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Eurasian project of Nursultan Nazarbayev

In March 29, 1994 at a meeting with the teaching staff of Lomonosov Moscow state University Nursultan Nazarbayev clearly outlined his opinion and suggestions about the prospects of post-Soviet States. He put forward the idea of establishing completely new enterprises of the countries - participants of the CIS and proposed to call it the Eurasian Union - the EAU.

"The Eurasian Union is necessary, - said the President of Kazakhstan. - European countries with long statehood go together, and the word "confederation" is increasingly heard there. They are well aware that the world market polarize in a hard way. North America, Japan, as well as Asia's "young tigers". We, the republics of the former Soviet Union, due to our history and destiny are prepared for a single community. We have similar forms and mechanisms of relations and management, general mentality etc. We are doomed to trust each other.

The question is that some political leaders, and not only them, have a political fear of the revival of the empire. We don't need to be afraid of the word "union". After all, there is, for example, the European Union. We are all equal, and my current visit to Russia is the recognition of this equality."

"I think, - said N. Nazarbayev - in Western Europe politicians are ahead in the Union, and the people are behind. And in CIS, on the contrary: the people want unification, and politicians are lagging behind... We could start a Union in the EAU with Kazakhstan and Russia".

Some of the opponents of N. Nazarbayev tried to imagine his Eurasian project as an attempt to restore the Soviet Union by a different name. But it was either a mistake or deliberate falsification. In the first book of his memoirs, written in 1996, N. Nazarbayev clearly stated that the post-Soviet

space is not a Phoenix that can rise from the ashes. No power options of integration in the CIS is unacceptable and impossible. We are talking only about voluntary integration, based on the obvious economic benefits and reasonably understood national interests.

In an extensive interview for the newspaper "Russia" in late October 1995, N. Nazarbayev said: "The severe crisis that has gripped the countries of the CIS is impossible to overcome without our mutual cooperation. We need to "refine" our common living space. Voluntary isolation of the CIS countries, even under the banner of sovereignty, is equal to regression and total degradation. The formation of the Eurasian Union inside and along with the CIS could be, on the one hand, the historic compromise that is so necessary today in the post-Soviet independent States, on the other - the prototype of the future Union of countries and peoples at a much higher level. Unfortunately, Russia does not offer us a coherent integration programme. Russia should as soon as possible to determine its geo-strategic interests. Time is running out. "Confusion and vacillation" in the CIS countries is caused by the fact that the Republics have to solve their economic and geopolitical objectives alone. Weak, as you know, doesn't choose his allies, and is subject to who is stronger".

Throughout the period of 1995-2000, nearly all the most significant integration initiatives in the CIS countries came from Kazakhstan and personally from Nursultan Nazarbayev. Formation of Customs Union began, which in 1996 included only three States. New relationships were established and strengthened within the framework of the Central Asian Union - CAU. These pulses were not very significant and noticeable at that time. However, with the beginning of the XXI century, the integration process continued to gain momentum, and the President of Kazakhstan was the first who performed major initiatives in this area.

The transition from words and sentences to projects was slow, but nonetheless functioning. Organization of collective security treaty, or CSTO,

became in the last few years one of the most important and successful associations within the CIS. It includes 6 countries: Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan. The main task of the CSTO is the fight against international terrorism and religious extremism, illegal migration and drug trafficking.

The most important part of the Eurasian project was the creation of the Eurasian economic community, or EurAsEC in 2000. This community was founded on the initiative of Nursultan Nazarbayev on the basis of gradually formed Customs Union. Besides Kazakhstan, the Eurasian economic community included from the very beginning Russia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The initial focus of this new international organization was the formation of the free trade regime between the logged on countries of the common customs tariff and a unified system of nontariff regulation. Extremely important is the fact that many rules and regulations for interaction between the participants of the EurAsEC was created on the base of the experience and regulations already adopted and tested in the European Union.

At the end of 2005 Uzbekistan, the country which in the previous 10 years did not support integration initiatives of Kazakhstan, announced its desire to join the EurAsEC. It took only a few months to add Uzbekistan to the already concluded agreements and rules in the framework of this Community. In January 25, 2006 the heads of the member states of the EEC, met in an extraordinary summit, which was held in Konstantinovsky Palace in St.-Petersburg under the chairmanship of Alexander Lukashenko. It was here where it was decided to accept the Republic of Uzbekistan to the Community.

Turkmenistan, as we know, has included in its Constitution a provision about "eternal neutrality". It is not the part of the EEC, though its cooperation with Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Russia in 2006-2007 increased significantly. Georgia dreams of joining the European Union, not the Community. Azerbaijan does not cooperate with EurAsEC as well. Ukraine, Moldova and Armenia asked and received the EurAsEC observer status.

The EurAsEC Secretary General, Kazakh politician and economist T. Mansurov said: "Creation of the Eurasian economic community is not a political improvisation. The idea about necessity of creation of such a community belongs to President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev. It goes back to his project of forming a Eurasian Union of States. This idea was first presented widely in his speech at Lomonosov Moscow state University in 1994. It is the result of evolved understanding of the need to maximally utilize and further strengthen historically developed trade and economic ties, vital for neighboring countries. EurAsEC is a qualitatively new integration organization in the post-Soviet space. It is the undisputed leader among the regional associations on the efficiency and dynamics of development".

"The leadership of Kazakhstan and the President of Kazakhstan are in fact the driving force in what concerns the integration in the post-Soviet space. Much of what has been achieved in the field of integration was done on the initiative of the President of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbayev".

The formation and operation of the EurAsEC is the main achievement in the implementation of the Eurasian project of Nursultan Nazarbayev.

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