



ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՊԱՏՎԻՐԱԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ
DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

ENGLISH only

Statement

in response to the Address by the Secretary of State of Kazakhstan and Deputy Chairman of the State Commission on Development and Concretization of the Program of Democratic Reforms H.E. Oralbai Abdykarimov delivered by Ambassador Jivan Tabibian at the 627th (Special) Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council September 26, 2006

Mr. Chairman,

Our comments are not so direct, or may be even pertinent. But nevertheless our Delegation does welcome with great interest Secretary of State of Kazakhstan H.E. Oralbai Abdykarimov, and say that it was good that for two days some of us who are quite ignorant of the specific political evolution of that country have been exposed to a lot of detail and substance. Everybody who talks about democratization here and there always mentions that the comparative issue is one of respecting specificity: how each system has evolved or not evolved in a certain direction.

Comparisons are difficult, even though we, Armenia and Kazakhstan, may have similar pedigree as to where we came from in recent political history. We can say that the comparison is quite difficult; Kazakhstan is big, rich, quite a multi-ethnic country and society, Armenia is relatively small, more compact, homogenous, resource poor, and so on. Hence, one does make comparisons with great caution.

However, let us simply say that the experiences of others are of great utility and importance to us. There are things we envy, there are things we respect, there are things we would love to imitate and, maybe, based on the Kazakh experience, some things that we should avoid. We approach this with a sense of relative modesty, since we do not think that there is any formula that one can take and duplicate, like what they call in vernacular a 'cookie-cutter' approach. If you use cookie-cutters they make all cookies look alike.

His Excellency's address was very far-reaching and comprehensive, with elements that are complex and even complicated. Between yesterday and today we are getting a certain sense of the thoroughness of a complete multi-aspect program. What is interesting is the very word the Commission uses: 'concretization'. We do not normally get commissions to so explicitly accept that there is a difference between *developing* a reform program and making it *concrete*. Typically it is called 'implementation', but we like 'concretization' much more, which shows that Kazakhstan is very aware that reform is not only one of ideas, development and decisions but it is one of *application* and *making it concrete*.

We are very interested in this because we believe that everyone has something to learn from it. The problematic that we face is the following: if we listened carefully, it demonstrates that people want and demonstrate political will. How much more

political will one may want, when in some ways a government like one in Kazakhstan is addressing every single unit, sub-unit and component that constitutes not only government in general but a democratic government. There was no aspect untouched.

But the real question is this: does democracy really come from top down? The dilemma is not Kazakhstan's, the dilemma is ours for all of us here. On one hand we want political will to act out and implement democratization from top down, recognizing that decisions and actions taken top-down temporarily do not look to us as democratic as they should; If we look at the democratization process of almost any society around this table, ultimate success depends on from the bottom-up. What we can imagine for the top is not to be inordinately an obstacle to the necessary evolution of the democratic institutions. Sometimes it is a big revolution here and there; after all some places indeed need a revolution before people can say that people have rights. Other places there may have been wars; some other places – a crises in succession, or World Wars.

Here we are in front of a dilemma or a paradox. We talk about Kazakhstan as much as we talk about my country, because we want simultaneously to be popularly led, bottom-up response to the needs of individuals and citizens and at the same time hoping, expecting and ordering so to speak those that are supposed to share power to do so by action, determination and political will. This is a serious dilemma not only for Kazakhstan; it is a serious dilemma in OSCE's general ideology and important approach to these questions.

It would be funny after these couple of thoughts if it looked like we are avoiding the 2009 Chairmanship candidacy issue. That is not an issue that we would like to avoid or can avoid. Our President was a cosignatory of the CIS Kazan declaration supporting the Kazakhstan's bid for the OSCE Chairmanship in 2009 and therefore expressed his views on this. We would simply say that again a word of caution is needed. We heard it yesterday at the informal briefing and today at this formal session of the Permanent Council that Kazakhstan is trying to present itself and give us details about their reform agenda.

I have been here for more than eight years: I have not heard of any similar self-examination or putting things honestly on the table from any of the other candidates for the Chairmanships. They passed the test without such an examination. I am not sitting and judging this test. I am sorry that there were no other opportunities, when I could have listened and formed my own opinion whether other candidates who they thought they were, and whether participating States certified them as having gotten there already, successfully.

It is not a typical process here that a candidate is subjected to a certain kind of examination. We did not require it; Kazakhstan presented itself to illuminate us. But in this exercise one realizes the asymmetric situation in which one country with aspiration is willing to bare its plan, whether we believe it or not, while others, had been automatically certified 'Grade A'.

The lesson for us and the OSCE is that it is a wonderful example of a difficult situation. We believe we are both wrong: both the OSCE and Kazakhstan, in instrumentalizing this issue of candidacy. Kazakhstan very sincerely presents its

candidacy as an impetus for more democratization saying: 'If this were to happen, it will help democracy'. Kazakhstan's instrumentalization is very sincere; it may be true. Unfortunately, the candidacy is not seen on its own merit but as a way to get somewhere else. And, guess what? The OSCE does the same. Instead of looking at the intrinsic value of the candidacy, we now have transformed the candidacies to a stick-and-carrot approach: 'If we like you, if you pass the test, you'd get it. If you don't, you won't'. Both approaches instrumentalize candidacy. We hope one day we all will pull back from that instrumentalization and look at the intrinsic merit of what a given country can do or should do.

Democratization is not a final stage; it is work in progress, a form of permanent transition. Most importantly, there is no democracy that does not occasionally experience backsliding. The idea, the direction, the determination and a little bit of luck never hurt.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.