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## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR EXPANDING CHINA KAZAKHSTAN INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

### Abstract

Kazakhstan is the first place to advocate the “the Belt and Road” initiative. The original intention of proposing this initiative is to draw on the ancient Silk Road, take connectivity as the main line, strengthen policy communication, facility connectivity, trade facilitation, financial integration, and people-to-people connectivity with other countries, inject new momentum into world economic growth, open up new space for global development, and create new platforms for international cooperation. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Kazakhstan in 1992, the international economic cooperation between China and Kazakhstan has achieved remarkable results. It has laid a very important foundation for enhancing the well-being of the two peoples. How to continuously improve the level of trade and investment facilitation in the future, how to continue expanding the import of high-quality green agricultural products from Kazakhstan, how to expand green energy cooperation, especially how to create new growth points for cooperation, strengthen the connection between the construction of the “Digital Silk Road” and the “Digital Kazakhstan” strategy, and promote digital economic cooperation are strategic priorities for economic and trade cooperation between the two countries. A healthy, stable, and vibrant China-Kazakhstan relationship is beneficial for the development and revitalization of both countries, as well as for regional peace and stability.

**Key words:** “the Belt and Road”, China Kazakhstan international economic cooperation, China-Kazakhstan relations, strategic priorities, path choice, China

### Introduction

“The Belt and Road” and the status quo of China Kazakhstan international economic cooperation

Since 2013, China has put forward the development concept of the “Belt and Road”, signed the Joint Declaration of China and Kazakhstan on Further Deepening the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, proposed the initiative of jointly building the “Silk Road Economic Belt”, and actively linked China’s development strategy with Kazakhstan’s “Bright Road” new economic policy[1], which is an important measure for China to promote the building of an open world economy and promote the reform of the global governance system. Since the proposal was put forward, it has received positive responses from important participating countries along the route, greatly enhancing China’s international shaping power. At present, after more than 30 years of development, trade and investment exchanges between China, Kazakhstan and Kazakhstan have become increasingly close. From January to September 2023, China invested 1.3 billion US dollars in Kazakhstan, a year-on-year increase of 36.5%. In 2023, there were a total of 2400 Chinese-funded enterprises in Kazakhstan, an increase of 37.8%. It covers a wide range of blank areas, which brings great development opportunities for both China and Kazakhstan. It not only promotes people-to-people and cultural exchanges and mutual learning between China and Kazakhstan, but also promotes economic cooperation and win-win results between the two countries through the construction of cooperation projects in agriculture, science and technology, education, tourism and other fields, enhances the friendship between the two peoples, and injects new impetus into the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind [2].

The purpose of the study. The purpose of the scientific article is to analyze the strategic priorities of China-Kazakhstan international economic cooperation in terms of its current trends, factors and prospects.

To achieve the goal of scientific work, the following tasks are set:

- Identification of key areas of cooperation between China and Kazakhstan in various fields such as trade, investment, transport, high technology and energy.
- Assessment of the impact of external economic factors on the development of bilateral relations, including global economic conditions, the political situation and initiatives such as "One Belt, One Road".
- Analysis of existing challenges and risks related to economic cooperation, as well as the formation of recommendations to minimize them.
- Identify prospects for further development of cooperation, including the development of strategies that promote sustainable growth and mutually beneficial partnership.

The scientific work aims to contribute to an understanding of current trends in Chinese-Kazakh economic cooperation and to offer practical recommendations for improving an effective strategy of cooperation between the two countries. Currently, cooperation projects implemented between China and Kazakhstan cover many areas, such as the automotive industry, chemical industry, mining and metallurgical industries. However, the educational sphere, according to Wu Zunmi, A. Akramova, Liu Lizzun, is and remains a priority area in the field of cooperation between the two countries [3]. Kazakh scientists L.A. Medukhanova, J.A. Serieva, in a scientific article on "China's Influence on Economic Cooperation Between Kazakhstan and Central Asian Countries" (2020), believe that currently, China, as the largest economic power, exerts a powerful influence on neighboring countries in various aspects of regional and international cooperation.: from military issues to economic cooperation. One of these regions is Central Asia (CA), which has become an important target for China's plans in the last decade in light of the implementation of its primarily foreign economic strategy. Kazakhstan, in turn, being the largest Central Asian country in terms of its economy, also aims to develop regional economic cooperation with other countries of the region: Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. At the same time, the economies of all Central Asian countries, and above all Kazakhstan, are strongly influenced by Chinese projects aimed at interacting with them. Among these projects, the most important place is occupied by the "One Belt, One Road" project, created in connection with it by the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the Silk Road Fund, etc. The purpose of the article is to identify the impact of China's projects in Central Asia on the development of economic cooperation between Kazakhstan and neighbouring countries in the Central Asian region. To achieve this goal, analytical and statistical research methods such as the analysis of foreign and domestic publications on the topic under study, and statistical data characterizing the economy and foreign trade of China and Central Asian countries were used. China, currently a major player in the economies of Central Asian countries and especially Kazakhstan, has an additional positive and negative impact on Kazakhstan's strategic economic cooperation with other Central Asian countries [4].

The Russian scientist Cherevyk K.A. in his scientific work *Strategic Cooperation Between The Republic of Kazakhstan and China: Trade and Economic Aspect* (2022y), showed the investment picture that Investment cooperation between the two countries. Kazakhstan is a leading country in terms of attracting Chinese investments to Central Asia. The main areas of Chinese investment in Kazakhstan are oil and gas, construction and mining, transportation and warehousing. In addition to the already mentioned regulatory legal acts, investment cooperation between the two countries is regulated by the following documents: The Agreement on the establishment of the Kazakh-Chinese Business Council, the Memorandum on Cooperation in the field of Industrialization and investments and the Framework Agreement in the field of industrialization and Investments. As for joint projects in this area, China and Kazakhstan have signed 33 agreements on cooperation in various industries, from energy and oil refining to the production of automobiles and flat glass. Among the joint projects was also the construction of the

first Chinese industrial park abroad in the Kazakh port city of Aktau on the Caspian Sea. Currently, 55 joint projects of the two countries with a total value of \$27.6 billion are being implemented in Kazakhstan. The United States in the fields of automotive, agriculture, chemical, mining, oil and gas, construction, metallurgy, light industry, production of mineral fertilizers, energy, transport and logistics, and new technologies [5].

### **Materials and methods of research**

The object of this research is the international economic cooperation between Kazakhstan and China, including the analysis of strategic priorities, directions, and mechanisms of interaction. The study covers various aspects of bilateral relations, such as trade, investments, infrastructure development, and cultural exchanges, in the context of current global economic and political conditions.

Research methods:

- Document analysis. The study of official documents, agreements and statistics related to bilateral relations between Kazakhstan and China. This includes treaties, government reports, and resolutions of international organizations.

- Comparative analysis. A comparison of the strategies and approaches of both countries in the field of international economic cooperation. This method will allow you to identify common and distinctive features in approaches to interaction, as well as identify successful practices.

- Case method. Study of specific examples of successful projects and initiatives within the framework of Kazakh-Chinese cooperation. This may include an analysis of economic projects such as the Belt and Road Initiative and their impact on infrastructure and trade development in the region.

- Qualitative and quantitative analysis. The use of data processing methods to identify trends and patterns in trade and investment. This may include an analysis of the dynamics of the foreign economic activity of Kazakhstan and China in recent years.

Since the “the Belt and Road” initiative has been promoted, the focus of China-Kazakhstan economic cooperation has shifted from simple resource complementarity to coordination and cooperation under the multilateral cooperation framework. Based on this transformation approach and strategic focus, the two countries should fully leverage their ability to coordinate and cooperate in future economic cooperation. The practical path needs to be based on the theoretical foundation of geo-economic development, adhering to the principle of joint construction, using transportation and market trade facilitation as the link, adhering to the modernization of agricultural technology and the integration of culture and tourism as the primary content, establishing industrial alliances as the breakthrough point, exploring the digital Silk Road as the focus, promoting the “dual carbon” goal through green energy cooperation as the practical path, consolidating the consensus of economic cooperation between China and Kazakhstan, deepening and expanding more potential areas of cooperation between the two countries, gradually promoting the transformation of bilateral to multilateral economic cooperation, and ultimately achieving a new pattern of regional integrated economic development of “alliance, joint construction, and linkage”.

### **Results and its discussion**

The trade turnover between Kazakhstan and China has been showing significant growth, reaching records in recent years. Kazakhstan's main exports are raw materials, while China actively supplies high-tech products and consumer goods, strengthening bilateral ties.

Let's consider the total trade turnover between Kazakhstan and China for 2021-2022 in the following table.

Table 1 - Trade turnover between Kazakhstan and China in 2021-2022

Indicators	Units of measurement	The 2021 year	The 2022 year	Absolute Deviations +,-	Relative Deviations %	Share in the structure of trade turnover of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Trade turnover	billions of US dollars	18	24,1	+6,1	133,9	18
Exports	billions of US dollars	9,8	13,2	+3,4	140,8	15,6
Imports	billions of US dollars	8,2	11	+2,8	134,1	21,9

Note: The table is based on the materials [6]

Exports from Kazakhstan increased by 40.8% over the year, to 13.2 billion US dollars. The share of Kazakhstan's exports to China accounted for a significant 15.6% of the country's total trade turnover. Imports from China to Kazakhstan increased by 33.9% over the year, to 11 billion US dollars. China's share in the import structure of the Republic of Kazakhstan was 21.9%.

Table 2 – Key export categories in Kazakhstan's trade with China

Indicators	Units of measurement	The 2021 year	The 2022 year	Absolute Deviations +,-	Relative Deviations %
Exports	billions of US dollars	9,8	13,2	+3,4	140,8
Crude oil and petroleum products	billions of US dollars	1,9	4,1	+2,2	220
Refined copper and copper alloys	billions of US dollars	1,99	2,3	+0,31	115,6
Natural gas	billions of US dollars	1,06	1,2	+0,14	113,6

Note: The table is based on the materials [6]

Crude oil and petroleum products are in the first place among Kazakhstan's key export categories to China: 4.1 billion US dollars, which is 2.2 times more than a year earlier. Next are refined copper and copper alloys (2.3 billion US dollars, plus 15.6% per year), as well as natural gas (1.2 billion US dollars, plus 13.6%).

Table 3 – Key import categories in Kazakhstan's trade with China

Indicators	Units of measurement	2021 year	2022 year	Absolute Deviations +,-	Relative Deviations %
Imports	billions of US dollars	8,2	11	+2,8	134,1
Phones and smartphones	billions of US dollars	0,7	0,91	+0,21	129,6
Clothing and accessories	billions of US dollars	0,37	0,83	+0,46	224,3
Tires and auto parts	billions of US dollars	0,93	0,197	-0,733	21

Note: The table is based on the materials [6]

At the same time, among the key categories of imports from China to Kazakhstan, phones and smartphones occupy the first place: USD 910.7 million, which is 29.6% more than a year earlier. The main imported product groups also include clothing, tires, and auto parts.

In 2023, China's GDP will be 1.260582 trillion yuan, an increase of 5.2% over the previous year. The GDP of Kazakhstan in 2023 is \$261.4 billion, a year-on-year increase of 5.1% (see Figure 1 for details on the growth rate in key areas). China and Kazakhstan have great potential for economic complementarity in international economic cooperation, and the cooperation between the two countries has entered the stage of building a permanent comprehensive strategic partnership. The relationship between the two countries is advancing to a higher level.

Firstly, from the perspective of industrial structure, China and Kazakhstan have significant complementarity in industrial development. China is a major agricultural country, and due to its natural geographical advantages, fruits, walnuts, peanuts, sugar, and livestock products are its

main export products. Especially in 2023, China's fruit exports to Kazakhstan reached 136300 tons, an increase of 1.2 times; Soybeans and barley are the backbone of Kazakhstan's agriculture. In 2023, the export volume of its oilseeds (sunflower seeds, flaxseed) to China reached 631300 tons, a year-on-year increase of 50%. Therefore, Kazakhstan has a relative advantage in the cultivation of crops such as sunflowers. The close import and export trade of agricultural products between the two countries plays an important role in improving the level of agricultural development, enhancing people's well-being, and ensuring food security [7].

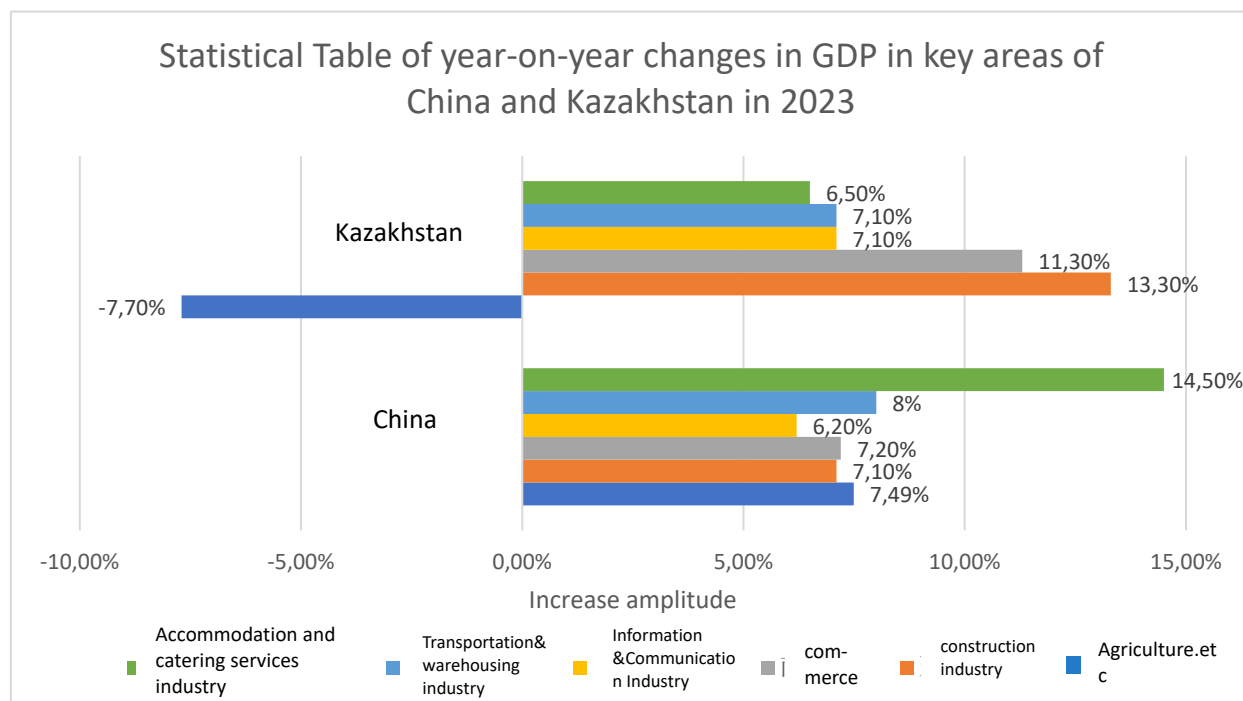


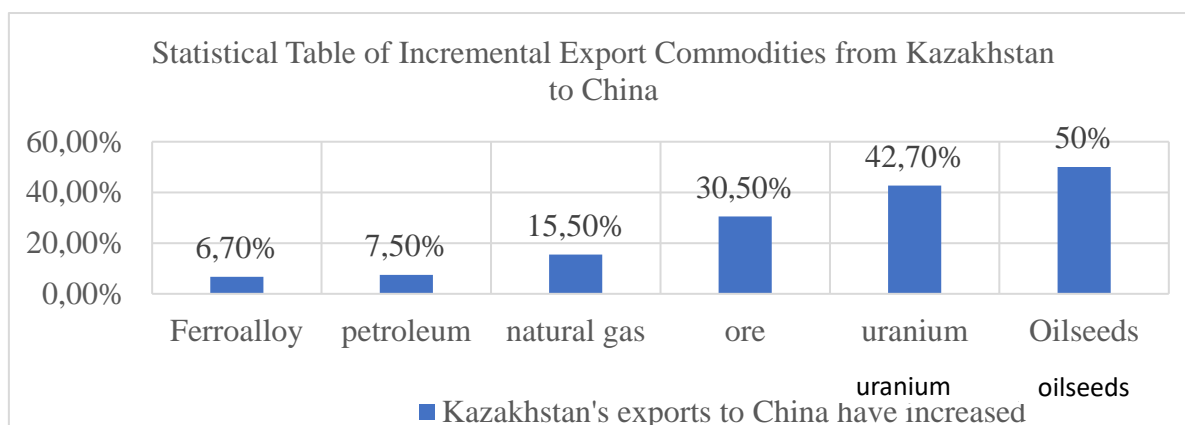
Figure 1 - Statistical Table of year-on-year changes in GDP in key areas of China and Kazakhstan in 2023

Note: compiled by the author

Secondly, China is a major manufacturing country, and the international image of “Made in China” continues to improve. The manufacturing industry has a complete range of categories, a relatively complete industrial system, and advanced manufacturing technology. The advantages of infrastructure and professional skilled talents are significant. Manufacturing giants such as Fuyao Glass, Huawei, and China Construction have demonstrated their excellent market share and leading technology. China has helped Kazakhstan improve its industrial development level by exporting advanced industrial equipment and technology to Kazakhstan; Kazakhstan, on the other hand, is dominated by natural resource-based industries such as oil, natural gas, minerals, etc., and has abundant natural resources. Kazakhstan can provide China with rich natural resources such as oil to meet the demand of China's economic development. Supported by the “Belt and Road” policy, the price of crude oil in the international market has declined. According to the theory of trade surplus and deficit, China's demand for coal, oil and other resources has shifted from trade deficit to trade surplus. For example, Sinopec's investment in the polyethylene project in Kazakhstan is the first petrochemical project constructed by China in Kazakhstan, which effectively enhances the level of cooperation between the two countries in the energy sector.

Finally, China's transportation and modern logistics industries have developed rapidly, and the construction of convenient transportation and diversified transportation modes has greatly reduced trade transportation costs; However, Kazakhstan's tertiary industry has a relatively low proportion, and its tourism industry has good development prospects. The visa-free policy towards China has also promoted the development of the tourism economy in both countries [8].

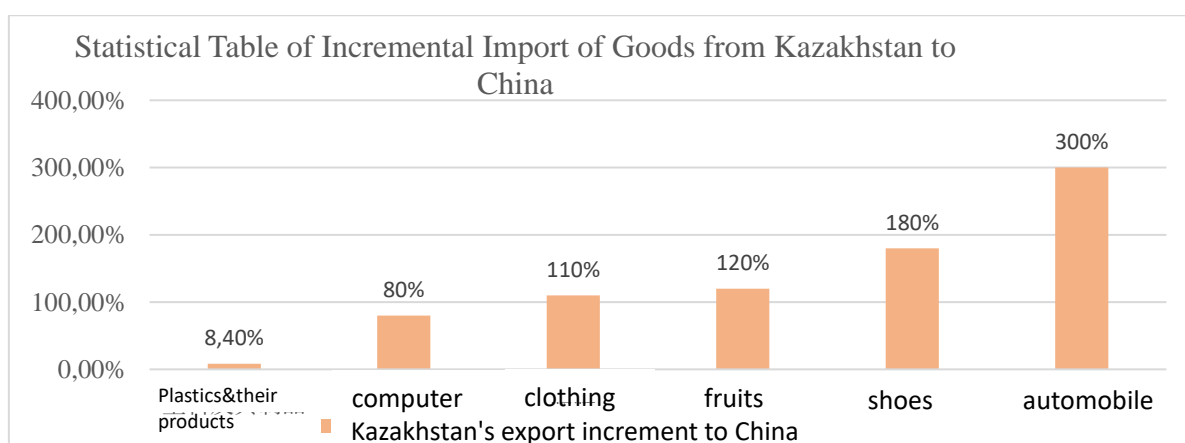
Secondly, from the perspective of technological innovation, China and Kazakhstan also have strong complementarity in technological innovation. On the one hand, China has made significant progress in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, and cloud computing, and has a large number of excellent research institutions and talents; On the other hand, Kazakhstan also has certain scientific research capabilities in fields such as aerospace and nuclear energy. Technological innovation provides a vast space for cooperation between the two countries in the field of science and technology. In recent years, the two countries have continuously carried out scientific research cooperation, promoted technological innovation and industrial upgrading, driven related economic growth, and achieved mutual benefit and win-win results. Especially in 2023, China and Kazakhstan jointly signed the China-Kazakhstan Joint Laboratory Agreement for Remote Sensing Technology and Applications, which was included in the list of achievements of the first China Asia Summit and received high attention from the governments of China and Kazakhstan. The unveiling of the China-Kazakhstan Joint Laboratory of Remote Sensing Technology and Applications in Almaty in March 2024 marks practical achievements in strengthening scientific and technological cooperation between China and Kazakhstan, providing



strong technological support for the construction of the Green Silk Road and the promotion of regional sustainable development.

Figures 2 - Statistical Table of Incremental Export Commodities from Kazakhstan to China

Note: compiled by the author



Figures 3 - Statistical Table of Incremental Import of Goods from Kazakhstan to China

Note: compiled by the author

Thirdly, from the perspective of market trade, China is one of Kazakhstan's important trading partners. China firmly holds the position of Kazakhstan's second-largest trading partner,

first-largest export destination, and second-largest import source country. In 2023, Kazakhstan's foreign trade amounted to 139.8 billion US dollars, of which exports accounted for 56.3%. The trade volume between China and Kazakhstan increased from 24.2 billion US dollars in 2022 to 31.5 billion US dollars in 2023, a year-on-year increase of 30.17%. In 2023, the import volume of Kazakhstan to China increased by 44.8% to 3.9 million tons, with an import value of 16.7 billion US dollars, and the export volume increased by 34.7% to 19.8 million tons, with an export value of 14.7 billion US dollars (see Figures 2 and 3 for specific import and export information).

After the establishment of the Russia-Belarus Kazakhstan Customs Union and the Eurasian Economic Union, their trade transfer and trade creation effects have correspondingly changed, and the construction of the China-Kazakhstan Free Trade Area has thus taken a new step forward. In addition, Kazakhstan has become the second country to open a national pavilion on Alibaba's e-commerce platform. As of April 2022, 196 Kazakh companies have settled on Alibaba's international e-commerce platform. There are over 5000 Kazakhstan products for sale on the Alibaba trading platform. From 2020 to 2022, the total sales scale of Chinese enterprises through B2B electronic platforms exceeded 300 million US dollars. It is worth mentioning that as of 2023, 25 Kazakh brands have successfully settled on the JD platform, among which food products sold out in their first trial run, setting a record for the fastest sales. This reflects China's advantages in promoting digitalization and e-commerce, as well as Kazakhstan's aspiration for the Chinese trade market. In the current post-pandemic era, the global economy has been severely impacted and economic recovery is extremely difficult. The continuous growth of trade volume between China and Kazakhstan undoubtedly demonstrates the tacit understanding of cooperation between the two countries in various fields of economy and trade.

Fourthly, from the perspective of geopolitical culture, among the various factors that affect China-Kazakhstan relations, geopolitical factors are inevitably one of the most profound and influential.

Gelvig Svetlana pointed out that China's foreign policy has a clear geopolitical priority, and any country has a "friendly country belt". The geographical location and friendly international relations between China and Kazakhstan have demonstrated strong complementarity in promoting cultural exchanges and maintaining regional peace and stability. As important nodes of the Silk Road Economic Belt, China and Kazakhstan can jointly address various challenges and create favorable conditions for regional economic prosperity and win-win cooperation between the two countries.

Of course, this complementarity is not only reflected in the mutual benefit and win-win situation between the two sides but also in a deep foundation of friendship and cooperation. China's cultural and educational institutions such as Confucius Institutes and Luban Workshops in Kazakhstan have spread excellent traditional Chinese culture to Kazakhstan, promoting cultural collision and integration between the two countries. China's East China Normal University, Shanghai University and other universities have established Kazakhstan research centers, while Central University for Nationalities and other universities offer programs in the Kazakh language. These collaborations have deepened cultural tolerance and friendship between the two countries. In addition, the 2019 Sino Kazakhstan co produced film *Musician* grossed 3.548 million yuan at the box office, and won the Outstanding Feature Film Award at the 18th China Ornamental Column Film Awards. In 2024, Kazakhstan's latest film and television production "At least in the Movies" was filmed at Hengdian Cinema in Zhejiang, China. This is the first production team from five Central Asian countries received by Hengdian, which not only provides new opportunities for cultural exchange between China and Kazakhstan but also promotes friendly cultural and economic cooperation between the two countries.

In summary, China and Kazakhstan, as strategic partners, have their own characteristics and advantages in the development of economic law. Both sides can fully utilize their respective strengths, explore the strategic priorities of international economic cooperation between the two countries, strengthen cooperation and exchanges in various fields, jointly promote the international

economic development of the two countries, achieve mutual benefit and win-win results, and thus jointly promote the sustainable development of the global economy.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Kazakhstan in 1992, the international economic exchanges between China and Kazakhstan have been more than 30 years. With the joint construction of “the Belt and Road” initiative and the docking of Kazakhstan’s “Bright Road” new economic policy, the international economic cooperation between China and Kazakhstan has reached a new level, which undoubtedly has special strategic significance for both countries. The author believes that, based on existing research and the current status of international economic cooperation between China and Kazakhstan, as well as the comparative advantages of both countries, two key directions need to be discussed to expand the strategic focus of international economic cooperation between China and Kazakhstan. One is to continuously deepen the transformation of industrial structure and strengthen regional integration construction; The second is to explore the possibility of new cooperation models in key areas.

*1. Reasonably adjust industrial structure, promote investment and regional economic integration*

The first and second industries, such as agriculture and manufacturing, have always been the core areas of cooperation between the two countries. For Kazakhstan, on the one hand, rural and remote areas have relatively scarce resources, and due to social factors such as the pandemic, manufacturing and transportation infrastructure are relatively outdated. A. A. Kireyeva and N. K. Nurlanova et al. found through studying urban and settlement data in the Zambir region, East Kazakhstan, and North Kazakhstan that the economic focus of some areas of Kazakhstan needs to shift from low value-added traditional basic industries to manufacturing, transportation, and social infrastructure. At the same time, the quality of government regulation needs to be improved to stimulate entrepreneurship and attract investment. On the other hand, the total foreign direct investment in Kazakhstan from 1993 to 2011 was \$146.633 billion. China’s foreign direct investment ranking in Kazakhstan dropped from seventh in 2010 to eighth in 2011, and China’s investment in Kazakhstan expanded from the energy sector to non energy sectors. In this situation, China’s investment in Kazakhstan is not simply a matter of “occupying the market” for its own benefit, but actively demonstrating constructive efforts and striving for win-win outcomes to the greatest extent possible.

In this way, the economic cooperation center between China and Kazakhstan should also make corresponding changes, that is, attach importance to the development of the tertiary industry such as tourism and logistics transportation, and increase the construction of investment projects between China and Kazakhstan. Therefore, how to adjust the industrial structure reasonably to solve the problem of diversified exports, how to promote the development of the tertiary industries such as tourism, logistics, and services in China and Kazakhstan, and how increased investment promotion efforts have become one of the strategic priorities of international economic cooperation between China and Kazakhstan.

Secondly, cross-border trade between China and Kazakhstan is thriving, with multiple entities such as the government, enterprises, and research institutes contributing to the improvement of the market trade mechanism. Due to the high degree of shared interests in economic cooperation between China and Kazakhstan, coordination and cooperation within international organizations and multilateral frameworks have been deepened. However, there are significant differences in the total economic output and structure between the two countries. In 2020, China’s total economic output was 86 times that of Kazakhstan. Due to economic strength limitations, Kazakhstan’s investment in China is relatively small. As of the end of 2021, Kazakhstan’s total investment in China was only 154 million US dollars, which is less than China’s total investment in Kazakhstan for the whole year of 2021. This to some extent limits the scale of bilateral strategic cooperation between the two countries. Therefore, transitioning from bilateral to multilateral, establishing industrial alliances, continuously promoting the construction of the China-Kazakhstan Free Trade Zone, and strengthening regional integration are also strategic priorities for economic cooperation between the two countries.



## *2. Explore new models of cooperation in key areas and tap into unknown potential between the two countries*

One is that China's rise cannot be separated from the era value endowed by informatization and digitization. If the logistics and transportation industry at that time stimulated the possibility of economic cooperation between the two countries, then today's high-tech fields such as artificial intelligence and cloud computing are not only favorable means for China's high-quality economic development but also key areas for future economic cooperation between China and Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan has a weak foundation in the development of the digital economy, lagging behind China in various aspects such as facilities, equipment, technological means, and professional talents. Based on the theory of digital economy, digital resources and products have the property of decreasing cost or increasing benefit within a certain limit. Once a digital platform is successfully built and can be used by multiple people, its marginal cost decreases and social benefits increase, which is the foundation for the formation of economies of scale and sharing economy. Therefore, based on the local characteristics of both countries, strengthening digital economic governance capabilities, exploring more cooperation projects and models in the digital field between the two countries, and seeking opportunities for cooperation are strategic priorities for international economic cooperation between the two countries [9].

Secondly, the "dual carbon" goal and green economy are not only key areas for China's future economic development but also inevitable issues for the community with a shared future for mankind. According to the principles of carbon economics, the cost and benefit of reducing carbon emissions do not match. The cost of reducing emissions in terms of technological level, energy efficiency, and other aspects needs to be borne by the reducing country. The economic benefits are not visible to the naked eye are difficult to achieve in the short term, and may even have a certain degree of altruism. In this situation, focusing on the transformation of green energy and tapping into the enormous potential for green economic development between the two countries has become a strategic priority for economic cooperation [10].

### *1. Persist in making agriculture and tourism the core competitiveness of China Kazakhstan cooperation*

At present, although economic cooperation between China and Kazakhstan has developed in various fields, agriculture and tourism have always been the "cornerstone" of the two countries' economic development, and an eternal issue for both sides' economic development and cooperation. Therefore, we should follow the development path of "steady progress and steady improvement" and face new challenges and opportunities.

In terms of agricultural development, Kazakhstan has a vast farmland area, strong global export capacity for grains, and lower labor costs compared to China. These advantages are the basis of China Kazakhstan cooperation. However, Kazakhstan has a slight lack of crop breeding technology, with long and aging crop seeds, and only one-third of new varieties of seeds. Farmers and farms lack the funds to purchase new seeds, which has led to a decline in their agricultural production. In this way, Kazakhstan can cooperate with the China Agricultural Research and Technology Experimental Station to strengthen the breeding of new varieties, update crop varieties, utilize water-saving irrigation systems, use new agricultural machinery and equipment, and effectively improve agricultural product yields. At the same time, we will increase the scale of agricultural cooperation between the two sides, intensify investment in building factories in Kazakhstan, vigorously develop the demonstrative role of the China Kazakhstan Science and Technology Base, and promote agricultural science and technology as well as agricultural product processing methods.

In terms of tourism development, with the arrival of the post-pandemic era, China and Kazakhstan have introduced a series of incentive policies, closely cooperated in the tourism field, worked together to cope with the impact of the pandemic, and restored the vitality of the tourism industry. Based on restoring passenger clearance at all five land transport ports in China and Kazakhstan by July 2023, further exploration of more possibilities for Central Asian tourism routes should be carried out. Some tourists are more inclined towards Southeast Asian tourism compared

to Central Asian tourism, partly due to the promotional effect of news media using Nha Trang Beach in Vietnam as a selling point and vigorously promoting Southeast Asian tourism on mainstream social platforms. The common languages in Kazakhstan are mainly Kazakh and Russian, which have high communication costs. Chinese and Kazakh people have a limited understanding of each other's culture, history, and geography, and there are also few ways to obtain information on tourism strategies. The two sides have not yet formed a cultural tourism interaction mechanism. On the other hand, China and Southeast Asia have stronger complementary tourism resources, while Central Asia is relatively weaker. There is only one high-quality beach in Sanya, Hainan in China, while the abundant islands and excellent sea resources in Southeast Asia are more attractive to tourists. However, China and Kazakhstan are adjacent, with similar natural climate conditions and high repetition of tourist landscapes and resources, making it difficult to attract tourists' favor. Therefore, the development of China Kazakhstan tourism must also rely on the "Belt and Road". On the one hand, build a cluster effect of China-Kazakhstan border tourism brands, strengthen the construction of local tourism supporting facilities, carry out smart tourism one-stop service, and launch "Silk Road" tourism route products, especially China's excellent intangible cultural heritage, such as lacquer and ceramic products, hand embroidery and weaving works, painted clay sculptures, tea and food. These "Silk Road" tourism route products can not only directly promote tourism economic growth, but also export China's excellent traditional culture to the world. On the other hand, with the help of China's excellent experience in the development of the Internet, we can use the "Dream", "Space Dream" and "Future Architecture" as gimmicks to dig deeper into the urban connotation of Almaty, Baiko and Astana, differentiate China Kazakhstan tourism positioning, attract young tourists, form the "Internet celebrity" effect, and drive and enhance Kazakhstan's tourism competitiveness.

## *2. Establishing an industrial alliance to improve cross-border channels between China and Kazakhstan as a priority area for cooperation*

Both China-Kazakhstan border ports are located in Xinjiang. Since the docking of the "the Belt and Road" and the "Bright Road", China Kazakhstan trade industry has developed rapidly, and the demand for cross-border transportation has increased dramatically. In this context, accelerating the construction of transportation and logistics infrastructure, adapting to market demand, and building transportation and logistics systems can not only enhance the economic well-being of both countries, but also promote trade facilitation, achieve industrial alliance and regional economic integration, and accelerate the integration of the two countries into the world economic system. In this way, improving the cross-border channels between China and Kazakhstan will inevitably become a priority area for economic cooperation between the two countries.

One is to accelerate the improvement of the transportation and logistics system. In the context of the "the Belt and Road Initiative", the China Kazakhstan cross-border passage mainly relies on maritime transport, roads and railways, and the logistics system is an important guarantee for cross-border economic and trade cooperation. By jointly building and improving logistics infrastructure, improving logistics efficiency, reducing logistics costs, optimizing logistics network layout, and promoting logistics information technology, we aim to provide more efficient and convenient logistics services for both parties' enterprises, promote trade facilitation, and smooth trade channels. Ultimately, China will be able to achieve its economic development policy of "going global" while also meeting Kazakhstan's demand for attracting foreign investment and supporting the diversified development of its industries.

Secondly, according to the mayor's economic theory, enterprises and the market are the main resource allocation methods for regulating production. However, ordinary market regulation cannot be satisfied with the innovative development of the current China-Kazakhstan economic cooperation. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a China-Kazakhstan industrial alliance, leverage the market advantages of both sides and link new fields. This not only avoids the lengthy process of resource integration but also leverages the complementary mechanism of advantages between China and Kazakhstan. Industrial alliances can internalize common issues in the industries of both

countries, save costs, and facilitate access to external resources. They are an inevitable path for economies of scale and integration with regional economies. Members of the industry alliance can share infrastructure and reduce product costs, increase economic profits, enhance cohesion among alliance members, collaborate to improve the global competitiveness of the industry, and promote economic development for both parties through joint procurement.

### *3. Exploring the Digital Silk Road and Building a New Pattern of Digital Cooperation*

The development prospects of the digital economy in Central Asian countries are promising, and it is the most promising emerging field for improving regional economic integration. China and Kazakhstan have initially established a good cooperative relationship in the development of the digital economy, but still need to strengthen the establishment of a cooperative mechanism system. Therefore, making the “Digital Silk Road” a priority area for economic cooperation between the two countries, fully focusing on cloud computing and artificial intelligence technology, creating Silk Road e-commerce and smart payments, cultivating digital economy talents, and jointly building the China Kazakhstan Digital Silk Road, opening up a new pattern of digital cooperation.

Firstly, Kazakhstan is in the early stages of developing its digital economy, while China has already achieved phased results in digital fields such as cloud computing and artificial intelligence technology, which can provide strong guidance for Kazakhstan’s digital infrastructure construction. In the process of digital economy development, one thing that cannot be ignored is people’s trust in electronic products and the Internet. In China, the development of the digital economy largely depends on people’s trust and dependence on electronic products. People can go out without keys or cash, and they can even buy any clothes or food they want without leaving their homes. More and more people choose to use their phones and computers at home on their weekends. But up to now, the trust of the Kazakh people in electronic products and the Internet has not yet been fully formed. Computer and Internet services are unfamiliar to most people. In particular, inflation and currency devaluation in 2014-2015 led to a sharp decline in the purchasing power of residents, which has a great negative impact on the development of Kazakhstan’s digital economy. People do not trust the digital economy market, but most trust Bitcoin. Therefore, 80% of people will not use bank cards to shop online, which makes Kazakhstan’s digital economy seriously lack the involvement of the Internet and become difficult to develop. Only in the past three years has the number of electronic products imported by Kazakhstan from China increased significantly, and the acceptance of the digital economy by the people of Kazakhstan has gradually increased.

In this way, China’s leading experience in the digital economy becomes particularly important. It can not only cooperate with Kazakhstan to accelerate the construction of hardware and software infrastructure such as the Internet of Things, cloud platforms, and blockchain, helping Kazakhstan build convenient and efficient digital platforms, but also share digital governance experience and practices, accelerate Kazakhstan’s economic digital transformation, and enrich its digital ecosystem.

Secondly, according to customs calculations, the total import and export volume of China’s cross-border e-commerce will reach 2.38 trillion yuan in 2023, an increase of 15.6% [11]. Among them, exports amounted to 1.83 trillion yuan, an increase of 19.6%; Imports amounted to 548.3 billion yuan, an increase of 3.9%. Based on the advantages of the industrial foundation between China and Kazakhstan, we will continue to improve policies such as taxation, foreign exchange, and one-click customs clearance. We will innovate and implement the “Silk Road E-commerce Live Streaming + Industrial Belt” cultivation project, or explore M2B2C and B2B2C business models to customize smart payment terminal systems for Kazakhstan. Combined with modern logistics service systems, we will not only reduce costs and increase efficiency but also provide more employment opportunities for both parties.

Third, the education rate of Central Asian countries is generally high, but due to the age of the population, lack of computers, remote location and other reasons, there are still a considerable number of people who need digital literacy, that is, learn to use computers and the Internet. This

indicates that the development of the Digital Silk Road cannot be separated from national learning and the cultivation of professional talents. By 2023, Kazakhstan will import 6 million computers from China, gradually bridging the 'digital divide'. China should also assist Kazakhstan in further popularizing digital education and basic digital skills, and promote cooperation between China and Kazakhstan in the field of digital economy through the establishment of new disciplines and courses, and the delivery of digital application talents.

#### *4. Promote energy cooperation and jointly move towards the “dual carbon” goal*

The energy sector is closely related to the community with a shared future for mankind and has always been the main battlefield for the “dual carbon” strategic goal. Cooperation between China and Kazakhstan in the dual carbon sector is still in its infancy, and the key lies in cooperation in the field of green and low-carbon energy. The scope of cooperation has shifted from fossil fuels to green energy such as wind and solar energy. In recent years, the promotion of the “dual carbon” goal by the green finance system, it has also pointed out the direction for China Kazakhstan international economic cooperation.

First, we should consolidate the conditions and foundation for the transition to green energy, give full play to the role of multilateral financing institutions such as the Silk Road Fund, the Asian Investment Bank, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, mobilize private capital to participate in China Kazakhstan green low-carbon energy cooperation, adopt PPP investment, and strengthen financing and enterprise cooperation. At the same time, it is also possible to tentatively adjust the tariff prices of both sides or establish various tax preferential economic zones to attract more “green investment” and achieve the goal of mutual benefit and win-win.

The second is to take advantage of the complementary nature of energy between China and Kazakhstan. Energy cooperation between China and Kazakhstan is mainly based on government cooperation, supplemented by enterprise cooperation. Green and low-carbon energy is not easy to store and transport and requires higher technical requirements. Therefore, the addition of research institutes can break through the current technological barriers, gradually abandon excessive dependence on energy such as coal and oil, and explore cooperation projects in fields other than wind and solar energy. For example, China and Kazakhstan can accelerate cooperation projects in new energy vehicles, innovate cooperation projects in new fields such as carbon credit, carbon insurance, and carbon bonds, and truly achieve common economic development between the two countries.

### **Conclusion**

In the context of “the Belt and Road”, the cooperation between China and Kazakhstan in diverse fields is an inevitable choice for their economic cooperation and development. It has become the common consensus of the international community to optimize the industrial structure reasonably, accelerate the promotion of the digital economy, and strengthen regional integration and multilateral cooperation. The comparative advantages and complementarity of the economies of China and Kazakhstan have laid the foundation for economic cooperation between the two countries. To make international economic cooperation between the two countries closer in the future, in addition to innovative revolutions in agriculture, tourism, and industrial alliances, it is also necessary to actively explore the development of the digital Silk Road and green energy to empower the economic development of the two countries.

- Sustainable Growth of Trade Turnover. The analytical assessment indicates that the trade turnover between Kazakhstan and China demonstrates sustainable growth, increasing by 33.9% in 2022 compared to the previous year. This reflects the growing influence of both countries on economic processes in the region and the strengthening of their mutual ties.

- Diversification of Exports and Imports. Kazakhstan continues to be primarily a supplier of raw materials, such as oil and natural gas, as evidenced by the sharp increase in oil exports by 2.2 times. At the same time, imports from China encompass a wide range of high-tech products and consumer goods, highlighting the maturity and diversity of the economic relations between the two countries.

- Increase in Trade Share. The share of Kazakhstan's exports in the country's total trade volume stands at 15.6%, while imports from China account for 21.9%. This indicates China's significant role as a trading partner for Kazakhstan and the successful integration into international trade chains.

- Growth Prospects. Both countries are showing positive economic growth rates in 2023 (China - 5.2%, Kazakhstan - 5.1%). This creates a solid foundation for further deepening economic cooperation, including investments, joint projects, and technology exchange.

- Strategic Partnership. Both countries are moving towards a deeper strategic partnership, which opens new horizons for joint initiatives under projects such as the Belt and Road Initiative. This also creates conditions for long-term stability and development of relations.

- Mutually Beneficial Economic Cooperation. The economic cooperation between Kazakhstan and China offers mutual benefits, including access to resources and technologies, which fosters the economic development of both countries. This underscores the importance of maintaining and strengthening bilateral relations.

Thus, Kazakhstan and China are positioned to further expand and deepen their economic cooperation, which will be an important factor in their economic growth and sustainable development in the future.

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## ҚЫТАЙ-ҚАЗАҚСТАН ХАЛЫҚАРАЛЫҚ ЭКОНОМИКАЛЫҚ ЫНТЫМАҚТАСТЫҒЫН КЕҢЕЙТУДІҢ СТРАТЕГИЯЛЫҚ БАҒЫТЫ

### Аңдатпа

Қазақстан «Бір белдеу, бір жол» бастамасын алғаш көтерген ел. Бұл бастаманы ұсынудың бастапқы мақсаты - ежелгі Жібек жолынан сабақ алу, негізгі бағыт ретінде өзара байланыс пен саяси коммуникацияны дамыту, нысандардың байланысын, кедергісіз сауданы, қаржылық интеграцияны, басқа елдермен адамдар арасындағы байланысты нығайту, әлемдік экономикалық өсуге жаңа серпін енгізу және халықаралық ынтымақтастықтың жаңа платформасын құру үшін жаһандық дамудың жаңа кеңістігін ашу. 1992 жылы Қытай

мен Қазақстан арасында дипломатиялық қарым-қатынас орнағаннан бері Қытай мен Қазақстанның халықаралық экономикалық ынтымақтастығы тамаша жетістіктерге жетті. Ол екі халықтың әл-ауқатын арттыруға өте маңызды негіз салды. Болашақта сауда мен инвестицияны жеңілдету деңгейін үздіксіз жақсарту, Қазақстаннан жоғары сапалы ауылшаруашылық өнімдерінің импортын кеңейтуді жүзеге асыру, жасыл энергетика саласындағы ынтымақтастықты кеңейту, әсіресе ынтымақтастық үшін жаңа өсу тетіктерін құру, «Цифрлық Жібек жолы» және «Цифрлық Қазақстан» құрылысында стратегиялық түйісу және цифрлық экономикалық ынтымақтастықты ілгерілету жолдары екі ел арасындағы экономикалық және сауда ынтымақтастығының стратегиялық басымдықтары болып табылады. Қытай мен Қазақстан қарым-қатынасындағы салауатты, тұрақты және серпінді саясат екі елдің дамуы мен жандануына, сондай-ақ аймақтық бейбітшілік пен тұрақтылыққа ықпал етеді.

**Негізгі сөздер:** «Бір белдеу, бір жол», Қытай-Қазақстан халықаралық экономикалық ынтымақтастығы, Қытай-Қазақстан қатынастары, стратегиялық басымдықтар, жол таңдау, Қытай

## СТРАТЕГИЧЕСКАЯ НАПРАВЛЕННОСТЬ РАСШИРЕНИЯ КИТАЙСКО-КАЗАХСТАНСКОГО МЕЖДУНАРОДНОГО ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОГО СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА

### Аннотация

Казахстан является первым местом, где иницируется инициатива «Один пояс, один путь». Первоначальное намерение предложить эту инициативу состоит в том, чтобы извлечь уроки из древнего Шелкового пути, принять взаимосвязь в качестве основной линии и укрепить политическую коммуникацию, связанность объектов, беспрепятственную торговлю, финансовую интеграцию и связи между людьми с другими странами, чтобы придать новый импульс мировому экономическому росту и открыть новые возможности для глобального развития. Новое пространство для создания новой платформы для международного сотрудничества. С момента установления дипломатических отношений между Китаем и Казахстаном в 1992 году международное экономическое сотрудничество между Китаем и Казахстаном достигло значительных успехов. Оно заложило очень важную основу для улучшения благосостояния двух народов. Как постоянно повышать уровень содействия торговле и инвестициям в будущем, как продолжать расширять импорт высококачественной зеленой сельскохозяйственной продукции из Казахстана, как расширять сотрудничество в области «зеленой» энергетики, особенно как создавать новые точки роста для сотрудничества, укреплять строительство «Цифрового Шелкового пути» и «Цифрового Казахстана». Стратегическая стыковка и развитие цифрового экономического сотрудничества являются стратегическими приоритетами торгово-экономического сотрудничества между двумя странами. Здоровые, стабильные и динамичные китайско-казахстанские отношения способствуют развитию и возрождению обеих стран, а также региональному миру и стабильности.

**Ключевые слова:** «Один пояс, один путь», китайско-казахстанское международное экономическое сотрудничество, китайско-казахстанские отношения, стратегические приоритеты, выбор пути, Китай

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