

Kazakhstan independence day

Political stability, economic growth, contributing to international security

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AMBASSADOR OF KAZAKHSTAN

On Dec. 16, the people of Kazakhstan celebrate Independence Day.

On this day 19 years ago, the modern history of our young state started. The years of independence have been fleeting in terms of history, but the depth and magnitude of economic, social and political transformations have become for us as an epoch. In such a short period Kazakhstan, under the leadership of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, managed to make tremendous breakthroughs in carrying out fundamental reforms and become one of the leaders among the newly independent states.

During the years of independence the country has been changed dramatically, turning from the periphery of the Soviet empire into the economically strong and dynamically developing democratic state, a reliable partner in the international arena.

We have achieved impressive results in all spheres of life. Fundamental principles of strengthening the state remain unchanged: development of a market economy, preservation of social harmony and political stability, implementation of democratic reforms.

Despite the negative consequences of the world economic crisis for many countries, in 2009 the Kazakhstani government, thanks to timely and decisive anticrisis measures, managed to ensure economic growth at 1.1 percent, preserving jobs and social stability.

During the first nine months of 2010 economic growth in Kazakhstan increased by 7.5 percent, including industrial production by 10 percent. Since the beginning of this year 200,000 new jobs have been created. President Nazarbayev, in his address to the nation titled "New decade - New economic growth - New opportunities," said a goal for the country was to achieve sustainable growth through accelerated industrialization and the development of infrastructure.

In March 2010, the government adopted a Program for Accelerated Industrial and Innovative Development, which would ensure sustainable and balanced economic growth through diversification and the enhancing of the country's competitiveness.

In accordance with the program, Kazakhstan by 2014 will reach economic growth at 50 percent to the level of 2008, bringing the share of exports from the nonextractive sector up to 40 percent of the total while increasing the productivity in the manufac-

turing sector by 50 percent.

No doubt, the achievement of desired goals, sustainable economic growth, improvement of citizens' welfare is unthinkable without political stability.

Therefore, the task of strengthening social cohesion and harmony is the top priority of the long-term national development strategy, the ground for the modernization of the state.

Today Kazakhstan is a model of interethnic and interreligious harmony.

More than 130 ethnic groups and 45 denominations peacefully coexist in Kazakhstan. Through a unique mechanism of respected nongovernment association — the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan, which has the rights of a consultative body to the president — the representatives of all major ethnic groups and religions have the opportunity to directly influence the policy of the country.

The Kazakhstan model, as a universal mechanism, is gaining more and more supporters among the major religions. The initiative of our president to hold in Kazakhstan the meetings of leaders of world and traditional religions is dedicated to this noble goal. In 2003, 2006, 2009 leaders of major world reli-

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gions and denominations, including the leadership of the Association of Shinto Shrines in Japan, gathered for this high-level forum in Kazakhstan.

The Congress of Leaders of World Religions is an important and effective international policy instrument designed to strengthen peace and stability in the world, bringing together political and religious leaders for a dialogue of civilizations, peoples and countries.

Kazakhstan has actively supported the process aimed at promoting dialogue among civilizations in the framework of the initiative titled "Common World: Progress through Diversity," which promotes dialogue between the West and the Islamic



President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev

world. In this regard the chairmanship in 2011 in the Organization of The Islamic Conference (OIC) takes particular importance. Today, the OIC is the largest and most influential Muslim formal intergovernmental organization. It brings together 57 countries with a population of over 1.4 billion people.

challenges resulted in the election of Kazakhstan as the chairman of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2010. We fully implemented our program of action as the chairman of the international organization. We have fulfilled all our tasks.

Kazakhstan, being steadily committed to the funda-

mental OSCE principles and values, sought to strengthen trust and understanding among the member countries of the West and East of Vienna, as well as to ensure a balance of all three dimensions of the organization.

Our priorities included such issues as strengthening the European security architecture, the development of transit-transport potential, stabilization of Afghanistan, the regional partner of the OSCE, as well as the promotion of tolerance and peaceful coexistence in different societies, which is a very important issue for Europe.

The logical conclusion of our chairmanship was the OSCE Summit held in Astana on Dec. 1-2, which was attended by 73 official delega-

tions of participating countries and partner countries, heads of states and governments, as well as major international and regional organizations such as the U.N., the European Union, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, etc. Holding the first OSCE Summit in 11 years in Astana made clear the high evaluation by the international community of the strong role of Kazakhstan in today's world.

Addressing the participants, President Nazarbayev said that the summit was unique as it was held in the heart of Eurasia, thousands of kilometers from the geographical boundaries of Europe, and this, first of all, reflects the changed paradigm of European security. In the 21st century, the sources of the most dangerous threats and challenges to the stability of the European continent are coming from outside. Only the problem of Afghanistan involved the 43 OSCE member states. Kazakhstan stands for the elaboration of a comprehensive strategy on Afghanistan for its economic recovery and peace. For these purposes our government allocated about \$50 million, particularly for civil training of Afghan youth in educational institutions of Kazakhstan.

The main achievement of the OSCE Summit was the adoption of the Astana Declaration titled "Toward a Security Community" in which member countries of the Organization reaffirmed their commitment to unconditionally and in good faith fulfill all the norms, principles and obligations of all three OSCE dimensions.

During the summit, heads of delegations expressed their appreciation for the active, fair and fruitful activity of Kazakhstan's chairmanship in 2010 and stressed the need to preserve high dynamics of the organization given by Kazakhstan.

"Today in Astana in the new historical conditions the spirit of Helsinki was revived. I am convinced that the Eurasian vector is able to give a powerful impetus to the OSCE, to bring together East and West, North and South, the understanding of the key issues of world order. I see this as the quintessence of the spirit of Astana," said President Nazarbayev at the end of the summit.

The declaration also identified the way forward to a genuine Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian community of united and indivisible security.

We are convinced that the leitmotif of forming long-term security should be based on complementary efforts of regional organizations and international forums.

In this regard, I should mention about Kazakhstan's initiative on convocation of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) that already become a real factor in international relations and serves as an effective instrument for maintaining security and cooperation in Asia.

Today, the CICA process unites 22 countries, occupying 90 percent of Asian territory, and the population of these countries is half of the world's population.

At the present stage, it is the only structure that provides the creation of a pan-Asian security mechanism. Indeed, the core idea of CICA's establishment was the formation of a pan-Asian multilateral institution that brings together all states of the Asian continent in order to ensure stability and security in the vast, multinational and multicultural region of the world. Moreover, today's CICA quickly adapts to a changing world as well as consecutively develops cooperation with the OSCE.

In this regard, being a strong supporter of the strengthening of cooperation

between these two regional structures, Kazakhstan does not exclude the possibility for creating in a perspective of some unified platform for ensuring security and confidence throughout the whole Eurasian region.

As you can see, the foreign policy of Kazakhstan is aimed at active participation and support of international efforts on ensuring global and regional security.

Since its independence, Kazakhstan has become an example of country that makes real contributions in this important direction. In 2009, Kazakhstan marked the 20th anniversary of the shutdown of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site on Aug. 29, 1991. It was very symbolic that under the Kazakhstani initiative, this day, Aug. 29, was proclaimed International Day Against Nuclear Tests. Among the coauthors of the appropriate resolution of the U.N. General Assembly were 26 states, including Japan.

I suppose that Kazakhstan and Japan, two countries that experienced the horrors of nuclear weapons, have a moral right to propose specific programs on nuclear disarmament and the strengthening of security. Furthermore, our two countries must work together in order to urge the countries possessing nuclear weapons to follow Kazakhstan's example and join the global disarmament movement. We must cooperate very closely in order to make the world free of nuclear weapons. Kazakhstan and Japan have a friendly and trusting relationship that are common for strategic partners. During the past years, we have reached significant progress in the development of mutually beneficial trade and economic cooperation. Taking into account the present current realities and new challenges, it is very important for us not only to keep the high dynamics of bilateral cooperation, but also to bring the relationship between our countries to a new, high level.

The driving force of economic cooperation between our countries is the energy industry, in which companies of both countries are actively cooperating in the nuclear field. With the increasing deficit of traditional energy resources, this field has become one of the most promising. In March, Kazakhstan and Japan have signed an agreement on cooperation in the peaceful use of atomic energy, which opens new pros-

pects and opportunities for further cooperation in such important areas.

We expect that the implementation of existing agreements in the coming years will not only increase the share of Kazakhstan's uranium on the Japanese market, but also ensure the transfer of advanced technologies to Kazakhstan. Paying tribute to the uniquely high level of investment, industrial and technological capabilities of Japan, we would like to significantly increase the intensity and scope of bilateral cooperation in non-raw material sectors.

Today, Kazakhstan attaches great importance to attracting foreign investment and technologies in the non-raw material sectors of the national economy. Kazakhstan has done a great job on creating a favorable environment for the promotion of investment and technological cooperation with our foreign partners. In the framework of implementation of projects in non-raw material sectors, the government of Kazakhstan provides significant benefits and preferences for investors.

Another important point: The customs union between Kazakhstan, Russia, and Belarus has been successfully operating since Jan. 1. In the frameworks of the customs union unified customs tariffs were already adopted. Moreover, appropriate work on the improvement of interactions between our countries is also under way. Creating a single customs space along with a favorable investment climate offers great opportunities for the further activities of Japanese investors, as well as business development in Kazakhstan. It means that products can be further distributed throughout the territory of a huge market of 170 million people.

In order to create favorable conditions for Kazakh-Japanese investment and technological cooperation, our countries are working toward the formation of appropriate legal frameworks. In January, the convention on preventing double taxation and preventing taxation avoidance in relation to income taxes entered into force. Our immediate plans include the further signing of an agreement on liberalization, promotion and protection of investments.

An important element of practical cooperation in the field of trade and economic cooperation was presented through the activities of the



Futuristic: The Khan Shatyr Entertainment Center, designed by British architect Norman Foster and opened this July in Astana, has a 150-meter-high transparent tent over an area of 140,000 sq. meters — larger than 10 football stadiums.

joint commission of private and public sectors on Kazakh-Japanese economic cooperation, founded in 2009. It is designed to assist by bringing together public and private sectors of our countries to further develop trade and economic relations. In September, the second meeting of the joint commission was successfully held in Tokyo.

In 2010, there opened three honorary consulates of the Republic of Kazakhstan in three large cities of Japan: Sapporo, Nagoya and Fukuoka. Also, last year was marked by the opening of the honorary consulate in Osaka. I think that Kazakhstani honorary consulates will make a worthy contribution to the further strengthening of trade and economic ties, as well as cultural and humanitarian cooperation between Kazakhstan and Japan.

To date, our countries have created a solid foundation for full-scale cooperation and the strengthening of strategic partnerships. We successfully cooperate both bilaterally and multilaterally, especially in the framework of international organizations.

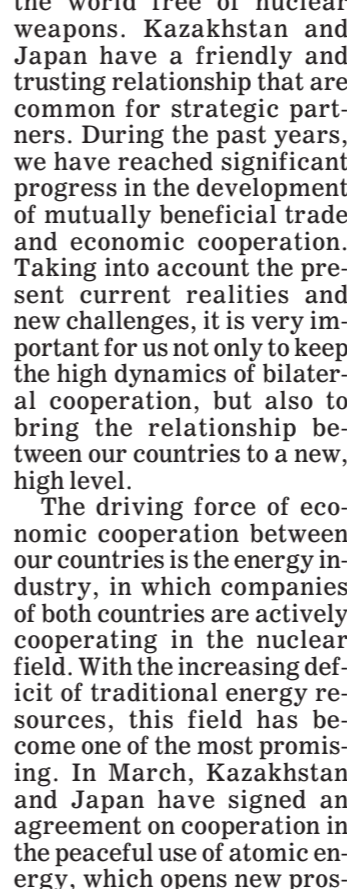
Evidence of the seriousness and the long-term character of our intentions is the intensity and regularity of the political dialogue between the leadership of both countries. In March 2008, President Nazarbayev paid an official visit to Japan. In August 2009, a visit of the Secretary of State Kanat Saudabayev took place. In 2010, there were three meetings between foreign ministers of both countries, including the exchange of visits by our foreign ministers. In November 2010, a Kazakh delegation of parliamentarians headed by Ural Mukhamezhanov, chairman of the Mazhilis of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, visited Japan.

In conclusion, I would like to note that the future interactions between Kazakhstan and Japan will continue to strengthen on all fronts because horizons of strategic partnership are endless.

With such achievements in the field of domestic development, international cooperation and bilateral interaction with our reliable partners, Kazakhstan celebrates its 19th Anniversary of Independence.

We passed through a difficult and thorny path of formation and development. And today, we are proud to talk about the achievements of our people. And we are optimistic about our future.

Heart of government: The administrative center of Astana City



KAZAKHSTAN EMBASSY

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Their Independence

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