



Remarks With Kazakhstan Foreign Minister Marat Tazhin

Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Foreign Ministry
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FOREIGN MINISTER TAZHIN (via translator): We have discussed a very broad range of issues, first of all, that have to do with our bilateral cooperation between Kazakhstan and the United States of America. We have a large volume of bilateral relations, both in the area of economy, transport, trade, and other areas. A very detailed, concrete discussion has taken place on the whole gamut of issues having to do with bilateral relations, and we also discussed a lot of issues concerning international relations.

I will not -- I do not want to get ahead of the speech of Madame Secretary, but I just would like to briefly summarize the status of cooperation between the United States and Kazakhstan. This relationship is stable. We are constantly in contact. And I would like to declare myself wholly satisfied with the outcome of the talks. And I would like to give the floor now to the State Secretary.

SECRETARY RICE: Thank you very much. And thank you very much, Minister, for having me here. This follows on our very substantive and successful meetings in New York. I am, indeed, very pleased at the state of relations between the United States and Kazakhstan.

We have had an opportunity to talk about a range of issues, about regional issues, about the growing economic ties between our countries. We also have had a chance to talk about the upcoming chairmanship of the OSCE in 2010 for Kazakhstan, and the commitments that have been made there, and also your plans for the future of that organization.

And so, thank you very much. I look forward to my meetings with the Prime Minister and with the President. It is always good to be in Astana. It is always good to be with you. And I look forward to the further development of our relationship. Thank you.

MODERATOR: Now one question from the press corps. Reuters News Agency, please.

QUESTION: I'm Susan Cornwell with Reuters. This is a question for Foreign Minister Tazhin.

You have managed to remain a special friend of Russia, as well as opening up to the West, your country has. And you have even conducted exercises with NATO. I wanted to know, did the Georgian war make that balancing act more difficult for you? And do you consider your country to be part of the Russian sphere of influence? Thank you.

FOREIGN MINISTER TAZHIN: It's an interesting question. But I should say that our relationship with Russia, I can formulate, it's just like excellent. We have very politically correct relations. Russia is our strategic partner. And I think that all question about the change of level of influence and so on, it's just, from my point of view, and from my vision, it's just some versions and some sort of expert community, or maybe media community, and so on.

At the same time, I should underline that our relationship with the United States has stable, has strategic character. And in 2006, during meetings of President of United States and President of Kazakhstan, it was very openly stated that our two countries have stable and strategic relationship.

So, I should answer to your question just one -- by one word, no. This does not mean, what you mean. I think that it is very important that this working relations with the United States and with Russia have a good and very solid (inaudible). Thank you.

QUESTION (via translator): So I have a question to FM Tazhin and to Secretary Rice. What is your take on the prospects of bilateral cooperation, especially in the area of energy? Thank you.

FOREIGN MINISTER TAZHIN (via translator): I believe that this relationship hinges on those agreements and contracts that have already been signed. It's a very transparent relationship that we have in the area of energy. And I do believe that they will be developing along those plans that we have had.

SECRETARY RICE: We have a very open relationship across a whole, broad range of issues. We have discussed, for instance, economic relations, trade relations, energy relations, based all on transparent relations - many of them commercial relations between companies. The United States, of course, doesn't own any companies, and so these are relations between commercial entities.

But I think that what you should take from this discussion -- and it speaks a bit to Sue's question, as well -- is that this is not some kind of contest for the affection of Kazakhstan between the countries of the region. Kazakhstan is a country that has excellent relations with all of its neighbors. That is the way that it should be. It has excellent relations with the United States. We have talked some about the relations that you're developing with Europe, which are also very important, and expect that these will serve Kazakhstan well.

But, in terms of our relationship with Kazakhstan, it's based on mutual respect, on transparency, and on the desire to see a more prosperous and open region here in Kazakhstan, as well as in Central Asia, more generally. Thank you.

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