

KAZAKHSTAN'S LEADERSHIP OF THE OSCE

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

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FEBRUARY 2, 2010

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KAZAKHSTAN'S LEADERSHIP OF THE OSCE

February 2, 2010

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
WASHINGTON, DC

The hearing was held at 10:02 a.m., in room 1100 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC, Hon. Alcee L. Hastings, Co-Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, presiding.

Commissioners present: Hon. Alcee L. Hastings, Co-Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe; and Hon. Darrell E. Issa, Commissioner, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Member present: Hon. Eni F.H. Faleomavaega, a Delegate in Congress from the American Samoa.

Witness present: H.E. Kanat Saudabayev, Foreign Minister, Republic of Kazakhstan.

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS, CO-CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Mr. HASTINGS. Our hearing will now come to order of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe and this hearing is entitled, "The Kazakhstan Leadership of the OSCE." For those that are in our audience on channel 2 on these headsets is in English and channel 10 is in Russian. I'll wait for the minister to get mic'ed up; is he OK for the moment? All right. Mr. Minister, I'd like first to

Mr. REDFIELD. No, he's not ready yet. He's not ready.

[Off-side conversation.]

Mr. HASTINGS. OK, you have the mic now?

First, it's an honor and a privilege for me to welcome my good friend, Foreign Minister Saudabayev back to Washington in his new role as chairman in office of the OSCE.

Mr. Chairman, before I go further with my statements, I'd like to acknowledge the fact that Senator Cardin, the Co-Chair of the Commission is in attendance at a funeral this morning of former Maryland Senator, Charles Mathias. And it's for that reason that the Senator is unable to be with us here this morning.

Foreign Minister Saudabayev and I have known each other for many years, going back to when the minister was Ambassador here in Washington. As most of you know, I long supported Kazakhstan's chair to the OSCE. I urged the U.S. Government to back the proposal and was pleased when the United States joined

consensus at the 2007 Madrid ministerial based on certain assurances.

Some thought that there were problems with Kazakhstan's record on democratization and human rights, but I believed then as I do today that inclusiveness was and is the best way to proceed. I was in Madrid and heard, Mr. Minister, your predecessor make specific pledges of reforms on behalf of your government. I believe that promises are meant to be kept and I have every expectation, Mr. Minister, that your government will continue working to translate its Madrid promises into actions consistent with OSCE commitments.

I look forward to hearing more about Kazakhstan's plans to organize an OSCE summit this year, which I might add, I certainly encourage. I hope that a summit would be not only substantive but also conducted in line with past practice, including being fully open to NGOs and civil society.

In that vein, the now-celebrated case of Yevgeny Zhovtis has received a great deal of attention here in this country and elsewhere. He's the best-known human rights activist in Kazakhstan and has testified before this Commission on several occasions, two of which I was in attendance. I understand that he has submitted an appeal to the Kazakhstan supreme court and I am sure that this matter will move forward accordingly.

As the former President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly—I'd like to take this moment to acknowledge the presence of the Secretary-General of the Parliamentary Assembly of OSCE, Spencer Oliver, who is in attendance with us here this morning—and I'd also ask you, Mr. Minister, to look at ways to strengthen the relationship between the Parliamentary Assembly and the governmental side of the OSCE. I strongly believe that the Parliamentary Assembly has an abundant of expertise to offer on a wide range of issues, including, of course, election observation.

As you may know, over the past several years, some have suggested—and I have been among them—that the OSCE work more closely with the CIS in the field of election observation. I believe it to be an interesting idea and one that should be explored in cooperation with other election observation partners for future election observation missions.

I also ask that you continue to make a priority the whole range of issues covered under the OSCE tolerance rubric: racism, anti-Semitism, racial profiling and blatant discrimination continue across the OSCE region as evidenced by recent violent attacks on African populations in Italy. An increased focus on racism, in addition to efforts focused on migrants, must continue to be at the top of the OSCE's agenda and I hope this will be a topic at this year's high-level tolerance meeting, which I'm hopeful that I, as well as other Members, will be able to attend.

The desecration of a Jewish cemetery in France on the 65th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz further demonstrates the need to maintain a focus on combating anti-Semitism. The increased political focus on Muslim populations in many countries, including banning minarets and face-veils, also requires attention. Efforts of the ODIHR tolerance unit, the Chairman-in-Office per-

sonal representatives on tolerance and the OSCE high commission on national minorities are critical to addressing these issues.

Mr. Minister, your leadership is going to be very important to the OSCE this year. We all support you and hope that Kazakhstan's chairmanship will be a tremendous success. We appreciate the good working relationship that has developed between your embassies—and I'm pleased to note your Ambassador here to the United States is with us this morning—and the cooperation developed in Vienna with the Helsinki Commission. And I look forward to continuing that throughout this year and beyond.

At this time I would like to acknowledge my good friend from American Samoa who is in attendance with us this morning, Eni Faleomavaega, for any comments he may wish to make.

**HON. ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA, A DELEGATE IN CONGRESS
FROM THE AMERICAN SAMOA**

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I do want to offer my personal condolences and sympathies of the late Senator Charles Mathias, certainly one of the stalwarts and leading Senators of our Nation and I can fully understand and appreciate why our Co-Chairman Senator Cardin could not join us this morning.

This is a very special occasion for me, Mr. Chairman, to the extent that I've decided to wear a cultural tie that was given to me by one of my brothers from the Indian Oneida Nation which is symbolic of the bear clan. As you can see, it is made—I have a claw of a bear, as well as it was from the part of the bear where it was carved—hopefully that I might receive some extra munna (ph), if you will, because sometimes, Mr. Chairman, some of our friends here in Washington, when you say, “tribe”—it kind of gives a connotation like the lesser civilized people coming from various tribes don't seem to have any sense of modernity or to the extent that they don't have culture.

Very interestingly enough for the tremendous problems that we're faced with not only in Central Asia that there was a number of tribes in Afghanistan that finally gave the demise to the former Soviet Union after 10 years of occupation. I think it was also the Nation of Israel are still in formal of tribal recognitions—whether you're from Judah or Manasseh or from Ephraim or whatever. So I think it's good to understand that even great nations like Kazakhstan—they still have their little tribal organizations; they're very proud of it.

As I'm very sure that our distinguished guest who's our key witness this morning happens to be my very dear friend whom I've had the privilege and honor of knowing for all these years, formerly as the Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to our country for some 7 years and then before that an outstanding diplomatic career in his own right, Dr. Kanat Saudabayev, now both as Secretary of State and as appointed recently as Foreign Minister by President Nazarbayev. I'm very, very privileged and honored that he has joined us this morning, hearing from him for the issues that are now before us concerning the Helsinki Commission.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Helsinki Commission regarding Kazakhstan's leadership of the

56-nation Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. This is undoubtedly a historical event for both the OSCE and Kazakhstan, given that Kazakhstan is the first former Soviet Republic to serve in the top leadership role of an organization best known for promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

As early as 20 years ago, the idea of any post-Soviet states' active participation in the OSCE was inconceivable. And for one of those states to assume the chairmanship of the organization was unimaginable. Yet Kazakhstan's bid to chair the OSCE was unanimously supported by all 56 Member nations in recognition of the bold steps that President Nazarbayev has taken to bring Kazakhstan out from under the yoke of communism or, for that matter, colonialism for some 80 or 90 years before they became independent some 18 or 19 years ago.

As chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment, which also has broad jurisdiction on U.S. foreign policy affecting Central Asia, I supported Kazakhstan's bid to chair the OSCE. And I have every confidence that OSCE Chairman-in-Office Kanat Saudabayev will fairly represent the interests of all Member States. Having worked with His Excellency Kanat Saudabayev for some 7 years during his tenure as Kazakhstan's former Ambassador to the United States.

I can unequivocally state that he spared no efforts in strengthening U.S.-Kazakh relations and because of his work in Washington remains unsurpassed. I have every reason to believe that this skilled and seasoned diplomat will spare no effort also in making the OSCE more valid, more useful and more effective.

This is why I also support President Nazarbayev's call for the convening of a summit of OSCE leaders in Kazakhstan this year. It has been 10 years since the OSCE held a security summit and since then the world has changed drastically and dramatically as a direct result of 9/11. Now more than ever it is critical that we bring together all Member States to discuss and come to solutions regarding the security of all nations. While I have serious reservations about U.S. involvement in Afghanistan—I have a very interesting observation, Mr. Chairman, on this issue. We already have 68,000 soldiers in Afghanistan. We're going to be sending another 30,000 soldiers, numbering almost 100,000 soldiers who are going to be looking for Taliban, which numbers about 27,000 and a couple of hundred al-Qaida. And by the way, these 27,000 Taliban, I would venture to say 99 percent are Pashtuns. Twelve million Pashtuns, I believe, live in Afghanistan, but right on the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan—27 million Pashtuns live there too.

Is it any wonder why it's been difficult for us even to locate Osama bin Laden after all these years? Because of the problems of tribal organizations that I think we have very little understanding or appreciation of the cultures of these areas. And I might say, very, very serious implications of the role that Central Asian countries will play on what's going to come out in Afghanistan in other areas of this very critical region at this time.

Kazakhstan aims to use the OSCE to press for a resolution to the conflict in Afghanistan. And for this reason, I believe the United States would do well to support Kazakhstan in its effort to hold a

summit. For this reason my colleagues and I have spearheaded an initiative which we have called upon the Obama administration to support an OSCE summit for purposes of bringing together all Member States to discuss and come to solutions regarding the security of all nations, particularly in this region of the world.

Mr. Chairman, I submit, I think we really need to look a little more deeply at the fact that this is not just going to cost us arms and body blood but a tremendous drain even in our own national treasury when it comes to this issue of Afghanistan. Without Central Asia's support, in my humble opinion, Mr. Chairman, we have no hope in Afghanistan. Central Asia is key to stabilizing Afghanistan and Kazakhstan is the only Central Asian country to have an action plan to assist in the reconstruction process.

As we noted in our letter to President Obama, "In 2007/2008, Kazakhstan provided \$3 million for social and infrastructure projects, humanitarian aid and training for Afghan law enforcement and border patrol officers. Last year, Kazakhstan committed an additional \$5 million to improve the water supply for the shipments of grain and other commodities. And most recently, Kazakhstan has announced a major education initiative for Afghan students, providing them opportunities to study abroad."

Because Kazakhstan is situated at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, it is in a position to build bridges between the East and the West and at a time when U.S. support is waning. I firmly believe that as a Nation we must support Kazakhstan and its chairmanship of the OSCE. No doubt there will always be critics' intent on setting Kazakhstan back in its attempt to move the OSCE forward, but again, all 56 Member States unanimously voted in favor of Kazakhstan's chairmanship and it is time for us to come together as a commission and an organization to support Kazakhstan and its ambitious agenda.

About efforts to improve implementation of commitments regarding fundamental human rights and freedoms, as David Wilshire, head of the delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe noted, "Building a democracy is a long and hard task." And given the time it has taken America to elect its first African-American President, Mr. Chairman, I submit I tend to agree with Mr. Wilshire's assessment.

As a Pacific Islander whose people know first-hand the horrors of nuclear testing, I also want to make a final comment about human rights. While Kazakhstan, like many other nations including our own, still has challenges ahead as it seeks to provide food, shelter and political rights for its people, we must not forget that when it mattered most, President Nazarbayev changed the course of history, in my opinion Mr. Chairman, and dismantled the world's fourth largest nuclear arsenal which was larger than the combined nuclear arsenals of Great Britain, France and China.

President Nazarbayev also made a tough choice to close and seal off the world's second largest nuclear test site. While the United States, Great Britain, France, China and Russia continue to possess thousands and thousands of nuclear weapons, while human rights groups continue to point fingers at Kazakhstan, I submit Mr. Chairman, only Kazakhstan had the moral courage to renounce nuclear weapons all together for the sake of all mankind.

I also wish to point out that according to U.S. polling data, more than 63 percent of the people of Kazakhstan have a favorable opinion of the United States. And I believe this is a direct result of President Nazarbayev's leadership and commitment in the service of his people.

Since 9/11 in regards to the U.S. coalition operations in Afghanistan, Kazakhstan allowed overflight and transshipment to assist U.S. efforts. U.S.-Kazakh accords were signed in 2002 on the emergency use of Kazakhstan's Almaty airport and on other military-to-military relations. The Kazakh legislature also approved sending military engineers to Iraq in May 2003. And I think it was just recently in a week ago that we've also had an agreement with Kazakhstan for shipment of allowing our shipment of goods going through passes in our efforts in building up our military capacity in Afghanistan.

On many of the other important issues, Mr. Chairman I submit, Kazakhstan has also stood with the United States and I hope the United States will now stand with Kazakhstan in support of an OSCE summit. Again, I commend Kazakhstan for its chairmanship of the OSCE. I sincerely thank you, Mr. Chairman, for giving me this opportunity to share with you my thoughts concerning this very important matter and I look forward to hearing from our witnesses this morning. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you very much, Mr. Faleomavaega. We've also been joined, and I would have the minister to note, we will get to his testimony, but I'd be terribly remiss if I did not acknowledge and allow any statement that he may wish to make at this time, by my colleague and good friend from California, Mr. Issa.

HON. DARRELL E. ISSA, COMMISSIONER, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Mr. ISSA. Thank you, Chairman, and I would ask unanimous consent that my entire statement be put in the record. And since so much has been said, properly, by my colleagues here, and since I really, more than anything else, want to welcome my former Ambassador here, and my good friend, and often we call each other our brothers, because we did form a bond since 2001 that was very close, just as our Nation continues to form a tighter bond with an emerging democracy, and as Mr. Faleomavaega said so well, the only country ever to dismantle its nuclear capability.

It gives us an opportunity to look further. With the summit coming up in 2010, certainly I want to join with my colleagues to support that. It's a bold move, in a place that is both beautiful and warm in the summer, and bitter cold in the winter. So I commend you for finding the right season for a summit, also. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I look forward to hearing his entire testimony and yield back.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you very much, Mr. Issa. If you will give your statement to staff, then we will make sure that it's included in the record.

Before proceeding further, I'd like to note the presence at today's hearing of our two fellow parliamentarians from another OSCE-Participating state, namely Macedonia. My understanding is that Mr. Eliodemoshi (ph) and Mr. Stankovi (ph) are visiting the United

States under the auspices of the Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program. Gentlemen, where are you? I think you're out there somewhere. I'd like to welcome you here to the hearing, in order to see the Helsinki Commission in action.

I'd also like to acknowledge my good friend, the United States Ambassador to Kazakhstan, Ambassador Hoagland—where are you, Ambassador—is here with us today as well. Thank you so very much.

With all of those amenities and courtesies out of the way, now we hear from my good friend, the Foreign Minister, Secretary of State, of Kazakhstan, Mr. Saudabayev. The floor is yours, sir.

And let me remind you all again that channel two is in English on the headsets, and channel 10 is in Russian.

Yes, sir.

H.E. KANAT SAUDABAYEV, FOREIGN MINISTER, REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

[**Note:** The English translation of the beginning of Mr. Saudabayev's remarks was not captured in the recording. His translated remarks begin in progress below.]

Mr. SAUDABAYEV. The fundamental human values—the cultural and human diversity of our reality should serve as the basis for this kind of work and in this regard, I'd like to emphasize this, to acknowledge this new spirit that has emerged in Washington—this aspiration to set the bridges connecting the East and the West.

The preparedness of the United States to listen to the world, to listen to other countries' opinions, which I think was quite brilliantly demonstrated by my friends, a Congressman who spoke this morning. I think that we can feel quite optimistic that we are here sharing our goals, sharing this path and we can continue serving, expanding the mutual understanding and connections between different civilizations.

Exactly in this human dimension, we would like to have the joint session in a conference in Copenhagen, which will also mark the 20th anniversary of the Copenhagen document adoption in 1990, one of the founding documents for the human dimensions in OSCE, as you probably know. So we hope that this conference will be devoted to the review of compliance with the founding principles and freedoms by the countries who are Members of the OSCE.

We think that the annual review conferences on human rights in Warsaw is also very important events—very important efforts conducted by the OSCE and we will take it—the preparation for this event very seriously. As you know, Kazakhstan is the country that encompasses the representatives of 140 nationalities and representatives of all kinds of different confessions (sic), which is one of the greatest accomplishments, I think, of the President of our country, Nursultan Nazarbayev.

Contrary to many forecasts and contrary to many apprehensions, he succeeded in maintaining stable peace in the country that's as diverse and as expansive as Kazakhstan. And actually, we think that preservation of this multiculturalism is the founding principle for our development today and tomorrow. And I think that this can be transposed—this experience that we have accumulated can be attributed to our international experience.

For example, we already have conducted the meeting of the highest representatives of three major religions of the world in Kazakhstan and we actually plan to incorporate the issues of tolerance as one of the top—religious tolerance as one of the top priorities of OSCE. This is why on June 29th and 30th, we are planning to conduct a conference on tolerance and nondiscrimination.

We have already started preparing for this important event. It involves the active engagement of three representatives on tolerance. One of them is from the United States, Andrew Baker, the rabbi who is now the high representative of the United States on religious tolerance and fighting anti-Semitism.

We do hope that the United States will contribute to a significant degree to the preparation of this event. We are very happy to see that Secretary of State Clinton is paying so much attention to the advancement of the issue of gender balance and we think it's very important direction for our work. And this is why we're proposing to conduct a joint session that will be devoted to the issues of equal opportunities for women's participation in political processes.

We also attribute a great importance to fighting human trafficking, especially trafficking in children, which seems unfortunate to have acquired a transnational character. Unquestionably, as a chairman, Kazakhstan will pay very significant attention to the rule of law, religious tolerance, the enforcement of equal access to equal justice, equal law and the efficient work of the penitentiary system.

We would like to say that we're planning to advance those freedoms, advance those principles in Kazakhstan. And actually, the 18 years of our independence is a clear testimony to the fact that we have been adhering to this path for all of this time. For example, just a few years ago, we incorporated very significant amendments in our legislation on elections on the freedom of mass media.

We have adopted the national plan on human rights and their implementation for the years 2009, 2012, as well as we have the national plan that is scheduled for implementation through 2020 in the area of the reinforcement of human rights and their protection.

The law on equal rights and equal opportunities for women, protection from domestic violence and improvement of the forensic system work, social protections from various categories of citizens, various means and methods that exist for carrying out sentences in the criminal court system.

The head of our state announced that he is going to start the implementation of the new legal reform which will be targeted at the humanization of our legislation. So this is why in the near future the parliament of our country is going to consider the draft of legislation that will provide for very stringent controls and monitoring for all of the activities in the area of human rights.

So here is an example of the few goals that we have declared as our main principal goals in the role of the chairman of OSCE. Elections monitoring. In the year of our chairmanship, we are planning to monitor 15 elections in various countries of the world. And we are, of course, planning to pay due attention to this process.

I'm happy to declare that our monitoring of the first elections round in Ukraine was very successful. They complied with OSCE requirements and we hope that the next round is going to be just

as good. And we would like to call upon ODIHR, the inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE, to continue contributing efficiently and constructively to this process of monitoring the elections in different countries.

Now, with respect to the second basket that has to do with economic reforms, I'd like to point out that we are planning to continue our efficient work in improving the efficiency of border control and the land transportation. There's quite a few acute issues in this regard and we are planning to tackle them this year.

The other aspect is the environmental security. As you know, we have inherited two manmade environmental disasters. One is the Semipalatinsk test range and the Aral Sea. The Aral Sea is a problem that actually is acute for all countries in the region. It has been proven beyond doubt that this sea also has a negative impact on the European countries who currently do get reached by the salts originating from the Aral Sea.

And I'd like to emphasize here that in the year of our chairmanship, Kazakhstan would like to intensify our activities that have to do with the stability in Afghanistan. As it was correctly pointed out by Congressman Eni Faleomavaega, we have been providing steady support to the United States and the international coalition on stabilizing the situation in Afghanistan.

However, today, we are convinced that the military efforts, by themselves, are not sufficient enough to stabilize this country. Now is the time to expand the humanitarian constituent part of the international efforts. On our part, in the course of a number of years, we have been providing significant support in the construction of hospitals, schools, providing various humanitarian aid efforts.

And in fact, in the course of the Afghani—as a consequence of the Afghani-Kazakh agreement, intergovernmental agreement, we will provide the training for 1,000 officers from Afghanistan. Despite the difficult economic situation in the world, we have found the time and we have found the means to allocate \$50 million for the training of those officers. And we hope that we will be able to become major contributors to the efforts of the OSCE in this regard and that our efforts will go along with the efforts announced by the President of the United States, Barack Obama.

Insofar, however, there is a drastic need to provide international support to the humanitarian aspects of life in Afghanistan, as well as the various social support programs that are required. This is what was discovered—this is what was discussed on the 27th, 28th of January in London, the conference that was devoted to the issue of Afghanistan and this is what I expressed at this conference.

Since the issues of Afghanistan are especially acute for those countries that are present in the region, we intend to continue intensive and efficient work on reinforcement of borders, the national borders of various countries that are bordering on Afghanistan, as well as strengthening the capacity of the border control troops that serve on the border with Afghanistan as well as continue contributing to the training of the officers in the Border Control College as well as customs.

Our country, as an acknowledged leader of the world in non-proliferation process, supports the initiatives of President Obama

in terms of nuclear disarmament, his commitment, he confirmed in his State of the Union Address to Congress. As chairman in office of the OSCE, we highly appreciate the American-Russian negotiations to develop a new START treaty.

A real contribution of the OSCE to the transnational threats and challenges including terrorism, religious extremism, drug trafficking and organized crime must be the conference for the prevention of terrorism in Astana. Here, we support the—we appreciate the support of our American colleagues.

Kazakhstan will also try to make a contribution to the solution of so-called prolonged conflicts, three of which are raging in post-Soviet space. Bearing in the mind the historical commonality and mental closeness of Kazakhstan to all the parties to the conflicts and also in view of the high authority and trust enjoyed by President Nazarbayev, we hope to give an impetus to this process.

This is what I'm planning to do in my forthcoming visit to Southern Caucasus, starting February 15th. At the same time, we believe it's important to prevent such conflicts which lead to tragedies and humanitarian disasters. And to this end, to use the potentiality of the OSCE in terms of monitoring and prevention of such situations.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, the year 2010 is momentous for OSCE by several anniversaries. It is the 35th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Accords, the 65th anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the 20th anniversary of the Paris Charter for the New Europe and the 20th anniversary of the Copenhagen Document. Beside, it will be 11 years since the latest summit on the OSCE in Istanbul.

Unfortunately, the first decade of the new century has not made our world safer or better. Thus, the 9/11 tragedy changed the usual notions of enemy and war and the international terrorism became an enemy without the address or nationality. The architecture of security in Europe has changed.

In spite of the many years of international effort, Afghanistan continues to be the source of international terrorism and a major drug supplier. Not only have the prolonged conflicts not been extinguished, but new conflicts arose. Even in the most comfortable countries of Europe, they are facing, now, acute issues of tolerances, international and inter-religious tolerance.

And it's all within the zone of responsibility of OSCE. So these are problems that demand consolidated attention and discussion by the leaders of the OSCE. That's why President Nazarbayev called to call a summit of the OSCE in 2010. These concrete recommendations for the summit have already been built into the Council of Foreign Ministers, a document in Athens, and supported by the Permanent Council in Vienna. The leaders of several countries among the OSCE—of OSCE not only support this suggestion, but also make an important contribution to the development of agenda.

Kazakhstan also wants to continue the good tradition laid down by our predecessor, Greece, and invite the Foreign Ministers of OSCE to the informal meeting in Almaty this coming summer to exchange opinions on the pressing issues and hopefully, achieve a consensus on the summit agenda.

I would like to note that as a result of a long absence of the United States in OSCE meetings, it's much more difficult today to find consensus. Today, OSCE demands proper attention on the part of one of the key countries that laid the foundation of this organization. Full-fledged, active participation of the United States will impart the needed impetus to our organization.

I'm quite sure that the idea of the summit is in full accord with the noble goals and efforts of the United States to promote security and improving the trust and cooperation over the whole zone of responsibility of OSCE from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

As the chairman in office of OSCE, I grasp this opportunity to call upon your distinguished colleagues, not only to extend our gratitude for your support, but also I call upon you to show your strategic vision, political will and leadership and support by the United States of the successful summit of our unique organization in the name of security and welfare of the peoples that created our organization.

Indeed, in the 35 years of its history, the OSCE created an unprecedented system of collecting universal and indivisible security. However, as noted by President Nazarbayev, the positive historical resource of OSCE has its limits and today, we should not continue the so-called redlines or zero-sum games practice.

I'm quite sure that our common task is in the light of new challenges and threats to make OSCE even more useful and more effective. Winding up, Mr. Chairman, I would like, once again, to thank, from the bottom of my heart, our chairman, distinguished Congressman Hastings, my friend and brother, Enid Faleomavaega and obviously, Darrell Issa.

He reminded me of 2001, when within these same walls, under an entirely different atmosphere, a hearing on Kazakhstan was held and that was the only voice raised by a U.S. Representative who came out to support an emerging democracy in our country. So it's been only 9 years, but my country has changed beyond recognition.

The United States has changed and today, we feel how reliable our strategic partnership is, looking forward into the future. Thank you very much and let me take this opportunity today to extend my gratitude to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, which used to be an active Member of your distinguished Commission.

As Chairman in Office of the OSCE, let me assure you that myself, personally, and Kazakhstan will always continue close and constructive cooperation with the Helsinki Commission, the Congress, the government and nongovernmental organizations of America with which Kazakhstan has formed a relationship of true strategic partnership. Thank you very much.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you very much, Mr. Minister, for a very comprehensive presentation. If you don't mind, we would turn to a few questions. But I'd like to take the prerogative of the chair initially to say that while I have a long list of questions, and in the interests of time, I would not present each of them, I would like, with your permission, to place in writing to your good offices, as Chair-in-Office, many of the questions that I would seek an answer to, and with your permission, upon their being answered, to place them on our Web site, so that all can see what the questions were,

and what the answers are to those questions. And I don't expect that to take place in any 2- or 3-day period, but certainly, if you can, within this month, answer the questions that I would submit.

Mr. Chairman, I was particularly interested in your comments when you spoke about the invisible walls that are residue or the remains of the cold war. One of the reasons that I supported Kazakhstan as Chair-in-Office was to be able to dramatize the fact that there are countries that are moving forward, in a progressive manner, as is Kazakhstan, and it would be my hope that that will show the way, not only in the OSCE sphere, but indeed, the world.

I think you rightly point out our shortcomings with reference to not having a formal Ambassador in Vienna. I do know that you do know that an ambassador-to-be has been nominated for this position. It would be my hope that he would be confirmed, and I'll use the term "fast," or "expeditiously." I think it has been too long in the coming, and it would be my hope that the U.S. Senate will exercise its confirmation prerogatives most immediately with reference to the nominee. There are two areas that I wish to highlight, then I'll allow, if you wish to answer—those are two questions—and then turn to my colleagues.

Mr. Minister, I think you know, that for 15 years, that I, and I'll use that pronoun, have participated in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, principally as a Member of the Parliamentary Assembly. During that period of time, I don't think there is any other Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, and I can think of at least six Members of various parliaments of the OSCE sphere, that have participated in as many election observations as I have.

As you know, I am just recently back from the observation mission in Ukraine, which was my third election observation in Ukraine. While I agree with you that ODIHR and the Parliamentary Assembly are, indeed required to conduct themselves efficiently and constructively. And in some respects, Ukraine had some measures of success in that regard. I won't bore you or those in attendance with just how important I believe this cooperation, understanding to be.

But I would like for you to take away from this meeting the fact that, here in the United States, particularly in the U.S. State Department, the ODIHR who do extraordinary work on the ground in election observation are referred to as the gold standard. I'm going to say to you what I said to Christian Strohal, who at one time was the head of ODIHR. Christian had been there a considerable number of years. I was 12 years in as an election observer. We were in Maastricht when I made the statement to him that he hadn't been elected to anything, and I had been elected, at that time, seven different times, and six different times. And that I knew more about elections than he would know if he was to start all over again as a bureaucrat.

And I'll say to this State Department, and anybody here, and if I offend you, it's deliberate—not you, Mr. Minister, but the others—that ODIHR is not a gold standard, they are one of the standards that are necessary in the OSCE sphere. But when it comes to election observation, elected officials have no peers.

And I just wish that to be clearly understood, so as how as we go forward, that those constructive and efficient undertakings of the Parliamentary Assembly are taken into account. Let me use yet another example. The OSCE governmental side took credit for and implemented, rightly, the anti-Semitism conferences that have been held under the aegis of OSCE—three of them.

The idea for those conferences came from the Parliamentary Assembly. They came from the Co-Chair of this Commission, Ben Cardin, and myself; Steny Hoyer, who now is the Majority Leader; Chris Smith, who was the Ranking Member of the Helsinki Commission and at the time, at different times, chairman of this same Helsinki Commission; Jerahmiel Grafstein, a Senator from Canada; and Gert Weisskerchen, a member of the Bundestag. The six of us—[inaudible]—the resolution that ultimately became the manifestation of the anti-Semitism conferences.

Those ideas generated transparency in that arena, and we have made other suggestions along those lines, particularly fiscal accounting. Perhaps mine is not a question: It is, as you are my friend and brother, a suggestion about how we go about viewing the work of the various institutions of OSCE as they proceed in their critical missions.

The one question that I would ask you to respond to is, Turkey hosted the last OSCE summit in Istanbul in 1999, and was prepared to host the entire review conference that precedes a summit. Mr. Minister, a year is going to go by a lot more rapidly than most of us think. A month is gone already in the year 2010, and you point out the significant anniversaries that come about in this year. But would your government be willing to hold an OSCE review conference in Kazakhstan, in connection with the decision to convene a summit under your chair?

And I suggest that that would be a very wise thing to do. I also would allow that wisely, you are proceeding to arrange for an informal conference. It would be my view that that should take place sooner than you are suggesting in an effort to give vent to the remaining undertakings that are going to be necessary to achieve a summit. You've heard the three of us suggest that we favor a summit. But I certainly favor the kind of review that the informal conference can proceed with, and with the participation of NGOs and others, in a more rapid-fire manner, to develop a substantive agenda. I hope out of that is a question, and if so, then I invite you to respond.

Mr. SAUDABAYEV. Mr. Chairman, as I have already pointed out, we already have started the substantive preparations for the summit. And after the formal agreement on the dates, we definitely will take into consideration proposals that were made here in favor of the summit and if necessary, if in addition to the informal council of ministers of foreign affairs, we should also hold the review conference. We will do that and we will be able to support its effective and efficient implementation.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Faleomavaega?

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would be remiss if I did not also recognize the presence of our good Ambassador from Kazakhstan, my good friend, Ambassador Erlan

Idrissov, who is also with us here. I do want to say, for the record, that in my humble judgment, I don't know of anybody that has spent so much of his precious time and his dedication and commitment to the operations and the—all aspects of how OSCE has taken its course, and especially with the active participation of those of us representing our government before this organization that is comprised of 56 countries, and I take this special tribute to you, Mr. Chairman, and also to Senator Cardin, and our other colleagues that you had indicated earlier.

I also have a list of questions, and for the sake of time, I'm just going to submit it for the record and also for the Foreign Minister, Saudabayev, to respond. But I do have some—I think, to followup on your question, Mr. Chairman, that I think it's important, and always has been, the question is to justify having a summit that has been requested by the chairman. That not only will it require substance, but something that will be making, that will be important to the extent that not only does it have a direct bearing on the national interests of each country making up the OSCE, but certainly on issues that are now before us, that has tremendous impact on these countries that are Members of the OSCE.

I noted with interest, Mr. Foreign Minister, you have indicated several aspects of several issues that could be part of the overall process of planning for the summit: issues related to religious freedom, elections, human trafficking, human rights, economic reforms, transportation, environmental—all of this, put together, I think they are important. But one issue that I'd like to share with Foreign Minister Saudabayev, and that is: We are right at the center of an issue that has very, very serious and broad implications, not only for the recent decisions that were made by my own government, or our own government—and I make reference again to the crisis, the problems in Afghanistan.

I think no other issue will bear more attention, Mr. Foreign Minister, on how this might relate to the interests that may be expressed by the 56-Member country, and the serious implications of how, what role, how important, this is to the Member countries that make up Central Asia. I have said over the years—and now, most recently, because of the crisis that we're faced with: the war in Afghanistan—I have always said, what are the serious implications will this be, for the Central Asian countries?

I note with interest that when you say "Afghanistans" or "Afghans," you don't really mean that they are all a homogeneous people living in Afghanistan. You're talking about—and I've got a little listing here—of a country that is made up of 42 percent Pashtuns, 11.9 million Pashtuns; 7.9 million Tajiks, who are from Tajikistan in Central Asia; 2.5 million Hazaras; 2.5 million Uzbeks—and by the way, Uzbekistan borders Afghanistan, their population is about 28 million Uzbeks that live there.

My point here, Mr. Chairman, and I want to note this: Will the issue of Afghanistan be considered as a primary, and a very substantial issue that OSCE should seriously undertake and consider in its deliberations, if a summit is to be held? And the reason I suggest this, Mr. Chairman, and I wanted to note with interest if Foreign Minister Saudabayev will share with us some insight.

We're about to expend well over \$30 to \$40 billion in sending another 30,000 soldiers in Afghanistan. You're talking about another expenditure of probably \$100 billion a year if we're going to stay there for another 18 months, as has been proposed by the administration. Now, while this may be just on a unilateral basis, where my country or our country is involved in this, but it does have serious implications throughout Central Asia, and I suspect that every Member of the OSCE country will be affected by what will be happening in the coming weeks and months in Afghanistan.

And I wanted to ask the good minister if the question of Afghanistan is being seriously considered as an issue that should be discussed openly and actively among Members of the OSCE, and if there's a possibility that this issue could also be taken up as part of the agenda and the program on the summit, if there will be a summit, this year.

Mr. Chairman?

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you very much. Mr. Minister?

Mr. SAUDABAYEV. It's a very, very accurate comment. I think you have been quite correct in pointing out the importance of, I think, the consultations that we have so far attested to the fact that the issue of Afghanistan's stabilization is going to be one of the primary items on the agenda of the summit.

And it's actually the issue with which we have the most consensus since 43 countries of the overall number of OSCE Members have displayed their serious interest in the stabilization of the environment in Afghanistan. And I think if we do not consolidate our efforts in the absence of stabilization in Afghanistan, we cannot speak about the sustainable development of our region as well as the overall OSCE space.

Mr. FALEOMAVEGA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I note with interest, also, Mr. Foreign Minister, that over the years, OSCE has had this little push-and-pull relationship, kind of like a mini-cold war effort, where we see Russia, again, playing a very critical role, and being critical also of some of the programs and the suggestions in terms of its proposal to have a security umbrella that is to be composed of European countries.

And I'm just curious, Mr. Foreign Minister, in terms of what is Kazakhstan's role in trying to be a referee, I suppose? Because we see this: the crisis in Georgia, the problem of missile test—I mean, missile bases in the Czech Republic, or in Poland—all these things. And I think in view of the current administration's latest proposals and policies, and I've just wondered, from you, Mr. Minister: How do you view Russia's role in the OSCE in terms of how we can develop a more, a friendly atmosphere, so that we will have a tendency to say, let's be uniform?

I like the idea of consensus-building in terms of how agreements or decisions are made within the OSCE, but I'm just curious: From our Foreign Minister, what exactly do you see the Central Asian countries' role toward Afghanistan, when we view this? And how does this imply, for the activities that we hope that the OSCE Members will play in that respect?

Now, in my discussion with some of the leaders of the Asian, Central Asian countries, we don't need to send more bullets and guns to kill other Taliban who are actually Pashtuns. We need to

provide more humanitarian assistance and education and health, agriculture development, so these people can be more self-sustaining. And I was just wondering if there was a feeling among Central Asian countries. What is the sense among Central Asian countries toward the crisis that we're faced with right now in Afghanistan, may I ask?

Mr. SAUDABAYEV. First of all, with respect to Russia, Russia is one of the OSCE Members and it's a very substantive—Russia is a very substantive and weighty player in the international space and in this organization as well. And all countries who are Members of OSCE have equal rights, we know that, which is why the proposal that Russia made vis-a-vis the European Security Treaty that was advanced by President Medvedev, I think, is a valid proposal that deserves attention and consideration by the countries who are Members of the OSCE.

Second, with respect to the situation around Afghanistan, I think the recent strategy announced by President Obama is correct. It's a good decision and as a country, we support it. We think that in the absence of adequate conditions that would make it possible for the Government of Afghanistan to take upon itself the responsibility for the security in the country, for the social and political involvement of the country itself, we cannot talk about the postwar development of this country.

And alongside the military efforts, we need to enhance what you have just pointed out, our common efforts in the social and economic initiatives of the development of this country, investments in the humanitarian infrastructure of this country, which is why it's so important to engage the capacities that are available in the bordering countries such as Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan.

Those are the countries who are strategically close. They're in the proximity of Afghanistan and of course, they have the religious and ethnic affinity with Afghanistan. Therefore, of course, we have experience in working with those countries. For example, Kazakhstan can present alongside the educational programs, we can also present the following proposals, that we can invite the international donors to use the agricultural opportunities that exist in Kazakhstan.

We can provide seeds, for example, the seed bank to Afghanistan. We can also help with the transportation infrastructure, i.e., for example, can help with the construction of railroads and restoration of railroads. So of course, we're facing the schedule on the removal of troops from Afghanistan. But that should be done in parallel with the other processes of a gradual—it should be a gradual process.

The reduction in the number of troops should be very gradual and it should be accompanied by the parallel process and I think the goal of having the 300,000-strong police and military force, there's going to become a very strong factor in bringing Afghanistan to normalcy and creating opportunities for its development.

Mr. FALEOMAVEGA. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you very much. Mr. Issa?

Mr. ISSA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Foreign Minister, I have a series of questions which I thought my staff was very wise

to say, why don't you just ask to have your friend answer them in writing later? It seemed like an original idea before the other two asked for the same thing. So with your indulgence, I will abbreviate my questions, and with your kindness, perhaps you can answer them at your leisure.

But there are a couple of items that I think bear discussion here today. One of them is, throughout the region, not just in Kazakhstan, not just in Afghanistan, there has been a difficult time in the democratization of producing competing parties, although in your country—and I've had the honor of visiting, and I have a former staff member who works on democracy in Kazakhstan—there are competing movements. They seldom—the seeds don't sprout, and so you don't have a two-, three-, four-party system in which they have representation in your parliament.

I want to share with you something here today. Washington, DC, is exactly the same. This is a one-party town, even though there are people who are not Democrats. And this town has decided to have representation, at least one member of the council, who is chosen simply to represent minorities.

And I might plant that seed, that throughout the emerging democracies, even though it would not usually fit in the U.S. democracy system, we all have to struggle to find a way to ensure that those who cannot get enough votes, but who represent other forms of diversity, find a way to actually get representation within parliaments, city councils, and other bodies. I plant that not as a question for you, but as a thought, because I know that your country has worked—you are not by any means the greatest democracy, nor are you least democracy (sic), but a struggling democracy trying to find the right way to lead your country in a post-cold war period. So that's not as much of a question as food for thought.

My question, though, has to go to the summit. And I'm not asking you for a question that you answer yes or no, but more as what is your vision or your view of what can be accomplished at a summit. And my question is this: Since I've been only less than 2 years on the Commission, I've observed one thing, which is, our problems that we discuss most of the time are problems that are never solved: the problems of the Roma, the problems of anti-Semitism, the problems of universal rights of women, certainly that related to freedom of religion throughout the world. Those did not start during my tenure or even during our chairman's tenure, and they will not finish, because those are ones we always must improve on.

But there seems to be in Afghanistan, as the others mention, there seems to be Member States, and non-Member States around the world who are struggling to reach the baseline, the lowest level of acceptance in the world. I spent a week in Afghanistan over our Christmas holiday, and it was the longest time I'd ever been in the region. And I was there long enough to realize that with less than 18 percent literacy among men, and almost zero among women, this is a country where for you to find those thousand officers to train, must be very hard, because to find people with enough education that you can help them become leaders is difficult.

I flew over poppy fields for hours each day, and discovered that we had no eradication program because we cannot take on the very—these people, at this point, because there is no substitution.

Afghanistan is somewhat unique, and I know that if there's a summit, it will dominate a great many of the forum, but what is your vision for raising the question of what is the base level for every nation of the world? And how do we rise to those base levels?

So this may not be the only thing the summit is about, but my question to you really has to be, do we have a summit in which we talk about the progress on those areas where the whole world continues to move, or can your summit be about the world rising, the least among us, in a way that we all work together on? Because for me, if there's a summit, and I support a summit, that would be the greatest goal, is for what we call it often in the United States, the weakest links to be stronger, rather than talking about making all the links stronger. So I would appreciate your vision on that, as my only question.

Mr. SAUDABAYEV. Thank you for a very interesting vision of—(in Russian). I think the chief result of the summit—this is my personal opinion—should be development of united political will of the leaders of the OSCE countries to concentrate their efforts on the social and economic rehabilitation, to lay down the foundation or create conditions, therefore a transition to peaceful life because the military aspects are taken care of by NATO and there is an established international coalition.

But now, to mobilize the OSCE countries in order to solve the socio-economic aspects, to train personnel, you have noted, very assuredly, that without an availability of—a cadre of educated people, it's very difficult to talk about adaptation of the people to a peaceful life, particularly considering the history of 30 years of incessant warfare.

So the helpful point of the agenda should be to marshal the resources and the efforts and everybody understands that such a summit must be held and the Afghan issue is the most pressing issue.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Minister, you've been very generous of, with your time, and forthcoming with your answers. It's deeply appreciated by all of us. I'm sure that we look forward to seeing you in Vienna.

We wish the Chair-in-Office a tremendous success during the next 11 months, and again, I would urge that as we are establishing the schedule, that we be mindful that a year is swift. But during that swift year, it is our great hope that there will be such a dynamic force coming from the Chair-in-Office, and I know, as my friend and little brother, that you will do a good job with those in your entourage.

If you have time, Mr. Minister, after greeting those who may wish to say hello to you, we've arranged—and I believe your staff will know—a brief, or intermittent visit, in the rear of the room. Our staff will point you in that direction. If you have the time, at the very least, do stop in and say hello and goodbye to us. And we'll see you later this evening, I hope, too, at 6:30 in the CVC. All right, with that, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:26 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

APPENDICES

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

I am pleased to welcome Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister to the Helsinki Commission today in his capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe for 2010. At the outset, let me congratulate the Government of Kazakhstan for the outstanding organization of your chairmanship. You and your colleagues in Astana, Vienna, and Washington have done a superb job. Kazakhstan has the distinction of being the first Central Asian country to chair the OSCE. This is a great honor for Kazakhstan. I hope Kazakhstan's leadership of the organization will enrich both Kazakhstan and the OSCE. I especially hope that the Kazakhstani chairmanship will promote democratization and human rights observance in Central Asia, a region that has sadly lagged behind in the critical human dimension.

Today's hearing is vitally important in maintaining the Commission's engagement with the political leadership of the OSCE, a tradition spanning nearly a decade. Your appearance here today, early in the Kazakh chairmanship, as well as your consultations with senior administration officials allows us to hear about your priorities and plans and to raise issues of mutual concern. We welcome this opportunity.

The Helsinki Commission likewise has closely followed developments in Kazakhstan since independence, and especially since your government announced its interest in securing the OSCE chairmanship in late 2003. It is fair to say that no prospective chair has undergone as much scrutiny. In this regard, we have been mindful that President Nazarbayev personally signed the Helsinki Final Act in 1992 when Kazakhstan joined the OSCE and the specific commitments made by your government at Madrid.

There are many 'firsts' associated with the Kazakh chairmanship, points of distinction for which you can rightly take pride. Given the distinctive focus of the Helsinki Commission on democracy, human rights and the rule of law, I would be remiss not to note that Kazakhstan is the first country assessed as "not free" by Freedom House to assume the OSCE chairmanship. This reality presents unique challenges and opportunities for Kazakhstan, for the United States, and for those of us committed to advancing the principles enshrined in the Final Act.

Kazakhstan's chairmanship comes at a time when the participating States collectively face myriad challenges from Afghanistan, the impasse over the CFE Treaty and prolonged frozen conflicts to corruption, persecution of human rights defenders and violations of fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression and media as well as the right to freely profess and practice one's religion. Your president's proposal to convene an OSCE summit in Kazakhstan in 2010 deserves serious and thoughtful consideration. I look forward to discussing this initiative with you further as we

consider those steps that would be necessary to make such a summit not only a reality, but a success.

Mr. Minister, I look forward to our sustained engagement with you and your colleagues during Kazakhstan's chairmanship and beyond.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. DARRELL E. ISSA, COMMISSIONER, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Chairman Hastings,

This past month, the Chairmanship of the 56 member Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the world's largest security-oriented intergovernmental organization, was assumed by Kazakhstan for the year of 2010. The responsibilities of the Chairmanship include, but are not limited to: Representing the Organization, managing the activities related to conflict prevention, crises, and post-conflict recovery, and coordinating the duties of the OSCE worldwide. The selection of Kazakhstan for the Chair is especially significant for several important reasons.

As an ex-Soviet republic, Kazakhstan has made great inroads from the transition of communist state to full-fledged democracy. While not yet a full-fledged democracy, Kazakhstan has for years been moving in the right direction. As the last of the Soviet republics to declare independence, which occurred on December 16th, 1991, Kazakhstan has made many strides towards becoming an open, more western-leaning democracy, yet they still have much work to do.

I want to acknowledge, however, the progress that Kazakhstan has made, especially in relation to its neighbors. President Nazerbayev's government continues to push for initiatives instilling confidence in the rule of law and create the infrastructures needed to strengthen the democratic values in the country. While this process has not been straightforward, or without controversy, and understanding that the government has made some questionable decisions recently, Kazakhstan is moving in the right direction. By ensuring further transparency, integrity of elections, the ability of public access to information and media, furthering press and human rights, establishing the freedom of religion Kazakhstan will solidify its place as a leader in the region.

By joining the OSCE, and assuming the chairmanship this year; Kazakhstan's leadership has proved that their desire to positively contribute to the region. With Chairmanship priorities in the present including such issues as Afghanistan and terrorism, human rights issues, election monitoring, and potential summits, Kazakhstan has a very busy year ahead.

Thus, I would like to welcome my dear friend Foreign Minister and Secretary of State Kanat Saudebayev, who prior to his current roles, was the Kazakhstani Ambassador to the United States for seven years. I look forward to hearing him outline Kazakhstan's agenda for 2010.

Thank you.

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF H.E. KANAT SAUDABAYEV,
FOREIGN MINISTER, REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN**

Distinguished Co-Chairman Cardin, Co-Chairman Hastings, members of the Commission, and members of Congress, today I am very happy to see, in this room, dignitaries, prominent politicians, and real patriots of America with whom I happened to work during my seven-year tenure as the Republic of Kazakhstan's Ambassador to the United States.

I would like to express my gratitude for this opportunity to address this esteemed Commission, which played a key role in the decision of the United States to support Kazakhstan's chairmanship in the Organization of Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Therefore, I decided to deliver my first statement as the OSCE Chairman-in-Office here, at the Helsinki Commission, as I believe in your sincere interest in the success of Kazakhstan's OSCE Chairmanship. The goal of our chairmanship is to strengthen our common organization to provide greater security and broader cooperation in the vast territory from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

In his video address to the OSCE's Permanent Council in Vienna on January 14, President Nazarbayev presented the strategy and priorities of Kazakhstan's OSCE chairmanship. First of all, we will strictly adhere to OSCE core principles and values. We will work in the interests of all OSCE member states. Kazakhstan views the OSCE support for Kazakhstan's chairmanship as explicit recognition by the international community of our achievements in the political, social, and economic development of our relatively young country as well as our contribution to regional and global security. At the same time, this decision demonstrates the desire of the OSCE to enhance trust and mutual understanding among countries from west and east of Vienna.

Our paramount objective is to fully strengthen the OSCE, to be instrumental in boosting its effectiveness and ability to appropriately respond to current challenges and threats.

Whether our priorities will be achieved will largely depend on our ability to overcome the crisis of confidence, engendered by divisive lines and vestiges of the Cold War, which remains. In this regard, we hope for the "Corfu Process" to continue, as it has brought to light the common dissatisfaction of all OSCE member states with current state of affairs that exists in the various areas of the organization's responsibility.

We deem it imperative that the "Corfu Process" includes the humanitarian basket. Kazakhstan considers the OSCE's human dimension an integral and key part of its operations in 2010. We will firmly support the important work of all three OSCE institutions i.e., the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the High Commissioner for National Minorities, and the Representative on Freedom of the Media.

In discussing human rights, it is important to note that such rights are based on fundamental human values, on diversity of cultures and civilizations, which must, no doubt, be respected. We are grateful to our American partners because, in supporting the Kazakh chairmanship, they reconfirmed their resolute commitment to the OSCE's ideals as an organization meant for all of its members, including countries with different and often more complicated

cultural and historic experiences. Together with Denmark and ODIHR, we intend to hold a conference in Copenhagen next June that will be devoted to the 20th anniversary of the 1990 Copenhagen Document as the fundamental instrument of the human dimension. The event's agenda will include a review of compliance with the obligation to observe fundamental human rights and freedoms within the OSCE region.

One of the most important events of our chairmanship will be the successful arrangement of the Review of Human Rights Conference in Warsaw to which we are paying special attention.

Given a rather positive experience of achieving inter-ethnic and inter-faith accord in our own country, we intend to make the issues of tolerance and intercultural dialogue within the OSCE space an important priority of our chairmanship.

Indeed, this will be the underlying theme of a high-level OSCE conference on tolerance and non-discrimination to be held in Astana June 29–30. We will work on the event's agenda and the OSCE's preparations for the event in close coordination with the three personal representatives on tolerance, including the esteemed Rabbi Andrew Baker and representative on combating anti-semitism. We expect the United States to support that event.

Further promotion of gender balance is a matter of urgency. In this regard, we intend to hold a meeting on promoting women's participation in public and political life and to co-sponsor an ODIHR program on boosting women's involvement in government.

We will focus on the troubling problem of human trafficking, particularly that of children, which has become a global tragedy and an increasing transnational crime.

Kazakhstan intends to pay special attention to such fundamental freedoms as the freedom of conscience, freedom of media, rule of law, greater independence of the judicial system, and better public access to justice. Given this occasion, I would like to assure you that Kazakhstan, a young democracy with an 18-year history, continues to pursue political modernization at home. Building a strong and democratic society is a conscious choice, and I am in a position to say that we have achieved some impressive successes along this difficult path.

In 2008 and 2009, in line with OSCE recommendations, significant legislative reforms were achieved on the areas of the media, elections, political parties, and local government. We have adopted and have been successfully implementing a 2009–2012 National Human Rights Action Plan and a 2010–2020 Concept as to the Policy of Law, intended to further liberalize the law of the Republic of Kazakhstan and bring it in line with international standards.

To strengthen the national system for protecting human rights, Kazakhstan adopted laws to ensure equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men, prevent domestic violence, improve the judicial system and forensic operations, take a tougher stand on corruption, provide a social safety net for select individuals and refugees, and address such issues as further improvement of the criminal penitentiary and correctional systems.

In his address to the nation on January 29, President Nazarbayev declared the importance of further reforms to the criminal justice system laws in keeping with high international

standards. Therefore, this year the Parliament will introduce a bill to provide strict public and parliament control over the operations and accountability of each and every law enforcement authority.

Thus, Kazakhstan has taken specific steps to implement international standards in its national legislation, in line with the goals and objectives we have identified in the context of our OSCE chairmanship.

Considering that this year elections will occur in 15 participating nations, the Kazakh chairmanship considers it important that the OSCE member states comply with their election monitoring obligations.

With great satisfaction, I would like to note the monitoring process that took place in the first round of elections in Ukraine; we hope that the second round also occurs in accordance with OSCE commitments. In this regard, we highlight the work of ODIHR and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, which has been conducted in the spirit of partnership, impartiality, and constructiveness.

Our priority in the economic and environmental dimension will be to promote good governance at border crossings and develop safe and efficient land transportation. We believe this topic is highly important as we emerge from the global recession.

Environmental security is yet another crucial focus in the OSCE's second dimension. We deem it important to focus on the Aral Sea problem, a Central Asian environmental catastrophe that has proven to adversely affect the European states. Addressing the Aral region's problems could serve as a model for solving similar environmental problems within the OSCE's area of responsibility.

Ladies and gentlemen, Afghanistan occupies a special place on our chairmanship's agenda. Since the beginning of the war in Afghanistan, Kazakhstan has provided support to U.S. and international coalition efforts in the country. However, we strongly believe that achieving the long-term objective of establishing peace and democracy in that country solely through military means would make it difficult, if not impossible. Therefore, it is time to significantly expand humanitarian efforts in Afghanistan.

For many years, Kazakhstan has provided financial support to Afghanistan to build schools, a hospital, and roads and to provide food aid.

As of this year, under an agreement with the Afghan government, Kazakhstan has been implementing a special program that offers the opportunity for 1,000 Afghans to attend our universities and earn civilian degrees. Despite the fallout from the financial crisis, Astana has allocated US \$50 million for this educational program. Kazakhstan as the Chairman-in-Office is going to use social, economic, and humanitarian capabilities of the OSCE that will absolutely correspond with President Obama's new strategy in Afghanistan.

It is obvious that the Afghan government should start solving the problems of its country. However, their efforts in social and economic rehabilitation and democratic development should be strongly supported by the international community and, first of all, by the member states of the OSCE. This understanding was demonstrated during discussions at the January 28 London Conference on Afghanistan, where I also delivered the vision of Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan will continue the OSCE's active endeavors to improve the standard of governance at the borders between the Central Asian countries and Afghanistan, to develop cross-border cooperation, and strengthen the capabilities of Afghanistan's national border and police forces. The OSCE has already achieved some concrete results in this area: an OSCE border college has opened in Dushanbe and a customs training center has become operational in Kyrgyzstan. Training Afghani customs, police, and border personnel translates into significant support for the Afghan government. In addition, the OSCE plans to develop new projects to stabilize the situation in the country.

Our country, as a recognized leader of the global nonproliferation process, supports President Obama's initiatives on nuclear disarmament, adherence to which he reconfirmed in his first State of the Union Address to Congress. As the OSCE Chairman-in-Office we appreciate the U.S.-Russian negotiations on a new strategic arms reduction treaty (START-2).

The real OSCE contribution to the fight against transnational threats and challenges—including terrorism, religious extremism, drug trafficking, and organized crime—will be the Conference on Preventing Terrorism in Astana.

Kazakhstan will try, to the best of its ability, to contribute to the difficult process of resolving the "protracted conflicts," three of which are raging in the post-Soviet space. Bearing in the mind the historical commonality and closeness of Kazakhstan to all the parties of the conflict, as well as the trust and authority enjoyed by President Nazarbayev, we hope to give an impetus to all efforts of our partners involved in this challenging process. Therefore, I am planning to devote attention to this subject during my first trip to South Caucasus on February 15.

At the same time, we believe it is crucial to seek ways to prevent the emergence of such conflicts, which eventually lead to human tragedies and humanitarian catastrophes. Therefore, we are going to actively engage the OSCE's capacity to monitor and identify any possible conflicts.

Ladies and gentlemen, 2010 represents a milestone for the OSCE. This year, it celebrates several anniversaries of great significance to the establishment of the security architecture in Europe. I am referring to the 35th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, the 65th anniversary of the end to the Second World War, the 20th anniversary of the Paris Charter for a New Europe, and the 20th anniversary of the Copenhagen Document. Furthermore, it is the 11th year since the last OSCE summit was held in Istanbul.

Unfortunately, the first decade of the new century has not made our world safer or better. The 9/11 tragedy changed the traditional notion of "enemy" and "war." International terrorism has become an enemy without an address or nationality. The architecture of the European security has changed. In spite of the many years of international efforts, Afghanistan continues to be the source of international terrorism and a major drug supplier. Not only have the protracted conflicts not been resolved but new conflicts have arisen. We have witnessed and been experiencing circumstances arising from the international financing crisis. Even the most comfortable countries of Europe are facing challenges in promoting tol-

erance, interethnic, and interreligious accord. All these problems exist in the OSCE area of responsibility—they need collective attention and consideration by the 56 leaders of OSCE member states.

That is why President Nazarbayev called for an OSCE summit in 2010. A specific recommendation concerning the summit is already incorporated into documents of the Athens Ministerial Council and is now supported by the Permanent Council in Vienna. Leaders of France, Italy, Vatican, Turkey, Spain, as well as Russia and other CIS countries, and the current EU President have not only supported the summit but have begun working on its agenda.

Kazakhstan also intends to continue a good tradition established by our predecessor, Greece, and invite the foreign ministers of the OSCE member states to an informal meeting in Almaty next summer. There, they could continue a free exchange of opinions on urgent problems and, ideally, achieve consensus as to approval of the summit's agenda and timeline.

I would like to note that, as a result of the United States' long absence from high-level OSCE meetings, a certain imbalance has emerged within the organization. Numerous OSCE processes have slowed, and consensus building is becoming an increasingly more challenging task. The OSCE needs proper attention on the part of a key nation that helped lay the organization's foundation. The full engagement of the United States with the OSCE will give the organization a new impetus and set a new tone for talks within its ambit.

I am absolutely certain that the idea of the Summit is in full accord with the noble goals and efforts of the United States to promote comprehensive, indivisible, and strong security and to strengthen trust and cooperation in the OSCE region—from Vancouver to Vladivostok. As the Chairman-in-Office I grasp this opportunity to call upon you, distinguished colleagues, to demonstrate the strategic vision, political will, leadership, and support needed to make the summit of our unique and unparalleled organization a reality in the name of security and prosperity of the people who established the OSCE.

Dear friends, during its 35-year history, the OSCE has created an unparalleled system of collective, comprehensive, and integral security. However, as President Nursultan Nazarbayev has noted, “. . . the positive historical resources of the OSCE are limited” and “today, it is not permissible to carry on endlessly a practice that involves drawing so-called ‘red lines’ and playing ‘zero-sum games.’” I am quite sure that it is our common task to make the OSCE more effective and stronger in light of new challenges and threats.

In conclusion, I would like, once again, to thank you, distinguished Co-chairman Hastings and all esteemed members of Congress in this room, as well as members and the staff of the U.S. Helsinki Commission for your efforts and support of Kazakhstan's OSCE chairmanship. I would like to offer my profound appreciation for the great interest in the OSCE and its activities as expressed by my counterpart Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who was a member of your esteemed Commission.

For my part, I assure you of our complete willingness to continue a close constructive engagement with the Helsinki Commission, the Congress, the administration, as well as other non-governmental entities of the United States with which Kazakhstan has established relations of a true strategic partnership.

Thank you for this opportunity to present Kazakhstan's vision for and priorities during its OSCE chairmanship. I am pleased to respond to your questions and welcome your comments and suggestions.



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