

PROMISES TO KEEP: KAZAKHSTAN'S 2010 OSCE CHAIRMANSHIP

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS SECOND SESSION

JULY 22, 2008

Printed for the use of the
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

[CSCE 110-2-18]



Available via <http://www.csce.gov>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

63-896 PDF

WASHINGTON : 2012

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512-1800; DC area (202) 512-1800
Fax: (202) 512-2250 Mail: Stop SSOP, Washington, DC 20402-0001

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH COMMISSIONERS

HOUSE

ALCEE L. HASTINGS, Florida,
Chairman
LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER,
New York
MIKE McINTYRE, North Carolina
HILDA L. SOLIS, California
G.K. BUTTERFIELD, North Carolina
CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, New Jersey
ROBERT B. ADERHOLT, Alabama
JOSEPH R. PITTS, Pennsylvania
MIKE PENCE, Indiana

SENATE

BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, Maryland,
Co-Chairman
RUSSELL D. FEINGOLD, Wisconsin
CHRISTOPHER J. DODD, Connecticut
HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON, New York
JOHN F. KERRY, Massachusetts
SAM BROWNBACK, Kansas
GORDON SMITH, Oregon
SAXBY CHAMBLISS, Georgia
RICHARD BURR, North Carolina

EXECUTIVE BRANCH COMMISSIONERS

David J. Kramer, Department of State
Mary Beth Long, Department of Defense
David Bohigian, Department of Commerce

**PROMISES TO KEEP: KAZAKHSTAN'S 2010 OSCE
CHAIRMANSHIP**

JULY 22, 2008

COMMISSIONERS

	Page
Hon. Alcee L. Hastings, Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe	1
Hon. G.K. Butterfield, Commissioner, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe	5

WITNESSES

Richard A. Boucher, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, Department of State	3
Askar Tazhiyev, Charge d'Affaires, Embassy of Kazakhstan .	12
Martha Olcott, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace	22
Andrea Berg, Researcher on Central Asia, Human Rights Watch	25

APPENDICES

Prepared statement of Hon. Alcee L. Hastings	31
Prepared statement of Hon. Benjamin L. Cardin	32
Prepared statement of Richard A. Boucher	34
Prepared statement of Askar Tazhiyev	37
Prepared statement of Martha Olcott	45
Prepared statement of Andrea Berg	49

PROMISES TO KEEP: KAZAKHSTAN'S 2010 OSCE CHAIRMANSHIP

July 22, 2008

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
WASHINGTON, DC

The hearing was held at 3 p.m. in room B-318 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC, Hon. Alcee L. Hastings, Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, presiding.

Commissioners present: Hon. Alcee L. Hastings, Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe; and Hon. G.K. Butterfield, Commissioner, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Witnesses present: Richard A. Boucher, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, Department of State; Askar Tazhiyev, Charge d'Affaires, Embassy of Kazakhstan; Martha Olcott, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; and Andrea Berg, Researcher on Central Asia, Human Rights Watch.

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

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you all, and welcome to the second in a series of hearings on Kazakhstan and the OSCE.

In our first meeting last October, we examined the pros and cons of Astana's bid to be the OSCE Chair-in-Office in 2009. Their campaign to become the first central Asian country to lead the OSCE began in 2003 and was controversial. Russian and the CIS countries were supportive, but the United States and some EU countries questioned the suitability of Kazakhstan to lead an organization dedicated to the promotion of democracy and human rights.

A decision was finally reached at the 2007 OSCE summit in Madrid—and underscore that because I'll come back to it in my remarks—and Kazakhstan is going to chair the OSCE in 2010.

One of the key factors in a favorable decision for Kazakhstan's future chairmanship was the speech made in Madrid by Kazakh Foreign Minister, Marat Tazhin. At the 2007 Madrid ministerial, he pledged that not only would Kazakhstan implement a number of key democratic reforms before it took over as Chair-in-Office but while chair it would also strongly support OSCE human rights programs.

Specifically, he said that Kazakhstan would amend the media law in accordance with the OSCE recommendations; that it would

implement ODIHR's recommendations on elections, including reform of the electoral law, that it would strengthen the role of Parliament and that it would develop a mechanism to ensure greater participation in the legislative process, among other things.

This hearing follows a trip to Kazakhstan by 11 Members of Congress—10 House Members and Senator Cardin, the Ranking Member of the Commission—and we were there earlier this month. We traveled to Astana to take part in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's annual meeting, which was held in Kazakhstan for the first time.

In Astana, we met with President Nazarbayev, Prime Minister Massimov, State Secretary and former Ambassador and my very good friend, Ambassador Saudabaev, and others.

We also met with representatives of the political opposition, human rights groups and religious minorities. Most significantly, I think, is that we heard President Nazarbayev, himself, commit Kazakhstan to implementing the same domestic political reforms outlined by Foreign Minister Tazhin in Madrid.

So from our discussions in Astana, we received a thorough grounding in how the government and its critics viewed the situation in Kazakhstan.

Today, we will continue the discussions begun at Astana of Kazakhstan's post-Madrid record.

We have a slate of witnesses today that are certainly more than qualified now to discuss this issue, and, as my colleagues arrive, and I'm sure some of them will come shortly, I would ask that they offer any remarks that they might wish to.

I normally say to the audience participants what is true and that is that the biographies are located of our witnesses on the outside tables, and you will also be mindful that our commission statements and witness testimony are available at our Web site, which is CSCE.gov. I repeat, CSCE.gov.

I'll take the liberty of going a little more into Secretary Boucher's biography, because I've had the good fortune of serving here and seeing him at work in a variety of settings on behalf of our Government, and I compliment him for his steadfastness and his ability to confine himself to issues of substance and deal with them in a way that serves our country and those with whom he interacts in an admiral fashion.

He was sworn in as Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs on February 21, 2006. The Bureau of South Asian Affairs was expanded to include other nations of Central Asia shortly before his confirmation.

Over the course of his career, Ambassador Boucher served as the Department of State spokesperson. Many of you, no doubt, have seen him in that capacity, under six Secretaries of State, and has served as Chief of Mission twice overseas.

In June of 2008, he was conferred the personal rank of career Ambassador, the highest achievement for a member of the Foreign Service. I had the good fortune of meeting him for the first time that I traveled abroad, and I don't think he would remember that but we were with Howard Berman, and it was my very first visit abroad, and I liked him then and like him now.

So, Rick, if you would go forward, I'd appreciate it.

**RICHARD A. BOUCHER, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIAN AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF
STATE**

Sec. BOUCHER. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

I have slightly longer remarks that I'd like to be entered into the record, but I want to thank you for inviting me today. Thank you for holding the hearing, and thank you and your Commission, you and Senator Cardin, in particular, for very sustained interest and leadership in matters involving Central Asia. And I think having seen you in Pakistan recently, having seen the results of your visit to Kazakhstan, I think that you're really out there working the hard issues.

And the fact that you're working these issues with us the way you were in Madrid as we negotiated this final—this deal and then in Kazakhstan to go and push the implementation I think is very important, because countries understand these are not just things that we dreamt up someday to give them a hard time. These are very fundamental issues that matter to all Americans, and representatives of the people of the United States can best put it forward. And they're essential not just because they matter to Americans but they are essential to achieving long-term stability and security for the countries involved.

We talk about democratic stability in this region, we talk about how long-term legacy of any government has to be its ability to pass on institutions that allow public and popular participation so that there is true stability in the long term.

Our policy in this region, I think, is best summed up by saying that we're trying to give nations and people in the region options and opportunities. The more options they have, the more opportunities they have, whether it's exporting their energy or getting ideas or choosing their government, and the more independence and sovereignty they have, and it's fundamental to their independence and sovereignty in a new world.

First, we're trying to advance democratic and market reforms, to achieve that. That helps bolster independence and sovereignty and stability.

Second, we're trying to work together with these countries on security interests, including fighting terrorism, stopping narcotics and promoting nonproliferation. And, as you know, Kazakhstan's been a leader in nonproliferation.

Third, we're trying to develop energy resources and economic capabilities in these countries so that the people of these countries can benefit from the abundance of resources that they hold.

I think Kazakhstan has made tremendous strides in many of these areas. They are playing a helpful role also more broadly in the international community. They have continuative troops in Iraq, engineering troops that are there diffusing mines and explosives, ordnance, they have a fund of \$3 million that they plan on spending in Afghanistan, and, as you yourself noted, they're trying to play a larger role by becoming Chairman-in-Office in 2010 of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. They would be the first former Soviet republic to achieve that goal.

As you noted, the decision to support Kazakhstan's chairmanship was not one that was easily reached. We worked very intensely

with Kazakhstan, from the secretary on down, we had a lot of meetings and discussions with the Kazakhs about this, we asked them to delay from 2009 to 2010 so that they would be able to undertake certain democratic reforms before they became chairman, and then they made the commitment to Madrid.

The commitment to Madrid we felt were fundamental, were vital, were crucial and need to be implemented. They promised to modernize the election law, modernize the media and liberalize their registration of political parties by the end of 2008.

So much of what we've been doing this year is to work with them, trust them to implement these commitments fully.

In terms of the status right now, the Central Election Commission has invited political parties to recommend changes to the election law. They're hosting experts meetings on the proposed amendments, and they expect draft legislation by the end of the year.

With regard to the media law, they committed to reform the media in line with recommendations of the Organization for Security and Cooperation and Europe's Freedom of Media representative, and in late February they formed a working group of government and non-government organizations, and after initial delays it appears that that group has now started to work in new media legislation.

In terms of treatment of political parties, opposition parties and non-governmental organizations have put forward concrete proposals, but the government has not yet engaged with the OSCE on that legislation, and that's something we continue to push them to do.

Clearly, there's a great deal of work that has to be done in 2008. We continue to engage very directly with them. We continue to encourage contacts and work with our European partners, work with the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and other organizations to keep contact with the Kazakhs and keep moving them along.

My Deputy for Central Asia, George Krol is in Kazakhstan today, as a matter of fact, having meetings to encourage these steps and encourage the government to take concrete steps toward reform.

It's important to achieve these reforms as part of a broader vision that we have of Kazakhstan as a strong, independent and democratic state. It can be a leader in the region and an anchor of stability.

And so we're going to continue to work on this to expand cooperation on reforms, to expand cooperation on important economic, security and diplomatic areas, and we hope that we can continue to work together with the Congress to support Kazakhstan's efforts to advance democratic and economic reforms, as our partnership continues to grow and strengthen.

So let me start with that. I'll be glad to discuss anything you want, and I'm also interested in hearing some of the other witnesses, the experts you have with us today.

Mr. HASTINGS [Off-mike]. We're joined by my colleague from North Carolina, and I'll give him a moment to catch his breath, unless he's ready. He was with us on the trip to Kazakhstan.

Mr. Butterfield?

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HASTINGS. All right.

**HON. G.K. BUTTERFIELD, COMMISSIONER, COMMISSION ON
SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE**

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. When you're young like me, it doesn't take but a second to catch your breath. After walking across Capitol Hill, it doesn't take very long at all. But thank you very much for convening this very important hearing. Thank you for your leadership on this committee.

We have, indeed, traveled throughout the world and most recently to Kazakhstan. It was a very enlightening trip. I really enjoyed the hospitality and met many people in the country who were forward thinking and visionary individuals. That would be those in the government as well as those in the private sector. It's a very interesting country, and so I want to learn more about the country and learn more about their customs and what their vision is for the future.

I read the Wall Street Journal this morning, and there's an article contained on page one of the Wall Street Journal that concerns me greatly, and I don't know if this is the forum for that conversation today, but if it's not, Mr. Chairman, I hope at some point in the future we will be able to deal with the very serious allegations that have been raised in the Wall Street Journal. But thank you very much for convening this hearing.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you very much, Commissioner, and I'll do a few questions, and if you have some of our witness, Secretary Boucher, then you go forward as well.

Mr. Secretary, Foreign Minister Tazhin, promised the OSCE at the Madrid Ministerial that Kazakhstan would make specific democratic reforms, as well as support core OSCE activities, such as election observation.

Just a footnote there, I had the distinct pleasure of observing elections in Kazakhstan, and I say "pleasure" for the reason that we were coming off of the heels of one of our many Florida elections, and it was interesting for me to go there, and we were discussing paper trails and to see their plans.

And I'll tell you something that I saw that I've not seen anywhere in the world, aside from many flaws that all of us have pointed out and continue to point out and the need for election reform, but I did see the names of persons who were registered to vote posted 2 weeks in advance of the elections, and the persons could go there and then could get the appropriate relief if their name wasn't there or if it was spelled incorrectly. And I wondered about that kind of activity in some of our locations being beneficial.

But given the fact that Minister Tazhin made these determinations, some feel that Kazakhstan has not made sufficient progress on protection of human rights, and how will the State Department respond if Kazakhstan doesn't keep the promises made in Madrid?

Sec. BOUCHER. I think, Congressman, that's a hard question for me to answer, because I think my job is to get them to do it. All we're working on right now is to try to help them, encourage them, work them to the position where they do achieve these requirements.

I think it's important to remember that these commitments were made in front of all of the OSCE countries in Madrid. They were made again by President Nazarbayev just recently at the parliamentary assembly that you—

Mr. HASTINGS. And to us individually, in private.

Sec. BOUCHER [continuing]. Participated in. I think that's important as well, that the President made them in addition to the Foreign Minister. He's made them to all of Europe, to all 54 countries of the OSCE. And so I think they're on the hook not just to us but to themselves, to their own people and to all the other countries in Europe.

So I think our first response is to say, it's going to be a matter for the OSCE to take up. Second, we will certainly play an important role in the OSCE, as we always have. We'll work closely with the Europeans, just as we're working closely with the Europeans to try to ensure implementation of these commitments, and then see what the organization should do in that case. But I think, first and foremost, our job is to try to see that the forward momentum is maintained, that the commitments and promises are fulfilled.

Mr. HASTINGS. In our meeting with President Nazarbayev, he answered a question about the tempo of political reform, and I believe the question was put by Senator Cardin. And he said, and I quote him, "Kazakhstan cannot move faster than its giant neighbors, Russia and China," unquote.

Now, geography isn't going to change and trend lines in Russia and China—let me try to be diplomatic—wax and wane, but based on President Nazarbayev's statement, what should we conclude about Kazakhstan's willingness to make serious systemic reform?

Sec. BOUCHER. You know, I guess that's an argument that they can make. I don't think it's actually the way they perceive it, and I don't buy it. I mean, I just don't think it's a valid argument for how fast they can go.

They have gone faster than their neighbors in many areas, in areas of nonproliferation, for example, in areas of economic reform. I guess I would argue most places—China's ahead, but they've done fairly significant economic reforms. They've moved forward constitutionally, I think. In some ways, this election was based on an improved constitution and procedural framework that was not implemented because of other rules that now need to be changed and other procedures that need to be changed.

But I think President Nazarbayev has said a lot of things, but he set three fundamental goals for Kazakhstan and what—he talks about establishing sovereignty and independence, getting the economy right and liberalizing the political system, and he sees them more or less as sequential. And, certainly, I've heard him say that we need to be out front of those other countries in achieving these things.

So I guess I would say it's probably—it's an argument, it's an argument that we shouldn't all reject, but I think it doesn't seem to be the governing principle for their behavior. The most recent goal that he set, I think, was the path to Europe, which involves much more significant changes in the long term than either Russia or China are likely to make.

Mr. HASTINGS. Together and separately, different members of our 11-person delegation met with religious leaders and persons involved in faith who were not leaders. I have a notorious habit of talking with hotel employees and taxi drivers. I was not in a taxi in Astana, but I talked with several employees, and I would ask them questions. And I might add, when you're in a place for 4 or 5 days and people see you regularly and if you tip them appropriately, sometimes they will answer you more frankly than you would expect.

But one of the things that kept coming up, and continues to cross our desks here at CSCE, is the problem encountered by some religious minorities, specifically the Hare Krishnas and Jehovah's Witnesses. Now, in Kazakhstan I spoke with one of the leaders of the Jehovah's Witnesses, and I did not speak with anyone from Hare Krishna, but I did meet with Jewish leaders and with the Deputy Mufti in the area, and Senator Cardin and other members did as well. And I believe all of us were made aware of the problem, however they're perceived, of Hare Krishna and the Jehovah's Witnesses.

How does the U.S. Government view this issue, Mr. Secretary, and what is being done to resolve what amounts to these contentious issues?

And let me hurriedly say that none of the religious leaders that I met with advanced any notion of discrimination toward their particular faith. And as a matter of fact, to the man and one woman that I spoke with, all of them signified that there was a great amount of tolerance.

And I'd be terribly remiss if I did not say that the Conference on Tolerance that was sponsored by President Nazarbayev seemed to be coupled by a significant number of religious faiths, and I've had a personal discussion with him about this, and I get the general impression that the Kazakh Government argues that these communities don't obey Kazakh law.

But I ask you, what's being done by the government, if anything?

Sec. BOUCHER. I think it's a very important area. I think we see it largely the same way as you do, that in some of the larger terms, this has been a country and a government that have promoted religious tolerance on an international level as well as a domestic level. I know some of your members of the congressional delegation went down to the synagogue to visit with people there.

Mr. HASTINGS. I did.

Sec. BOUCHER. I think you did, and Senator Cardin did and others from your group. So I think it's important that we show our respect for religious faiths that are there and their inclusion throughout society. I think, by and large, that is the ethos that they uphold, that they pronounce. Promoting interfaith dialogue is an important project to the president. He's given it to the former foreign minister, now head of the senate, Mr. TOKev, to carry out, and I go see him all the time, and it's a fairly active process with other countries and religious leaders from throughout the world.

The problem, I think, that we've seen inside Kazakhstan has been with the non-traditional or smaller faiths that have been there. And as you say, Jehovah's Witnesses have had a couple

problems. On the other hand, they've been treated OK in other circumstances.

The Hare Krishnas have had a problem largely over property—
Mr. HASTINGS. Property.

Sec. BOUCHER [continuing]. Property problems with the local authorities in Almaty, so they weren't up in Astana when you were there, but I think we keep in close touch with them. We've been keeping in touch with the local authorities and trying to say, "Look, we understand there may be property disputes, but there needs to be fair resolution of these and peaceful resolution of these without impinging upon their faith."

Mr. HASTINGS. Right.

Sec. BOUCHER. And that's pretty much the position we've taken, to say, "You espouse all the right principles, and you even support them on a grand scale, but you have to support them on a small scale too."

Mr. HASTINGS. Right. Lest we point out fingers only at Kazakhstan, there are other non Central Asian countries that persist in raising issues with religious groups as well. And I only just say that so it's understood that a country such as ours that promotes religious tolerance, and I credit President Nazarbayev with, as you put it, in the larger sense, doing so, but we will, I'm sure, in OSCE continue to raise these issues, and hopefully they will be favorably resolved.

Mr. Butterfield?

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I will be brief. I really enjoy the Q&A when you have control of the microphone. It's so informative. Thank you very much.

Before starting, Mr. Boucher, do you have any relationship to Mr. Boucher on the Energy and Commerce Committee, whom I serve with? I know you've been asked that before.

Sec. BOUCHER. No, I don't, except I know him, and I used to get messages on my answering machine for him when I lived in the District, and he used to get calls from constituents when I would make rounds at the State Department podium.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Congressman Boucher is the chairman of our subcommittee, and I was just curious to ask that. I noticed that you were born and raised in Maryland, and I know he's a Virginian, so I was trying to make the connection.

During my trip to Kazakhstan a few weeks ago, as I said earlier, it was a very interesting country, and one conclusion that I reached was that we cannot ignore Kazakhstan. They're too important in the world, not only because of their natural resources but because of the relationship that we need with the Middle East.

Now, what advice could you give to an incoming president, be it a Democrat or Republican, about the future relationship that we should exert and try to foster with this country?

Sec. BOUCHER. I guess, basic advice is keep pushing, but their overall goal is to have them be an independent, sovereign and democratic nation. You've got to keep pushing even as we look for all the possible areas of cooperation.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. We're continuing to get reports, and the most recent report was in the Wall Street Journal this morning of widespread corruption among governmental leaders in the country.

And, certainly, I don't know if that claim is true or not true—I certainly hope that it's not true—but to what extent should the U.S. Government get involved in this issue?

Sec. BOUCHER. Well, the report in the Wall Street Journal this morning deals specifically with the President's former son-in-law, Rakhat Aliev, and he also has—

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. As a former lawyer, I understand domestic relationships very well.

Sec. BOUCHER. He also has a checkered past and I think a position to defend at this point.

But I guess what I would say is, yes, we all know there's corruption in Kazakhstan that's come out in different ways, sometimes court cases, sometimes in violence.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Is it any of our business? I guess that's the point that I'm trying to raise.

Sec. BOUCHER. Well, we try to make sure, first of all, and I think our companies do a good job of this, make sure U.S. companies are not implicated. If they were, if they are, there will be court cases and prosecutions, and there have been some.

Second of all, that we need to work with the Kazakhs on the continued process of economic reform, administrative reform, make it a government of systems and institutions, because that's the only way to get away from corruption, and, frankly, that's the only decent legacy that any leader can leave his nation with in the long term. It's not a matter of family, it's a matter of setting up a government that serves the people and that can do that for a long time to come.

So I think as we push openness, media freedom, economic reform, these things are all designed to get at the fundamental issues of corruption as well. And because they expose corruption, they give it less room to operate, and they try to create systems that don't require constant approvals from the government and, therefore, constant opportunities to take bribes.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Also, during my visit with one or two of the governmental leaders, I raised the question of global warming and climate change—I'm on the Energy and Commerce Committee, and, certainly, I have a particular interest in that subject—and I was told that the country has a commitment to working with other countries in trying to reduce carbon emissions.

Can we take that seriously? Are we satisfied with their commitment to reducing carbon emissions?

Sec. BOUCHER. I guess I'd say there's probably a lot more to be done in that area. They are—

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Because they reminded me that they are signatories to the Kyoto protocol and we are not.

Sec. BOUCHER. Yes.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. They were quick to remind me of that.

Sec. BOUCHER. They are a very large producer of hydrocarbons. They are going to emerge as one of the largest producers in the world of hydrocarbons in the next few years, and I think we all recognize that however much we can expand other areas, oil and gas are still going to be very important to the economies of the developed nations and to the developing world.

At the same time, they're also trying to diversify their economy, look for other sources of energy. Every now and then they talk about nuclear, they talk about supporting hydropower development, particularly with neighboring countries in the region that have even higher mountains than they do.

So I think there's some attempt there to diversify and to look into other areas of clean energy and that we need to be there to help them with that in terms of diversifying the economy and the sources of energy.

The way the energy picture works out is they have an enormous amount of oil on one side of the country and a deficit on the other side, so they've got to work on coal, they've got to work on other things to do energy in the southeastern part of the country, as well as work on bringing some of the hydrocarbons out from the west.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Finally, the State Department determined several months ago that Kazakhstan has not made significant improvements in the protection of human rights in the preceding 6-month period in order to receive funding under the Department of State Foreign Ops and Related Appropriations Act but that requirement was waived on national security grounds.

What does this say about Kazakhstan's leadership, of the OSCE and the prospects for having the Chairmanship? And if you would elaborate, I will be finished with my questions.

Sec. BOUCHER. I think it's sort of an answer like the answer I gave to, "What would you tell the next administration," that we would love to be able to certify that Kazakhstan has made substantial progress. A lot of our policy effort is committed to trying to get them to make substantial progress in these areas by the criteria of the law, particularly when it came to these specific OSCE commitments. They have not done that yet.

And around about the time in February when we had to make the certification, I was in Kazakhstan discussing with them how they were going to make these—take these steps, and the answers I got were, "We're going to consult, we're going to work on drafts, but don't expect to see legislation until the end of the year." And that looks like the way it's going. I guess within the commitment to do it in 2008 that's OK, but we want a fair amount of reassurance and understanding that it is going to happen in 2008.

So at the moment we faced a decision in February, we couldn't certify it. We didn't feel like that was a decision that we could make, but we did feel that the overall relationship with Kazakhstan was important. The progress, the cooperation that we have on nonproliferation, on security issues, economic reform issues and on continuing the process of political reform was important enough that we should waive it under national security grounds so we could keep moving in all these areas, as we have been.

And so that's where I'd say keep pushing them but also keep working with them.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. All right. Thank you very much, Mr. Boucher.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When I travel, Mr. Chairman, I get my gossip from the barbershop. [Laughter.]

Mr. HASTINGS. OK. All right. Are you trying to say that I—
[Crosstalk.]

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. I'm not trying to saying anything.

Mr. HASTINGS. That's all right. I'll take that problem, Mr. Butterfield, but I'll see you on the floor. [Laughter.]

But Mr. Secretary, very often those of us that are in the policy-making business are critics of different departments of government, including the State Department. In this particular instance, I just make it a point of personal reference that I know the extraordinary amount of time and effort that you and your colleagues, including Secretary Rice and Secretary Fried and others in the State Department, put into the efforts of ameliorating existing problems that came up in Kazakhstan's bid to become Chair-in-Office.

And to lay my bona fides on the table, I don't think that there was ever a question at the State Department that I supported Kazakhstan becoming Chair-in-Office. And I also would not have anyone believe that the State Department, beginning from 2003 until the time in Madrid, had done an awful lot, and a lot was done, in the way of meeting criteria that the State Department wanted up to an including in Madrid. And I was privileged and very pleased that the State Department included opportunities for me to be involved in the negotiations.

Now, I can say to you that I have a stake in them succeeding, and that stake in them succeeding does not ignore the fact that the problems as they arise that they should not be undertaken and addressed and, as you say, continuing pushing and allowing that these matters are met.

I intend to remain active, and I believe that I can be helpful in trying to assure that the responsibilities, particularly in the area of human rights and election reform, are constantly raised with our [inaudible]. And from this point, I can assure you that the Commission is going to undertake that.

I thank you so much, and you are welcome to stay and listen to our other outstanding witnesses.

I'd ask now if Charge d'Affaires, Mr. Askar Tazhiyev, would come forward at this time.

Mr. TAZHIYEV. Thank you, sir.

Mr. HASTINGS. If you would join us.

While we're getting set up, we reached out to the Embassy of Kazakhstan, and my friend, Ambassador Idrissoy, is not in country and we wanted to make sure that there was representation. So the Counselor, Minister Counselor, Deputy Chief of Mission of the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United States is here with us again, having undertaken several portfolios on behalf of his country: Department of Europe and America, the First Secretary of Trade and Economic, Embassy of the Republic to the U.S.A. and the Second Secretary of the Department of International Organizations and Economic Relations, head of division on regional cooperation, with an extraordinary background.

And I also understand that the charge is soon going to be leaving Washington to take up his new position as Ambassador-at-large for OSCE issues in Astana, and so I'd like to congratulate you and wish you every success and guarantee you that you will see a lot of me.

Please, sir, you may proceed.

**ASKAR TAZHIYEV, CHARGE D'AFFAIRES, EMBASSY OF
KAZAKHSTAN**

Mr. TAZHIYEV. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It's, of course, quite—become quite personal for me, and I was hesitating if I should [inaudible] in announcing about my new assignment [inaudible] in regard to OSCE. But at the same time, what prevails in my emotions is that maybe that I will not—I won't be beaten up too much if I tell you that the OSCE is a new area of my responsibility. Actually, it's not a new area. We were working here—I was working here for a quite a lot on this.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission, ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure to appear before you today to testify on the issues related to Kazakhstan's 2010 OSCE Chairmanship.

It is such a positive fact that this is the second hearing on Kazakhstan in the Congress during the past several months.

First of all, let me begin with words of appreciation for you, Mr. Chairman, and your colleagues' participation in the work of this year's summer session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. Ambassador Isidros and officials in Astana have asked me to pass, once again, their thanks for your continued support of the development process in Kazakhstan.

And, of course, I was honored to extend hospitality to such a strong representative to the delegation from the U.S. Congress. And I am sure they will provide good opportunities for fruitful discussions. As we could hear feedback from Astana, that's exactly what our officials feel about this, not only officials but other representatives from Kazakhstan.

In my testimony today, I will try to contribute to the discussions by informing the Commission about the major developments around the Kazakhstan chairmanship, including the work we're doing to implement steps announced by Foreign Minister Tazhin in Madrid. And the road that led us to the Madrid is rooted to the consistent foreign and internal policy. Our [inaudible] for our independence.

Kazakhstan has been demonstrating responsibility and full adherence to the international law and commitment. And I should stress out here that there's a great deal of maybe misperception or maybe a misunderstanding about what are the driving forces behind the Kazakhstan development process and what Astana tries to convey as a message. It's not a situation where we are dragged to the future, by someone for the north, south or west or east.

It is our clear strategic region and our—as I will show it here, it's a little bit to the consistent steps taken in the internationally as well as internally. And each and every step in the milestones and our development process, both international and internally, can be backed up by very serious, authoritative statements from U.S. representatives, Congress, Department of State and NGOs and other communities.

First off, I should tell you that during the 16 years we have jointly written multiple success stories into OSCE dimensions of the security game. Military, political and economic, ecological ones, and now my country is fully ready—is completely ready to replicate success in organizations for humanitarian dimension.

According to the distinguished U.S. politicians, as I said, and NGOs, the most notable achievement setting examples, as we always were, we are setting examples to other OSCE members in terms of exactly our commitment in this area. First off is non-proliferation, which is already well established and a well-known fact. Second, leadership stems from regional security. In 1992, Kazakhstan initiated a new regional concept of security and cooperation through confidence-building measures in Asia envisioned along the lines of principles and goals of the OSCE.

Still then the confidence on interaction and confidence-building measures in Asia has been institutionalized and enjoys bold support in Asia. And as you know, it played quite a serious role in mitigating some tensions between India and Pakistan during one of the summits and then their quite fruitful interaction between Israel, Palestine, and other countries of this organization.

Kazakhstan takes steps in furthering security in so-called greater Central Asia. Kazakhstan is the only CIS nation to adopt a government plan of assistance to Afghanistan. As Mr. Boucher mentioned, Astana has allocated \$10 million of state funds to build a road, a hospital and school in different provinces of Afghanistan. In addition, we are providing training for Afghani border and security forces, as well as for several tactical personnel.

By the request of Afghanistan Government, we're also helping them in such a crucial issue as good governance, and it is what we hear from time to time from U.S. Representatives as well.

Kazakhstan has been also contributing to the anti-terrorist operation, providing thousands of free of charge overflight rights to international coalition forces operating in Afghanistan. And, of course, our country has been one of the active participants and supporters of [inaudible] conventional armed forces in Europe, and it's quite typical if one takes into account this [inaudible] rigorous activity in such an important region as [inaudible].

In 2003, Kazakhstan became the first Muslim nation to send its military personnel to Iraq. And, again, briefly, Ambassador Boucher mentioned we do some job there. I will give additional statistics. It counts in millions, more than 5 million of explosive ordnance creates more demand by our military engineers, creating safe zones for Iraqi civilians and U.S. personnel working there. We provide training for the Iraqi military as well.

No. 5, Kazakhstan has become a true example and model of ethnic and religious tolerances Chairman, you mentioned, which is one of the core principles of the OSCE, which is [inaudible] and seeks development of the market economy. Is it pure of Kazakhstan's future progress that will contribute to the overall economic security? Again, Kazakhstan was the first among the CIS nations to receive market economist papers, and the long-term vision of our leadership is based on clear, well-established principles.

Free market economy allows people's goods and services to move freely within the country and abroad. This, in turn, provides a, sort of, platform for the country's economic and political development and simultaneously contributing to sustainable development of our neighbors. Tajikistan has been one of the leading investors in Georgia—Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, [inaudible] their economic independence and security. Our country invests responsibly in various sec-

tors of the economy in the Ukraine as well such countries, members of the European Union, as Germany, Romania, Bulgaria, and Baltic states.

Environmental security is No. 7. Kazakhstan has inherited a number of major ecological disasters as a legacy left by the Soviet Union. Then our policy mitigating Caspian ecosystem [inaudible] and so on.

Despite the scale of the task, Kazakhstan, jointly with the World Bank, has managed to stop and reverse the [inaudible]. According to an international and the U.S. environmental experts, this fact constitutes the first case of reversal of an environmental catastrophe of such magnitude in the history of humankind.

Six, energy security, the Government of Kazakhstan contributes to the global energy security that continues increasing supply of foreign gas to the world market, including Georgia, Ukraine and Kazakh partners in Eurasia. And it is also in line with the decisions of G-8 where our President Nazarbayev was invited as a guest, taking into account Astana's [inaudible] this year and indispensable energy policy.

Today's extremely topical issue is contributing to the food security. Again, Kazakhstan is doing [inaudible] in supplying food staples to our neighbors at the caucuses and, of course, to Afghanistan. This list can go on and on, and, again, as I already stated, each and every [inaudible] can be backed up by [inaudible] and relations from Western representatives.

And another point is [inaudible] of Kazakhstan's policy and actions have had positive effects on both regional and global levels. Constructiveness, consistency, reliability and responsibility are three pillars of Kazakhstan policy, again, both from international area and internally.

Mr. Chairman, when it comes to internal political progress, Kazakhstan adheres to senior principles of development, consistently and confidently implementing step-by-step growth and commitments outlined in the study in 2003 and [inaudible]. I should stress here that Kazakhstan [inaudible] historical path of major Western democracy, including the United States.

Two, we are in a different geopolitical circumstances and a different historical period. Nevertheless, we did what others had done, doing great at [inaudible] on market and diversified economy and the development of nation's middle class. That is a bearer of free entrepreneurial spirit and universal release or a backbone of a free democratic society.

As observers here in America and in Europe have found, the middle class in Kazakhstan has grown from zero 50 years ago to, by way of sources, 25 to 48 percent of last year. And I would refer to the book, which is outside this room. It's quite a good book, research done by Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, first maybe in this fashion done by independent researchers, giving quite an impressive picture of what has been done.

To compare these figures with Ukraine, 8.9 percent of this layer of society is, according to the 2008 data, a form of [inaudible] specialized information agency, which only has experience in international personnel. In Russia, the figure is about 10 to 30. There

is an ongoing dialogue process between government and business in Kazakhstan.

Also, we fully subscribe to the principle that our Western partners and international organizations want us to implement and keep saying about this. We don't entirely agree with the argument that affection and emotional, social, cultural and economic rights is a precondition of energy development of any society. We also completely realize those clear reasons the Human Rights Watch [inaudible] when its Web site informs us that organization is switching focus from political and civic rights to economic, social and cultural rights today.

It is outlined as a [inaudible] condition on economic, social, and cultural rights in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The idea of free human beings can only be achievable if everyone may enjoy economic, social, and cultural rights, as well as civil and political rights. And our Western partners are united in their opinions of free entrepreneurial spirit is the strongest in Kazakhstan among all possible states.

We simultaneously pursue the implementation of provisions of the covenant article 10, the protection and assistance to the family, covering health care and education. 34 percent of Kazakhstan's national budget is allocated on implementation of the social programs. Starting from prior to 2000, expenditures on education, health care, and social security have increased five-fold. Today, 5 million people, or one-third of the population, benefit from social security.

We spend on education and health care per capita on par with several new European Union member states. In fact, 6 years from now Kazakhstan will reach the current spending levels of many developed Western democracies. We believe that democracy, as one of its [inaudible] is, quote, "the informed decision of the rights of citizens or individuals," end of quote.

Today, Kazakhstan is developing American-style economy of knowledge, and it is in full compliance with priorities of our society, particularly when [inaudible] has launched a new national project, Intelligent Nation 2020. January of this year, [inaudible]. As many of you know, the Bolashak Presidential Scholarship is a unique program that has allowed 15 years ago dozens of [inaudible] and now thousands of young Kazakhstan people who study in leading academic centers of the United States, those universities who are carriers of liberal ideas and principles and leaders of free democratic society.

And just to prevent—all I'm referring to is what the possible questions are, I would [inaudible].

And, also, we're reminded about mission facts, and our American partners and friends keep saying that we should do it constantly because Americans know difference with other people have a short memory sometimes, and we—let me bring your attention to the fact that it is very offending for us to hear when someone continues to doubt the sincerity of Kazakhstan for our own goals or to advance our own goals and priorities coinciding with the international communities want.

Moreover, there are questions being raised in Kazakhstan within the society. It is a mere lack of information and understanding of

the facts. It is a short memory or even some geopolitical games. We wonder, how there can be any suspicion based on our records, clean record, exemplary, according to all the references from international experts and the politicians, how Kazakhstan might abandon its own course and destroy the [inaudible] and consistency of its sustainable development.

Let me reiterate, there should be no doubts whatsoever that Kazakhstan having achieved with its partners such an impressive joint successes in two of OSCE dimensions: Political military and economic environmental. We will be able to implement and contribute, accordingly, in the same reliable, responsible and consistent manner to the humanitarian dimension of the OSCE.

Let me also assure you that Kazakhstan is pursuing its political modernization agenda consciously and independently from anyone's pressure to the east, west, north, or south from us.

I would like to inform you on what has been done with the [inaudible] implementation of those Madrid declarations of Minister Tazhin. First of all, I should tell you that from the very beginning, right after the statement from Minister Tazhin, in January-February, the government established several working groups to work out specific plan and sub-plans, and it was done, the plans were established, most in terms of legislative work or working with the parliament and on the executive branch up to the local levels.

All plans, conceptual, were split into the particular actions by quarters and by months, and everything, I should inform you, goes according to this plan. And, of course, one should take into account there are many things going in parallel like in the United States with the economic outcry about the economic crisis and so on, similar effects on our processes in Kazakhstan.

Nevertheless, again, we adhere to this plan, and it's going to be implemented completely by the end of the year, as we talked previously.

Freedom of the media, the main point of concern here was the issue of criminal liability for the information and liable in the media. And after two rounds of consultations with the Office of the High Representatives and Freedom of the Media, the working group had put together a set of amendments to exclude information from a list of criminal offenses and [inaudible] from a list of offenses punishable by imprisonment.

[Inaudible] people there are certified with dynamics and character of the corporation. [Inaudible] to the parliament already this fall.

Also, we should mention here that while we're doing the job, such countries, democracies like Austria, Germany, France, Poland, Spain, Denmark, Finland, Latvia, and Lithuania, they maintain criminal liability for the information and liable in the initial legislation.

We are further listening of bureaucratic barriers that might affect the activities over the media. Again, specific measures are being put to be undertaken, and we think it will happen.

Now, also, High Representative [inaudible] acknowledged during a roundtable that government has done a lot to decriminalize liable and demonopolize the media in the country and also to provide legal framework for protection of journalists.

I would also refer to Tamara Kaleeva. She's one of the main political for existing legislation. Even she admitted or acknowledged that journalists in Kazakhstan enjoy freedoms that their colleagues in many of the OSCE members do not have.

In election legislation, one should, of course, take note of what President Nazarbayev announced that we would like to create legislative conditions or mechanisms where more than one party—by law, there should be more than one party. One of the options is that automatically any second party, even if it doesn't—that party would not reach required level or percentage, so-called [inaudible]. Then the second party after winning will automatically be included to the parliament.

Also, in the election legislation, we'll work on the electronic [inaudible] other issues of—critical issues, and it is expected [inaudible], such as providing guaranteed equal media coverage for candidates and their campaign, listening requirements for candidates, elimination of preferential treatment of ethnic minorities will be incorporated into the draft as well.

Also let me reiterate once more that Kazakhstan is fully committed to strengthening of the OG mandate. We believe that this is a unique institution of equal dialogue that we must preserve. We will never let the traditions and readiness of OG to be diminished. The Embassy recently received—just to break up this logic and what we stated previously, the Embassy recently received a request from the Central Election Commission in Astana, [inaudible] of their team to observe and to learn, first of all, from 2008 Presidential election.

This would afford a wonderful opportunity for them to receive a firsthand experience and the knowledge of democracy at work.

Also, the same request, it was received [inaudible] with similar inquiries, a few other OSCE members which will hold elections this year as well, and next year.

We also plan to include the knowledge into the [inaudible] continuing efforts to stabilize and [inaudible] Afghanistan, religious tolerance, [inaudible] of the energy security and assisting the economic development of the OSCE nations.

Kazakhstan 2010 OSCE Chairmanship will capitalize deeper political modernization in the country. No matter what we believe this will send a clear, positive signal to other traditional nations that a young state, responsible member of the OSCE can reach for higher standards, both in the economy and politics and, moreover, demonstrate leadership in these areas, as we did previously.

Thank you very much.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you very much, Ambassador.

I allowed the latitude because I wanted you, on behalf of your government, to be able to explicate those positions that you wished to put forward.

I listened to you very carefully. I am mindful of many of the things that you said, and at the very same time, I wish you to know that the concerns that are raised are raised in the spirit of hope that they will be resolved favorably to Kazakhstan's sovereignty and to the people.

Now, your country is getting ready to embark on a great mission, and it's one thing for you and representatives of the government,

many of whom are friends of mine, to say that they are going to do things and at the very same time the level of progress or the tempo is one that is not satisfactory to some.

As good a friend as I perceive myself, I can also be a fair-minded critic, and I go hurriedly to the issue that I raised with Secretary Boucher.

Now, I don't know what happened to the Jehovah's Witnesses who complained of persecution. I don't know personally what happened to those of the Hare Krishnas who said that their homes were demolished, and I do know, and you do too, whether it's right or wrong, that many human rights organizations have severely criticized the draft law on freedom of religion.

It was your item No. 5, as I recall, from your testimony, but can you explain your government's position on the problems of Hare Krishna and Jehovah's Witnesses, and will Astana amend the draft religion law so as to meet OSCE norms?

Mr. TAZHIYEV. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for this question and for your already objective attitude and our meeting that one cannot know all details about the situation, and that's exactly the venue and opportunity to hear all parties interested in.

Jehovah's Witnesses, yes, we're completely considering all the small and bigger aspects and details of the situation. We requested from here, from the embassy [inaudible] what's going on around that issue.

The main point here is that we have our national legislation and constitution, of course, and there are particular concrete provisions of our legislation which are, let me say, in conflict right now with what they need, with what they're trying to do. They're in conflict with the provisions of our law and constitution.

One of them is missionary activity when they were referring that they have a charter registered with the local authority. It is one thing to have—at least it is questionable—there's many questions around their clients about that they have this charter to conduct—it's big difference between what this provision in that charter with local authorities, what it offers or afford and in terms of clear legal point of view, what is prohibited and which is a mission activity or legislative activity, and this was exactly the case.

Mr. HASTINGS. But, Ambassador, that cuts to the core. I'm not a Jehovah's Witness, but all of my life here in America I have seen and know persons who are members of that faith. And the core of the faith is to reach out, among other things.

And just as an aside, I didn't know until just the Wimbledon championship that the sisters of Serena and Venus Williams are members of the Jehovah's Witness faith. And I only cite that to—they don't vote here in this country. That is their right. And I beg of you to listen very carefully to what you're saying.

And I'm a firm believer in countries establishing their laws, but at the very same time, we're all adherence to the international sphere, and in this case, the OSCE norms would not preclude a religion from going about its basic tenet. And, therefore, any way you cut it, you can argue strictly that they are violating your law if they go out and hand out paraphernalia.

Well, you should come with me to Broward County, Florida where there are a host of, I mean numerous, Jehovah's Witnesses,

and every time I go to the grocery store they offer me their Watchtower, and sometimes at my home they come and offer me their Watchtower. It hasn't changed my faith, mine. It hasn't changed my belief that they have a right to do that, just as you allow.

It seems that what Kazakhstan is saying, and I don't know whether this is based on your experiences and I wish that President Nazarbayev was sitting here so that he and I could really get into it about this, I recognize that you are exercising an appropriate function, but please know that how it appears to me is you're saying, "You can be any religion you want to be in this country so long as you stay in your lane." And there are faiths that do just that, stay in their lane, and there are others that go all over the world trying to espouse their point of view as the point of view that others should adhere to.

Now, that's the core of it, and I don't expect an answer from you, but I ask you to listen to it very carefully, because you're going to continue to hear that criticism, and I think it has great currency and easy enough shift in the law. What you finally are saying is you don't believe in a person's right to make a determination whether or not I want to convert from being a Muslim or a Jew or a Catholic to being a member of Jehovah's Witness.

And I've argued with Jehovah's Witness all my life. I still don't understand what they talk about when they don't vote. And every time I hear that, I understand what they're saying, and I read that same Bible that they read, and I have a lot of problems with it. And what I say to them that stops them in their tracks, especially in areas where there are impoverished conditions is, "You tell me that you don't vote, and voting has something to do with all that water standing out in front of your church when the rains come." You understand.

So I firmly, firmly disagree with that position.

Let's move on to Hare Krishna.

Mr. TAZHIYEV. Yes.

Mr. Chairman, just a few lines for clarification purpose. There were several roundtables taken place in Astana which was arranged by our authorities. These were including representative of Jehovah's Witness, other religious organizations and OSCE representatives. OSCE representatives dealing with religious issues exactly to an open manner during the dialogue to figure out what solutions, including on those amendments. That's exactly what our government pursued through the [inaudible] and recommendations done by OSCE representatives.

As for Hare Krishna, it is different case, and they're long-standing issues. Now, what's our last developments around the situation is that our authorities were advancing—I mean, even given more, not just compromises, but even it's obviously giving up to Hare Krishna and offering—there were five lucrative land pieces in Almaty. In those areas where it is a line of people, 5,000 people, it is more advantageous conditions and property just—I mean, looking down and giving others this opportunity.

Yet they are rejecting, and in our independent media there are some articles, those who follow the situation, speculating that Hare Krishna might be interested in maintaining this situation. We're

far from speculating, but what we're doing is, again, an open manner in a flexible opportunity and flexible offering—

Mr. HASTINGS. Well, I heard you in your testimony talk about goods and services moving freely, and yet the complaints that continue to come that all meetings are regulated and restricted. You have to open up a little bit and understand that this isn't just criticism that is directed at Kazakhstan for idle reasons.

And at the very same time, please understand that all of us are sovereign works in progress, and we all have our flaws, but when we have our flaws, we should not—next week I'm going to have a very heated discussion with an ambassador. He's going to tell me about sovereignty, about people in jail, and I'm going to tell him that if I can criticize my government—and I have and I will as long as Guantanamo exists—I believe that if you hold somebody and don't tell them what they're held for and don't let them talk with a lawyer and don't let them see their family, that that is wrong, and I will tell him that to his face and his President in the whatever it's worth category and President Bush in the whatever it's worth category and whoever else is his successor. I mean, somewhere somebody has to get it straight.

And so when human rights violations take place, it is not always that the sovereign is right because they're sovereign. If we are going to be observant of each other and try to be tolerant and try to be brothers, then we need to have greater understanding of the rights of the individual.

I'll go to Mr. Butterfield, in light of time, and I'm pressing the other witnesses, and I would like very much to submit to you in writing and at your good office's leisure to respond to them, and I will post them on the Web site. I have a variety of issues that I'd like to raise.

Mr. TAZHIYEV. Yes, sir; we will, sir.

Mr. HASTINGS. All right. Thank you.

Mr. Butterfield?

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Following the last election, the President of your country said that the election was, quote, "A wonderful opportunity to speed up the country's economic and political modernization," but that was a single parting victory for the parliament of your country. Only one party was elected, and yet that statement was made by the President. And now we're beginning to hear reports that the President might be planning a pre-term parliamentary election next year to ensure that Kazakhstan does not begin the OSCE chairmanship in 2010 with this one-party parliament.

If that is true, can you elaborate on it, please?

Mr. TAZHIYEV. Well, yes. First of all, regarding the one—thank you for this question. It's absolutely critical for us, for our society, for United States as a partner in this process. And, again, we should be clear and sincere in assessing our own situation, and that's exactly what we do.

I should stress that we are not happy, at least to my understanding and to our understanding, in the Embassy, in Astana and the government. A lot of people, if not the majority of officials are not happy with the situation that it is a one-party parliament in the country. My personal belief it is not very healthy.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. So is a pre-term election a possibility or a probability?

Mr. TAZHIYEV. No. Second point, as far as pre-term elections, it's not necessarily that it's going to be exactly done through the pre-term elections. I mean, what we have right now, there are no such plans considered, to the best of my knowledge.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. But is the conversation taking place?

Mr. TAZHIYEV. I know as much as you, Congressman, know about this, from news articles, from rumors in fact, but I would say, my own personal opinion, it's not on the agenda. There are a lot of things to be done again with OSCE.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. What about the political parties that are unregistered who want to become registered? Are they being given that opportunity?

Mr. TAZHIYEV. Yes. First of all, we are simplifying this process. Again, there are several roundtables are taking place with the OSCE representative, with the political party representatives and NGOs and how to simplify the procedures according to the—

[Crosstalk.]

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Well, I would certainly encourage you to include more political parties. If I'm not mistaken, at Madrid, Kazakhstan pledged to ease the registration requirements—

Mr. TAZHIYEV. Right.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD [continuing]. For political parties by the end of this year.

Mr. TAZHIYEV. Right.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. However work on this law has not even started, nor is it on the legislative agenda for this year. On July 1, nine parties, including the ruling party, called on their government to liberalize the political party law, and I'm encouraging you, and join with all of the comments made by the chairman just a few minutes ago, I'm encouraging you to take another look at it and see if you can have pre-parliamentary elections and include all of the political parties who want to participate.

Mr. TAZHIYEV. Yes. Thank you. Again, it's the legislation process will be simplified, again, to the old procedures and law, which is established and according to the recommendations and [inaudible] which exist in this area with the OSCE.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Let's work on it.

My final question is, earlier this month when we were over in Astana, the delegation from your country did not vote for the U.S.-sponsored resolution that urged Moscow to respect Georgia's territorial integrity, yet Russia is clearly threatening Georgia's integrity. In fact, Moscow no longer even denied that its airplanes violate the Georgian air space.

Can you understand where there might be some concern here in Washington about Astana's willingness to defy Moscow about matters of this importance?

Mr. TAZHIYEV. Well, first of all, our position is to maintain and to restrain—to make all parties—if it is in our position to make other parties interested to restrain from such a—heating up the tensions between the states. And as far as our particular statement in regard to Georgia, again, to my understanding, it was balanced, it wasn't pro-Russia or somehow to be interpreted as a green light

to Russia's actions. In other words, I would say it's, again, a balanced position. We are for [inaudible] integrity. It is in our own priority and of course we have such a complicated historical [inaudible] in terms of our territorial development of our territory, of our country as a nation, having such a multiethnic and diversified society. It's one of our principles to adhere to this—

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. All right. I think I've run out of time. Yes. I'm going to have to yield back to the Chairman.

Thank you very much for coming.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Thank you for your answers.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you very much. I would like very much, however, to help my colleague with that question that you just put, and by that I mean Mr. Butterfield.

Kazakhstan did not vote for the U.S.-sponsored resolution, but they also didn't vote against it. They didn't vote.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. That was the abstention.

Mr. HASTINGS. Yes.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. OK.

Mr. HASTINGS. That's a little bit different if you nuance it that way. And I talked with Speaker TOKey about that afterward, and that's why, in fairness to them, I wanted to make it clear.

Also, I was particularly disappointed that my Russian colleague walked out during the course of that vote. So there was a rather substantial tension, but I thought in light of the fact that Kazakhstan was moving toward the chair, that the position that they took was to try and let the parties work it out and not give them a role in it.

But I think what he is suggesting, Mr. Charge, is that in matters of geostrategic importance it's going to be important that Kazakhstan be understood to be able to be critical of Russia, the United States, or any others of the Participating states in the event that need arises. And from a geostrategic standpoint, when you're Chair-in-Office, that's where I think some are coming from.

But I thank you, and I offer my best, and you tell Ambassador Idrisov that he ducked all those bullets that you had to absorb.

Mr. TAZHIYEV. I will.

Mr. HASTINGS. And I'll send him the written statements, and good luck to you in your new mission.

Mr. TAZHIYEV. Thank you so much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much.

Mr. HASTINGS. All right.

At this time, I'd like to ask Dr. Olcott and Dr. Berg if you all would come forward.

I'll go to the rule of first to sit.

So, Dr. Olcott?

**MARTHA OLCOTT, SENIOR ASSOCIATE, CARNEGIE
ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE**

Dr. OLCOTT. Thank you.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I will give you a short summary of my written remarks, knowing that the whole testimony is in the record.

We've heard at great length about Kazakhstan's commitment to the OSCE and whether they're being met and how fast they're being met. I'd like to spend my few minutes trying to put the situation in a broader context, the situation with regard to democracy building in Kazakhstan.

In my opinion, it will be impossible to consider Kazakhstan a democratic society or even a fledgling democracy until it's had a democratic transfer of power. Right now, it is not clear when that will occur and, most importantly, if the proper institutions have been created to facilitate this in case there is an unexpected vacancy in the highest office, either by accident or by the decision of the president to leave office.

Will the president leave office? It's clear from his public statements this year when there was a serious debate over whether Russian President Vladimir Putin would leave office, that President Nazarbayev does not believe that someone should leave office at the height of his powers or before his mission to transform a society is complete.

At the same time, Nazarbayev likes to think of the Kazakh nation as part of an Asian civilization and that he's a wise Asian ruler. Part of his wisdom includes the recognition of the ages of man, and this may encourage him to leave office at a time that he deems appropriate, allowing him to stay behind the scenes and help guide his successor and the new generation that comes to power.

The other tradition that Nazarbayev comes from, however, is that of the Communist party of the Soviet Union where leaders never handed over power voluntarily.

In case that President Nazarbayev were to die in office or become incapacitated, Senate President Kassymzhomart TOKev would preside over the country as an interim leader, but there's no clear mechanism—and this is really what I'd like to stress in my next 2 minutes—there's no clear mechanism by which leading candidates could be identified, either by TOKev or by President Nazarbayev himself.

The choice of the next President of Kazakhstan will be a personal one, made among candidates who have thrust themselves forward to the President's attention. Much like what is in the case in Russia, the next President of Kazakhstan will be chosen in something closer to a popular referendum than in a democratic-style election. More than likely, one candidate will get an official blessing and run against a much less popular or less experienced political figure, making the election an anticlimax more than a process by which potential leaders contest for public approval.

To complicate matters, right now there are no institutions that really serve as political training grounds. Political parties are weak, and that includes the president's own political party, Nur Otan, as well as the opposition groupings. Nur Otan lacks a clear program, one that goes beyond Presidential policy pronouncements, and that's true of almost all the other opposition parties, the only exceptions being the nationalists and Communists who have a clear ideological agenda.

Most of the opposition parties were formed out of an elite rift in 2001–2002 and basically accept most of the precepts of the Presi-

dential party, that Kazakhstan must be a market economy with a democratic system. What distinguishes these leaders from the President is their belief they would do a better job and democratize the country more rapidly and would be more forceful combatants against the corruption that's still rampant in daily life and still present even if less pervasive at various levels of government.

The weakness of political parties reinforces the weakness of the legislature. The current division of labor between parliament and the executive branch and the decision to have the lower house elected solely through an alphabetic party list system makes the process of gaining the necessary expertise a slow one.

Even with the constitutional amendments of 2007, the legislature remains a largely consultative body. Legislation is typically drafted in the government and comes under discussion and modification by the legislature. As long as this system prevails, there will be little incentive for politicians to seek to make a career in the legislature instead of as now seeing it as a stepping stone to a career in business or the executive branch.

For questions of time, I'm going to skip over comments on the local government and judiciary. I would say in both cases the same thing applies, that reform is a process that—reform is going very slowly, and neither local government nor the judiciary is a place where you have bottom-up initiatives rather than top-down initiatives.

The strongest incentive for democratic reform in Kazakhstan, I would argue, is the desire of President Nazarbayev and his close political advisors for the country to be accorded international respectability. This is not a simple task, as we've talked about today, but international respectability I do think also means acceptance, not just by the United States and E.U. but by neighbors like Russia and China.

For this, Kazakhstan must be seen as having evolved politically as its leader chose and not being bullied into transforming its political system. That doesn't mean Kazakhstan can't become a democracy. I think that it really requires being a democracy as actions that they themselves commit to their neighbors that they are taking voluntarily.

Does this mean there are disincentives? Some have said—I want to just try to sum up—some have said that now that Kazakhstan has been given the chairmanship of the OSCE, they will lack the incentive to introduce further political reforms. I honestly don't believe this. I believe this is because the current Kazakh leadership wants the Chairmanship to serve as a showplace for the country, and a showplace is not just a dramatic new skyline but also a political system that is clearly transforming itself into something more akin to European norms.

This means that the Kazakhs are likely to continue to reform their political system, albeit not necessarily the pace that we would like. I do believe that they will hold pre-term parliamentary elections before 2010 with some important modifications to the rules. Party threshold seems certain to drop, as well as guarantees to ensure that a second or even a third place party gain automatic representation.

But political reform is going to remain only one of the priorities of a Kazakh Government, and right now, given the country's banking crisis and the pressures on agriculture as well as those living with fixed incomes, to cope with rising food and energy prices, it may well be that political reform takes something of a backseat as the government presses on with what it considers more pressing concerns.

What can we do about this—my final comment. OK. I would say that we would do well to recognize that we don't have as many levers available to us now as we did previously. The U.S.-Kazakh relationship has changed a great deal over the last several years, as has the Kazakh-E.U. relationship, making Kazakhstan a much more important and much less junior partner than it was during the first decade of independence.

Kazakhstan's oil and gas is only one factor in this change. The country is in a strategic position, has real regional weight and has a sufficiently diverse as wealthy economy to be a donor country in most senses of the term. This kind of country does not take well to lecturing. This leaves us room for attempts at persuasion but mostly the need to hope that the Kazakhs themselves make the right choices about their own future.

Thank you so much.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you, Dr. Olcott.

Dr. Berg?

ANDREA BERG, RESEARCHER ON CENTRAL ASIA, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Dr. BERG. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm very grateful for the opportunity to testify today before this commission on behalf of Human Rights Watch on important issue of Kazakhstan's upcoming OSCE Chairmanship.

Let me say first that Human Rights Watch very much welcomes the promises that Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Tazhin made last November at the OSCE ministerial conference in Madrid, and you have already mentioned what these promises were, like the reform of the media law and the law on elections, to liberalize the registration requirements for political parties and to preserve the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and its existing mandate.

These are modest but important steps for Kazakhstan to [inaudible] international leadership role.

In Madrid—and we have already heard several times now—Minister Tazhin stated that these reforms would be implemented by the end of 2008. I and my colleague have just been to Almaty and Astana in early June, and in meetings with government officials, they reassured us that they are still committed to Mr. Tazhin's pledges. It is, of course, good news, but in practice, and today we are like nearly 8 months since the Madrid promises have passed, the government has made almost no substantive or concrete progress toward implementing these pledges.

Let me say a few general words before I give you some examples of how Mr. Tazhin's promises contrast the human rights situation in the country.

Human Rights Watch often hears that policymakers compare the human rights practices among Central Asian governments, and, clearly, in their eyes, the government of Kazakhstan benefits from such comparisons.

Kazakhstan is not a country with frequent or dramatic crackdown on freedoms and human rights, but this should not mislead you. The bigger picture is an atmosphere of quiet and subtle repression. For several years already, local human rights groups have been advocating for human rights reforms such as a review of legislation on freedom of assemblies or the reform of the judicial system. But so far the government has resisted implementing meaningful reforms in this area, and I can tell you a little bit more details in the question and answer session.

With regard to reforming the media law, I have a slightly different opinion to what Secretary Boucher has said here earlier. First of all, in February 2008, the Ministry of Culture and Information declined for the second time to accept the draft media law compiled by a working group, including civil society representatives, and then they established a new working group.

This group has met twice so far, and I have just had a telephone conversation with one of its members, the media watchdog, Adil Soz, yesterday morning. The second meeting of the group was on Friday, last week, and the meeting last for 1 hour, hardly allowing any time for discussion. And then yesterday morning all the members received an e-mail with the draft law and were told that they had 24 hours to study it and submit their comments, "because the government wants to see this done quickly," and this was a quote from the e-mail.

Tamara Kaleeva, from Adil Soz, the Chairwoman, told me that the bill does not include any ideas proposed by civil society groups.

The situation with the election legislative working group is very similar. The two meetings of this group have focused more on form rather than on content. From the beginning, it was made clear to the members that they were not allowed to amend more than 50 percent of the existing law and not allowed to draft new ones. And at the second meeting, the government proposed conducting a series of seminars on elections, which is, of course, welcome, but seminars cannot be a substitute for a substantive electoral reform.

And with regard to the third of Minister Tazhin's promises, to liberalize registration requirements for political parties by the end of 2008, we are not aware of any steps taken by the government toward fulfilling this promise, and the opposition party, Alga, for instance, is waiting for registration since November 2006.

Mr. Chairman, in recent years, the United States took a principled stand on Kazakhstan's chairmanship bid, but, ultimately, went with the consensus to schedule it for 2010. The United States argued that this would provide an opportunity to constructively engage the government for positive change. Now, we, Human Rights Watch, ask the United States to redouble efforts to hold Kazakhstan to its commitment.

We ask the United States convey two strong messages to the government in Astana. First, it is important for Kazakhstan to meet the above-mentioned commitments by the end of 2008 and, second, that it is important for the government to significantly improve its

record on honoring other OSCE commitments before it takes over the organization's chairmanship.

Human Rights Watch counts on the commission's active support in ensuring that the United States voice remains strong on the much needed outstanding human rights reforms, including the following: That the government of Kazakhstan comply with its commitment to the OSCE's and other international bodies' standards on freedom of media by fostering and not stifling independent media; that the government of Kazakhstan allow the working group on election legislation to act without undue interference or subject to unreasonable conditions and speedily adapt the legislation according to the OSCE recommendations; and, third, that the government of Kazakhstan immediately take measures to liberalize the registration requirements for political parties.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Commission members, for your attention. I will look forward to your questions.

Mr. HASTINGS. I have one question for both of you. First, thank you for your very clear and concise statement, and my apologies in advance, I'm due, as we speak, at the Rules Committee, and I hope we will give the opposition more than 24 hours to study what it is that we are going to do in the housing arena.

But that said, knowing both your expertise, taking into consideration that Kazakhstan as well as all of the CIS countries that were a part of the Soviet Union, have had what we call independence since 1991, is it fair to assume, notwithstanding Chair-in-Office, notwithstanding any number of things along the way, is it fair to believe that they should move any more rapidly in areas that are of concern in the OSCE than other countries that took as many as 100 years or, would you believe, 200 years to develop up to a certain point?

I ask that only for the reason that when I began serving in Congress I went to Uganda and I met with President Museveni, and he was very fair minded and open in asserting that he felt that 200 years from the day that we were sitting there that Uganda would be a different place. And we all know, if we look at just some of the other countries, that tempo and pace is a critical matter.

Now, I don't mean, by any stretch of the imagination, as one who spent a large portion of his career advocating for human rights and still do, that these rights should not be observed, but let me say to the two of you that the primary reason that I supported Kazakhstan as chair was so that these changes could be accelerated, and that was my argument that I made to Secretary Rice personally and that I made to the first witness here, Mr. Boucher, and to Dan Fried and to Julie Finley in Vienna and countless others along the way, Europeans and Central Asians.

And I might add, I didn't stop with just Kazakhstan. If you look at my record, you'll find that I was in Uzbekistan perhaps more than any Member of Congress.

I just see the opportunity that exists, and I do not think that the leverage is gone, because now they're in the position where there will be even more heightened criticism of their inaction on the rightful subjects that are being raised.

So just in that context, what would be your response?

Dr. OLCOTT. I agree with virtually everything that you said. I, too, was strongly in favor—although I didn't have a vote—of Kazakhstan getting the Chairmanship, because I felt it was kind of the only way out of a very difficult circumstance, and that was the only way we were going to move forward in promoting political change in the country.

I've been going to Kazakhstan for over 30 years.

Mr. HASTINGS. Wow.

Dr. OLCOTT. I've been going to Central Asia for over 30 years. I've seen enormous changes. I've seen enormous changes in Kazakhstan over the last 10 years.

Mr. HASTINGS. Did you see any in Turkmenistan? [Laughter.]

Dr. OLCOTT. They've changed.

Mr. HASTINGS. The man died.

Dr. OLCOTT. Exactly.

I think that obviously, in today's world, you can't give states 200 years to make changes to achieve political development, but the international expectations have changed and changed a great deal. States have to move faster than they had the liberty to do even 50 years ago. But there are still human development factors. States still have internal breaks on how fast they can move. You have to have some degree of generational change.

That was part of the reason in preparing my testimony I thought about: not about the human rights violations, which are there and should be addressed, but the systemic breaks that continue to exist against democratization and rapid democratization—

Mr. HASTINGS. Right.

Dr. OLCOTT [continuing]. In these countries. Those are the ones I think we have to become even more mindful of as we continue to press them to meet their OSCE obligations.

We also have to begin to become more creative about thinking about ways that we can work with them to address the more systemic problems, the problems that are not going to change unless there begins to be a more thoughtful way of building capacity among the next generation of elite—on the sitting generation that's in positions of power but still hasn't evolved their world view, even though they recognize that they have to.

And that I think is really critical with the Kazakhs, the recognition that they have to move, that I think Tazhiyev talked about. It's that they too want to change. They'll fight with us over some of the details and the speed, but I think there's no question that the bulk of Kazakhs serving in the government and in positions of responsibility want Kazakhstan to move in the direction of European norm.

Mr. HASTINGS. Right. And one of the things that I was continuously impressed on, having worked in the organization for 14 years, was during that entire period of time, they, as well as others, were an active delegation, whereas some of the Central Asian countries were not, which brings to mind the Kyrgyz who are indicating a desire to seek the Chair in 2013. At this point, I'm not persuaded that they're ready yet, but I thought that Kazakhstan was. And I could go into greater detail, but I think you and I share those sentiments.

And I want to make it very clear, Dr. Berg, that that does not mean, by any stretch of the imagination, and you heard me today talking with the charge, the deputy Ambassador, I'm very firm in my resolve with reference to religious freedom and to the rights of the media.

And one of the things in the development of democracy that kind of goes too slowly for me is one of the lynchpins—and this would be criticism that I would offer in another sense, you touched on it, the Deputy Ambassador glossed over it, Rick Boucher did not touch it—but that is a strong and independent judiciary. The one thing that I have witnessed in all of these countries where the change is taking place is that when there is some blowback, when there is someone, even if it's an oligarch that can say, "no," to the president, that it can ultimately make a difference.

Many of our efforts, if I would address reminiscing here or ruminating, I would say, if I was to use Iraq, for example, we're spending a great deal of time and resources in developing an Iraqi military and an Iraqi police force. So then the Iraqi police force is going to go out and let's say they're perfect and they catch people. Who's going to try them? How about prosecutors? How about public defenders or a private bar?

And if you look at the resources that we spend on this other thing calling democracy and leave out the independent judiciary, it's de minimis by comparison, and that's frightening to me. And if I were urging Kazakhstan to do anything, and any of those countries, it would be to really develop an independent judiciary to the extent that they can.

Example, example, case in point: Well, the judges in Ukraine that made the decision, I was there, I saw his hands shaking when he read the decision. It was as courageous a thing as I've ever seen, but they made it, and when I say made it, they made it through that revolutionary period without there being overt civil strife. Very interesting.

I'm sorry, Dr. Berg. I went on, and I'm the one that has to go.

Dr. BERG. No, I just wanted to say that I absolutely agree with you, and I don't think that the level which is done at all, just the contrary, and that is why Human Rights Watch is really asking you to make sure the United States makes sure that Kazakhstan sticks with its commitment and implements or enforces the promises it has made.

The question is if it's fair to believe that Kazakhstan should move so rapidly. I would say the people in Kazakhstan are ready for this, they are just now allowed to do so. They want to exercise their political rights, for instance, but they are not allowed to. There is a capital where you can only have meetings and demonstrations in two places at the outskirts of the city, and this is the capital of the country with 15 million inhabitants. This is just unbelievable.

And, therefore, I think with regard to other numbers, the religious groups, for instance, the total number of missionaries in Kazakhstan is 380, and what are they scared of, what they are afraid of? I mean, this is really a small number of people.

So I think what the international community and the United States should do is really engage in dialogue with Kazakhstan and

use this year and next—especially this year and next year—to make sure Kazakhstan improves its human rights record and also its OSCE commitments.

Mr. HASTINGS. I thank you both and my humble apologies for having to go to work.

Thank you, and the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:20 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

APPENDICES

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS, CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Welcome to the second in our series of hearings on Kazakhstan and the OSCE. In our first hearing last October, we examined the pros and cons of Astana's bid to be the OSCE's Chairman in Office in 2009. Their campaign to become the first Central Asian country to lead the OSCE began in 2003 and was controversial. Russia and the CIS countries were supportive, but the U.S. and some EU countries questioned the suitability of Kazakhstan to lead an organization dedicated to the promotion of democracy and human rights. A decision was finally reached at the 2007 OSCE Summit in Madrid and Kazakhstan will chair the OSCE in 2010.

One of the key factors in a favorable decision for Kazakhstan's future chairmanship was the speech made in Madrid by Kazakh Foreign Minister Marat Tazhin. At the 2007 Madrid Ministerial, he pledged that not only would Kazakhstan implement a number of key democratic reforms before it took over as Chair-in-Office, but while Chair, it would also strongly support OSCE human rights programs. Specifically, he said that Kazakhstan would amend the media law in accordance with OSCE recommendations; that it would implement ODIHR recommendations on elections, including reform of the electoral law; that it would strengthen the role of parliament; and that it would develop a mechanism to ensure greater participation in the legislative process, among other things.

This hearing follows a trip to Kazakhstan by 11 Members of Congress earlier this month. We traveled to Astana to take part in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Annual Meeting, which was held in Kazakhstan for the first time. In Astana, we met with President Nazarbaev, Prime Minister Massimov, State Secretary and former Ambassador Saudabaev, and others. We also met with representatives of the political opposition, human rights groups and religious minorities. Most significantly, I think, is that we heard President Nazarbaev himself commit Kazakhstan to implementing the same domestic political reforms outlined by Foreign Minister Tazhin in Madrid.

So, from our discussions in Astana we received a thorough grounding in how the government—and its critics—view the situation in Kazakhstan. Today we will continue the discussions begun in Astana of Kazakhstan's post-Madrid record. We have a slate of witnesses today that are certainly more than qualified to discuss this issue.

Thank you.

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

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for convening this important hearing. I was very pleased to travel with you and our other colleagues to Kazakhstan for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Annual Meeting. It was my first time in that country and in light of Kazakhstan's upcoming chairmanship of the OSCE, it was certainly timely.

Astana's record on human rights and democratization does indeed raise concerns. The State Department's yearly reports, as well as those by numerous human rights groups inside and outside of Kazakhstan, lay out in detail the problem areas.

For example, Kazakhstan has yet to hold an election that meets OSCE norms. The 2007 election produced a legislature composed exclusively of President Nazarbaev's party, the first post-independence parliament with no opposition lawmakers. Some opposition figures and journalists have been murdered or have died under suspicious circumstances. There remain serious concerns about freedom of association, assembly and conscience.

Washington, London and some other capitals were understandably reluctant to back Astana's bid to chair the OSCE, an organization with a defining human rights profile. Foreign Minister's Tazhin's statement in Madrid about planned reforms was a critical factor in convincing countries that were opposed or wavering to take a leap of faith and support Kazakhstan's OSCE aspirations.

President Nazarbaev himself repeated the commitment to political reform in a speech to OSCE Parliamentarians. For that reason, the most striking moment of the trip for me came less than an hour after that same speech when we met with the President privately. Responding to a question about the tempo of political reform in Kazakhstan, he said that his country "cannot move faster than his giant neighbors Russia and China."

Frankly, I found that statement quite sobering: China, after all, is still run by the Communist Party and lacks even the most fundamental rights embraced by the OSCE such as a democratic system, freedom of the media and freedom of assembly. Russia, despite its formal political pluralism, is for all practical purposes run by the Kremlin through highly centralized lines of authority. A few months ago, presidential power was transferred from Vladimir Putin to Dmitry Medvedev in a carefully orchestrated exercise. But the executive branch still dominates all other branches of government. Information, especially on the airwaves, is tightly controlled and journalists who try to expose the rampant corruption or other official abuses literally risk their lives.

So when the President of Kazakhstan argues that his country cannot reform faster than Russia and China, I wonder what to make of Kazakhstan's commitment to political reform. Freedom House, which testified at our hearing last October, has completed a comprehensive analysis of Kazakhstan's progress on implementation, issue by issue. So far, the record is not very encouraging. Human Rights Watch has come to similar conclusions.

What is certain, Mr. Chairman is that only a year and a half remains before Kazakhstan takes over the chairmanship of the

OSCE—not a very long time to make the many needed, and promised, reforms. I look forward to hearing the perspective of our witnesses on where matters stand today and how Kazakhstan can meet these commitments in the appropriate time frame.

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF RICHARD A. BOUCHER, ASSISTANT
SECRETARY FOR SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIAN AFFAIRS**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me. I'm pleased to be here today to talk about U.S. policy towards Kazakhstan. I also want to thank the Committee members for their interest and continued engagement and leadership on U.S. policy in Central Asia, including your recent travel to the region. The Helsinki Commission has demonstrated great leadership and bipartisan cooperation in forging a sustained partnership between the United States and the five countries of Central Asia.

There is no doubt that Central Asia is of significant importance to U.S. national interests. Our policy is designed to provide the nations and people of the region with options and opportunity. We support the development of fully sovereign, stable democratic nations, integrated into the world economy and cooperating with one another, the United States, and our partners to advance regional security and stability. We do not view Kazakhstan or any other Central Asian nation as a part of any external state's special sphere of influence, and our relations are not based on competition with any other power. Rather, we seek to maintain mature bilateral relations with each country, based on our foreign policy goals and each country's needs, goals and unique dynamics.

The partnership between the United States and Kazakhstan is a strategic one, with three primary goals. First, we seek to advance democratic and market economic reforms as the best guarantees of their independence and stability. Second, we seek to further our common security interests, by fighting terrorism, stemming narcotics trafficking and promoting non-proliferation efforts. As you know, Kazakhstan was the first country to renounce its nuclear weapons voluntarily after the break-up of the Soviet Union, and has been a strong and reliable partner on non-proliferation. Through the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program, we have cooperated for over a decade to ensure that Weapons of Mass Destruction-related materials and technical knowledge will not fall into terrorist hands. Third, we seek to foster the development of Central Asia's very significant energy resources. U.S. companies have recognized Kazakhstan's potential and are cooperating with Kazakhstan to develop its significant oil and gas resources, currently holding major stakes in Kazakhstan's three largest oil and gas projects: Tengiz, Karachaganak, and Kashagan.

Beyond engagement with the United States, Kazakhstan has also made serious efforts to play a helpful role in the international community, and in its region. Today, Kazakhstan is contributing to coalition efforts in Iraq, where it has deployed engineering troops since 2003. Kazakhstan is also taking on reconstruction programs in Afghanistan totaling almost 3 million dollars. And, as you're well aware, after an intense debate within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe last November, Kazakhstan was selected to be Chairman in Office for 2010—the first former-Soviet republic to achieve that goal.

I know that you are most interested in discussing this aspect of our relationship today. Mr. Chairman, the decision to support Kazakhstan's Chairmanship was not one the United States made quickly or easily. While we welcomed Astana's initiative and desire

to play a leadership role, we felt Kazakhstan had much to do to meet the high standards of Chairmanship. Political institutions, civil society and the independent media remain underdeveloped; the presidency dominates the political system; and the parliament elected in 2007 has representation from only one political party.

Secretary Rice, former Under Secretary Burns, Ambassador John Ordway, my Deputy Evan Feigenbaum and I all engaged actively with Kazakhstan to come to a decision on our support and what Kazakhstan needed to do to prepare for its leadership role. In recognition of its mixed record on political development, we asked Kazakhstan to delay its Chairmanship from 2009 to 2010 so that it would have time to undertake several democratic reforms. In turn, in Madrid Kazakhstan publicly pledged to pass legislation that would modernize the election law, modernize the media and liberalize the registration of political parties by the end of 2008. It also vowed to support the OSCE's Human Dimension and the autonomy of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

I can assure the Members of this Committee that we are pressing Kazakhstan to meet these commitments fully. Despite slow and uneven progress, President Nazarbayev assured me earlier this year that Kazakhstan will stand by its commitments and he reiterated that commitment before the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Astana less than a month ago.

With respect to the elections law, the Central Election Commission invited the political parties, including the opposition, to recommend changes in the election law. The Commission is currently hosting experts meetings on the proposed election law amendments, and expects draft legislation to be ready by the end of the year.

With respect to the media law, the government committed to reform the media law in line with recommendations from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Freedom of Media Representative, which include, among others, reducing criminal liability for defamation in the media and liberalizing registration procedures for media outlets. In late February, the Information Ministry formed a working group of government and non-governmental organization representatives to amend the media law. After initial delays, the working group has now begun work on new media legislation.

With respect to the treatment of political parties, opposition parties and non-governmental organizations have put forward several concrete proposals to liberalize the political party law and ease registration requirements for political parties, but the government has not yet engaged with the OSCE on legislation.

In Madrid, Kazakhstan pledged to support and preserve the current mandate of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, including the integrity of its election monitoring efforts. In Vienna, Kazakhstan has not yet begun to play a proactive role in the Human Dimension Committee but we are encouraging them to do so.

In addition to its Madrid commitments, we are also engaging Kazakhstan on ways to improve respect for religious freedom—an

OSCE core commitment. We were pleased that Kazakhstan invited the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights to review draft amendments to their religion law and we hope these recommendations are taken into account in the final version.

Clearly, a great deal of work must be done by the end of 2008. We have enlisted our European partners to help, and we have encouraged direct engagement by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. My Deputy for Central Asia, George Krol, is in Kazakhstan today, encouraging these same steps. Meanwhile, we will continue to regularly encourage the government to take concrete steps toward reform, and through our assistance programs, we will help provide resources to help them promote democratic reform and the development of civil society and independent media.

Our broader vision is for a strong, independent, and democratic Kazakhstan that is a leader and anchor of stability in the region. We believe Kazakhstan's service as Chairman in Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe will help serve that broader vision. Kazakhstan is an important partner for us, one with whom we are broadening economic cooperation, security cooperation, and diplomatic cooperation. We will continue to expand cooperation on reforms, as well. We hope that together, Congress and the Administration will continue to support any steps Kazakhstan takes to advance democratic and economic reforms as the United States' partnership with Kazakhstan continues to grow and strengthen.

Thank you and I'd be happy to take your questions.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ASKAR TAZHIYEV, CHARGE D'AFFAIRES, EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Commission,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to appear before you today to testify on issues related to Kazakhstan's 2010 OSCE Chairmanship. We register such a positive fact that it's a second hearings on Kazakhstan in the Congress during past several months.

First of all, let me begin with words of appreciation for your, Mr. Chairman, and your colleagues' participation in the work of this year's Summer Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. Ambassador Idrissov and officials in Astana have asked me to pass once again their thanks to you for your continued support of the development processes in Kazakhstan.

Astana was honored to extend its hospitality to such a strong delegation of the US Congress. I am sure the visit provided good opportunities for discussions on many important subjects, including Kazakhstan's 2010 Chairmanship and the road that leads to it.

In my testimony today I will try to contribute to these discussions by informing the Commission about the major developments around the Kazakhstan's Chairmanship, including the work we do to implement steps announced by Foreign Minister Tazhin last December in Madrid.

Indeed, the road that led us to the Madrid is rooted to the consistent foreign and internal policy our country implements since very first days of our independence. Kazakhstan has been demonstrating responsibility and full adherence to the international law and commitments.

We are proud to say that with our partners, including the United States, in the span of these 16 years we have jointly written multiple success stories in two OSCE's dimensions of the security—military-political and economic/ecological ones and now my country is ready to replicate success in Organization's third, humanitarian dimension. According to distinguished US politicians and representatives, including NGOs, the most notable achievements, setting examples for other OSCE members in terms of commitment to their international obligations, are:

1. Nonproliferation record. Kazakhstan has shown and continues to show leadership in these area (decisions to close down the world's largest nuclear testing site in Semipalatinsk and to eliminate country's fourth largest nuclear arsenal in the world). Much of this work has been done within the framework of the Nunn-Lugar Initiative. In 1994, Kazakhstan transferred more than a half-ton of weapons-grade uranium to the United States. In 1995 Kazakhstan removed its last nuclear warheads. In May 2000 with U.S. assistance our country completed the sealing of 181 nuclear test tunnels. Export control system in Kazakhstan was recognized as a model for NIS.

Kazakhstan has signed the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (1992), the START Treaty (1992), the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (1993), the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (2001).

2. Leadership in strengthening Regional Security. In 1992 Kazakhstan initiated a new regional concept of security and cooperation through confidence-building measures in Asia, envisioned along the lines, principles and goals of the OSCE. Since then the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) has been institutionalized and enjoys broad support in Asia. It provides a platform for interactions between various nations: India, Pakistan, Israel, Palestine, Russia, China, Japan and others. Member-states seek to enlarge cooperation, create and strengthen the atmosphere of peace, confidence, and friendship on the Asian continent in order to promote regional security.

Kazakhstan takes steps in furthering security in the "Greater Central Asia". Kazakhstan is the only CIS nation to adopt a Governmental Plan of Assistance to Afghanistan. Astana has allocated \$ 3 mln. of state funds to build a road, a hospital and a school in different provinces of Afghanistan. In addition, we're providing training for Afghani border and security forces as well as for civil technical personnel. We fully support the US efforts to widen international involvement in this process whether individually or through multilateral structures, including the OSCE.

Kazakhstan has been also contributing to the antiterrorist operation providing thousands of free-of-charge over-flight rights to international coalition forces, operating in Afghanistan. NATO's leadership has praised Kazakhstan on various occasions for being one of the most active and effective partners in the framework of Partnership for Peace Program. According to our American partners, they are very much satisfied with the cooperation between US and Kazakhstan special agencies in combating various extremist and terrorist organizations in Afghanistan.

Our country has been one of the active participants and supporters of the strengthening of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) which regulates, among other things, member-states' activity in such an important region as Caucasus. In 2006, Kazakhstan effectively presided over the Third Conference on Review of the CFE Treaty and has held the OSCE Conference on Tolerance.

In 2003 Kazakhstan became the first Muslim nation to send its military personnel to Iraq to assist in reconstruction process and clear the cities, towns and villages from the dangerous explosives. During these five years our team of military engineers has destroyed more than 5 millions of explosive ordinance creating safe zones (up to 170 sq.m) for both Iraqi civilians and US forces engaged in security operations. In addition, our soldiers provide training for the Iraqi military. While other coalition members were announcing troop reductions and withdrawals Kazakhstan continued to stay in Iraq helping its people to return to peaceful life. Nine rotations of Kazakhstan military unit have been made since 2003.

5. Kazakhstan has become a true exemplary model of ethnic and religious tolerance, which is one of the core principles of the OSCE. In 2003 Kazakhstan initiated and hosted in Astana the Congress of World's and Traditional Religions. Second event took place in 2006. Next Summit will be held again in Astana in 2009, this time under the aegis of the United Nations.

On September 22nd, 2001 during his State visit to Kazakhstan Pope John Paul II said: “It is with affection that I kiss this Land, which has given rise to a multi-ethnic state . . . Today in your Country, citizens belonging to over a hundred nationalities and ethnic groups live side by side, each guaranteed the same rights and freedoms . . . This spirit of openness and cooperation is part of your tradition” (The Pope John Paul II called Kazakhstan “an example of harmony between men and women of different origins and beliefs.”)

We will continue vigorously promote these values while chairing the OSCE in 2010 using experience and well-established practices of the member-states.

6. Development of the Market Economy is the pillar of Kazakhstan’s future progress that will contribute to the world’s economic security. Kazakhstan was the first among the CIS nations to receive “market economy status” both from the United States (in 2001) and the European Union (in 2002). Long term vision of our leadership is based on clear, well established principle: free market economy allows people, goods, capital and services to move freely within the country and abroad. This, in turn, provides a solid platform for the country’s economic and political development, and simultaneously contributing to sustainable development of our neighbors.

Today Kazakhstan, being one of the leading investors in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan strengthens their economic independence and security. Our country invests in various sectors of economy in Ukraine, as well as such countries-members of EU as Germany, Romania, Bulgaria and Baltic states.

In coming years we plan to intensify our efforts to promote market economy in the broader region as part of our 2010 OSCE Chairmanship agenda.

7. Environmental Security. Kazakhstan has inherited a number of major ecological disastrous as a legacy left by the Soviet Union: drying up Aral Sea, mitigating Caspian ecosystem, contaminated Semipalatinsk nuclear test-site, extremely polluted cities, desertification, and lack of mechanisms for regional transboundary water management. Despite the scale of the task, Kazakhstan, jointly with the World Bank, has managed to stop and reverse the desiccation of the Northern Aral. According to international and US environmental experts, this fact constitutes “the first case of reversal of an environmental catastrophe of such magnitude in the history of humankind”. The sea water has come back 30 miles in the span of the last few years. As a result, environmental and health conditions drastically improved, new jobs and opportunities for the local population were created, environment-associated illnesses has dropped significantly in the area.

6. Energy Security. The Government of Kazakhstan contributes to the global energy security by continuously increasing supplying of oil and gas to the world markets, including Georgia, Ukraine and other common partners in Eurasia. Among other things, this demonstrates Kazakhstan’s commitment to the decisions of G8 summit in 2007 (President Nazarbayev was invited to the summit taking into account Astana’s growing role in this sphere and responsible energy policy).

7. Contributing to the Food Security. Kazakhstan, being one of the world's top 5 grain exporters, provides food security for Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Caucasus states. As part of our joint with the US efforts to rebuild Afghanistan, we provide this young democracy with food grain and seeds to help overcome local farmers' dependence on producing heroin poppy crops. Last delivery from Kazakhstan was 8,200 tons of grain.

This list can go on and on and each and every statement reflecting Kazakhstan's exemplary records in the "OSCE's area of responsibility" can be backed up by the statements of distinguished representatives of the international community.

Another point is that all of those instances of Kazakhstan's policy and actions have had positive effect on both, regional and global levels. Constructiveness, consistency, reliability and responsibility—are the pillars of Kazakhstan's policy. I would like to underscore the opinion of some American foreign policy experts who believe that, unlike other new "beacons of democracy" in our part of the world, Kazakhstan is more reliable and independent from any of the existing world "power houses", big or small ones.

Mr. Chairman,

When it comes to internal political progress Kazakhstan adheres to similar principles of development—consistently and confidently implementing step-by-step goals and commitments outlined in the Strategy 2030 and other long- and short term development plans.

During the years of independence Kazakhstan like no other former Soviet republic has been successful in implementing systemic and interconnected socio-economic reforms: pension, tax, administrative, banking and financial, utilities reforms, which a number of international institutions and experts call "models for the nations in the area of OSCE's responsibility".

Kazakhstan to big extent follows the historical path of major Western democracies, including the United States. True—we are in different geopolitical circumstances and at a different historical period. Nevertheless, we did what others had done: doing greater accent on market and diversified economy and the development of nation's middle class—that is a bearer of free entrepreneurial spirit and universal values, or a backbone of a free democratic society. As the observers here in America and in Europe have found, the middle class in Kazakhstan has grown from 0% 15 years ago to, by various sources 25–40% of last year. This is to compare with Ukraine's 8.9% of this layer of society (according to 2008 data of one of Canadian specialized information agency with 10 years experience and international personnel). In Russia corresponding figure is about 10-30%.

There is an ongoing dialogue-process between the Government and the businesses including foreign ones in the country.

We fully subscribe to the principle, that our Western partners and international organization want us to implement. We also entirely agree with argument that protection and promotion of social, cultural and economic rights is the precondition of any development of any society. We also completely realize those clear reasons Human Rights Watch relying upon when its web-site informs that organization is switching focus from political and civic rights to

economic, social and cultural rights today. As it is outlined in the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights, “In accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human rights, the ideal of free human beings . . . can only be achievable if . . . everyone may enjoy his economic, social and cultural rights, as well as his civil and political rights”.

Our western partners are united in their opinion that free entrepreneurial spirit is the strongest in Kazakhstan among all post-soviet states.

We simultaneously pursue the implementation of provisions of the Covenant (article X)—the protection and assistance to the family, furthering healthcare and education.

34% Kazakhstan’s national budget are allocated on implementation of the social programs. Starting from 2000 expenditures on education, healthcare and social security have increased 5-folds. Today 5 million people, or one third of the population, benefit from the social security (two times more than in 2003). We spend on education and healthcare per capita on par with several new EU member-states. In 5–6 years from now Kazakhstan will reach the corresponding levels of many developed Western European democracies.

We believe that democracy, as one of its definitions states, is “the informed decisions of enlightened citizens or individuals”. Today Kazakhstan is developing American-style “economy of knowledge”. It is in full compliance and priorities of our society President Nazarbayev has launched the new national project “Intelligent Nation 2020” January this year at meeting with students. As many of you know, “Bolashak” presidential scholarship is a unique program that has allowed 15 years ago dozens, then- hundreds and now- thousands of young Kazakhstan people to study in leading academic centers of the United States and Europe. This year the scholarship’s budget has grown to an unprecedented \$125 million.

Mr. Chairman,

During the OSCE PA Session in Astana few weeks ago Assembly’s President Goran Lennmarker said: “We are confident that Kazakhstan will continue to work toward meeting the commitments outlined by Kazakhstan at the OSCE Ministerial in Madrid last year in good faith and in a transparent and inclusive manner. The OSCE stands ready to support Kazakhstan in this process.”

Mr. Lennmarker based his firm confidence on a clear record of significant achievements that the Government of Kazakhstan has made not only in terms of implementing its international commitments, as it was described above, but more importantly in terms of keeping the pace in fulfilling its obligations before its people by providing protection and furthering their social and economic as well as political and civic rights.

Having reminded above mentioned facts (and our American friends keep saying us that we should do it constantly) let me bring your attention to the fact that it is very offending for us to hear when someone continuously doubts the sincerity of Kazakhstan’s efforts to further our own goals and priorities coinciding with the international community’s ones. Moreover, there are questions being raised in Kazakhstan within the society—is it mere lack of

information and understanding of the facts, is it “short memory” or even some “geopolitical games”?

We wonder, how can there be any suspicion based on our record that Kazakhstan might abandon its course and destroy the logic and consistency of its sustainable development.

Let me reiterate that there should be no doubts whatsoever that Kazakhstan, having achieved with its partners such an impressive joint successes in two of OSCE dimensions—politico-military and economic-environmental—will be able to implement and contribute accordingly in the same reliable, responsible and consistent manner to the humanitarian dimension of the OSCE.

Let me also assure you that Kazakhstan is pursuing its political modernization agenda consciously and independently from anyone’s pressure to the East, West, North or South from us.

I’d like to inform you on what has been done with regard to implementations of the Madrid declarations made by Foreign Minister Tazhin 8 months ago. We should stress here that already in January the Government has put together a Plan for implementation of these declarations and established interagency working groups. From our part, here in D.C. the Embassy reached out to various partners—in the Congress, Department of State, think tanks and NGO community requesting their advises and suggestions in regard to advancement of common goals within the potential agenda for Kazakhstan’s CiO. The Embassy have held a series of round tables and the NGO community and think tanks reacted promptly. We defined issues of common interests and started working on them already (we also were promised to have DOS’s official response soon). The Embassy has yet to receive a reply to its relevant diplomatic note.

FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA

The main point of concern here was the issue of criminal liability for defamation and libel in the Media. After two rounds of consultations with the Office of the High Representative on Freedom of the Media (OHRFM) Mr. Miklos Harazsti the working group had put together a set of amendments to exclude defamation from a list of criminal offenses and libel from a list of offenses punishable by imprisonment.

The draft of the legislation has been sent to the OHRFM for the final review. Both the Government and Mr. Harazsti’s Office are satisfied with the dynamics and character of the cooperation. If this pace is kept, the draft will be sent to the Parliament already this fall.

While this work is under way, we ask our partners to bear in mind that many other OSCE members, like Austria, Germany, France, Poland, Spain, Denmark, Finland, Latvia and Lithuania have maintained criminal liability for defamation and libel in their national legislation.

Another issue of concern that we have been able to reach some progress on is the further lessening of bureaucratic barriers that might affect the activities of the media.

As High Representative Harazsti acknowledged during a round table, the Government has done a lot “to decriminalize libel and demonopolize media in the country and also to provide legal frame-

work for protection of journalists' confidential sources". This round table with the participation of OSCE experts and Union of Journalists has resulted in a package of recommendations for further amending the legislation on media.

This package is the key document that has been taken as the basis for deliberations by the Working Group that consists of the representatives of the Government, and relevant NGOs (Internews Network, International Foundation for Protection of Freedom of Speech, Union of Journalists, Club of Chief Editors, National Association of TV and Radio Broadcasters and OSCE experts).

Even the main critic of the existing legislation, the President of the International Foundation for Protection of Freedom of Speech Ms. Tamara Kaleeva, has acknowledged that journalists in Kazakhstan enjoy freedom that their colleagues in many of other OSCE members do not have. She has also expressed her commitment to continue participating in the work of the Working Group and her belief in ability of the WG to come up with the draft legislation that would satisfy the journalist community.

* IMPROVING ELECTION LEGISLATION.

The ODIHR together with the Central Election Commission have held a series of round tables that included participation of the NGOs and all political parties' representatives. These round tables have produced 250 recommendations, much of them were incorporated into the draft of the new Law on Elections.

These amendments would eliminate various limitations on registration of candidates, regulate more thoroughly the work of the election commissions, counting of votes, including electronic voting, as well as provide more clear rules of campaigning.

It is expected that several OSCE recommendations, such as providing guaranteed equal media coverage of candidates and their campaigns, lessening requirements for candidates and elimination of preferential treatment of ethnic minorities, will be incorporated into the draft as well.

This draft is planned to be sent for Parliament's consideration September or October of this year.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission,

Immediately after the Government had began working on implementation of the Madrid declarations in close cooperation with the OSCE institutions, the Embassy has initiated here the discussion of Kazakhstan's Chairmanship agenda. The Embassy have held a series of round tables with Washington's leading think tanks and NGOs. Our partners from non-governmental sector has taken a very active role in this work and we have already reached agreements formally on this issue. We have approached few months ago the State Department with similar proposals. The Embassy has yet to receive a reply to its relevant diplomatic note.

Let me reiterate once more that Kazakhstan is fully committed to strengthening of the ODIHR mandate. We believe that this is a unique institution of equal dialogue that we must preserve. We will never let the traditions and values of the ODIHR to be diminished. The Embassy recently received a request from Central Election Commission in Astana to arrange a visit to the US of their team to observe the 2008 Presidential Elections. This would afford a

wonderful opportunity for them to receive a first-hand experience and knowledge of “democracy at work”. The CEC has approached with similar inquiries a few other OSCE members which will hold elections this year as well.

We are confident this type of cooperation, among other things, would have a strong positive impact on the process of implementation of Kazakhstan’s Madrid declarations.

In 2010 Kazakhstan will continue its predecessors’ work in OSCE’s traditional areas: frozen conflicts, promotion of human rights and democratic values. We also plan to include in our agenda the following topics:

- assisting Central Asian nations in finding solutions to the regional problems;
- continue efforts to stabilize and rebuild Afghanistan;
- building bridges of dialogue between OSCE and OIC, OSCE and CICA to tackle common and similar challenges;
- strengthening inter-religious tolerance. Kazakhstan intends to apply historical experiences. This issue is of particular importance for entire OSCE neighborhood;
- strengthening of the energy security including through the development of the cooperation on new clean energy technology;
- assisting the economic development of the OSCE nations.

Kazakhstan’s 2010 OSCE Chairmanship will catalyze deeper political modernization in the country. Moreover, we believe, this would send a clear positive signal to other transitional nations that a young state, responsible member of the OSCE can reach for higher standards both in economy and politics and, moreover, demonstrate leadership in these areas.

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARTHA BRILL OLCOTT, SENIOR
ASSOCIATE, CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL
PEACE**

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I will now give you an oral summary of my written remarks, which I have submitted to become part of the record of this commission.

Kazakhstan's road to becoming a democratic society has certainly been laid with twists and turns, more slowly than necessary and with no shortage of temporary road-blocks along the way. When it will be completed is still not clear. Much depends on the will of the man who is the lead planner for its construction, who seems reluctant to define his task as completed.

All this is a rather indirect way of saying that it will be impossible to consider Kazakhstan to be a democratic society - even a fledgling democracy -until it has had a democratic transfer of power. Right now it is not clear when that will occur, or even if the proper institutions have been created to facilitate this in case there is an unexpected vacancy in the country's highest office, or to prepare for a successor to President Nazarbayev should he decide that power will be passed on during his lifetime.

The founding president of a state often finds it difficult to leave office, because for so long his person has been synonymous with power. He can claim that the country has achieved its successes due his visionary prowess, and create a nearly endless list of calamities averted through his wise rule. What will the country do without him?

WILL PRESIDENT NAZARBAYEV LEAVE OFFICE?

Certainly since Saparmurad Niyazov's unexpected death, something of a monologue along these lines must have been running through President Nursultan Nazarbayev's head. And my own guess is that President Nazarbayev has not yet made up his mind what to do, remaining torn between the two options.

It is clear from his public statements last year, when there was serious debate over whether Russian president Vladimir Putin would leave office as scheduled, that Nazarbayev does not believe that someone should leave office at the height of his powers, before his mission to transform or build a new state has been completed.

At the same time though Nazarbayev likes to think of the Kazakh nation as part of an Asian civilization, and that he is a wise Asian ruler. Part of that wisdom includes the recognition of "the ages of man." This tradition may encourage him to leave office at some time deemed appropriate, allowing him to stay behind the scenes and help guide his successor and the new generation that comes to power.

The other tradition that Nazarbayev comes from is that of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, where leaders never handed over power voluntarily. However, Nazarbayev's decision to make an experienced, strong and relatively politically neutral figure like Kassymzhomart Tokayev president of the Senate does speak to his awareness that the country must be protected in the event of his sudden death.

Tokayev would preside over the country as an interim leader in the event of Nazarbayev's death or incapacitation in office. But there is no clear mechanism by which leading candidates could become identified, either to Tokayev or to President Nazarbayev himself should he decide to ever resign his office or decline to run again. The choice will be a personal one, among candidates who have thrust themselves forward to the sitting president.

CHOOSING THE NEXT PRESIDENT

Much like has been the case in Russia the next president of Kazakhstan will be chosen in something closer to a popular referendum than a democratic style election. More than likely one candidate will get an official blessing, and run against much less popular or experienced political figures, making the election more of an anti-climax than the actual process by which potential leaders contest for public approval.

Right now there are no institutions that really serve as political training grounds. Political parties are weak, and that includes the presidential party, Nur Otan, as well as the opposition groupings. Nur Otan lacks a clear program, one that goes beyond the presidential policy pronouncements, and this is also true of most of the opposition parties, with the exception of the nationalists and communists. The opposition parties that were formed out of the elite rift in 2001-2002, Democratic Choice, Ak Zhol and its various successors, basically accept most of the precepts of the presidential party, that Kazakhstan must be a market economy with a democratic political system. What distinguishes most of the leaders from the president is their belief that they would do a better job, would democratize the political system more rapidly. They would be more forceful combatants against the corruption that is still rampant in daily life and still present, even if less pervasive, at the various levels of government.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE LEGISLATURE

The weakness of political parties reinforces the weakness of the legislature. As most political figures in Kazakhstan recognize, parliament should become a more professional body. This can be accomplished in part through having parliamentarians work with better trained staff, but ultimately requires their gaining experience through enhanced responsibility.

The current division of labor between parliament and the executive branch, and the decision to have the lower house (the majlis) elected solely through party lists is likely to make the process of gaining the necessary expertise a slow one. It is simply not enough to have the senior members of a political party decide who among their list of candidates would make the best parliamentarians. Moreover, since the candidates on party lists are offered in alphabetical order, the population has no say in which candidates are going to parliament, merely which party is free to choose among their candidates.

Even with the constitutional amendments of 2007, the legislature still remains a largely consultative body. Legislation is typically drafted in the government, and comes under discussion and modi-

fication by the legislature. As long as this system prevails there will be little incentive for politicians to seek to make a career in the legislature, instead of as now, seeing it as a stepping stone to a career in business or in the executive branch.

The legislature has not yet reached the point where they are competent to originate legislation. Nor do they have an agenda that they submit to the government and the government's own legislative agenda is formed with only limited consultation with the legislature.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE JUDICIARY

While the system of local government is being reformed to enhance political participation, this is not yet a realistic path to power for independent political figures interested in advancing careers through public support. Similarly it is still very difficult for local political figures to rise to the national stage, in any sort of career path that is bottom up rather than top down. Once again patronage rather than popular acclaim is the most dependable route.

Judicial reform is in much the same state as the reform of local government, which is part way towards the development of more democratic procedures. As with local government reform, there has been an on-again-off-again quality to the reform process.

WHAT ARE THE INCENTIVES FOR FURTHER DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL REFORMS?

The strongest incentive for further democratic reform in Kazakhstan is the desire of President Nazarbayev and his close political advisors for the country to be accorded international respectability.

Now that is not a simple task, for respectability means acceptance in the U.S., the EU and the industrially developed democratic societies of Asia. But it also means acceptance by strong neighbors like Russia and China, as a medium sized state that matters. For that, Kazakhstan must be seen as having evolved politically as its leaders choose and not having been "bullied" into transforming its political system into something "unnatural" for its history or location.

But even with Kazakhstan proceeding at what it sees as its own pace, there is, as I eluded above, the question of whether they fully understand what it would take to create a democratic society in Kazakhstan. Nor should we underestimate the complexity of the task.

Some of what is necessary is quite obvious, both to us and to them, all the things that are regularly highlighted in U.S. Department of State human rights reports, in OSCE observer missions and other documentation, in the various publications prepared by Freedom House. Where the Kazakh government disagrees is how fast these changes need to be made, and at what cost to other governmental priorities. But one thing that the Kazakh government realizes, that we often take less account of, is that these changes will not guarantee a democratic outcome. They will increase public participation and they will level the political playing field, important goals in and of themselves. But they will not insure the devel-

opment of a democratic polity or an articulate, competent and publicly supported alternative elite.

WHAT ARE THE DISINCENTIVES FOR FURTHER DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL REFORM?

Many have said that now that the Kazakhs have been given the chairmanship of the OSCE for 2010 they will lack the incentive to introduce further political reforms.

I do not agree with this, largely because the current Kazakh leadership wants the chairmanship to serve as something of a showplace for the country. And a showplace is not just a dramatic new sky line, but also a political system that is clearly transforming itself into something more akin to "European norms."

This means that the Kazakhs are likely to continue to reform their political system, albeit not necessarily at a pace that we try and set for them. It is very likely that they will hold pre-term parliamentary elections, with some important modifications to the rules under which the 2007 majlis elections were held. Party thresholds seem certain to drop and their may well be guarantees introduced to insure that second, or even second and third place parties gain representation in the parliament (much like the current Russian system).

But political reform is only going to be one of the priorities of the Kazakh government, and right now, given the country's banking crises, and the pressures on agriculture as well as those living on fixed incomes to cope with rising food and energy prices it may well be that political reforms take something of a back seat to what the government views as more pressing concerns.

WHAT LEVERS DO WE HAVE?

We would do well to recognize that we do not have many levers available to us to freely use in trying to get the Kazakhs to democratize their political system at the pace that we would view as desirable.

The Kazakh-U.S. relationship has changed a great deal over the last several years (as has the Kazakh-EU relationship), making Kazakhstan a much more important and much less junior partner than it was in its first decade of independence.

Kazakhstan's oil and gas wealth is only one factor in this change. For all President Nazarbayev's seemingly high-blown phrases about Kazakhstan being a bridge between Europe and Asia, the country does help bridge the value systems of the developed democracies with the communist or former communist worlds. The country is in a strategic position, has real regional weight, and has a sufficient diverse as well as wealthy economy to be a donor country in most senses of the term. This kind of country does not take well to lecturing. This leaves us room for attempts at persuasion, but mostly the need to hope that they make the right choices on their own.

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. ANDREA BERG, CENTRAL ASIA
RESEARCHER, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH**

Thank you, Chairman Hastings and the other members of the Commission, for allowing me to submit this written statement. Human Rights Watch is pleased to have the opportunity to contribute our findings and recommendations to this hearing on Kazakhstan. The Commission's hearing has come at a very crucial moment in the lead-up to Kazakhstan's scheduled OSCE chairmanship in 2010.

Human Rights Watch very much welcomes the pledges that Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Tazhin made last November at the OSCE Ministerial Council in Madrid to reform the media law and the law on elections, to liberalize the registration requirements for political parties, and to incorporate recommendations by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in election legislation. Minister Tazhin pledged that these reforms would take place by the end of 2008. He also promised that Kazakhstan's chairmanship would preserve the ODIHR and its existing mandate and refrain from supporting any future efforts to weaken this institution. These pledges are a modest but important step for Kazakhstan toward fulfilling its aspired international leadership role.

Human Rights Watch has closely followed Kazakhstan's bid for the OSCE chairmanship over the last years and expressed strong concern over moves by the government to restrict fundamental rights and freedoms. In March and June 2008, Human Rights Watch representatives went to Astana and Almaty to meet with government officials, civil society and international organizations to discuss the human rights situation in Kazakhstan and familiarize themselves with ongoing reforms. In meetings with Human Rights Watch, Kazakhstan's public officials reiterated their commitment to Minister Tazhin's pledges. This is good news. But in practice, the government has made almost no concrete progress towards implementing the pledges.

When Kazakhstan assumes the chairmanship, the OSCE and the public will look to it to embody and project OSCE values. The chairmanship is also an opportunity for the international community to press for concrete progress in long overdue reforms. For both reasons, it is important for OSCE participating States to engage with Kazakhstan to ensure that these pledges are fulfilled by the end of 2008, and to ensure progress on other human rights reforms prior to 2010.

Today, we are pleased to share our main findings and recommendations regarding Minister Tazhin's promises with the Commission. Information on additional human rights issues are available in the memorandum that was submitted as additional written material for inclusion in the hearing record.

KEY FINDINGS:

General situation: In the past two years Kazakhstan's government has undertaken a number of important steps such as ratifying the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 2006, signing the Optional Protocol to ICCPR and the

Optional Protocol to the UN Convention Against Torture (CAT) in 2007 and introducing some reform to the criminal justice system.

In discussions with Human Rights Watch, policy makers often draw comparisons among Central Asian government's human rights practices, and in their eyes the government of Kazakhstan benefits from such comparisons. But the government has shown a disappointing lack of commitment to human rights reform and has shown few if any signs of fundamental change in practice.

Kazakhstan is not a country with frequent or dramatic government crackdown on freedoms and human rights. One finds rather an atmosphere of quiet, subtle repression.

As noted above Tazhin's Madrid pledges are most welcome. But they are very much a modest beginning to addressing Kazakhstan's human rights problems. For several years already, local human rights groups have been advocating for human rights reforms such as the review of legislation on freedom of assembly, improvements in the prison system, abolition of the death penalty, reforming the judicial system and introducing legislation to guarantee an independent judiciary, and ensuring accountability for torture. So far the government has resisted implementing meaningful reforms in these areas. The government has certainly created a difficult environment for the exercise and promotion of human rights that is out of line with OSCE standards and far less than what one would expect of the leadership of an organization grounded in human rights principles.

Media legislation: Kazakhstan does not meet OSCE commitments in relation to the promotion and protection of freedom of expression. The broadcast media are dominated by government loyalists, and independent journalists are threatened and harassed for criticizing the president or government policies and practices. Libel continues to be a criminal offense.

In Madrid, Minister Tazhin promised that the government was "going to incorporate various proposals into a consolidated bill to amend the media law, which will reflect the OSCE recommendations as well." Three months later, in February 2008, the Ministry of Culture, Information and Public Accord declined, for the second time, to accept a draft media law compiled by a working group including civil society representatives. A notable aspect of the draft was its proposal to liberalize the registration procedures for media outlets by replacing the current system, which requires new media outlets to secure permission from the Ministry of Culture, Information and Public Accord in order to begin operating, with one in which they need only to inform the Ministry of Culture, Information and Public Accord.¹ After rejecting the draft, the ministry announced that a new draft would be undertaken and established a working group consisting of ten government and four NGO representatives; the group has met once.

During the first meeting of this working group, the government officials suggested several amendments to the mass media law,

¹ Currently a person planning to start a newspaper must submit a variety of documents to the Ministry of Culture which is then obliged to answer within 15 days. But according to Adil Soz, a media rights organization, often the ministry replies after six or more months only and even then it does not permit activities but rather asks for additional documents or argues the documents provided do not comply with the legislation. One suggestion in the draft law was that if a newspaper does not hear back from the Ministry within 15 days it may begin to operate.

which would, among other things, abolish the registration requirement for electronic (i.e., television) media, protect the right of journalists to maintain confidentiality of sources, except in “special cases”, and reduce criminal responsibility for libel. According to the media watchdog Adil Soz, the first suggestion is insignificant because all TV and radio stations must obtain a license first, making registration a rather unimportant issue for them. The proposal relaxing criminal responsibility for libel - by abolishing the current maximum penalty of six months imprisonment²—is a rather superficial measure. According to Adil Soz not a single journalist was imprisoned for libel during the last ten years. The imprisonment clause is rather used as a threat by the authorities to silence journalists.³

Criminal libel laws are routinely used against opposition media and political activists. In 2007 alone, the authorities opened 27 criminal cases against journalists for alleged libel, slander and defamation. Media watchdogs argue that libel is a civil issue between two individuals or legal entities but not a criminal act. So far, all attempts by journalists and media organizations to have criminal penalties for libel in the Criminal Code repealed have been unsuccessful.

The second meeting of the media law working group, scheduled for May 27, was postponed indefinitely without explanation, although the appointment of a new Minister of Culture, Information, and Public Accord may be a factor. The working group ultimately met on July 18 for one hour, which did not allow adequate time discussion according to Adil Soz. On July 21 the members of the working group received a draft law from the head of working group. Although Human Rights Watch has not had the opportunity to study the draft, according to Adil Soz it does not include any ideas proposed by civil society groups. The members of the working group were told that they had one day to examine the draft and submit their comments “because the government wants to see this done quickly.”⁴

Free expression and media pluralism are key to human rights improvements and undermining this commitment casts a poor light on Kazakhstan as an upcoming OSCE chair.

Election legislation: Kazakhstan’s government has yet to hold a national election that meets international standards. ODIHR found that the most recent election, the August 2007 parliamentary contest “did not meet a number of OSCE commitments, in particular with regard to elements of the legal framework and to the vote count and tabulation” and “interrupted an ongoing dialogue on election legislation.” Due in part to government manipulation and changes to the election legislation following constitutional amendments in May 2007, opposition candidates did not win a single seat in the August 2007 parliamentary elections. ODIHR/OSCE under-

²Article 129, paragraph 2 reads: Libel which is contained in a public speech, or in a publicly displayed work, or in mass information media, shall be punished by a fine in an amount from two hundred up to five hundred monthly assessment indices, or in an amount of wages or other income of a given convict for a period from two to five months, or by engagement in public works for a period from one hundred eighty up to two hundred forty hours, or by correctional labour for a period from one year up to two years, or by restriction of freedom for a period up to two years, or detention under arrest for a period up to six months.

³Human Rights Watch interview with Tamara Kaleeva, Adil Soz, Almaty, June 2, 2008.

⁴Human Rights Watch telephone interview with Tamara Kaleeva, Adil Soz, July 21, 2008.

lined in its Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions that “a number of the new legal provisions conflict with OSCE commitments” such as “excessive requirements for registration of political parties” and “undue limitations on the right to seek public office.”⁵

The amendments adopted in May 2007, in combination with current election legislation, will also make it even more unlikely that future elections will be free and fair and meet international standards. The amendments now make it possible for President Nursultan Nazarbaev, who has led Kazakhstan since before independence from the Soviet Union, to run for an unlimited number of terms. Other problematic amendments gave the president the right (as head of the political party which participates in the elections under a proportional representation system) to appoint the chairperson and two members of the Central Election Commission;⁶ to dissolve the Majilis (Lower Chamber of the Parliament) or the whole parliament on the grounds he defines himself; and the right to appoint 15 out of 47 members of the Senate (the Upper Chamber of the Parliament), as well as to fire them.

In Madrid, Minister Tazhin promised that “with the assistance of ODIHR and the OSCE’s other institutions, we intend to take measures to reform the Law on Elections by the end of 2008.” While at the beginning of 2008 a working group of around 15 government officials and four civil society representatives was created to reform the election legislation it was made clear they were not allowed to reverse the May 2007 amendments to the constitution, nor was the group allowed to amend other laws related to the election law. The group was allowed to amend no more than 50 per cent of the existing laws and not allowed to draft new ones. Neither OSCE nor ODIHR representatives form part of the working group and so far no serious steps were taken to incorporate OSCE recommendations. The working group has met twice so far; the first meeting centered on setting up the second meeting. At the second meeting the government proposed conducting a series of seminars on elections.⁷ While seminars and the like are welcome, they are no substitute for substantive electoral reform.

Registration of political parties: In a democratic society, the legislative framework should promote a vibrant and multiparty political landscape. But in Kazakhstan, legislative requirements for the establishment of political parties have grown more restrictive. Since 2002, in order to form a political party it is necessary to have an initial conference of 1,000 persons representing two-thirds of the regions of Kazakhstan and a membership of 50,000.⁸ At the time,

⁵The legislation requires that only members of a party can run as candidates, depriving persons the opportunity to run as independent candidates. Furthermore, the amended Constitution increases from five to ten years the time that eligible candidates must have been permanently resident in Kazakhstan, which unreasonably restricts the right to seek public office.

⁶The CEC consists of seven people: two members are appointed by the lower house of the parliament (Majlis), two by the upper house (Senate) and three by the president. This means that if there is no other party in the parliament the president and his party appoint the majority of the CEC. In addition, the president appoints 15 of the 47 senators, the other 32 are appointed by the Majlis.

⁷Human Rights Watch interview with Yevgeniy Zhovtis, Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law, Almaty, June 2, 2008.

⁸The 2002 Law on Political Parties raised from 3,000 to 50,000 the minimum number of member signatures required to obtain registration. In the view of the law’s supporters in parliament, the new minimum was imposed to ensure that “any party that claims it represents the interests

the OSCE denounced the restrictiveness of this new law and predicted that it would have “a chilling effect on the development of political pluralism in Kazakhstan.”⁹ For example, on February 20, 2006, the Ministry of Justice denied registration to the opposition party Alga (Forward) claiming that Alga did not provide sufficient evidence of its membership. The Astana Municipal Court and the Supreme Court upheld this decision later during that year. In November 2006, Alga submitted a new registration application and has been awaiting approval since then.

In Madrid, Minister Tazhin said that Kazakhstan will take measures to liberalize registration requirements for political parties by the end of 2008. We are not aware of any steps taken by the government of Kazakhstan towards fulfilling this promise.

In recent years the United States took a principled stand on Kazakhstan’s chairmanship bid but ultimately went with the consensus to schedule Kazakhstan’s chairmanship for 2010, arguing that this would provide an opportunity to constructively engage the government for positive change. Now we ask that you redouble your efforts to hold Kazakhstan’s government to its commitments.

We ask that you convey two strong messages to the government in Astana: first, that it is important for Kazakhstan’s government to meet the above mentioned commitments by the end of 2008; and second, that it is important for the government to significantly improve its record on honoring other OSCE commitments before it takes over the organization’s chairmanship in 2010.

Human Rights Watch urges you

- to call on Kazakhstan’s government to comply with its commitments to the OSCE’s and other international bodies’ standards on media freedom by fostering, not stifling, independent media. The government should fulfill Mr. Tazhin’s pledge to amend the media law in order to simplify the registration process for media. It should also place a moratorium on criminal libel, with a view to abolishing the offense.

- to encourage Kazakhstan’s government to allow the working group on election legislation to act without undue interference or subject to unreasonable conditions and speedily adapt the legislation according to the OSCE recommendations.

- to call on Kazakhstan’s government to no longer delay registering the opposition party Alga and immediately take measures to liberalize the registration requirements for political parties.

Thank you very much for considering our information and recommendations. I remain at your disposal should the Commission request anything further on this issue.

For additional Human Rights Watch reporting on the human rights situation in Kazakhstan, please see:

of and speaks on behalf of the people of Kazakhstan should have a legitimate basis for that.” “President signs law “On political parties,”” Kazakhstan News Bulletin Released weekly by the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Vol. 3, No. 24, July 17, 2002. www.kazakhembus.com/071702.html [retrieved on March 8, 2004] But the law drew criticism from local and international observers, who claimed that it would restrict parties’ access to the ballot and limit pluralism.

⁹Mark Braden, “OSCE/ODIHR Review of Kazakhstan’s New Law on Political Parties,” July 8, 2002; OSCE press release, “New Law on Political Parties Could Seriously Threaten Political Pluralism in Kazakhstan,” June 27, 2002.

- July 8, 2008 letter to Finish Foreign Minister and OSCE CiO Alexander Stubb regarding his upcoming trip to Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, hrw.org/english/docs/2008/07/08/kyrgyz19299.htm
- May 2008 memorandum “Human Rights in Kazakhstan: The Madrid Promises and Beyond,” hrw.org/english/docs/2008/05/29/kazakh19061.htm
- April 8, 2008 letter to France’s Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner in advance of his trip to the region, hrw.org/english/docs/2008/04/08/eca18430.htm
- April 8, 2008 briefing paper “Benchmarks, Consultations and Transparency: Making the EU Central Asia Strategy an Effective Tool for Human Rights Improvements,” hrw.org/backgrounders/2008/ca0408/ca0408web.pdf
- November 30, 2007 press release “Kazakhstan: OSCE Chairmanship Undeserved,” hrw.org/english/docs/2007/11/30/kazakh17458.htm



This is an official publication of the
**Commission on Security and
Cooperation in Europe.**

★ ★ ★

This publication is intended to document
developments and trends in participating
States of the Organization for Security
and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

★ ★ ★

All Commission publications may be freely
reproduced, in any form, with appropriate
credit. The Commission encourages
the widest possible dissemination
of its publications.

★ ★ ★

<http://www.csce.gov>

The Commission's Web site provides
access to the latest press releases
and reports, as well as hearings and
briefings. Using the Commission's electronic
subscription service, readers are able
to receive press releases, articles,
and other materials by topic or countries
of particular interest.

Please subscribe today.