to go in for soft power derives from liberal values. However, the features of the last two decades involved with the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the civil war in Syria, the Ukrainian crisis, withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan demonstrated negative attitudes and distrust of people to the liberal world order. As John Mearsheimer mentioned, there is no universal agreement for the world proclaiming the best and ideal political system. One can only say that liberal democracy is the most acceptable way to preserve peace, but we must bear in mind that other people prefer different systems of governing [18]. This is the main reason why wars are still taking place worldwide. This is the reason for the stagnation

of the liberal world order. This explains why American politicians take on increasing importance of the soft power tools at current days.

Measurements, effectiveness and index of “soft power” concept

The practical significance of soft power concept leads to the defining of its measurements and effectiveness. As we see it, in order to justify the need to finance a particular humanitarian program, it is important to estimate how fruitful this activity is, and how the outcomes correlate with the goals and costs set. For instance, the researchers from the Institute for International Cultural Relations at the University of Edinburgh are convinced that the state’s culture promotion in an international arena provides significant strategic advantages [19].

According to them, soft power policy of the government has impact on attracting of foreign direct investment and worldwide influence in the global platforms such as UN General Assembly, etc. Also, a large number of foreign humanitarian institutes in host country could bring the attractiveness and economic profits arising from it. To be precise, scholars have found that if a certain country increases the coverage of countries by 1% in which it opens cultural institutions, this eventually leads to an increase in FDI to the same country by 0.66%. As an example, scholars observed that in 2016 the similar growth was fixed in the United Kingdom, where the foreign investment reached £197 billion as well as the growth of number of foreign students thanks to the active spread of British education and culture around the world. This is one the effective measurements of soft power policy.

The scale of U.S. soft power is also expressed by activity of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), which in turn realizes professional and educational exchange programs to reach the U.S. foreign affairs goals and ensure American leadership. ECA is functioning under

the guidance of the White House and Congress, and Secretary of State. It explores global political trends and provides facilities for international exchange to achieve American leadership by spreading liberal values [20].

American soft power policy in Kazakhstan

One of the cases of implementing U.S. soft power is the Central Asian countries, among which Kazakhstan is perceived as the state actively absorbing western culture, education, and lifestyle. The main directions of this strategy come down to the strengthening of human rights, support of the free press and democratic institutions, development of education skills corresponding to modern realities of the 21st century, which is related to the American soft power projection as a whole [21].

There are several categories of “soft power” policy we are considering in this paper: culture, academic resources, and business, which is more relative to the economic interests of actors.

The category «Culture» generally includes such indicators as the influence of the country’s music and art industry in the world, the ability of public diplomacy to win popular affections among the academic community, foreign mass media, and youth, indeed.

In Chinese academia, culture is considered as the core of soft power. The founder of this approach is a member of the Standing Committee of the CPC Central Committee Political Bureau, Professor Wang Huning, according to whom the concept of culture encompasses the attractiveness of the political system, scientific and technological progress [22]. From this point of view, the attractiveness of American soft power for Kazakhstanis is entirely justified because mass consumption of innovative U.S. brands like Apple and Microsoft is a common phenomenon among the youth of Kazakhstan, and it gives the preferences for U.S. comparing to the products of China. According to Boston Consulting Group, these American most valuable brands are included in the top ten of

the 50 Most Innovative Companies of 2021 [23]. This indicates that supporting and encouraging innovative breakthroughs is a part of American culture.

Today the cultural exchange between the United States and Kazakhstan is realized through the various programs, platforms, and activities such as American spaces located in several regions of Kazakhstan, source centers for discovering and learning cultural and language features supported by the U.S. Embassy and Consulate in Kazakhstan, scholarships as the Fulbright Program, and the other mass cultural events. In turn, Kazakhstan is also developing its cultural heritage in the territory of the United States. The launch of the Abai center in Washington, the virtual space recognizing the legacy of great Kazakh poet Abai Qunanbaiuly, is perceived as the sort of Kazakh soft power projection in the United States of America. This project was initiated by the Central Asia Program of George Washington University, the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the USA, and the Institute for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies. The aim is to share the latest research and scholar’s opinion on Kazakh people’s cultural and national features in the Eurasian context.

While J. Nye includes education in the category “Culture”, the authors preferred to allocate it to an academic category. As a result of this analysis, the cause-and-effect linkage rising between the intellectual product of American soft power and the formation of a robust civil society in Kazakhstan, which specifies the country’s future. It has long been known that education and academic potential are determinants of the state’s efficiency to be internationally viable. In the case of Kazakhstan, ensuring quality education is a crucial issue on the agenda. This is confirmed by the Message of the Head of State K.K. Tokayev, dated September 1, 2021, outlined the development of science as the most critical priority [24].

It is well-known that higher *education* is a competitive advantage of the U.S. soft power

compared to other strong states. According to QS World University Rankings 2021, the top three universities include American higher education institutions, such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Stanford University, and Harvard University.

In this way, the U.S. soft power gives impetus through the various educational and academic programs within which Kazakh youth and scientists upgrade their skills. During the research, the authors received the data about the “Bolashak” program graduates through an official request addressed to JSC “Center for International Programs”. According to official information, in the framework of the “Bolashak” program, around 11 343 people have been trained at the best universities of the world, of which 2 723 people have completed their studies in the United States. Among the graduates who completed their studies in the United States, the most significant number is prepared for the Master's program - 1477 people (54.2%), Bachelor's degree - 979 people (36%), Internship - 244 people (9%), Doctoral studies - 23 people (0.8%).

Despite having access to the official data confirming the number of U.S. universities' graduates by the “Bolashak” program, limited literature has been observed regarding alumni's activities that could impact the country's development. Besides, we have faced the criticism of the overwhelming majority narrating the contradiction between the professional skills gained in the United States through the various programs and the reality in Kazakhstan's labor market. This issue requires a rethinking of the state's approaches in supporting the younger generation with innovative knowledge applicable in a more equipped scientific environment.

On the other hand, we must admit that there are various successful cases related to the career path of U.S.'s universities graduates in Kazakhstan: Yerzhan Ashikbayev, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United States of America, the graduate of

J.F. Kennedy School of Public Administration at Harvard University (USA); Saysat Nurbek, acting as the Head of the BTS Digital Educational Center, the graduate of Marshalltown Community College (USA); Iskander Akylbayev, Executive Director of Kazakhstan Council on International Relations, was selected as a fellow of Rumsfeld Foundation in 2018 (USA). These real cases are the only a piece of successful stories of graduates of American educational institutions who are making a considerable contribution to the development of Kazakh civil society.

The category “Business” is actively correlated with economic context, describing the investment activities of foreign corporations in Kazakhstan. In 2020, a third of tax revenues to the state budget of Kazakhstan fall on the thirty most prominent companies with foreign participation. Among the most significant foreign taxpayers, about 37% of payments were made by oil and gas company “Tengizchevroil”, a large share of which belongs to American partners: Chevron (USA) owns 50%, ExxonMobil (USA) holds 25%, KazMunayGas (Kazakhstan) owns 20% and LukArco (Russia) with 5% of the shares. The Fact Sheet of “Tengizchevroil” shows us the results of the company's activity by the third quarter of the 2021 year, according to which in 2021, the company allocated more than 1.6 million U.S. dollars to improve the quality of healthcare, education, as well as the development of social entrepreneurship in Atyrau region and Borankul Village (Mangystau region) as part of the Community Investment Program [25].

Chevron itself makes a significant contribution to the development of education of the local population in Kazakhstan through the various humanitarian programs covering teachers and youths from urban and rural schools. These figures are quantitative measurements of how the U.S. actively uses soft power in the business environment, making it attractive among the local population.

Such programs and actions of American

companies reflect a strategic approach and confirm the official statements of the United States related to the strengthening of sovereignty of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Figure 1).

Figure 1. American soft power projection in Kazakhstan

Culture

bilateral relations of U.S.-Kazakhstan through mass-cultural events supported by Embassies of the two countries

Education

exchange programs through the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the United States (Fulbright); Bolashak program financing by the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Business

educational development support by American corporations as Chevron, Exxon Mobile, etc.

Conclusion

Research shows the deep correlation between the soft power policy of the United States and the development of Kazakhstan's potential in a worldwide view. The paper proved this assertion through the analysis of three categories of soft power as culture, education and business as well.

First, relying on the basic provisions of Nye, who claimed that spreading the values that could help people in the long-term reap the benefits, we found American higher education as an indispensable tool to attract positive attitudes in Kazakhstan. This is confirmed by the activity of American universities graduates who subsequently engaged in the human capital development in Kazakhstan. In turn, the USA receives its dividends from Kazakhstani students in the form of tuition fees as well as bright minds, which sometimes remain and form a high-quality professional circle in the United States. This is how the intangible values of the state

can play in its favor. On this issue, Kazakhstan's political elite should realize that the development of society is inseparable from scientific and technological progress and properly encourage and support youth initiatives in order to prevent brain drain.

Second, we can assume that all the training initiatives, environment, and healthcare projects of big companies are aimed at successfully implementing oil and gas projects with the lion's share of American companies through empathy and winning the favor of the local population in Kazakhstan. This is how soft power works in business.

From a perspective of long-term strategy, the products of American soft power in the form of the human asset will play a significant role in the formation of the Kazakh elite and liberalization of people's consciousness for the next decades. Another question is the readiness of Kazakhstan to fully support freedom of speech, freedom of the press, democratic institutions, etc. On this issue, we must admit that many skeptics are claiming that the soft power of the United States is an element of the "color and velvet revolution" while expressing concerns about the interference of Americans in the internal affairs of Kazakhstan. This topic was especially debatable in light of the tragic events in Kazakhstan in January this year. On the other hand, we must admit American and other foreign investments attracting to Kazakhstan will not allow shaping the country inside, and this is not economically beneficial.

To sum up, we agree that the United States will stay as the superpower for the next decades in today's globalized world. Moreover, the growing status of Kazakhstan in Central Asia has advanced significant interests of the United States. Nevertheless, we must admit that the integration between the states at a people-to-people level does not mean understanding and policy agreement at a high level. The deep cooperation in terms of soft power policy is perceived as a solid basis to bilateral relations,

but thinking about global matters, we have to assume other influencing factors to make policy agreement. From the standpoint of powers' Great Game, meaning the interaction between Russian, Chinese, and American vector for influence in Central Asia including Kazakhstan, the U.S. will continue to nurture soft power policy reflected in Western democracies and values, and solving such issues as global warming, pandemics, water resources management, and etc.

Finally, one assertion remains clear as a result of our explorations - American soft power evidently matters for the maintaining of the strategic presence of Washington in Kazakhstan, while for the Kazakh government, the issue on the formation of its way and ideology as well as saving nation's identity despite the absorbing the Western values should become one of the critical points on the agenda.

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