PREFACE

Kazakhstan occupies a unique geopolitical position in Eurasia sharing about 1700 kms long border with China which constitutes almost half of China’s total border with Central Asia. That this border goes along plains, three rivers (Irtysh, Emin, Ili) further enhance the geopolitical importance of Kazakhstan vis-à-vis China. Ever since the republic of Kazakhstan declared its independence on December 16, 1991, its foreign policy has been oriented towards consolidating its relations with foreign powers particularly its great neighbours - China and Russia. Kazakhstan has made rapid progress after managing the pains of political and economic transition. Kazakhstan has over the period of twenty years of its independence gradually emerged as a regional power from the region itself. This process is both the result of its economic progress and the moderate and ‘multi-vector’ foreign policy of Kazakhstan.

During this period, Kazakhstan has developed its energy sources and has become the richest country in the Central Asian region. Calculated domestic and international policies have also contributed to the stability of this multi-ethnic country. The Kazakh leaders have been stressing the importance of multifaceted relationship in the international arena. As such, Kazakhstan has developed political and economic relations with China, along with other great powers. Although mutual skepticism exists among the leaders of China and Kazakhstan, they have approached each other following a careful policy with stress on friendly cooperation instead of touching up on the contentious issues. China has adopted an active policy and resolved the border issue with Kazakhstan. By developing good relations with Kazakhstan, China secured its long border with this country from any hostile development. Furthermore, China created the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation with the help of Russia, and some Central Asian states, in its bid to outmaneuver the US presence in the region.

It is against this background that this thesis seeks to examine the extent and pattern of Kazakhstan-China relations from 1991 unto 2009. This thesis has six chapters.

First chapter is introductory in nature providing a brief overview of the present research work in a precise manner. It provides a historical and political perspective on the situation in Kazakhstan after independence and the process of its social, economic and political development. It explains Kazakhstan’s ‘multi-vector’ foreign policy, with emphasis on
strengthening its relations with China. This chapter also explores the factors responsible for active Chinese interest in Central Asia and particularly in Kazakhstan.

Second chapter titled “Political Relations” deal with the extent and pattern of relations between Kazakhstan and China, from the year 1991 (when Kazakhstan became independent) till 2009. While giving a background of the historical relations between the two countries, this chapter examines the socio-economic and political situation in Xinjiang province of China and its importance in Kazakhstan-China relations. Linkages between the Uighurs diaspora settled in Kazakhstan, with their counterparts in Xinjiang province of China and their role in promoting bilateral trade and cultural relations is also explored.

Third chapter examines the process of negotiations and border settlement between Kazakhstan and China through regional organizations, particularly the Shanghai-5, now SCO. It discusses in detail the process of resolution of border dispute and the final demarcation of the Kazakhstan-China border.

Fourth chapter examines the economic linkages between the two countries. Since Kazakhstan is rich in natural resources like oil, natural gas, gold, uranium and other valuable minerals, China’s trade with this country has been increasing enormously. This chapter examines the extent and pattern of bilateral economic besides looking at Chinese investments in Kazakhstan.

Fifth chapter titled “Energy Cooperation” explores various aspects of energy cooperation. Both Kazakhstan and China have entered into major energy cooperation, involving construction of pipelines, exploration and transportation of oil from Kazakhstan to China. This chapter focuses on such energy linkages. Besides, it analyzes the challenges posed by other international players (great and regional powers) in the region to such energy cooperation between Kazakhstan and china.

Sixth chapter while summing up the conclusions about Kazakhstan - China relations in the fields of economy, energy and regional cooperation, also explore any potential problems.

The whole study is based on published literature, government publications and speeches of the leaders, which have been collected from both the primary and secondary sources. Besides articles published in various research journals and books have been consulted.