



# Kazakhstan News Bulletin

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## **Vice President Cheney Will Visit Kazakhstan in Early May**

U.S. Vice President Richard Cheney will visit Kazakhstan in early May in order to “strengthen our bilateral relationship”, the office of the Vice President announced on April 19.

In a press release, the office said U.S. President George W. Bush “asked the Vice President to visit Kazakhstan to meet with President Nazarbayev to strengthen our bilateral relationship on the basis of our shared strategic interests and desire to promote democratic reform and economic development.”

Kanat Saudabayev, Kazakhstan’s Ambassador in Washington, said: “Vice President Cheney’s upcoming visit is a landmark event demonstrating a special priority of relations with Kazakhstan for the United States and recognition of our leadership in economic and political reforms in Central Asia. We are hopeful the upcoming meetings in Astana will give a new important boost to further strengthening of our strategic partnership, both in bilateral and multilateral dimensions.”

Recently, Kazakhstan hosted the visits of U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman and Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns, as well as former President Bill Clinton and numerous congressional delegations. On a visit to Astana, Secretary Rice said, “Today, Kazakhstan is poised and ready to break a path for a new Silk Road, a great corridor of reform... A strong and prosperous and democratic Kazakhstan will once again energize the global transmission of learning, and trade and freedom across the steppes of Central Asia. This nation has a glorious past and it is destined for a hopeful future. Kazakhstan’s greatest days lie ahead of it. And the United States wants to be your partner.”

The United States was the first country to recognize an independent Kazakhstan and establish diplomatic relations with it in 1991. In 2001, Presidents Nursultan Nazarbayev and George W. Bush defined the relations between Kazakhstan and the USA as a “long term strategic partnership.” Its key elements are cooperation in security and nonproliferation, energy partnership and a dialog on democracy.

Since 1991, under the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program the U.S. has assisted Kazakhstan in ridding itself of the world’s fourth largest nuclear arsenal, inherited from the former Soviet Union, and eliminating the infrastructure for production and testing of weapons of mass destruction. Today this cooperation continues, focusing on down-blending of highly enriched uranium.

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Kazakhstan has provided broad support for the U.S.-led war on terror, including assistance for Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, and the support for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Kazakhstan is one of the very few Muslim majority countries and the only country in Central Asia to send a military contingent to Iraq which continues its service there.

The U.S. is the largest investor in Kazakhstan. U.S. companies account for more than US\$15 billion in investment. Approximately 400 companies with U.S. participation work in Kazakhstan. In 2005, bilateral trade amounted to US\$1.65 billion of which U.S. imports of oil and minerals amounted to US\$800 million.

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