



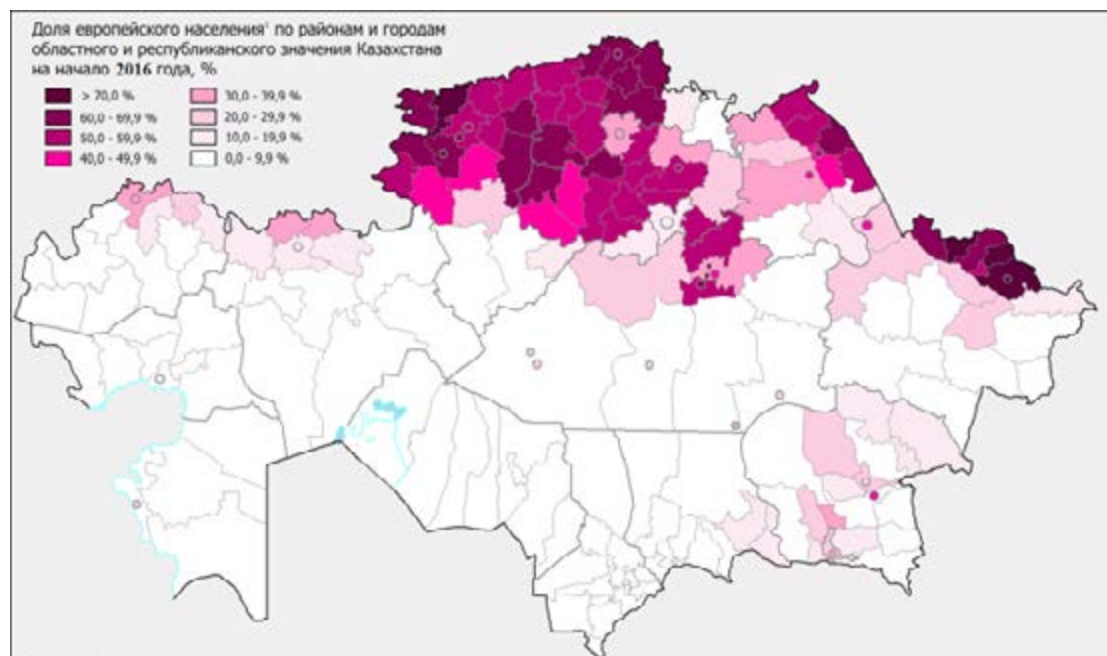
Kazakhstan's New Military Doctrine

OE Watch Commentary: Kazakhstan's Ministry of Defense (MoD) recently published its new military doctrine. While it is similar to the previous version from 2011, the new doctrine has an important addition: the threat of hybrid war. The accompanying passage by Dosym Satpayev, a well known political-security analyst, discusses this addition in an article in *Ratel*, a Russian-language news website in Kazakhstan.

The article looks at the addition of hybrid war and describes one of its main goals as “undermin[ing] the legitimacy and authority of the existing regime, which can then be replaced.” He also points out that the updated Russian military doctrine also incorporated a new kind of threat defined as “a change of power or the emergence of a hostile regime in a neighboring state” and that “the Kremlin very successfully applied various methods of hybrid war during and after the annexation of Crimea.” Satpayev questions “if [Kazakhstan] is ready for hybrid conflicts, especially in conditions when a part of the population is under the influence of other states and non-state actors, including extremist groups.”

As Russia became involved in Ukraine, there was concern in Kazakhstan about the ethnic Russian population in northern Kazakhstan (bordering Russia); namely that the situation would be a repeat of what happened in eastern Ukraine. The Kazakh government has been concerned with the threat of the northern regions of Kazakhstan breaking off from the country since before the conflict in Ukraine; but this is the first time that it has incorporated it into the national military doctrine. Satpayev notes that the new doctrine “is defensive in character” and how the 2011 doctrine stated that “defense spending in Kazakhstan must be no less than one percent of the country's GDP.” The new doctrine does not explicitly state that defense spending must be one percent of the GDP, but it does state that the military-industrial complex of Kazakhstan will continue to be developed.

Satpayev mentions that increased defense spending “is happening at the expense of other spheres” and states: “The main guarantee of our security, in addition to immunity from hybrid wars, is not our armed forces or even multiple international agreements, but long-term political stability and real socio-economic development.” While a number of other sources in Kazakhstan have made similar statements, the government believes that the country's military-industrial complex is becoming an important sector of the economy and will likely continue to grow. The article demonstrates that the Kazakh Armed Forces is looking more closely at hybrid threats, but how it works to combat them is an ongoing debate. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**



The percentage of Russians, Ukrainians, Germans, Poles by the regions and cities of Oblast level and republican subordination of Kazakhstan at the start of 2016.

Source: Sibom via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:3AKazakhstan_European_2016_Rus.png, CC BY-SA 4.0.

“...it is unknown if the country is ready for hybrid conflicts, especially in conditions when a part of the population is under the influence of other states and non-state actors, including extremist groups.”

Source: Satpayev, Dosym. “Готов ли Казахстан к гибридной войне? (Is Kazakhstan prepared for a hybrid war?),” *Ratel*, 10 October 2017. http://www.ratel.kz/outlook/gotov_li_kazahstan_k_gibridnoj_vojne

Four military doctrines have been written in Kazakhstan during its period of independence, in 1993, 2000, 2007 and 2011...the world has undergone major changes over the past six years...One of the main goals of hybrid attacks is to undermine the legitimacy and authority of the existing regime, which can then be replaced. In the updated Russian military doctrine, a change of power in a neighboring state or the emergence of hostile regime was named as a new kind of threat... As the Ukrainian conflict showed, the Kremlin very successfully applied various methods of hybrid war during and after the annexation of Crimea...

...it is unclear how the Ukrainian events influenced the upgrade of the military doctrine of Kazakhstan, with an emphasis on hybrid threats. Already in March 2015, during a meeting within the Ministry of Defense of Kazakhstan, a statement was made that military training in Kazakhstan would be carried out with consideration of modern military conflicts. However, it is unknown if the country is ready for hybrid conflicts, especially in conditions when a part of the population is under the influence of other states and non-state actors, including extremist groups...

All of Kazakhstan's military doctrines have a strictly defensive character. This time as well stressed that the “military doctrine is defensive in character and reflects Kazakhstan's commitment for defending national interests”...the military doctrine of 2011 clearly states that the goal of defense spending in Kazakhstan must be no less than one percent of the country's GDP. There have been suggestions to increase it to 1.5 percent and this has apparently begun. According to the Stockholm Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), in 2015, Kazakhstan had \$1.9 billion, or 1.2 percent of GDP in military spending...

...the growth of defense spending in Kazakhstan also brings up questions, such as if this is happening at the expense of other spheres...except for healthcare, other social area areas – like education – expenditures are falling, while defense is growing...The main guarantee of our security, in addition to immunity from hybrid wars, is not our armed forces or even multiple international agreements, but long-term political stability and real socio-economic development...In the end, if local authorities do not “fight” with their own people, any external threats are not as awful.