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STATEMENT

by H.E. Mr. Rakhat Aliyev, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs – Special Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan on cooperation with the OSCE at the Conference

“Challenges of Kazakhstan: regional and global influence”

(US Chamber of Commerce, Washington D.C., 25 October 2005)

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to warmly welcome the participants of the Conference and thank you for the attention. On behalf of the delegation of Kazakhstan, I would like to express our gratitude for the hospitality and cordiality extended to us in the United States.

Today's Conference has covered a number of important topics related to the political, economic and security issues. All of them are closely connected with the activities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. And I would like to take this opportunity to share some thoughts about the development of the relationship between Kazakhstan and the OSCE.

We joined the OSCE in 1992 and voluntarily took upon ourselves the Helsinki Final Act commitments, which till the present day are the basis of Euro Atlantic security architecture.

At that time, the situation in the country was very difficult. The country suffered an acute food and energy crisis. The industry that we found was suddenly ruined, economic ties were lost, the majority of factories and plants had stopped working, with serious consequences - social tension, unemployment, damage to the environment.

In Kazakhstan live representatives of more than 130 nations and national minorities, including those who have been resettled by Stalin's regime. Many leading western political analysts predicted an early collapse of Kazakhstan in analogy with the ethnic crisis in Balkans.

At that time, by the way, Kazakhstan possessed the fourth largest nuclear arsenal in the world. We voluntarily renounced weapons of mass destruction at the early stage of our independence, and gave a clear signal that the principles of peaceful coexistence, trust and responsibility are the basis of the statehood of Kazakhstan.

The members of our delegation have already provided you with a comprehensive economic, political and social picture of modern Kazakhstan, and you understand how radical the changes in the country were.

We have a lot of things to be proud of. The success of Kazakhstan's reforms is being achieved under conditions that are the result a sustained and careful development strategy, taking into account the latest foreign expertise, on the basis of effective cooperation with international organizations, under the strong leadership of President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

I wish to underline the great significance of the OSCE as one of the most important institutions influencing Transatlantic and Eurasian policy. The OSCE after 30 years still is a unique international organization because of its comprehensive approach in all three security dimensions, including politico-military, economic, environmental and humanitarian.

The OSCE standards became a clear guideline and important goal for our country. We are firmly progressing towards their fulfillment and modern Kazakhstan has been recognized as one of the most dynamically growing emerging democracies.

Our country is a consistent supporter of the disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime expansion. We joined all 12 international Conventions against terrorism, and are incurring commitments as an antiterrorist coalition participant.

The economic policy of the country has a clear social orientation in line with external expectations. Considerable part of income of the state external economic activities is being invested, first of all, in social sphere, with visible effect on the wealth and standard of living of the population.

We also readily contribute to the strengthening of the OSCE. For example, during the OSCE budget crisis at the beginning of 2005, Kazakhstan financially supported the OSCE, ensuring, along with other countries, its continued functioning.

We have a lot to share with the OSCE on the basis of our own experience of the inter-confessional accord, tolerance of the multinational relations and maintenance of the effective dialogue of cultures that is a key element of the security and stability of any country. Following OSCE recommendations is one of the factors for our success in this area. And we are applying these precepts to the country's democratization at present.

The international community has recognized that Kazakhstan plays the role of one of the guarantors of regional security, pursuing an effective stabilization policy. Kazakhstan is becoming a key country in Central Asia, an integrator of the regional economic ties, a focus attracting investments, world financial institutions activities, modern technologies, etc.

All of these efforts are directed to make Central Asian peoples' life better.

The bid of Kazakhstan to chair the OSCE in 2009 coincides with historic changes within our society and the growth of the international influence of the country. In this regard, I would recommend to consider the perspectives of Kazakhstan's Chairmanship through the lens of the political credibility of our country and the strategic course it has taken towards democracy, tolerance, rule of law, comprehensive security and free market economy.

I also think that now is a unique, truly historical chance to substantially expand the OSCE authority and influence in Asia which are relatively weak at present.

The choice in favour of Kazakhstan could seriously change this situation that undoubtedly would enhance security and stability of the region.

We hope and expect that a commonsense decision will be reached as a result of the dialogue we are carrying out with all the OSCE participating states.

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

We are fully aware that in the 21st century the role of our country in world economic and political relations will be enhanced. This imposes on us an exclusive responsibility which is also absolutely clear.

Kazakhstan and the United States have strategic partnership relations which repeatedly have been tested by the time.

We see the US as one of the states contributing the most towards making a more secure and stable world. In solving these tasks Astana and Washington are consistent allies. The OSCE, in my opinion, is the institution where our interaction should be exercised at the highest level.

I am certain that as a result of the deepening dialogue with the United States we will be able to agree on a common position on all issues of today's agenda of our bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation, including support of Kazakhstan's bid to chair the OSCE in 2009.

Thank you for your attention.