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The Role of Diplomacy in promoting Kazakhstan's country image in the international arena

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to reveal the role of diplomatic institutions in forming the international image and finding the best ways to improve a favorable image of Kazakhstan abroad. We defined and analyzed the categorical conceptual framework, reviewed the key events of Kazakhstan's foreign policy, established its relationship with changing the image of Kazakhstan in the world, made an analysis of the image of Kazakhstan in the leading editions of the world press, reviewed the activities of the Kazakh Foreign Ministry to create a positive image of the country abroad. After analyzing the data, the results show that at this stage of history there is no coordinating body to create a favorable image of Kazakhstan abroad. As well no common modern Kazakh brands, which have guided of foreign policy. Analysis of the main events of foreign policy and the media coverage showed that the promise of peace-loving foreign policy is one of the basic conditions of a favorable image of the country in the international arena. We discuss that successful formation of a positive image of the country is not possible without the active, purposeful efforts of diplomatic bodies of the state.

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1. Introduction

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In the era of globalization, the image of the country increasingly determines its importance in the world. Since independence Kazakhstan had a need for self-identification and establishment of its image in the international arena. One of the major tools forming a positive image of the state is Diplomacy.

According to Anholt (Anholt, 2008): «Since the advance of globalisation, national image and reputation have become ever more critical assets in the modern world». This process has highlighted the need for countries to create a strong image focused on 4 dimensions (tourism, exports, foreign investment, foreign policy / diplomacy). Diplomacy aims to promote a positive image of the country internationally and within interest groups.

Vicente (Vicente, 2004) believes that the country image is the result of a cumulative effort in the long term, which requires consistent and stable marketing strategies. The effectiveness of such a strategy is a source of competitive advantage, promoting a positive image of tourism, exports, foreign direct investment and foreign policy of the country.

The nation/country image is the mental representation of a country, the sum of beliefs and impressions people hold about a certain place. Every nation has an image that can vary across time and space to a greater or lesser extent. This image colors consumers' perceptions of a country's products and services, investors' perceptions of the country as a place in which to do business, tourists' expectations, and the attitudes of the public at large. The nation/country identity, on the other hand, is what a country believes it is (or wants to be). That identity is projected onto the rest of the world through branding and communication efforts to attract tourism and foreign direct investment, boost exports, and carry out effective public diplomacy (Bernard L. Simonin, 2008).

Search for ways to create a positive international image of the Republic of Kazakhstan is constantly in the focus of the Kazakh Diplomacy. For Kazakhstan, this process is more difficult and prolonged, as Kazakhstan's Diplomacy has only about twenty years.

2. Experience of the Republic of Kazakhstan in organizing image building events

Kazakhstan has considerable practical experience in the conduct image building events to promote the country's image in the international arena.

To the category of successful image events can be attributed many international forums and information campaigns organized by the Administration of the President, by the action of political science and research centers. Some of these campaigns include the annual Eurasian Media Forum, the international scientific-practical conference «Kazakhstan. Bridges to the West», series of promotion campaigns, for example, a series of commercials broadcast on CNN and Euronews. A special set of activities with image character are information campaign to promote the new capital - Astana. It is a campaign of "Astana - the new name on the map" and the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the transfer of the capital from Almaty (Kadyrzhanov, 2009).

There have been and organizes activities of international significance: the Pope's visit to Kazakhstan (2001), joining the club of UEFA (2002), Congresses of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions (2003, 2006, 2009, 2012), chairmanship in OSCE and the OSCE summit in Astana (2010), VII Asian Winter Games (2011), chairmanship in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (2011-2012), the International Exhibition EXPO-2017 in Astana. Events of this format form the image of Kazakhstan as a global player, showing his ambition and potential.

Increasingly there is information about the Republic of Kazakhstan as a country of "unknown" and "distant" of Central Asia, but the country creates significant events in certain aspects of the social and political activities of the international community. Naturally, these events provided some information about the country, about the president, about the inhabitants, and raised the level of Kazakh citizens sense of pride for their state as a country actively involved in shaping world history.

If we consider all the above and ongoing worldwide events in Kazakhstan it can be traced the basic values which are automatically laid in creating an image of Kazakhstan.

Events and interpretations:

§ The OSCE summit - the reputation of the country, promoting democratic values and security in the world.

§ Congress of leaders of world and traditional religions, the Pope's visit - tolerance.

§ Joining to the Club UEFA, the Asian Games - Sports Capital of Asia.

§ International contest "Voice of Asia" - the cradle of Asian Art

§ Conducting international forums and exhibitions - the development of communication space in Eurasia and integration into the world community (Izteleuova, 2013).

Due to worldwide events which held in Kazakhstan there is a constant improvement of the positive country

image abroad. According to the published index of country brands of American company "East West Global Nation Branding Index 200" for 2009, Kazakhstan took 28th place out of 200 countries in the world and has improved its indicators in comparison with 2008 by 3 points.

The index, prepared on the basis of quantitative and qualitative analysis of the context of coverage in the world media, is based on an assessment of millions of references of countries and regions of the 40 world's leading media, mostly English-speaking.

According to the ranking, Kazakhstan takes the first place among the CIS countries with the most favorable international image. Kyrgyzstan takes 99th place, Azerbaijan - 101th place, Uzbekistan - 126th place, Ukraine - 175th place, Russia - only 187th place.

Today we can say that Kazakhstan is becoming more recognized and positively perceived state, largely due to the unique experience of inter-ethnic and interconfessional consent and its contribution to nuclear disarmament (Nuraliev, 2010).

Moreover, according to experts, the planned Expo International Exhibition in 2017, the active foreign policy of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, and the realization of its important international initiatives could lead to a further increase in interest and respect for our country.

According to the data of international Committee of the Foreign Ministry, the frequency of references to Kazakhstan in the world media increase significantly from year to year.

3. Importance of Diplomacy for the Image of the Republic of Kazakhstan

The classic organizer and conductor of nation information transmitted to foreign audiences are foreign offices - the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the diplomatic corps of the country. Diplomacy is one of the most major tools forming a positive image of the state.

Diplomacy is one of the mechanisms of formation the relations structure between countries and diplomats' image is directly related to the country image. Must be noted that for the last 100 years the conditions for diplomatic activities have changed. It is connected with changes of the global information space, of the development of information and vehicle communications, with the changing of global economic structure. Classical methods of diplomacy are no longer dominated in the interstate communications. The Foreign Ministry of Kazakhstan more uses of new forms, methods and technologies of communication impact.

At the same time deep changes in the structure of diplomacy did not happen. This is still a group of distinguished representatives of the nation, representing it in various countries around the world. However, with the globalization processes, has become increasingly important the network organization of embassies abroad. Information became one of the most important resources of state governance, and therefore in relation to information the Foreign Service has two main functions.

The first function is the collection and analysis of information in the interest of the State's foreign policy in order to ensure the country's international image worthy.

In another case, the information is used to directly influence on public opinion in other countries, i.e. the diplomatic service itself is an important source of information. It must be emphasized that this information has "directed" character, which is defined by challenges faced the diplomatic service at that particular moment.

The period of the formation "information society" is characterized by increasing volumes of information, increasing its varieties, introduction of new technologies to transmit information over long distances in real time.

These new circumstances give to diplomatic service new opportunities to demonstrate the positive image of Kazakhstan abroad. These are realities of socio-economic situation in that country, as well as the mentality of the majority of its population. In addition, it is important knowledge and consideration of political moods in this environment.

The factors listed above indicate the high value of the Kazakh Foreign Ministry which provides a direct relationship of diplomacy image and the country image. The value of the Foreign Ministry, as one of the main organizers of international communications, strengthened by the negative factor such as the lack of development of other missions of Kazakhstan abroad which organized by the network way - cultural missions and non-governmental organizations (Kadyrzhanov, 2009).

In 2007 in the formation of international image of Kazakhstan has experienced major changes. In February 2007 in the structure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was established the Department of International Information, the main function of which was to form of country image abroad. Creation of a new body was closely related with the

scandalous film by British comedian Sacha Baron Cohen "Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan" (November 2006).

This movie turned the policy of image formation of Kazakhstan from the plane of conversations into practical deeds. Already in May 2007 the Department attracted to the work two major PR-agencies including the "Corporation of Public Relations Development" (CPRD) in Russia. The first steps of forming an international image of Kazakhstan brought the noticeable progress. If the presidential elections of Kazakhstan in December 2005 provoked criticism abroad and accusations of undemocratic, the parliamentary elections in August 2007, have been considered as standards for the subsequent parliamentary elections in Russia and Kyrgyzstan.

However, the international image of Kazakhstan that covers all aspects of Kazakh life, culture and history far from being developed and is in the early stage of formation. The different aspects of image requires the development and discussion (Verkhoturov, 2007).

4. Conclusion

In many ways today's image of Kazakhstan is due to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the leaving from the shadow of "superpower", which played for a long time period a central role in the "cold war" and in the construction of the "iron curtain" between the various philosophical and economic systems.

Most nations in the process of creation its international image faced with the fact that the notion of them in mass consciousness has already been formed at the level of the stereotypes. Therefore, the statement that "the new independent countries" begin their image-work "from scratch" is a mistake. In such circumstances, the developing Kazakhstan needs a systematic approach to work on its own international image and diplomacy plays in this process the main role (Kadyrzhanov, 2009).

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