

МЕМЛЕКЕТТІК ЖӘНЕ САЯСИ БАСҚАРУ МӘСЕЛЕЛЕРІ ВОПРОСЫ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОГО И ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОГО УПРАВЛЕНИЯ ISSUES OF PUBLIC AND POLITICAL ADMINISTRATION

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N. NAZARBAYEV AND MODERN STATE BUILDING THE QUEST FOR A PROFESSIONAL CIVIL SERVICE AS PART OF MODERN STATE BUILDING (1992–2013): TOWARDS THE NEXT PHASE

Management Summary

This contribution for the N. Nazarbayev Reading focuses the development of a professional civil service as part of nation building efforts under the current strategic objective seven “building an efficient modern public administration that can assure good governance in a market economy”. Following current international relations and public administration research agendas we argue that the professionalization of civil service as part of public administration is beyond national boundaries and thus contributes to stability and service delivery. That said we also argue that due its geo-political and economical developments public sector innovation is needed in order to remain competitive and to deliver state of the art services to more demands citizens and business. Based on our long standing relation with the Kazakh public administration and in line with the purposes of the Nazarbayev Readings we made a number of observations and we take the opportunity to present some dilemma’s for the future state development. It should be noted that these challenges are part of any modern 21st century public administration and civil service quality deliverance agenda and thus can be used to inform decision-making on the future development of the Kazakh state apparatus.

Institutional development Kazakhstan

The developments in the building and strengthening of the Kazakh government apparatus are encouraging. The government under the leadership of President Nazarbayev has stimulated new governance forms. It has been open to new ideas regarding state of the art governing systems. When rising to power 20 years ago N. Nazarbayev clearly sensed that institutional choices were only partially contingent on 70 years soviet past, as there were only few legacies available regarding state and nationhood building. In his own words:

“There was no such thing as Kazakhstan. It was just a chunk of the Soviet Union” he said. I had to build a country, to establish an army, our own police, our internal life, everything from roads to the constitution. I had to change the minds of the people 180 degrees, from totalitarian regime to freedom, from state property to private protery./ Nobody wanted to understand that. My comrades from the communist party were against me. I had to train myself too... I wasn’t raised with democracy and freedom of speech. (Hugh Pope 2005: 126)

Echoing a deep and profound understanding about the dilemma’s leaders typically face when building a new polity from scratch these choices were made and put into practice in the last 20 years. Institution building, in recognition of the need for a reliable public administration, has been one focus of the Strategy 2030 plan. Objective Seven especially the development of an open and quality oriented professional merit based civil service is been heralded. The international orientation, ensuring a steady influx of new ideas and introduction of modern concepts for public service, has been provided especially by two programmes: Boleshak and the in-service training of the Academy of civil service.

Challenges for designing, developing and maintaining institutions and statehood

International experiences show that there are two categories of policy challenges, which emerged in the past decade, which present significant structural challenges to the organization of government.

These structural challenges are cross-border interdependencies and “wicked problems”. Both of these problems will only increase in frequency and complexity in the future.

Increasing interdependent and cross-border policy issues

It is increasingly clear that governments are no longer completely in control of what transpires in their own country with their own citizens and businesses as was the case a decade ago. “Hard”, impermeable, borders are a luxury of the past and this will not return. Instead, governments are faced with increasingly interdependent, cross-border economic and financial systems with their many benefits but also serious threats as is evident with the worldwide financial crisis.

Corporations and businesses are increasingly mobile, forcing countries to compete for their presence in their borders. Outsourcing and long-distance service delivery is made possible through the increasing speed of the internet and increasing computing power of computers, which have serious effects on global employment patterns. Internet and the increasing numbers of internet users introduce new economic opportunities and e-governance but also increase cybercrime, terrorism and dissemination of radical views.

The effects of cross-border interdependencies on government:

- In other words, the countries are more exposed to international developments and countries are reduced in their ability to directly control and regulate what happens within their borders. Effective governments are more necessary than ever, but to govern effectively requires flexible and “smart” organizations capable of responding and anticipating developments while still delivering public services in a stable, cost-effective and acceptable manner. This is difficult to organize as the organizational structure and staff skill-sets for rapid reaction and anticipation are different from those required for stable, predictable public service delivery.

- International cooperation will be required for increasingly more policy issues in the future and such cooperation will need to become more effective and results-oriented than in the past. The “debate club” approach to international cooperation will fail to produce results. The international dimension of ministry policy portfolios will increase in importance, requiring these ministries to strengthen their international cooperation capacity, which in turn requires specific staff training and organizational development. Furthermore, cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other ministries operating abroad needs to be organized more robustly. A strong center of government is needed to ensure the required level of coordination.

Wicked problems

We are also discovering that a multitude of policy issues are essentially “wicked problems”. In the last decades, problems such as poverty, obesity and climate change have been recognized as wicked problems after different policy strategies to solve these problems have consistently failed to produce significant and lasting results. Wicked problems are resistant to any singular solution due to interdependencies and inherent trade-offs. Our knowledge of these wicked problems has increased through trial and error and we have learned that such policy challenges generally require a multi-disciplinary approach.

- Although many management gurus would argue differently, government is still organized in accordance with 19th century principles. We are now discovering that the bureaucratic systems developed according to Weber’s ideas on legitimacy, which have served the western industrialized nations so well in the past, are facing increasing difficulties (or even fail outright) to address current day problems. Hierarchical organizations, with clear divisions of responsibilities are useful for stable service delivery but less so for rapid reactions to developments and dealing with emerging policy issues that require integrated solutions.

- The type of organizational structure, arrangements and processes needed to allow the organization to handle the fundamentally different work of stable public service delivery on the one hand and quick reaction and anticipation to emerging issue on the other, require a well-integrated and internally coordinated organization. Internal stovepipes where the various departments and divisions are all doing their normal work without supporting strategic organizational priorities are common, but ill-suited to the new challenges. Such old-fashioned organizations will stop being relevant in the modern world, producing outputs and following processes that no longer have added value.

Building a government fit to tackle future challenges

To be prepared for the challenges in the coming decades, it is necessary for government to focus on two approaches: becoming a joined-up government and building integrated government organizations.

Joined up government is focused on achieving a government that works in unison as a whole: well-coordinated; all focused on the same strategic priorities; and making available for every policy challenge the right mix expertise and skills already available in the civil service cadre. This may sound straightforward, but those who work in government know how difficult it is to achieve this level of coordination. It requires a number of elements to be effective.

Firstly, there needs to be a high-level demand for the benefits for coordination. This means that the political and civil service leadership, such as the President, the Prime minister and the Council of Ministers need to demand from ministries that there is coordination. For example, the demand for tangible policy results, stakeholder support and innovative solutions to problems, often force the ministries and other organizations to work together.

Secondly, there need to be tangible benefits for the ministries and government organizations that have to coordinate. If the benefits of coordination only accrue to the top of the government, this will dampen enthusiasm for coordination, especially because coordination have costs in terms of time and effort associated with them. If a ministry does not feel it receives benefits from its coordination efforts, it is unlikely to be willing to continue such coordination at the optimal level. Rather the ministry will do the minimum required to avoid problems. For coordination to work, it is better if the ministry receives benefits of this coordination effort, such as an increased chance for increased political support for its policy initiatives or additional funding. A two-way street for coordination is the only route to sustainable and structural coordination.

Thirdly, coordination requires a dedicated unit at the center of government to link the center of government with the ministries, other government organizations and provinces for coordination purposes. This allows the greater linkage of policy development with decision-making and budget issues. Key for such a unit is that it facilitates the work of the ministries and other government organizations and refrains from being overly directive. This allows for the coordination to be a two-way street and it ensures that ministries cooperate with such a unit willingly and constructively. This unit could have additional linkage with ministries in the form of liaisons in the organizations that for a horizontal network.

The other approach required for a modern government is to build truly integrated government organizations. Ministries themselves often function in a manner resembling internal stovepipes with each department focusing on its own traditional work, regardless if this is best suited to the strategic priorities of the organization. Moreover, organizations frequently suffer from competition between departments that distracts from the true priorities. Although such behavior is inherent to people and can thus not be eradicated, it can be curbed by good civil service practices and by instituting organizational arrangements that introduce flexibility and cross-departmental thinking and cooperation.

An integrated government would also reach out to the private sector and academia to ensure the best results are achieved. Public–private partnerships and other cooperative arrangements have been used throughout the world for a long time now, with varying levels of success. However, a country that can unlock the expertise of its citizens, companies, NGOs and academia is able to leverage all its available strengths to produce optimal results.

The civil service is the bedrock of an effective government

Underpinning a modern government is a modern civil service cadre. Without a modern, well-trained and highly skilled civil service, the government will not be able to be as effective as it wants to be.

To build, hone and maintain such a civil service requires a very deliberate and long-term strategy. Such a strategy comprises several measures to ensure that this senior civil service cadre is empowered with the right authorities; that they are kept flexible by rotation schemes; that they are judged and promoted on their merits on the basis of achieved results; and that they receive the necessary training and development to ensure relevant skill-sets.

Training and development needs to be the right combination of theory and applied knowledge, utilizing case-based and action-based learning to ensure that new knowledge and skills are converted

into practically applicable expertise. Without such a conversion, all the training and development will have only a minimal impact. With the complexity of the new policy challenges ahead, the civil service requires concerted action to lift them to the necessary level of expertise.

ROI, the Dutch Institute for Public Administration, would be proud to continue its long relationship with the government of Kazakhstan and to assist the government and its civil service further strengthening the capacity and effectiveness of government

Overview of training provided by ROI

ear	Topic	Participants
003	Tacis Project Tax Administration	
004	Policy Making and Multi-Level Governance	25
005	One Stop Shops in the Netherlands	20
007	Leadership in the Public Sector	20
007	OSCE diplomats preparation	20
008	Training for Akimats	20
008	OSCE diplomats	20
008	Presidential Administration : The Dutch Golden Rolodex	5
008	Strategic Planning	25
009	Strategic Planning	15
010	HRM for the public sector	20
010	International Law	
010	Round Table presentation on Ethics and Corruption	Commissioned by Kazakh Embassy 150 Dutch attendees
010	Multi ethnics and region	Commissioned by Kazakh Embassy 150 Dutch attendees
011	International Relations	20
011	International Law Programme	20
012	Public Administration in the Netherlands; central and local level	30

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