



THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT
GEORGE W. BUSH

 [CLICK HERE TO PRINT](#)

For Immediate Release
Office of the Vice President
May 5, 2006

Vice President's Remarks in a Press Availability with President Nursultan Nazarbayev of the Republic of Kazakhstan

The Presidential Palace
Astana, Kazakhstan

8:07 P.M. (Local)

PRESIDENT NAZARBAYEV: (As translated.) Distinguished Mr. Vice President, dear representatives of mass media, dear, ladies and gentlemen, today the Vice President of the United States of America, Mr. Richard Cheney is paying his first official visit to the Republic of Kazakhstan. Previous guests of such a high rank visited our country back in December 1993, that was Mr. Albert Gore. Therefore, I would like to stress the specific significance of today's event and welcome the delegation.

And the United States is the largest foreign investor in Kazakhstan that invested 12 billion U.S. dollars to our economy so far, and our trade volume has reached 2 billion U.S. dollars, and 374 ventures and enterprises of the United States work in Kazakhstan currently.

Within the framework of the visit, we have carried out the meeting between our delegations that took place in an open and trusted atmosphere that is inherent to the Kazakhstani-American relations. We have discussed bilateral issues in the energy sector, security, and mostly we have discussed trade and economic collaboration issues.



And we also exchanged views on the geopolitical situation in Central Asia, regional integration processes that take place in the Caspian region and on the territory of Eurasia. During the visit an amendment to the agreement between the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the U.S. Department of Defense have been signed. And it foresees that the United States will allocate an amount of \$158 million for -- national projects.

And they've also signed a memorandum of understanding between the two governments for the economic development up to the year of 2010 in order to co-finance Kazakhstani projects in business field, and also an agreement on the prevention of illicit trafficking of nuclear materials. This document significantly forced interaction on the mentioned aspects and allowed to contribute jointly to stronger nonproliferation regime, regional and global stability and security.

And we also agreed that American companies will provide the assistance in the modernization of Kazakhstan, as well to our efforts to join the team of the 50 most competitive nations of the world. Implementing breakthrough projects in high technology and export-oriented production in Kazakhstan was also discussed in this respect. Opening joint ventures in biotechnology and space exploration, establishment of joint scientific research and educational centers have very bright perspectives.

We also discussed very eagerly our collaboration in the energy sector, and in this respect development of nuclear collaboration between the two countries is very important. And our experience of long lasting and fruitful cooperation with the U.S. in the field of nonproliferation encourages this to the full. And Kazakhstan has initiated the possibility to establish a permanent bilateral working structure to implement the reached agreements and outlined objectives.

And joint efforts to stand against challenges of international terrorism, religious extremism, separatism, illegal drug traffic, and organized crime have been a very crucial part of our negotiation. And security in Central Asia in this region is a key part of our bilateral cooperation. And we've always been collaborating with the United States in this area, and we will continue this cooperation. The rich agreements and results of this important visit come from the aspiration of Kazakhstan and the United States to further gradual develop our bilateral relations. And I'm confident that the strategic cooperation between Kazakhstan and the United States will serve to the prosperity of Kazakhstan and all nations of Central Asia.

Thank you for your attention.

VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY: Well, thank you very much, Mr. President. And I'm delighted to be here as a guest of President Nazarbayev today. We met some years ago and I consider him my friend, and I'm delighted to have the opportunity to visit him here in this beautiful new capital of Kazakhstan.

And on behalf of the President, George Bush, and the American people, I want to extend our best wishes from the American people to the people of Kazakhstan.

The President and I just had a very good meeting. And I had the opportunity to thank the President for the contributions that Kazakhstan has made to our coalition's efforts in Iraq and in the global war on terror. We talked about ways to strengthen our bilateral relations, ways we could work together to advance the security and the prosperity of this region of the globe.

We admire this nation's many contributions to our world, and the United States is proud to count Kazakhstan as a friend. Your nation has abundant resources and an even greater supply of human talent. And America has tremendous confidence in your future as a successful, independent, sovereign and prosperous nation.

Kazakhstan also has a vital role to play in ensuring prosperity, stability and peace across Central Asia. All the nations of this region have the right to determine their own destiny, to institute reforms and to work with others to ensure a future of hope across Central Asia. The way forward is clear; continue democratic and economic reforms, the rule of law, fighting corruption, accountability of institutions and

sound security policies. These are the keys to progress, and nations that follow such a course will find themselves on a path to greatness.

The vision we affirm today is a community of sovereign states that grow in liberty and prosperity, trade and freedom and strive together for a century of peace. Standing in this modern capital city, I am proud to affirm the strong ties between Kazakhstan and the United States. We have great respect, Mr. President, for all that you have accomplished in the last 15 years. And we are proud to be your strategic partner. My country looks forward to continued friendship between us as we work to enhance security to defend the peace and to build a better world.

And once again, Mr. President, my warmest thanks for your hospitality. Thank you.

Q Mr. Vice President, you spoke forcefully yesterday about the importance of democratic reform, and you've just mentioned it here again in your remarks, how would you evaluate Kazakhstan along those lines? And what did you say to the President about those issues?

VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY: Well, I have previously expressed my admiration for what has transpired here in Kazakhstan over the last 15 years. Both in terms of economic development, as well as political development. I think the record speaks for itself.

MODERATOR: The question was (As translated.)

VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY: And I'll start my answer over again -- (Laughter.) I have expressed my admiration for all that's been accomplished here in Kazakhstan in the last 15 years, both in the economic and the political realm. The President discussed with me the Commission on Democracy that he's established. We support that effort and look forward to continuing to work with the government of Kazakhstan in the area of the future kinds of developments that have been such an important part of all that's been done over the last 15 years both in the economic and the political arena.

Q (As translated) This is a question to the President, Mr. President, today you have mentioned about the role of Kazakhstan in global and regional security, but can you elaborate more on what specific role can Kazakhstan play in strengthening regional and global security and stability?

PRESIDENT NAZARBAYEV: (As translated.) Well, first of all, Kazakhstan is by itself a very secure, stable country, despite the fact that we have 130 different nationalities and ethnic groups and 45 different religions peacefully coexisting in this country. And Kazakhstan initiated the idea of Eurasian Union and Central Asian Cooperation Union. And based on the economic achievements of Kazakhstan, today our country is exporting its own capital to the neighboring country, thus assisting economic development of the neighboring countries of the region. And Kazakhstan was the country that initiated the conference on interaction and confidence-building measures in Asia, and the second summit of this conference will take place in Kazakhstan in June.

And this year also in Kazakhstan, we will host the Second Conference of Global Religions. And I think this is a big contribution towards integration, not only in this region but also in the world in general. And

recalling the fact that Kazakhstan was the country who first renounced its nuclear arsenal, the fourth largest nuclear arsenal in the world and shut down its nuclear test site, I think this is the greatest contribution of Kazakhstan to global security and stability.

Q Yes, Matt Spetalnick, with Reuters. Mr. Vice President, the Kremlin has dismissed your criticism of Russia's record of democracy and its energy policy as "incomprehensible." Can you respond to that and explain how are you going to get this message across if they don't want to hear it? And what this could bode for the G8 Summit?

And for Mr. President, what do you think of the rising tensions between these two major powers?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I haven't had an opportunity to -- excuse me.

MODERATOR: Excuse me -- which superpowers you were talking about, sir? United States and Russia?

Q United States and Russia. (Laughter.)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I haven't had an opportunity to study the response out of Moscow. The speech was very carefully crafted. It made the point that we don't look upon Russia as an enemy by any means, that we want them as a strong friend and ally. But I also made it clear that we had some concerns with respect to the extent to which they seem to resist the development of strong democracies, if you will, in those areas represented by the governments that were represented at the conference in Vilnius in Lithuania.

And I expressed the concern that I heard repeated by many of the people I interacted with at the conference that Russia is using its control over energy resources to gain political leverage of various kinds on those governments that were represented at the conference.

I expect the G8 conference will go forward as scheduled in Petersburg, and that we'll all benefit from a free, open, and honest exchange of views at that conference.

PRESIDENT NAZARBAYEV: (As translated) Well, first of all, I think that there is no such thing as confrontation between United States and Russia. We think that there is a friendly exchange of opinions and views. And we all have to know that every country has their own way of solving their own problems, and that is called politics. And we have to respect politics of every country. But every country also has a right to voice their opinion of what is happening in another country. And if that would be done in a friendly manner, I think we will just benefit from that.

Q (As translated) Well, this question is directed to Mr. Vice President. Sir, we know you as a very experienced politician since the administration of President Nixon. And what is your personal position with respect to Iranian nuclear program? And how you would comment the position of Russia when they said that in the U.N. resolution they should be embodied -- there should be a political and legal solution to the Iranian problem?

VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY: We -- and these are my views as well -- think that we need to find a way diplomatically to avoid the kind of problems that would result from an Iran that developed nuclear weapons. I believe there's an international consensus that is held by most of the governments of the region, indeed, around the world that there's no need for Iran to acquire nuclear weapons. The United States is working with others to try to find a diplomatic solution that will avoid a confrontation over this issue. I, frankly, think that the example provided by Kazakhstan some years ago when they achieved independence by giving up the inventory of nuclear weapons that were deployed in Kazakhstan was an outstanding example that the Iranians might want to consider.

MODERATOR: Thank you very much.

END 8:31 P.M. (Local)

Return to this article at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/05/20060505-4.html>



CLICK HERE TO PRINT