

# A National Idea in Conditions of the Islamic Revival

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**Abstract**—Discussion and development of principles of the uniform nation formation within the limits of the Kazakhstan state obviously became one of the most pressing questions of the day. The fact that this question has not been solved "from above" as many other questions has caused really brisk discussion, shows us increase of civil consciousness in Kazakhstan society, and also the actuality of this theme which can be carried in the category of fatal questions. In any sense, nation building has raised civil society to a much higher level. It would be better to begin with certain definitions. First is the word "nation". The second is the "state". Both of these terms are very closely connected with each other, so that in English language they are in general synonyms. In Russian more shades of these terms exist. For example in Kazakhstan the citizens of the country irrespective of nationality (but mainly with reference to non-kazakhs) are called «kazakhstanians», while the name of the title nation is \"Kazakhs\". The same we can see in Russia, where, for example, the Chechen or the Yakut –are \"Rossiyane\" which means “the citizens of Russian Federation, but not \"Russians\".

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## I. INTRODUCTION

THE concept of national idea has no clear scientific definition. National idea defines the meaning of the existence of peoples, ethnic group or nation. There is a significant difference between the national idea, at least in the totality of the nation's image of itself, and the national state ideology.

National idea is a systematic, sustained compilation of national identity, often presented in socio-philosophical and socio-political forms, artistic works that means that it could be rational and, well shaped.

The national idea as it answers the question about the meaning of being a particular historical community: ethnicity, nation and the state, responds to the question of their specificity, spiritual mission.

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National idea from a religious point of view can be seen as a goal set by God before this people, as the contribution which in accordance with the divine plan of this nation it must make to the world development. State idea is a combination of political, legal, social and economic principles on which the state becomes a home to this nation. Optimal state idea is one that will best contribute to achieving the goal set in the national idea.

National ideology is a form of realization of the function of state power, that's why the countries inclined to authoritarianism, and especially to totalitarianism often use it, and that 's why many of them are often in search of a national idea. This idea helps to mobilize the masses, constantly seeking ways to unite, connect people and territories around the authorities. It may explain their constant desire to find a "national idea", but it's artificial character, introduced by force is not able to display the result outside the framework of the state ideology, to turn it from official ideology to public consciousness and mentality.

It is obvious that in the states that emerged from the collapsed Soviet Union state idea in the period beginning from 1991, was the maximum possible use of independence for the benefit of their peoples. And so far the theme of social reconciliation and the consolidation of society came to the fore [1].

## II. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Kazakhstan is a multi-religious and multi-ethnic country, and this fact complicates the process of a single idea and a sense of a nation forming within our borders, but in recent years constantly repeated formula that Islam is a "historic spiritual basis" of the main, dominant ethnic group has developed.

All this seems to be confirmed by the surveys, according to which the vast majority of the population consider themselves Muslims, but they don't practice the performance of Islam religious rites in daily life. The strange thing is that a large number of traditionalists reject a purely Muslim culture and the idea of supranational (globalist) character of that religion, they perceive them negatively. As a result, the public were offered two ideological products - nationalist idea and the idea of religion. There is a third one, which is based on compromise «nation understood as citizenship."

It is this kind of compromise embodied in the Doctrine of National Unity draft, called to become the the basic document in the field of the state and nation-building in Kazakhstan. Put forward by the head of the state in 2010 it has caused the extremely ready response in a society and the sharp criticism.

The idea of civil, instead of an ethnic basis of nation creation («Kazakhstanians», instead of "Kazakhs") has caused criticism from the side of the nationalist Kazakh circles which suspected the power in desire to refuse an ethnic heritage of the title nation in general [2].

Nationalist circles have suggested developing national building on the basis of strengthening of the Kazakh component – in internal policy, state structures, and office-work. The position of national minorities is that they would like to keep the ethnic roots, but not to be minor or second-grade citizens, having kept, as far as possible, also possibility to use Russian as language of international dialogue, instead of Kazakh.

On this background the state started wide discussion on this theme and authorized the beginning of mixed commission work on development of a new variant of the doctrine. The alternative variant offered by nationalists has found the reflexion in a new concept accepted by the authorities in 2011.

Part of it was the idea of the revival of Islam as a religion of peace and harmony, it was the central idea to a wide range of the Kazakh ethnic group and other ethnic minorities (Uighurs, Uzbeks, Turks, Chechens, Ingush, and other non-Slav nationalities) [3].

Discussion and development of principles of the uniform nation formation within the limits of the Kazakhstan state obviously became one of the most pressing questions of the day. The fact that this question has not been solved "from above" as many other questions has caused really brisk discussion, shows us increase of civil consciousness in Kazakhstan society, and also the actuality of this theme which can be carried in the category of fatal questions. In any sense, nation building has raised civil society to a much higher level. As well as demonstrated the weakness of the government in terms of determining the fate of the country.

"Nation" and "state"- both of these terms are very closely connected with each other, so that in English language they are in general synonyms. In Russian more shades of these terms exist. For example in Kazakhstan the citizens of the country irrespective of nationality are called «kazakhstanians», while the name of the title nation is "Kazakhs". The same we can see in Russia, where, for example, the Chechen or the Yakut –are "Rossiyane" which means "the citizens of Russian Federation", but not "Russians". To transfer this nuance in English language is not obviously possible, however in Kazakhstan in the light of discussion of the Doctrine of national unity this different interpretation has become a symbol of polar opposition of two approaches to nation formation within the limits of the state.

The first conclusion which is possible to be made is very simple and categorical: within the limits of the Kazakhstan state there is no uniform nation uniting all its population by any more or less integral cultural and spiritual ideas. Unlike many European states where the nations were formed, as the state units, post-colonial societies almost always, and sometimes very painfully, endure the problem of nation

formation, as forms of an ethnic common living, carrier of the state idea.

There are a lot of reasons for it – from casual borders defined by colonizers, to a low level of population development that is not ready to create a civil society in national scales. It is historically developed that the state of Kazakhstan which has received independence in December, 1991, 21 years ago, has no this community. There are few reasons: the absence of independence throughout the long period of time (in 1731 Kazakhstan has started to be a part of the Russian empire, this process has come to the end by 1860 years), long colonization, russification, mass reprisals and the absence of national-liberation movement.

Because of Stalin in 30-40th years the title nationality of Kazakhstan lost the whole generation of intelligentsia; (the intellectuals). And under his rule the ethnic structure of the republic population reached present "diversity". These factors became barriers on a way of uniform nation formation and not only in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Some researchers of «the nation – the state» problem, differently explaining this phenomenon, insist on the central role of the intellectuals and a cultural-information generality in nation formation. Charles Doych in his "Nationalism and social communications"[4], makes definition of the "nation", as «groups in which the level of communicative activity is considerably above, than out of its limits». And Ernest Gellner [5], sees the nation, as «the result of modern society requirement in the cultural homogeneity caused by development of industrial manufacture», in which the process of nation formation is based on «the expansion of general education and mass media» which concern an intellectual field of activity. Benedict Anderson in "Imagined communities" [6], regarded as of paramount importance the phenomenon of "printing capitalism" with its newspapers and novels. Even Anthony Smith [7], considering as a nation basis not a civil unification, but ethnic one, notices that the leading part in the course of addition of the nation plays «the intellectuals struggling for preservation of ethnic traditions».

The main difference of Kazakhstan from other Soviet republics consists in that it was unique formation as a part of formal Soviet federation in which the indigenous population during the long period of time made ethnic minority with a minimum in 29 % of Kazakhs in 1962. At the present stage, by results of census of 2009, the percent of Kazakhs has increased in Kazakhstan to 63, 9 %. In all other republics – Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan - the population of other, non- title origin, made much less considerable figures. It is quite natural that Kazakhstan became the country of the greatest outcome of non-title population (basically Slavic) that, together with repatriation of foreign Kazakhs has led to so fast growth of percent of Kazakhs among Kazakhstanians.

And one more "nation" definition is - «The feeling of an accessory to the certain nation is necessary for the person as the form, through which comfort necessary for achievement of the certain social purposes is realized. The nation is a system

of the symbolical representations necessary for formation and existence of the people, for strengthening of their internal unity and creation of power bases of those who supervises over them. It is a steady centuries-old generality possessing a rich historical and cultural heritage. It forms feeling of an accessory of the individual to big communities, giving to it language, communication with the native earth, and a place in a historical chain of generations» [8].

Thus, there is a question – how to build the nation in Kazakhstan so that it could keep unique, ethnic features of a titular nationality (as they distinguish it from Russia, for example), but become the present house, the native land, for non-Kazakhs, who are ready to define themselves as «Kazakhstanians» (but not "Kazakhs") only within the limits of a wide cultural autonomy? It is not enough to work over increasing of "percent" of Kazakhs in Kazakhstan, it is necessary to think up and accept a principle of formation of statehood (and nation formation as we have already defined, is the important part of this process). This principle should allow to all inhabitants of the country to participate in the political, cultural processes, to transform all citizens of the country into a single whole, with the general cultural and information field.

And one more conclusion is that earlier, till the moment of discussion of the Doctrine of national unity, a question on nation formation with alternatives in the form of either civil or national principle of its formation was not considered seriously.

Probably it was reflected in the main law – Constitutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan, but it was impossible to say that its editions were the result of public discussion, neither in 1993, nor in 1995, nor in 2007.

*So, there are two approaches. The first, based on understanding of democratic development, as movement to the developed civil society, «a melting copper» in which national identity, cultural, religious and other features of individuals will not have any value, with a primacy of the rights and duties of the citizen. And the second, resulting from a state principle – as the right of the nation to self-determination, the sovereignty, as national power of the ethnic group assimilating on the certain bases representatives of other ethnic groups, minorities, with a prevalence of a cultural-political component of "the titular nation».*

By the way, the second principle is far from democratism, realized in the countries which have left the USSR, in particular, close to Europe Latvia where the majority of not-Latvians did not receive citizenship of the independent country at the beginning. It is necessary to notice also that after events on September, 11th, 2001 even in the Europe to which supporters of purely civil principle of construction of the nation appealed, there was a serious withdrawal in the opposite direction. It has got expression in tests for loyalty, knowledge of language and cultures of the countries where migrants had arrived to, interdictions for religious attributes of other cultures in public institutions.

And the apogee of the process was loud rejection of two European Union states (Germany, France) from a policy of multiculturalism.

On this background in Kazakhstan social movement in favor of wider reflexion of the Kazakh national component in the nation formation, as country bases has prevailed.

However, this in turn raises questions about the mechanisms of inclusion of other ethnic components, which at the moment is not actually provided.

Throughout the independence Kazakhstan power did not do a definitive choice in favor of this or that concept of nation building. At the first stage of independence, the preference was given to Kazakh component:

- In the Declaration on the state sovereignty of Kazakh Soviet socialist Republic from October, 25th, 1990 it is fixed that Kazakhs are state forming nation and make an ethno cultural kernel of the Kazakhstan statehood [9].

- The constitutional law «About the state independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan» from December, 16th, 1991 has underlined «the right of the Kazakh nation to self-determination» [10].

- The constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan from January, 28th, 1993 also has given particular attention to national character of the Kazakhstan statehood, having presented it as the form of statehood of the Kazakh nation which gained its independence [11].

Within the limits of this concept the program of returning of compatriots-Kazakhs (oralmans) was proclaimed, laws on an obligatory 50 %-s' quota on the Kazakh language on TV was passed, and also attempt of restoration of ethnic balance in the north and in the country centre, through carrying over of the country capital from Almaty to Akmola renamed into Astana was undertaken.

Then transition to civil model of the nation has gradually begun. First, the Assembly of the people of Kazakhstan was created as an advisory body at the President of Kazakhstan; it was intended for providing national representation of ethnic minority in the power. By 2007 it "has grown" to incorporation in system of the higher government – its members had an opportunity to delegate the colleagues in Madzhlis - the parliament lower chamber

After occurrence of the Assembly in the second constitution of the country (from 1995) the division of Kazakhstanians on representatives of the title and not title nation has been withdrawn: «We, the people of Kazakhstan united by the general historical destiny, creating statehood on the primordial Kazakh earth, understanding itself as the peaceful civil society attached to ideals of freedom, equality and the consent, wishing to take a worthy place in the world community, realizing the high responsibility before present and the future generations, proceeding from the sovereign right, we accept the present Constitution» [12]. To eliminate discrepancy, the Assembly was even renamed from Assembly of the people of Kazakhstan into Assembly of single people of Kazakhstan.

The project of the Doctrine offered by presidential administration became in any sense apogee of a civil principle

in the approach to nation building in Kazakhstan. Here are the important points of the first variant of the project lowered from above: «the Purpose of the present Doctrine is definition of priorities and mechanisms of maintenance of national unity in Kazakhstan on the basis of civil identity, patriotism, a spiritually-cultural generality, preservation of stability, interethnic and interconfessional consent in a society ... the primary choice in favor of civil formation, instead of an ethnic generality became the Base of the consent and stability in a society» [2].

What is the reason of the defeat of Civil Kazakhstan nation idea? On the one hand, naturally, pressure of the nationalist Kazakh organizations which managed to mobilize wide layers of the Kazakh population against it. But on the other hand – dissolution in a melting copper without an accurate national basis did not find support in the circles of national minorities.

As consequence in the definitive confirmed variant of the Doctrine we can find these words: «the Republic of Kazakhstan is the unique legal and historical successor of centuries-old statehood of the Kazakh people and natural continuation of its political and state system» [3].

In the definitive variant of the doctrine it is told that there are two principles which have defined bases of the sovereignty and the further consolidation of the nation: first, the right of the Kazakh people to self-determination which has become a condition for creation of Kazakhstan state, secondly, equal possibilities for all citizens of the country», and here we see the compromise between old and new approaches.

However, if we analyze the form and the maintenance we'll see that the maintenance is knowledge of language, culture of Kazakhs by all citizens of the country and this reflects a primacy of the principle of ethnic self-determination over the civil principle. «In new historical conditions there is a new historical mission of the Kazakh people which have given the proud name to the country: to become the consolidating centre of the Nation. And it imposes special responsibility», -so it is told in the Doctrine. Though first two principles – a destiny generality, equality of possibilities – reflect the civil approach, real value has the third principle – Development of national spirit:

«The spiritual basis is a force which rallies the Nation in a single whole. The more strongly spirit of the people is, the higher prospects of its statehood are. It is the main engine of history and our destiny. The Spirit of the Nation defines originality of any country, sets a direction and gives an impulse to development.

For raising of our National Spirit the main priorities should become: spirit of traditions and patriotism, spirit of updating, competitiveness and a victory.

The spirit of the nation leans on thousand-year traditions, values and culture, on language, as a part of consciousness of the people. Language, traditional values and our unique culture throughout the centuries supported the people, kept it from dissolving in the history. And today they have become a basis of our spirituality, as the unique integrity doing us special, unlike all others. Therefore revival and development

of spirituality, culture, traditions and language are one of the major duties of the state.

First of all it concerns expansion of sphere of the state language use. Mastering it should become a duty of each Kazakhstan citizen, the stimulus defining personal competitiveness and active participation in a public life. It is a key priority, a primary factor of spiritual and national unity» [3].

### III. CONCLUSION

As we can see, the religious aspect in the doctrine of national unity was not considered, but today the role of religion in Kazakhstan significantly increased, and the number of the Muslim citizens grew. Obviously, there are some reasons. First, Islam can not be exclusively Kazakh national idea. It is the religion of Muslims. Ummah doesn't attach importance to ethnicity and nation-states, these issues are not considered. Second, in recent years the country has seen that the active introduction and practice of Islam did not lead to the unification of society, as it was hoped by power structures; on the contrary, it led to a split.

Activities of the various movements, groups and sects, litigation, acts of terrorism, the increasing trend in the last two years across the country, showed that Islam as an idea cannot become a unifying factor, but rather a powerful destroyer of Kazakhstan statehood. Inside it is a fierce struggle for the minds between the Tariqa, Sufis, maturidits (called "traditional") and the Salafis, better known as the Wahhabis.

However, is it true that a national idea should be religious?

Connections of the religious component with nation-building processes are multifaceted and complex. There are numerous historical examples of the religious factor as a basis for overcoming intra ethnic conflicts, conflicts between clans and castes, creation of national associations, even overcoming ethnic strife.

On the other hand, the idea of total conversion to Islam of non-titular ethnic groups in Kazakhstan looks unrealistic... Not to mention the fact that the interreligious processes at the moment reflect the centrifugal, not centripetal forces and, it leads, obviously not to the strong nation-building on a national scale, but to the disintegration, even in the titular ethnic group.

It is clear that the factor of the religious revival in the country can be both an important ally in the process of nation building, and a serious obstacle to its consolidation.

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