RUSSIA’S ENGAGEMENT WITH ITS DIASPORA IN KAZAKHSTAN: SOFT POWER AT PLAY?

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Summary

After the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1991, a large number of ethnic Russians situated in the former Soviet Republics became minority over-night. These diaspora residing as minorities in foreign lands out of the Russian Federation especially in Kazakhstan was considered a tool for Russian foreign policy to renew Russian prominence in the republics through policies like the Compatriot policy, Near Abroad and emphasis on promotion of culture and language. The focus of this study is to analyze how the Russian diaspora becomes an apparatus for Russia to design its soft power policies. This article studies Russian federation’s policies related to Russian diaspora and the increasing weightage of Russian diaspora in Russian foreign policy. Along with this, the policies adopted by Kazakhstan with regard to its Russians and the Russian speaking population have also been looked at here.

Key Words: Russian Diaspora, Soft Power, Language, Education, Migration.

Introduction

Russian diaspora is not a recent phenomenon. Since the early 16th century, Russians started to migrate to the other parts of the world, with the aim to Russify particularly the southern parts of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR from here now) (Tumbetkov, 2004), Kazakhstan for instance. The mid 19th century saw about 500,000 Russians migrants during the 1860s and 1880s. But what was interesting about this phase of migration pattern was that the composition of ethnic Russians was less since the non-Russians composed bulk of the migrants, who were already a
diaspora in Russia. However, diaspora in the modern sense began only after 1917 when a large number of Russian citizens began to migrate (Tishkov, 2008), the reason being both political and economical. It was because of the large migration process that later created the “Russian World” (Tishkov, 2008) which we will explain later. The state policies also served as an impetus for Russians to migrate to the Soviet states. For instance, the Virgin Lands Campaign initiated in 1953 under the first Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev aimed at serving his policy of making Russia self-sufficient in terms of agricultural produce, so as to tackle the problems of food deficit in USSR, resulted in mass voluntary migration of more than 1.5 million people to the steppes of Kazakhstan, the Volga Region, Siberia, and the Urals to grow grains (Peyrouse, 2008; Timofeychev, 2017). However, the dissolution of USSR dealt the heaviest blow to Russia in terms of loss on two crucial fronts. First, the contraction of Russian geographical area, and second, the loss of about 25 million Russians to the new post-Soviet state Republics. The dissolution of USSR was the watershed moment in the history of a new fragmented Russia when overnight Russians of the former Soviet states found themselves stranded in a new geographical foreign space, causing dilemma amongst these former citizens now known as a diaspora of Russia.

It is learned that in Kazakhstan, at the time of dissolution, it was estimated that the Russians outnumbered the ethnic Kazakhs with some data records showing that the ethnic Kazakhs composed of only 40 per cent of the total population. But there has been a steady change in the demographic composition over time due to the decrease of the ethnic Russian population in Kazakhstan. The number of ethnic Russians declined from 37 per cent in 1989 to 30 per cent in 1999-2000. Over the last one decade, there has been a sharper fall from 26.14 per cent in 2006 to 20.16 per cent in 2016 (Peyrouse, 2008; Sencerman, 2016; Gussarova, 2017). The rapid decline in the number of ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan marginalized them to an unfavorable status of being minorities. The disadvantage of being a minority has been compounded by the efforts of the ethnic Kazakhs to reclaim its space (political, economic and so on) thereby cornering them further aside, due to which Russians from Central Asia began to immigrate to Russia in huge numbers by the mid-1990s to the extent that by 1994, 300,000 Russian left Kazakhstan for Russia (Sadovskaia, 1996). Putin in 2006 started the Repatriation Program with a positive anticipation to attract the ethnic Russians back to its original homeland sanctioning a massive 17 billion rubles (approximately $700 million) towards it. The Kremlin had a target of at least a few million returning to Russia by 2012, however considering the lukewarm response from the diaspora, the program was considered attractive only on paper because, during the first year of the program, Russia registered only 147 ethnic Russian families to Russia under the program. One of the central reasons for introducing such ambitious policy was related to Russia’s plan to compensate for the declining Russian population owing to high mortality rate and low birth rate, which was believed to be reducing Russia’s demography by 700,000 per year (Peuch, 2007; Ibid 2008).

The study of Russian diaspora in Kazakhstan is important for three reasons. First, geographically Russia shares the largest boundary with Kazakhstan. Second, economically Kazakhstan is the largest former Soviet state enriched with rich deposits of oil, gas, and uranium. Third, Kazakhstan has the largest number of Russians after Ukraine in comparison to all the others post-soviet states. Also, certain pertinent questions need to put forth. How does Russia keep its relations with Kazakhstan strengthened amidst the growing exodus of Russian minorities from Kazakhstan back to Russia? What will the change in Kazakhstan demography entail? Will Russia’s Foreign Policy towards Kazakhstan be altered? And so on, will be analyzed in this paper.
Language as Soft Power Tool for Russia’s Compatriot

Boris Yeltsin foreign policy adviser, Sergei Karaganov had once said “Spheres of influence are a fact of life,” (Watson, 1994). These strong comments were made after Yeltsin-Clinton talks in 1993 at the Russian-American Vancouver Summit. Yeltsin was probably the first among the Russian leaders to focus on what it believed its former Soviet States to be “Near Abroad” and the Russian diaspora in general as its “Compatriots”. The earliest use of the term can be traced to Fred Shapiro who in an article titled "Near Abroad Wants to Be Far” wrote about the Soviet States of Russia in The Russian Press Digest of June 9, 1992, “ (Safire, 1994; Suslov, 2017). During the Vancouver Summit, Yeltsin had strictly made it clear to his counterpart to stay out of his backyard and that he would reciprocate on the same lines (Watson, 1994). Russia has been keenly interested in the activities of its “Near Abroad”. Because of its possessive attitude towards these countries, Russia has since its dissolution tried to maintain positive ties with them, though sometimes it has been interpreted as a forceful relationship taking the case of Ukraine crisis in 2013 and annexation of Crimea into the Russian Federation in 2014. The atmosphere in the Russian Federation has altered to a certain extent because of these events. There has been a rollback in the policies of Russia towards its diaspora. Their focus has been shifting from the all-inclusive global compatriots abroad to the compatriots only in the former Soviet states. Also, considering that Russia has been misrepresented at the international stage and that it has been negatively portrayed, Russia has sought to counter such arguments by employing policies that project a positive image and thereby keep it's near abroad attracted particularly.

Law “On the State Policy in Relation to Compatriots Abroad” was approved in March 1999 by the Duma categorizing formally those Russian emigrants who were formerly part of the Soviet Union or the present Russian Federation. After signing the “Conception of Support for Compatriot” Russian President Vladimir Putin organized the First World Congress of Compatriots living Abroad in 2001, wherein he asserted the need for a mutually beneficial partnership between Russia and its diaspora while addressing diasporas from 47 countries gathered in Russia, Moscow while accepting the fact that over the decade after the dissolution nothing substantial was done towards building its relationship with its compatriots (Putin’s speech at the opening of the Congress of Compatriots in 2001). As a follow up to these developments, and with the aim to institutionalize the idea of the Russian diaspora, the concept of Russkly Mir Foundation (Russian World) in 2007 and the Rossotrudnichestvo (the Federal Agency for CIS Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation) in 2008 was formed. Later in 2010, the federal law on Compatriots was amended to widen the concept of Compatriots by adding “historical, cultural, ethnical and spiritual bonds with Russia” (Poloskova, 2011). The Russkly Mir Foundation (Russian World) according to Putin was instituted for the purpose of “promoting the Russian language, as Russia’s national heritage and a significant aspect of Russian and world culture, and supporting Russian language teaching programs abroad”.

Suslov (2017), while discussing on Russian diaspora tried to problematize the concept of Russian Compatriots and forwarded two arguments. First, what criteria should be employed in identifying the diaspora given the ambiguity to differentiate between the concepts of compatriots near and far abroad? Second is the structural tension between the Russian political elites and the diaspora (Ibid, 2017).
The creation of new post-Soviet republic states overnight created a sense of dilemma among the Russians. They were being confronted with; one, the struggles of adapting themselves to the newly created geographical boundary and second, contestation for the creation of national identity between who is an ethnic citizen and who is not. The aim to create a consolidated national consciousness among these new states further challenged the identity of the Russians, now a minority in their form Soviet state. In Kazakhstan, the Russians were posited with two questions in the 1990s. First, how do they continue to maintain their stronghold in a new country where demographically they outnumber the ethnic citizens? Second, how do they protect and promote their culture and language? Russian language at that time was the official language of the state. But by the Gazette of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 1997, it specifically mentioned in Article 4 that the Kazakh language was to be used as the state language of the Republic of Kazakhstan and in Article 5 it mentioned that Russian was to be officially used in the state organizations and bodies of local self-government, along with Kazakh (Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan as of July 11, 1997 No. 151-I On Languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan, 1997).

It is along this line that language and culture becomes an important soft power tool for Russia while engaging with its diaspora in Kazakhstan. The term soft power notably associated with Joseph Nye is “the power of attraction which enables one to make others want what you want and do what you want voluntarily through their cultural affinity with the one who wields the power.” Soft power of a country according to Nye rests primarily on three resources, culture, political values and foreign policies (Nye, 2004). Although the concept of soft power had been subtly at play in the Russian foreign affairs, it was The Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation 2013 that officially asserted why the need to employ soft power was significant. Hence Part II of the concept read as “Soft power, a comprehensive toolkit for achieving foreign policy objectives building on civil society potential, information, cultural and other methods and technologies alternative to traditional diplomacy, is becoming an indispensable component of modern international relations…” (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2013). Following Nye’s concept of soft power, Russia has sought to reach out to its diaspora in Kazakhstan by linking them to their historical ties, using culture and language as a parameter while serving them as an important means to extend Russia’s influence over the region and help construct the idea of Russian diaspora as “the Russian irredenta” (Suslov, 2017). The Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation 2013 furthered this objective wherein it read, “promoting the Russian language and strengthening its positions in the world…consolidating the Russian diaspora abroad” (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2013).

Tishkov (2008) writes that the shared Russian language is a reason why the diaspora becomes a Russian diaspora and it is this common language that becomes the primary differentiating cultural characteristic, which also serves a cultural magnet for Russia (Ibid, 2008). What is interesting about Russian diaspora in Kazakhstan is the fact that the Russian language is a common thread that binds both the ethnic Kazakhs and the Russian minority. Despite there being a contestation between the ethnic Kazakhs and Russians in terms of furthering its language, the fact remains that the Russian language is still widely used as much as the Kazakh language is used. Hence we find that among the former Soviet republics, after Ukraine with around 8500 Russian speakers, Kazakhstan had the second largest Russian speaking population with almost 4000 Russian speakers.
While discussing the language policies in Kazakhstan, it is crucial to understand that Kazakhstan is a multilingual state with over 117 different languages being spoken by 130 different nationalities (Suleimenova, 2015). However, despite being a multilingual state, Russian language in Kazakhstan in terms of its use in the education system is still high. Naziya Zhanpeisova, a professor with the Aktobe University, in an interview with the Russiky Mir Foundation, said that “out of the 7,576 general education schools in Kazakhstan, 1,598 are Russian, while 2,089 schools combine both Russian and Kazakh. Russian schools are still in high demand. And after a small decline, Kazakhs are starting to come to Russian schools again” (Russiky Mir Foundation, 2017).

Another reason why Russian schools are doing well in Kazakhstan is partly because of the quality of education imparted and the familiarity of Russian language (Gussarova, 2017) both by the Kazakhs and Russian diasporas. As an incentive to further the continuity in Russian education, the Russian Ministry of Education through Rossotrudnichestvo (the Federal Agency for CIS Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation) has been providing free scholarships to the Kazakhstan students since 2003. As of 2015, among the students pursuing higher education in Kazakhstan, 62.7 percent were in the state language, 34.3 percent in Russian and 3 percent in English (Higher educational institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2015/2016 academic year, 2015).

The Concept of the Federal Target Program “Russian Language” for 2016-2020 was approved by the Duma an important soft power tool to further Russia’s soft power through Russian language promotion by engaging with the authorities at the federal level (Russiky Mir Foundation, 2014). Suleimenova writes that “the Russian language has become a reliable political communication partner in the integration process of Kazakh society” (Suleimenova, 2015). Gallup research on the level of Russian language proficiency of residents in Central Asia and South Caucasus in 2011 found out that in Kazakhstan 99.9 percent could speak with proficiency in Russian (Mendkovich, 2013).

Given the role of language as soft power in Kazakhstan, deterioration of Russian language use and its influence could prove to be detrimental to Russia. Rossotrudnichestvo (the Federal Agency for CIS Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation) and the Ministry of Education in 2014, had prepared an extensive report with regard to the status of Russian language both in Russia and abroad. This report was an eye opener for the Russian Federation because it pointed out two crucial impediments. First, there is a trend of deteriorating Russian language use, especially in its former Soviet states. As a corollary to the first point, the second one emphasized the need for Russia to enhance its budget worth 7.6 billion rubles for five years on Russian language promotion. The report further reiterated that “France, Germany, Spain, Italy, China and South Korea spend on development and promotion of their language in the world about 60 billion rubles in 4-5 years, while in Russia financing of such programs is 2-5 billion rubles” (Panov, 2014). Considering the challenges that Russia is faced with, one needs to question the willpower of the Russian Federation and its leaders towards keeping soft power central to their foreign policy just on papers or to materialize their determination. If they chose to go with the latter, then there is a need to first, make sure that financial crunch towards employing the Russian language should be dealt with utmost priority. Second, there is a need to employ policy makers, academicians, and like-minded leaders to unlearn and reorient their existing policies towards this end. The degree
to which their policies have yielded results need to be assessed. For any state policy to materialize it needs the support of the leader and in the case of Russia we have Vladimir Putin, who has been the most vocal person in terms of constantly engaging Russia with the world by the use of soft power. However, such aspirations have not worked out favorably. One argument towards this end could be that Russia still favors hard power over soft power. The annexation of Crimea in 2013 is a perfect example of what extent Russia could go in fulfilling its aspirations. On a positive note, such determination also proves the value Russia attributes towards the former Soviet states.

At a time when global politics are manifesting to be unpredictable and alliances are changing according to the needs of time, Russian diaspora can be seen as “a political project” (Safran, 1999) in strengthening Russia’s ties because the migration of people across the globe creates a “Transnational space” (Bretell and Hollifield, 2014) giving opportunities for a country like Russia with one of the highest numbers of diaspora globally to use this to their utmost advantage. Furthermore, with the advancement in modern transport and communication technology coupled with the availability of cheap means of transportation and information technology, it has enabled emigrants to keep its ties knitted to its original homeland (Laitin, 1998; Suslov 2017). Russia’s diaspora can be a factor in contributing towards its process of influencing another country’s policies.

**Russia’s soft power base eroding due to Exodus?**

Identity policy in terms of citizenship adopted by Kazakhstan demonstrates the complexity of the ethnic situation in the country. In Kazakhstan citizenship was granted to all the citizens of the republic at the time of independence regardless of ethnicity or knowledge of the language. While in some republics like Estonia and Latvia restrictions on acquiring citizenship were imposed by conducting language proficiency and history tests for non-ethnic people, those who moved to these lands during the Soviet period. But with the adoption of Kazakhstan’s constitution in 1990 and 1995, Kazakhstan’s position on its ethnic citizens was affirmed by referring to Kazakhstan as the state of the ethnic Kazakhs. This according to Peyrouse (2008) marginalized the other citizens to the status of being a ‘second-class’ citizens within their own country. Furthermore, Kazakhstan imposed a ban on dual citizenship, an idea put forward by Russia initially but met with disagreement from the leaders of Kazakhstan. Citizenship law was appropriated by Kazakhstan, wherein the Russians were forced to choose between Kazakhstan and Russia. This law posited two contrasting options for the Russians in Kazakhstan. First, to choose Kazakhstan citizenship this would make the Russians from Kazakhstan, foreigners in their historic homeland. Second, to choose Russian citizenship this would result in them ending up as aliens in their own historic homeland since they lived and worked outside for a long time. As a result, the demands made by most of the Russian political parties at that time included the demand for the revocation of ban on dual citizenship. This has been one of the most contentious issues between the Kazakhs and the Russians.

In the backdrop of the above developments, it is important to note that the exodus of Russians from Kazakhstan was not a phenomenon solely propelled by laws on citizenship. In fact, it is recorded that migration of Russians to and from Central Asia to Russia has existed historically and it started as early as the 1970s during the Soviet regime. Between 1970 and 1989, about 940,000 people- mostly the ethnic Russians, Germans, Poles, and Ukrainians migrated out of Kazakhstan. The peak of the exodus of Russians however, occurred during the 1990s, particularly between 1994-1995 and since then, the pace has continued till date (Peyrouse, 2008; Panfilova, 2014). And because of the continuity in the rapid exodus, the number of ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan declined...
from 37per cent in 1989 to 20.16per cent in 2016 (Peyrouse, 2008; Sencerman, 2016; Gussarova, 2017).

The main reasons that are pushing out Russians from Kazakhstan are, 50per cent due to the lack of opportunities for children, 40per cent due to the language policy that people dislike, 37per cent due to the lack of prospects for decent wages, and 33per cent due to the lack of confidence in bright future (Panfilova, 2014). According to Peyrouse (2007), the departure of the Russians was proportional to professional skills. The educated Russians, who were old enough to work and make a new life in other countries, chose to leave. The percentage of migrants who had higher education and were specialized in some or the other fields were the first ones to leave the republic. Rest of the Russians who chose to stay was of the older generation and in weak social conditions. The 1999 census also highlights the fact that looking at the Kazakh and Russian population one does notice that there was a semi-inversion of the pyramid of ages between the two, this is also attributed to the higher fertility rate among the Kazakhs along with the massive migrations among the Russians (ibid).

The policy of nationalization by Kazakhstan also propelled the migration drive. Structural changes in the form of preference meted out for the ethnic citizens for employment by implementing quotas in the field of public administration as referred by Peyrouse (2008) as ‘Kazakhization of the administration’, and also in the educational institutions. The Russian schools were being closed and the Russian children were being forced to attend Kazakh schools which were already overcrowded with inferior infrastructure. The Russians in general also objected that the ethnic Kazakhs control all the public spheres of the country. In the field of business, both private and public, and politics, the opportunities for the Russian diaspora seem to be limited. In the context of these developments, the Russians residing in the republic, have a general opinion that the stance adopted by the republic was discriminatory towards them.

The shift in Kazakhstan’s national capital from Almaty to Astana was part of the campaign to push the Russians out of the northern majority regions. Renaming of places, streets and areas from Russian to Kazakh was understood as a policy to rid the nation of the Russian past altogether. These actions of the state deeply affected the ethnic Russians of Kazakhstan making them feel like a ‘second-class’ citizens (Peyrouse, 2008), within its own country in their own land, resulting in mass migration of Russians from Kazakhstan. Although the representatives of the Russian associations had initially not expected such large number of people to move out. In the initial years of the formation of independent Kazakhstan, the Russian associations made efforts towards encouraging Russians to stay in the republic as that would be in their favor. They emphasized the fact that in order to get their rights it was important for the Russians to stay in Kazakhstan. Keeping this in mind there was a meeting organized by the associations with President Putin in October 2000, during his official visit to Kazakhstan. In the meeting, three possibilities were suggested: to form a cultural autonomy encouraging Russians to stay in Kazakhstan, territorial unification of the northern regions with Russia and emigration of Russians on a massive scale to Russia. The first two suggestions were immediately dismissed by the President while accepting the third possibility (Peyrouse, 2007). This project of a collective departure was termed as ‘first convoy’ (ibid, 2007), a term used for the migrants who came to Kazakhstan in the 1950s and 1960s during the Virgin Land Campaign under Khrushchev. However, this programme did not require the transfer of all the Russians back to Russia, but only those who wished to migrate giving priority to those who came to the republic during the virgin land campaign.

The excitement caused by the ‘first convoy’ programme quickly dampened due to the lag
showed on the part of Russia in launching this project as it required a huge amount of finances. Although the repatriation program still arouses interests within the political groups, yet it fails to hold the attention of the Russians. For the majority of Russians, the homeland from where their ancestors came was Russia but the country where they themselves belong remains Kazakhstan.

**Way forward**

Looking at the ‘Russian question’ in Kazakhstan, there are certain aspects that need to be highlighted. In order for the ethnic Russians to have a more effective say in their state of affairs, they need to have an organized political representation. Peyrouse (2008) writes that Kazakhstan was the only post-soviet central Asian states that had true Russian minority political life in the 1990s. But in recent years, the Russian minority has become increasingly de-politicised. The existing political associations such as Cossacks, Lad, and Russkaia Obshchina have failed to mobilize the large numbers of Russians in the republic. Studies show that many of these Russians have no links to these associations and some have not even heard of them (Kosmarskaia, 2006). These associations also fail to incorporate the different reactions among the Russians where some want to migrate, while few want to integrate into the Kazakh society and some of the Russians do not consider Russia as their motherland anymore. The political discourses in the post-Soviet period have striven to feature a rhetorical fight for independence. Whereas for the Kazakh authorities the mass migrations of Russians out of the republic works in their favor, as it helps them to form a mono-ethnical population (Peyrouse, 2008). How is political representation important for Russian minorities in Kazakhstan or for that matter in any part of the country? One, it gives a space for the minorities to voice out their concern in the growing context of Kazakhization by the ethnic Kazakhs. Second, political representation of Russians would mean the window of opportunity for the Russian Federation to influence the decision-making process in Kazakhstan, thereby work policies out to favor their relationship with the state. However, the second option may not go down well with the state in question because the involvement of an outsider (Russia in this case) in the affairs of the country may be underscored by the negative reaction. Inversely, lack of Russian minorities political determination to push for an active political life has resulted in the sidelining of the former’s growing concerns. Although, the Russian Federation may try to directly intervene in addressing the diaspora’s concerns, at the end of the day, that involves a bilateral dialogue between the two states, which can be time-consuming and a lengthy process too. However, the advantage of having an active political life among the Russian diaspora is that it opens up a direct platform to engage in political discourse.

In addition to these, with the development of Ukraine crisis in 2013 and the Crimean annexation in 2014, some scholars have come to think that the Russian hard power has been used under the cloak of soft power adding to the suspicion of the former Soviet states over Russia’s political intentions. Due to the lack of a systematic political will and a dearth of funds to formulate an effective and comprehensive diaspora policy, the Russian authorities have managed to maintain their hold over it's near abroad with the help of hard power largely rather than the cultural and ‘big brotherly’ approach that most people believe it has. The above stated two important events have convinced some of the scholars that where there is a failure of peaceful influence, Russia takes up the role of being a powerful neighbor, factoring fear as an element. Such persistent fear and uncertainties over Russia’s approach, according to some of the political analysts, is the main reason behind the soft and lenient approach adopted by Kazakhstan towards the ethnic Russians residing in the republic. Hence, Nazarbayev weary of Russia’s determination to take make its presence felt in
the former Soviet states, started to promote Russians to the post of responsibility and also been sober on forcing Kazakh language in the state (Goble, 2014), despite the changing demographic equations between ethnic Kazakhs and Russians due to the dwindling Russian population.

Although the northern Russian bordering regions of Kazakhstan have been peaceful until now with no signs of rebellion, the growing insecurity of the ethnic Russians has resulted in them sympathizing with the separatists in Ukraine more than often. The Ukrainian experience, in particular, has made the Kazakh authorities extremely alert towards the reaction of the Russians in the republic. There are also no signs of encouragement of separatism from Moscow although it wants to keep the republic in its sphere of influence. The post-Ukrainian crisis period has witnessed attempts by the government to change the demographic balance by encouraging the ethnic Kazakhs to migrate to the northern regions from the southern majority regions. The government has often reacted staunchly to any references of Russian desire for its territory. In 2014, for instance, when the Russian parliament speaker Vladimir Zhirinovsky asserted that Kazakhstan had been given Russian lands during the Soviet era, Kazakhstan’s Foreign Ministry officially denounced this statement and protested against such comments.

**Conclusion**

While there is a continual exodus of the Russian diaspora from Kazakhstan, we believe that this trend will gradually decline over time for several reasons. First, Russia’s capacity to accommodate the immigrants because the addition of new population would mean extra state expenses and also increase in competition among the Russian population. Second, given the first possible problem of the immigrants to fit into a new space, a sense of dissent may grow which may result in discouraging the others from migrating to Russia. Third, a mass exodus of Russian migrants from Kazakhstan may result in tampering the country's image as insensitive to nonethnic minorities. Considering the political atmosphere in the world, a country’s image is pertinent for establishing global networks, Kazakhstan’s negative image may undermine its efforts at engaging with the world. Given these three probabilities, we feel that Russia should push for a problem-solving arrangement with Kazakhstan. And because the presence of Russian diaspora is an asset, Russia should not push for policies encouraging the diaspora for a mass exodus, particularly in Kazakhstan where the number of Russian diasporas is significantly large as compared to the others. Meanwhile, while agreeing to some scholars policy on language, we also argue that a more effective solution to the issue of the Russian minority in the republic would be to have provisions according official status to the Russian language and promote both Russian as well as the Kazakh language at par in all fields. With the Russian language having such deep roots in the Kazakh society, it is not feasible to completely and suddenly rid the nation of its Russian past. Instead of forcing the citizens to discontinue the use of Russian and force the Kazakh language upon them, the state should develop their national language along with that of the Russian, making the Russian minority feel at home in their motherland despite the dwindling population of the latter.

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