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what we have achieved during these negotiations.

And I'm here today to tell once again that Kazakhstan is a friend of the United States, because the United States is the country that guaranteed stability and protection of Kazakhstan when Kazakhstan renounced nuclear weapons, and we will continue to work in all fields of our cooperation that exist today.

President Bush. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:51 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Nazarbayev spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Joint Statement by the United States and Kazakhstan

September 29, 2006

We express satisfaction with the progress the United States and Kazakhstan have made in advancing our strategic partnership, and declare our commitment to a shared vision of stability, prosperity, and democratic reform in Central Asia and the broader region.

We affirm our commitment to advancing that vision through an increasingly dynamic and varied partnership that advances our global and regional objectives. We will deepen our cooperation in fighting international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We will strengthen our cooperation to enhance regional security and economic integration and the reconstruction of Afghanistan and Iraq. We will expand our joint activities to ensure the development of energy resources, while supporting economic diversification and reform, market principles, and the development of small- and medium-size enterprises. We recognize that peaceful democratization invests citizens in the future of their nation. Developing democratic institutions is therefore the crucial condition of long-term stability.

The United States and Kazakhstan reaffirm the importance of democratic development, and are committed to accelerating Kazakhstan's efforts to strengthen representative institutions that further invest its citizens in the political process, such as an independent media, local self-government, and elections deemed free and fair by international standards. We note that our two governments are signatories to international human rights covenants and our common membership in organizations whose goal is to support democracy and human rights, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The United States supports efforts to promote democracy, strengthen religious freedoms, and bolster civil society in Kazakhstan. With the full participation of all political parties and non-governmental organizations, the United States supports the activity of the State Commission to develop a program of democratic reforms. Kazakhstan supports the assistance of American and other international non-governmental organizations promoting these objectives and will take the necessary steps to facilitate their legal functioning.

The United States commends Kazakhstan's traditions of religious tolerance and its efforts to promote inter-ethnic harmony and cooperation. We welcome the initiatives Kazakhstan has taken internationally to promote mutual understanding and strengthen religious freedoms, such as the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, as well as initiatives to promote peace, such as the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia. These initiatives bring important contributions to inter-religious and inter-ethnic tolerance, as well as international security and conflict resolution. We commit to deepening our cooperation to help ensure mutual understanding and security in the world.

The United States recognizes Kazakhstan's leadership and commends its efforts in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, thus enhancing global security. Kazakhstan was the first country to voluntarily renounce its nuclear weapons after the break up of the former Soviet Union and also closed its nuclear test site. This example reflects our shared commitment to threat reduction and nonproliferation remains a cornerstone of our joint effort to ensure global and regional security. We welcome new agreements to blend down highly enriched uranium in Kazakhstan and Kazakhstan's strong policy of strengthening the regime of nuclear nonproliferation as concrete steps in

support of the recently launched Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

The United States and Kazakhstan are steadfast partners in the international war on terrorism. The United States is grateful to Kazakhstan for its unwavering commitment to strengthening stability in Afghanistan and Iraq. We commit to further strengthening the excellent cooperation already achieved by our two countries, and confirm the determination to strengthen our close cooperation in the fight against international terrorism and illegal trafficking in drugs, persons, and dangerous weapons.

We commit to further cooperation between our armed forces in counterterrorism and peacekeeping operations, both bilaterally and through NATO's Partnership for Peace Program.

We commend our energy partnership which has helped move Kazakhstan into the ranks of the world's leading reliable suppliers of hydrocarbon reserves. The United States welcomes Kazakhstan's recent accession to the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline which has made a valuable contribution to this important multilateral project. Our energy partnership will promote the participation of U.S. companies in exploring the reserves of Kazakhstan, as well as in the development of nuclear energy. Our nations pledge to enhance common efforts to expand global energy supplies and will seek new means to deliver those resources to the international market.

We share a commitment to economic diversification across a range of industries and sectors. Recognizing Kazakhstan's macroeconomic reforms and impressive economic successes, the United States will continue to assist in Kazakhstan's transformation into a strong, economically developed country. Both sides view liberalization and diversification of the economy as a key to sustained growth. The United States supports Kazakhstan's plan to join the world's fifty most competitive nations consistent with the strategy outlined by President Nursultan Nazarbayev. Strengthening the rule of law, taking steps to improve Kazakhstan's investment climate, and reducing business risk will contribute to that shared goal. We pledge our support for efforts under the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) to ensure that companies in the petroleum and mining industries observe international standards of transparency and accountability.

The United States supports Kazakhstan's membership in the World Trade Organization, and welcomes Kazakhstan's efforts to prepare for membership, recognizing that a market access agreement will enhance free trade and contribute to the continuing modernization of Kazakhstan's economy. The United States will send a team of experts to Kazakhstan in the coming months to continue this joint work. Both sides pledge to facilitate Kazakhstan's graduation under the Jackson-Vanik Amendment.

In order to strengthen friendship between our peoples, we intend to expand our cultural and humanitarian cooperation, including exchanges of students. We also intend to strengthen scientific and technical cooperation between researchers and students at universities, research institutes, and in the private sector.

The United States supports Kazakhstan's leadership in regional integration efforts including its significant investment throughout Eurasia and in Afghanistan. We declare our common commitment to strengthen the independence, sovereignty and security of, and to develop democratic institutions in, the countries of the region, ensuring their sustainable development and prosperity. We pledge to support legal trade by improving border crossings and customs procedures, the implementation of transportation and infrastructure projects, and the use of cross-border resources.

Confirming our commitment to this shared view to implementing the agreements achieved today, we declare our intention to further strengthen our strategic partnership through enhanced strategic dialogues on energy, military cooperation, trade and investment, and democratization. We express firm confidence that an enhanced strategic partnership between our countries will promote security and prosperity and foster democracy in the 21st Century.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Statement on Congressional Action on the "Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2007"

September 29, 2006

I applaud Congress for passing legislation that will provide our men and women in uniform with the necessary resources to protect our country and win the war on terror. As our troops risk their lives to fight terrorism, this bill will ensure they are prepared to defeat today's enemies and address tomorrow's threats. I look forward to signing this bill into law.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 5631.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

September 23

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President announced his designation of the following individuals as members of a delegation to Beirut, Lebanon, to visit areas affected by recent conflict and to meet with Prime Minister Fuad Siniora of Lebanon and business leaders to discuss rebuilding priorities: Dina Powell (head of delegation); Jeffrey Feltman; John T. Chambers; Yousif Ghafari; and Ray Irani.

September 25

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to New York City, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Katie Hustead. He then traveled to Riverside, CT.

In the afternoon, at a private residence, the President attended a Connecticut Republican Party luncheon. Later, he traveled to Cincinnati, OH, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Robert "Kent" Wellington II. Later, he toured Meyer Tool, Inc.

In the evening, at a private residence, the President attended a reception for senatorial candidate Michael DeWine. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to Budapest, Hungary, to attend the 50th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution on October 23: George E. Pataki (head of delegation); April H. Foley; Peter K. Gogolak; and Steven F. Udvar-Hazy.

September 26

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

Also in the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Ali Abdallah Salih of Yemen.

In the afternoon, in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building, the President participated in a signing ceremony for Public Law 109–283, the United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act. Later, he met with Republican congressional leaders to discuss legislative priorities.

In the evening, at a private residence, the President attended a reception for Iowa, Arkansas, and Wisconsin congressional candidates.

The President announced his intention to nominate Kevin M. Kolevar to be Assistant Secretary of Energy (Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability).

The President announced his intention to nominate Jane C. Luxton to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere.

The President announced his intention to nominate Phillip L. Swagel to be Assistant Secretary of the Treasury (Economic Policy).

The President announced his intention to nominate Thurgood Marshall, Jr., to be a Governor of the Board of Governors of the U.S. Postal Service.

The President announced that he has named Tony Fratto as Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy Press Secretary.