

Emergency Food Demand High Nationwide

Recent national studies document persistent, and even increased, demand for emergency food assistance. Second Harvest reported that its emergency food programs across the country served over 21 million people (an unduplicated count) in 1997. Of the clients interviewed, 78.5% had insufficient income for food and relied upon agency or government food programs. Over one-quarter (27.5%) of Second Harvest clients reported that adults in their household missed meals during the previous month because they did not have enough food or money to buy food. Of those households with children, 9.1% reported that children missed meals in the prior month for similar reasons (Second Harvest, 1998). In addition, Catholic Charities reported that during 1998, the demand for emergency food assistance rose an average of 38% among reporting agencies (GAO, July 1999).

The recently-released U.S. Conference of Mayors survey of 26 major cities reveals that 85% of respondent cities reported a rise in emergency food assistance demand between November 1998 and October 1999, with requests increasing by an average of 18% over the previous year. For those cities reporting increases, the rising demand for emergency food ranged from 1% in Chicago to 45% in Los Angeles. Nearly 60% of those requesting food assistance were children and their parents. In addition, over two-thirds (67%) of adults requesting food assistance were employed. In all of the cities surveyed, people relied upon emergency food assistance facilities not only in emergencies but also as a steady source of food over long periods of time. Officials in virtually every city surveyed anticipate increased requests for emergency food assistance in 1999, especially among families with children (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 1999).

State and Local Emergency Food Programs Seeing More Families

Reports from states and metropolitan areas present a similar, if not a more striking, picture of emergency food demand in various regions throughout the United States. Of those studies reviewed, recent increases in the number of clients ranged from 14% to 36%.

Maryland emergency providers reported that from September 1997 to September 1998, soup kitchens experienced a 25% increase in the number of children served, a 24% increase in the number of women served, and a 19% increase in the number of families served. Food pantries reported an 8% increase in children, a 21% increase in women, and a 24% increase in the number of families served (Center for Poverty Solutions, 1998).

A Massachusetts study of 98 emergency providers found that between 1996 and 1997, 63% experienced a rise in the total number of emergency food requests, with clients served increasing an average of 22.4%. Over half (52.4%) of the clients requesting emergency food assistance were families with children, and nearly half of the programs reported an increasing number of families with children requesting services. (Project Bread and the Center on Hunger and Poverty, Tufts University, 1998).

A recent survey of 330 New York City providers revealed that emergency food requests at each site increased an average of 36% from January 1998 to January 1999. Providers reported a 72% increase in the number of families with children seeking emergency food assistance (New York City Coalition Against Hunger, 1999).

Of the greater Philadelphia community food providers surveyed between April 1998 and April 1999, 67% reported a greater demand for food assistance during this time pe-

riod. Overall, providers reported an 18% increase in the number of individuals seeking food assistance compared to the previous year, with 45% of their clients from families (Philabundance, 1999).

Connecticut also reported higher demand for food assistance. Of the 128 food sites that reported an increased demand for assistance between October 1997 and October 1998, the number of persons served grew by an average of 24% (Connecticut Association for Human Services, 1999).

At emergency food programs in Utah, researchers found a 24% increase in the number of individuals served from 1997 to 1998, and an astonishing 107% increase over the prior two-year period (Utah Food Bank, 1999).

An Oregon survey of over 680 regional food providers reported that the number of people who received emergency food boxes increased 14% from 1997 to 1998, to a high of 458,208 individuals, or 1 in 8 people in Oregon and Clark County, Washington (Oregon Food Bank, 1999).

Emergency Food Providers Struggling to Meet Demand

Emergency food providers are struggling to meet the increased food needs of their clients. Although the provider network continues to grow, reports indicate that it is unable to meet the demand for assistance, and providers must sometimes either turn clients away or provide them with less in order to stretch resources over a growing client population. For example, the U.S. Conference of Mayors report that in 1998, on average, 21% of requests for emergency food assistance went unmet (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 1999).

Studies also indicate a shift in the composition of people using emergency food programs. Soup kitchens, which have traditionally served homeless adults, report an increase in the number of families with children. Pantries report increased requests for evening hours in order to serve needy working parents. And food bank directors report increased regular use of their programs by clientele who used to stop in occasionally for a bag of food.

Taken together, this evidence raises red flags concerning the depth of food insecurity experienced by many families. Typically, seeking out emergency food assistance is an end-stage coping strategy. As such, emergency food program activity constitutes a unique barometer for gauging the paradox of hunger in a strong economy, and is evidence of the numbers of households and individuals for whom neither employment in the strong economy nor federal safety nets are providing the support necessary to ensure their food security.

SUMMING UP THE EVIDENCE

Based on data from national, state and local studies as well as reports from emergency food providers, the evidence on hunger and food insecurity in the United States can be summarized as follows.

The national data show remarkably persistent levels of aggregate household food insecurity over the last four years that appear unresponsive to favorable national economic trends. Approximately one in ten households in the US report food insecurity; over 30 million adults and children live in these households.

Household food security at the state level varies widely around the national average, ranging from less than 5% to over 15%.

Local studies using the same food security survey instrument used by the USDA have found hunger prevalence rates among various at-risk groups that are 5 to 10 times the overall national rate.

Recent reports from emergency food assistance providers across the country indicate

greater dependence of food insecure families on the emergency food system, increased regular reliance on this system to meet household food needs, a significant number of unfulfilled requests, and greater numbers of families with children among their clientele.

FOOTNOTES

¹Shapiro and Greenstein (1999): U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States 1999.

²Food insecurity occurs whenever the availability of nutritionally adequate and safe food, or the ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways, is limited or uncertain. Hunger is defined as the uneasy or painful sensation caused by a recurrent or involuntary lack of food and is a potential, although not necessary, consequence of food insecurity. Over time, hunger may result in malnutrition.

³The USDA Food Security Core Module consists of an 18-item instrument constructed as a scale measure. The items ask about a household's experiences of increasingly severe circumstances of food insufficiency and behaviors undertaken in response to them during the 12-month period preceding the survey (Hamilton et al. 1997).

⁴The Advance Report (Nord, 1999) builds on an earlier historic report released in 1997 that presented the first-ever national prevalence estimates of food security using 1995 data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau.

⁵To assess household food security, the NSAF includes three questions from the USDA's Food Security Core Module.

⁶The studies reviewed for this report were published or released after January 1998 and represent only a portion of available data. For a more comprehensive collection of state and local food security studies, see the compilation of studies released in February 1999 by the Food Security Institute at the Center on Hunger and Poverty.●

KAZAKHSTAN

●Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, last November, Akezhan Kazhegeldin, who served as Prime Minister of Kazakhstan from 1994 to 1997, was the featured speaker at the City Club of Cleveland. His remarks summarize the many challenges and struggles in Kazakhstan and how the United States can be a partner for progress and democracy in Central Asia.

I have a copy of Mr. Kazhegeldin's remarks, as well as a copy of the story on his visit that appeared in the Cleveland Plain Dealer, and I ask that both appear in the RECORD following the conclusion of my remarks.

The material follows:

REMARKS OF THE HONORABLE AKEZHAN KAZHEGELDIN

Ladies and Gentlemen!

First of all, I would like to thank those who arranged this radio forum and asked me to appear before you. This is not only an honor for me, but also a great responsibility. At this rostrum I have been preceded by many respected politicians, among them presidents of the United States. Now the chance to be heard here, in Ohio—the very heart of the United States, has been given not only to me, Akezhan Kazhegeldin, economist and politician, but through me to all of Kazakhstan.

My country lies in the very center of Asia between Russia and China, between Siberia and the great deserts. Poets say that Kazakhstan is the very heart of Asia. For me, therefore, this appearance before the citizens of Ohio represents a conversation between two hearts, a true heart-to-heart talk.

American society needs first-hand knowledge about what is happening in the countries which were formerly parts of the Soviet Union. American corporations, working in Kazakhstan, may have knowledge and understanding of geological resources, but no more

than that. I am sure that the oil companies which worked in Iran under Shah Pahlevi had the most detailed and accurate geographical maps. But these maps could not have predicted that the Shah would be replaced by the Khomeini regime.

In many of the former Soviet republics one can clearly see the possibility or the actual threat of new anti-democratic regimes arising. They are not necessarily linked to religious extremism. And even less to Islam. The Serbian leader Milosevich is not an Islamic extremist. He is a Christian extremist, a nationalist. But that does not make him any less dangerous.

ABOUT KAZAKHSTAN

My country has been in existence as an independent state for only eight years. I am not surprised that not everyone can find it on a map. And yet in recent times American newspapers have been writing about Kazakhstan more frequently. So it is harder nowadays to miss Kazakhstan. Some may say that Kazakhstan is simply a splinter of the former Soviet empire. If so, it is a very large splinter. The largest if one does not count Russia. The territory of Kazakhstan covers 2.7 million square kilometers. This huge territory is inhabited by fifteen million people. This is a bit more than the population of the greater New York metropolitan area. I suspect that it will be a long time before we enter the international discussion of world overpopulation. Imagine the reaction of Japanese businessmen during a four-hour flight from Almaty, our southern capital, to Atray, the center of the oil production region in the western part of the country, when they are told by the stewardess that on their way they will pass over all of three towns. On the other hand, Kazakhstan businessmen are equally stunned when they find out the size of the assets of Japanese and American banks. The total annual state budget of Kazakhstan is somewhere in the area of six billion dollars. That sum passes through a New York bank during one week. And I am not specifically speaking of the Bank of New York.

THE RESOURCES OF DEMOCRACY

When I speak of money, I have no intention of asking for a donation of a certain number of millions to Kazakhstan. This in spite of the catastrophic lack of funds for everything and anything, from formula for the newborn to pensions for the aged. The envoys of the current president regularly come to Washington to ask for credits and donations. But we, the opposition, expect a different kind of aid from America. You probably know the ancient saying that one can give a hungry man a fish or one can teach him how to fish. This holds true not only for Kazakhstan but for all other newly independent states. People in those countries do indeed need the means to exist, but what they need even more is the ability to earn these means within the framework of a unified world market.

God has not been ungenerous to Kazakhstan when He distributed natural resources. Oil is far from being our only treasure. Kazakhstan possesses deposits of almost all metals, including gold, aluminum, copper, titanium, uranium, zinc and others. All of these resources were being used in one form or another under the Soviet regime. Kazakhstan was then one of the key regions impacting on the growth of the military and industrial might of the Soviet Union.

When I entered the government in 1993 after having held the position of President of the Entrepreneurs' Union, I considered it my main task to attract foreign investment capital. I traveled the world meeting with businessmen and touting our mineral resources, our highly qualified labor force and engi-

neers, and the possibility of unlimited new markets.

During the four years that I held the position of prime-minister we were able to attract to our country hundreds of Western, primarily American, companies. Their investments totaled 9 billion dollars. We not only managed to avoid defaulting on the multi-billion debt incurred by the previous regime, but we created gold and hard currency reserves of a size remarkable for a country such as Kazakhstan.

But I have to confess that during my tenure I failed to achieve the most important goal—that of creating a sufficient reserve of democracy in our society. Parallel with the development of a liberalized economy an authoritarian and anti-democratic regime was emerging in Kazakhstan—the regime of President Nazarbaev.

And, unfortunately, I myself helped solidify it. As a young politician and, more accurately, a technocrat, I believed that everything would develop on its own as it should. Together with my reform-minded colleagues I thought that once a market economy was established, democracy would follow; once Western investments started coming, society would automatically become transparent; once a middle class had emerged and defined its interests, a multi-party system would appear.

We were wrong. Even while still in the position of prime-minister I began to notice that foreign investors would frequently find themselves in conflict with local administrations and would always lose in the end.

The courts and media controlled by local officials invariably took the side of their bosses. Foreign investors and ambassadors applied to me and in each specific case I was forced to use my authority as prime-minister.

Our own businessmen found themselves in an even worse situation. They became hostages to the officials. They did not have embassies on their side, and their complaints were not being heard by the international arbitration board in Stockholm. Without the administration's patronage they were unable to conduct their business.

At the same time more and more positions in government were being occupied by the President's relatives. Other positions went to nephews, to fellow-villagers and former colleagues in the Communist Party.

Combining business holdings, obtained without investment or qualifications, with power, they created a unique sort of capitalism profiting an oligarchy determined by clan and family ties. It was futile to expect of these people either democratic views or even professional managerial conduct.

At this point I left the government and dedicated myself to political activity. I became the head of the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan and later the chairman of the Republican National Party of Kazakhstan. These organizations formed an opposition to President Nazarbaev, and I personally was forced to leave my country and seek temporary asylum in Western Europe.

AMERICAN AID

I recently read in the New York Times a commentary by Tina Rosenberg on the work of one of the specialists of the Carnegie Endowment for Peace dealing with the effectiveness of America's "export of democracy". I have not as yet seen the book myself, but I noted the following figure: Seven hundred nineteen million dollars were spent last year on US government support of democracy in other countries.

Thomas Carothers attempted to estimate the effect of such investment in democracy. This is an extremely important question. In

the case of Kazakhstan, I see how often such aid is being used by anti-democratic forces for their own purposes. I will give you an example: The International Financial Corporation opened the printing house "Franklin" in Almaty. At first it printed a number of newspapers expressing different viewpoints, among them "Karavan", the most widely read and independent of the newspapers of Kazakhstan.

However, just before last year's presidential elections the authorities forced the owner to sell the newspaper together with the printing house to a relative of President Nazarbaev. Since then the facility has printed nothing but pro-government publications, and the opposition has been forced to print its materials a thousand miles away in Russia and ship them secretly into Kazakhstan.

As you know, barely a month ago parliamentary elections were held in Kazakhstan. They were carried out with massive violations of voting procedures and false vote counts. As a result, the majority of the seats in parliament went to the candidates of the powers that be and to government officials. This happened in spite of the fact that sociological polling and the monitoring of voting precincts on election day indicated that the opposition candidates were in the lead across the country.

It is not surprising that all this falsification was carried out and later covered up by the Central Electoral Commission. The Commission was created and is controlled by President Nazarbaev. It is, therefore, understandable that local electoral commissions composed of government employees and controlled by local administrators and governors added fake ballots and issued false election returns.

What is amazing is the fact that on the eve of the elections international organizations conducted serious work of "educating" the members of these electoral commissions. Dozens of experts from Western Europe and the United States lectured on the subject of how ballots must be handled and counted correctly and honestly. Members of the Central Electoral Commission went abroad for training. Instructions and methodological materials were printed, seminars conducted. I do not know how much all of this cost, but I suspect that millions were spent. We, the citizens of Kazakhstan, watched all this as a performance of the theater-of-the-absurd.

Why were all these efforts and funds, among them those of the American taxpayers, expended in vain? As recently as in January of this year, these very same electoral commissions had falsified the results of the presidential elections. The free press had been annihilated and many members of the opposition had been denied their civil rights. I was one of them.

The Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe, a number of Congressional committees and the Administration of President Clinton have condemned those elections as incompatible with democratic norms. The authorities of Kazakhstan never intended to hold honest elections or to admit opposition candidates to parliament. Could the Administration and the agencies involved in foreign aid have deemed it possible that, having falsified the presidential election, Nursultan Nazarbaev would allow honest parliamentary elections? That is hard to believe.

THE SECRET STRATEGY OF DICTATORS

It seems to me that after the dissolution of the Soviet bloc and the Soviet Union, the West was caught in a trap set by crafty post-Soviet leaders. These people have learned the lesson of history, they have understood that one cannot openly reject democratic principles. They determined that it is much better to verbally acknowledge common

human values, to proclaim them loudly at every turn, to promise to stop all violations of human rights, and—most of all—to abstain from polemics with the West.

Then one can pay yearly visits to Washington, make speeches before members of the various think tanks about progress towards democracy, and acquire the reputation of being “our man”. And meanwhile in one's own country one can destroy the free press, quash the opposition, and prevent any possibility of a transfer of power by constitutional means.

At the same time, these leaders, trying to preempt criticism, are asking the West for help in building democracy. They say that because of long years of Soviet dictatorship, their citizens are unable to absorb such concepts as equality before the law, freedom of speech, political competition and the division of power.

Thus in April of this year, President Nazarbaev during his appearance at the Carnegie Endowment asserted in all seriousness that America had needed two hundred years to build its democracy and that, therefore, no demands in that respect could be made on Kazakhstan.

Had I been present at that meeting, I would have answered my president by saying: “Had American presidents allowed themselves to rig elections and prolong their terms in office at will, even five hundred years would not have been enough for building democracy in the United States.”

It is hard to say how many American consultants have visited Kazakhstan and how many proposals and memorandums they have written for the government. All of them were qualified experts, all of them believed that the government was just waiting for their recommendations to make one more step toward genuine democracy. But none of these recommendations are implemented if they go contrary to the preservation of power by the new “nomenklatura”.

You must realize that the elective nature of local government has been abolished in Kazakhstan. All regional governors and local mayors are appointed by the President. There is a Ministry of Information and Social Consensus which controls the media and printing. What kind of recommendations can one give to these institutions? All this reminds one of a discourse between a cannibal and dieticians. The members of the rubber-stamp parliament have frequently visited Washington on the invitation of their colleagues, the US legislators. They pretended to admire the perfection of the American system of division of power and then returned home to vote for granting President Nararbaev additional powers and authority and extending his term of office from five to seven years. There is a Russian proverb “The oats were of no profit to the horse”. I think it fits the situation.

A year ago a ban was placed on the publication of my book “The Right to Chose”, which exposed the true nature of the current regime. More than three hundred thousand copies published in the Kazakh language were destroyed. For the last two years the authorities have been denying registration to the newspaper “Respublika”. During the presidential elections twelve opposition papers and two radio stations were closed down. Three printing houses were confiscated and have not been returned to their owners. Quite recently the owner of the independent radio station RIK was forced to leave for Canada.

I was outraged when I heard the testimony of Kazakhstan's ambassador to Washington Nurgaliev at the hearings before the Congressional Committee on Cooperation and Security in Europe. He was trying to convince Congress that democracy was indeed

evolving in Kazakhstan, that it was becoming an accomplished fact. As proof thereof he cited the cooperation of his government with international organizations and American consultants.

And this at a time when it is clear to any objective observer that Kazakhstan is moving swiftly away from democracy and mutating towards a classic dictatorship. What is encouraging is that US legislators do not allow themselves to be duped by such litanies of “good deeds” and continue to condemn the anti-democratic practices of the current regime.

Does this mean that the United States should abandon their efforts to export democracy to post-Soviet states? Not at all! But it would be useful to analyze the correlation between cost and effect.

When viewed from that perspective, the most effective aid turns out to be that which is given not to governmental bodies, but to specific opposition groups, to independent newspapers to intellectuals, to unofficial trade unions. It is such aid that proved to be decisive in Poland. A simple Xerox machine in the hands of “Solidarity” proved to be a more powerful weapon than the guns and clubs of the secret police.

But one must remember that the new dictators are extremely resourceful. For the benefit of the West they create a large number of seemingly non-governmental and quite democratic organizations: “pocket” trade-unions, environmental movements, women's movements, fake political parties.

It would seem, that a foreigner would be incapable of telling a genuine human rights advocate from a false one, a real democratic movement from a fictional one. But in actuality, it is all quite simple: There is only one criterion and it is well known to your journalists and diplomats who work in Kazakhstan: Does this or that opposition group allow itself to criticize the President?

All the “pocket” dissidents and fictional opponents are permitted to severely criticize and expose regional governors and even government ministers, but will never dare to point out that, if corruption has pervaded the highest levels of government, the President is obviously aiding and abetting it. Once you identify the “upper limit of criticism”, you can determine whether the organization in question is really independent of the government and the secret police.

THE VOICE OF AMERICA MUST BE TRULY HEARD

The credit for the fact that the Soviet Union crumbled of its own accord without anybody coming to its defense belongs to a greater degree to the radios “Liberty” and “Voice of America” than to the Pentagon and the CIA. I hope that the workers of those two venerable agencies will not feel offended.

But it is precisely from those broadcasts that I myself gained my basic understanding of a free society and of a market economy. At that time the broadcasts were being heavily jammed, but we listened anyway. We did so because man has, among other instincts, the very basic instinct, the unquenchable desire to know the truth. The great Russian writer and the great dissident of the Soviet era, Nobel Prize Laureate Alexander Solzhenitsyn proclaimed that “God is to be found in truth, not in might”. It is because of this that Brezhnev feared him more than any other of his enemies.

This is why, when I meet with members of Congress and the Administration in Washington, I ask them again and again not to cut down on broadcasts to the former Soviet republics, but to create broadcast services for each of the new states of Central Asia. My people need information as much as they need bread.

You cannot imagine to what length my fellow-citizens will go to obtain truthful infor-

mation. Because of the difference in time zones, they watch Russian TV broadcasts deep into the night trying to find out what is really happening in Kazakhstan. Early in October the New York Times published an article about the fact that the Swiss police had frozen the personal bank account of President Nazarbaev in the amount of eighty five million dollars. As soon as reports about this event began to be broadcast by Russian television stations, all Russian TV channels were blocked for three days in Kazakhstan.

I am sure that you find it hard to believe. But this is indeed so. Try to imagine it. Try to imagine how hard it is for people to live not only in poverty but surrounded by lies. Help people in all post-Soviet states to turn from mere populations into civic societies. The broadcasts of the Voice of America and of Radio Liberty must not be curtailed.

Full-fledged programs for each of these states in its own language must be created. One should not economize on truth and freedom of information. The United States, as the last of the superpowers, bear the responsibility for maintaining not only peace but truth. I repeat the words of Solzhenitsyn: “God is to be found in truth, not in might”.

THE THREAT TO THE WEST

No one can say that Kazakhstan and other states of Central Asia are being ignored by American diplomats and non-governmental experts. But this is so mainly because of their oil and the question of its delivery to Western markets. The bloody conflict in Chechnya and the armed religious movements in these countries are viewed merely as arguments pro or con for one or the other route the future gigantic pipeline might take.

I am convinced that world history is driven not by oil, but by blood. The danger of terrorist movements lies not in the fact that they may hinder the building of this or that pipeline, but in the fact that they disrupt and destroy human lives. Remember Bosnia and Kosovo. There is no oil in the Balkans, but the threat to peace which arose there forced the United States and NATO to send their troops.

If after the passing of Tito the West had not abandoned Yugoslavia to the tender mercies of Milosevich, if the democratic movements there had received support in the nineteen eighties, the dissolution of that state would not have been as tragic and prolonged. If a radio “Free Serbia” had begun broadcasting early enough, Milosevich would have left the scene five years ago. Instead, just as the presidents of some of the CIS countries, among them President Nazarbaev, had done, he placed his daughter at the head of state television and radio. The Serbian people became the victims of nationalist lies and have suffered for it.

Nationalism and religious extremism are the two main threats to a happy and prosperous future. Do they threaten Kazakhstan? To a great extent they do, unless the opposition forces and world opinion counter them with a democratic alternative. Otherwise no strong-hand tactics, not dictatorial regime will stand up to that threat.

Conversely, dictatorship and the corruption it breeds is likely to lead to an explosion of religious, and particularly Islamic, fanaticism. In a poor country where the ruling elite cynically robs the people and deprives them of the opportunity to express their aspirations, the emergence of religious extremism becomes unavoidable.

The average person sees that he or she cannot change anything, becomes desperate and ready to do anything. And at this moment a preacher inevitably appears saying that God will bless your protest and forgive any bloodshed. All that remains is to find the weapons, and that is not difficult in our world today.

So wherein lies the true source of religious extremism—in religion or in dictatorship which pushes people towards violence? The answer is self-evident. Leaders of some CIS regimes find it useful to have a few extremist Islamic groups handy to frighten the West.

They tell you: "Only dictatorship can stop Islamic terror. If you do not support me, your oil pipelines will suffer". This is a lie. This is a total reversal of cause and effect. The longer dictatorial clan-based regimes remain in power, the greater will the influence of religious fanatics become, and the more blood will be spilled eventually.

For Kazakhstan the threat of national and religious extremism is especially great. In our country there are as many Kazakhs as non-Kazakhs, as many Muslims as there are Orthodox Christians. If the danger of religious extremism arises in the predominantly Kazakh south, the Russian population which is concentrated in the north will turn to Russia for aid. The oil-rich western part of the country will proclaim its own interests. In that case the "balkanization" of Kazakhstan will become inevitable.

It pains me to say all this. I am asking you to help my country avoid this fate. There is no other way to achieve this than to help the people of Kazakhstan to secure those freedoms which were initially promised by the Constitution but which were then stolen: the freedom of speech, the freedom of forming political organizations, the freedom to choose one's representatives in the governing bodies. And, I beg, do not help dictators stay in power.

Our world stands on the threshold of a new millennium. There is a saying: "As you greet the New Year, so will you live in it". If this is true, then equally true would be the conclusion that "as you greet a new century, so will you live in it", or "as you greet a new millennium, so will you live in it". During most of the first millennium of the new era East and West existed apart from each other. During the second millennium they fought a great deal. Let us live the third millennium in peace, justice and prosperity.

I thank you for your interest in my country, Kazakhstan, and its people.

NATIONAL EXILE WARNS OF EXTREMIST THREAT IN KAZAKHSTAN

[From the Cleveland Plain Dealer, OH, Nov.
13, 1999]

(By Joe Frolik)

A Kazakhstani dissident leader in exile since April warns that his resource-rich homeland could fall prey to religious or nationalist extremists if the current regime continues to resist democratic reforms.

Akezhan Kazhegeldin told a City Club of Cleveland audience yesterday that United States and other democratic countries should continue pressing the former Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan to hold open elections, to allow a free press and to permit political dissent.

"When the average person sees that he or she cannot change anything, they become desperate and ready to do anything," said Kazhegeldin, Kazakhstan's Prime Minister before he broke with President Nursultan Nazarbaev in 1997. "It pains me to say all this. I am asking you to help my country avoid this fate."

Nazarbaev was Kazakhstan's communist boss at the end of the Soviet Union and became president of the newly independent republic. He has concentrated economic and political power in family members and sponsored a series of elections that have been criticized by outside observers, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Last year, Nazarbaev suddenly moved the date of the next presidential election ahead two years.

Then his election commission disqualified Kazhegeldin, who most Western observers consider the country's most popular opposition figure. The reason: He had delivered a speech to an "unauthorized" group—Kazakhstanis for Free Elections. Kazhegeldin also was barred from last month's parliamentary ballot, though by then he had fled to Moscow and then London after being shot at and accused of corruption and money laundering.

He has denied the charges.

Nazarbaev himself is widely suspected of having profited from power.

The Guardian newspaper last year reported that he was the eighth wealthiest person in the world.

Kazakhstan covers 1 million square miles of Central Asia and borders both Russia and China.

It is believed to contain the world's largest untapped pool of oil, as well as large deposits of gold and titanium.

But unemployment is high and the average annual income is less than \$1,300, according to the State Department.

Foreign investors are afraid to set up shop in Kazakhstan, Kazhegeldin said, because of an unreliable legal system.●

RECOGNITION OF ANNE SWANT'S AP BIOLOGY CLASS IN WALLA WALLA

● Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, in November I had the pleasure of joining a unique group of students on a field trip to Coppei Creek outside of Walla Walla, Washington. The Advanced Placement biology class from Walla Walla high school, led by their teacher Anne Swant, has been engaged in an innovative program to study wild steelhead restoration and monitor water quality.

The Coppei Creek project is a collaboration between the Walla Walla conservation district, Tri-State Steelheaders, City of Waitsburg, and local landowners. This group came together after severe flooding damaged property and habitat in 1996. Their goal was to restore stream habitat for threatened steelhead while providing necessary flood control for adjacent farmlands.

As part of the "Four Schools" project Anne Swant's class has teamed up with John Geidl, a retired educator and executive secretary of Tri-State Steelheaders, to institute a "classrooms in the stream" project—teaching biology and scientific research techniques through real-life applications.

In addition to the work at Coppei Creek, the students helped design and construct in-stream habitat and riparian buffers for a fish-bearing stream on their own school campus.

For their leadership in this revolutionary program, I was proud to award Anne Swant and John Geidl one of my "Innovation in Education" awards for excellence and creativity in hands-on science learning and leadership in teaching community conservation.

This program, and the Coppei Creek restoration project are models of lo-

cally-driven conservation and education initiatives. This community has taken it upon itself, without unnecessary pressure from Washington DC bureaucrats, to engage in salmon habitat restoration and use it as an educational experience for future stewards of this precious resource.

Clearly, a good education in today's world requires much more than just solid academic instruction—it must also include a broader understanding of the application of those skills learned in the classroom. The Four Schools Project is an excellent example of this principle in action. I propose to my colleagues here in the Senate that this successful project is further proof that local educators will be able to make the best decisions about the unique needs of their students.●

THE WATCHDOGS PROGRAM

● Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, I rise today to commend a special program that is having a positive impact on schools throughout my home State of Arkansas. This program is called WatchDOGS, and was founded to combat school violence in the wake of the Jonesboro tragedy by Jim Moore, PTA President of Gene George Elementary School in Sprindgale, Arkansas. Jim has informed me that the program has rapidly expanded to about 35 schools and I share in his goal of seeing it implemented in schools throughout the State of Arkansas. Furthermore, it is my hope that this program will be implemented in schools throughout the nation.

In a WatchDOGS program, fathers and grandfathers of students volunteer to spend at least one day a year in their child's school. By doing so, they not only provide unobtrusive security, but they also serve as positive role models for the children. Each school has a WatchDOGS coordinator who schedules the shifts to ensure that there is a father or grandfather on the premises at all times. WatchDOGS participate in a wide variety of school activities. For example, they read to and tutor students, participate in playground activities, eat lunch with students, and assist in the loading and unloading of school buses.

I believe that this program can be a great tool in our efforts to prevent school violence and to improve student performance because it increase parental initiative and involvement in their children's education. It can often be implemented without any expenditure of school funds as the only supplies necessary are a pair of walkie-talkies and identifying t-shirts, which are usually donated by local merchants or the PTA.

I hope that my colleagues will ask the school superintendents and principals in their respective home states to consider implementing this program in their schools. Finally, I wish to thank Jim Moore, Gene George Elementary School Principal Jim Lewis,