



Kazakhstan News Bulletin

Released weekly by the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the USA and Canada
www.kazakhembus.com

February 8, 2007

Vol. 7, No. 7

In this issue:

**Europe Sees
Kazakhstan as
Central Asian
Gateway**

**NATO and
Kazakhstan to
Expand Ties**

**In Astana, U.S.
Mission Focuses on
Energy,
Diversification**

**Kazakhstan's
Parliament,
Reaffirming
Commitment to
Nonproliferation,
Ratifies Additional
Protocol with
IAEA**

**Kazakh Men Lose
to Japan Leaving It
to Women to
Avenge Them in
Ice Hockey**

Europe Sees Kazakhstan as Central Asian Gateway

Observers of European policies toward Central Asia have noticed a growing trend in recent months where European countries, both individually and collectively, seek stronger economic and political ties with Kazakhstan as the gateway to the region. As Europe looks east, Kazakhstan looks west.

Last year, several high ranking European officials, including the top energy official and Belgium's foreign minister representing the presidency of the European Union (EU), visited Kazakhstan and its regional neighbors.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev's visits to London and Brussels last November and December elevated the relations with the United Kingdom, Belgium and the EU to a new level.

These visits were followed by President Nazarbayev's visit to Germany last week. It produced several agreements and sharpened Germany's focus on opportunities for greater economic and political ties with Kazakhstan. It also the strongest indication yet Germany, current EU president and chairman of the Group of Eight industrialized countries, would like to have a much larger presence in Central Asia centered on Kazakhstan. (See [Kazakhstan](#) News Bulletin, February 1, 2007).

Next month, this trend will again be on display when the European Union's 'troika' will confer with Central Asian foreign ministers in Astana, Kazakhstan's capital. The troika includes top European officials in charge of foreign relations: Javier Solana, EU's High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the European Commission's Commissioner for External Relations, and the presiding foreign minister, Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier of Germany.

The March 28 meeting in the 'EU Troika-Central Asia' format will be the first of its kind and will focus on developing EU strategy toward Central Asia.

Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Marat Tazhin said the upcoming meeting, discussed at length during the President's visit to Germany, will be an important event. Speaking on Khabar TV's *Zheti Qun* program on February 4, Tazhin said the meeting, co-chaired by Kazakhstan and Germany, will "discuss a strategy which never existed in the past between Central Asia and the European Union as between two geographical and economical regions." Tazhin added, "We are hoping to approve concepts of several dimensions of cooperation. This will be the first serious institutional step toward promoting cooperation between the EU and Central Asia."



It's not Texas, it's... Kazakhstan. The country's huge oil reserves increasingly draw the attention of major world players.

Kazakhstan's Foreign Ministry spokesman Yerzhan Ashikbayev added Astana was "working very closely with relevant EU commission developing this strategy."

Those in Washington, DC, can have an opportunity to expand their knowledge on this issue tonight if they choose to attend a presentation by Ambassador Pierre Morel, EU Special Representative for Central Asia, on "Central Asia and the European Union," at the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute of Johns Hopkins University's School for Advanced International Studies. The session starts at 6 pm at 1619 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Room 806. Space is limited, so please RSVP directly to caci2@mail.jhuwash.jhu.edu or (202) 663-7721.

NATO and Kazakhstan to Expand Ties

NATO and Kazakhstan will expand ties under the existing individual partnership plan and may do more together in reforming Kazakhstan's armed forces and the country's military doctrine.

Robert Simmons, NATO's Special Representative for Central Asia and Caucasus, announced the news following his visit to Astana on January 7.

Simmons said the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) between NATO and Kazakhstan, in existence for a year, will be expanded to include new proposals and recommendations discussed during the visit with Foreign Minister Marat Tazhin, Senate Speaker Kassym-Zhomart Tokaev, leadership of the Defense Ministry and the Majilis Committee on International Affairs, Defense and Security.

Simmons noted both parties had new proposals which "we will now try squeezing" in the IPAP. His visit to Astana, his second since his appointment in 2005, was meant to establish good communications with new ministers of defense and foreign affairs, Simmons added.

While in Astana, NATO's representative also announced the alliance was ready to assist Kazakhstan in developing its new military doctrine.

Delivering a speech at the Eurasian National University in Astana, which has become an important part of itineraries for foreign dignitaries, Simmons said, "We would like to provide comprehensive assistance in reforming your armed services and developing a new military doctrine so that you can better meet modern threats and challenges."

Simmons explained NATO is already assisting Kazakhstan in reforming its military, especially "through the development of and in bringing its mobile forces to NATO standards, specifically KazBat, which lately became KazBrig [Kazakhstan's brigade]."

He also added that "the military language institute in Almaty for officers from throughout Central Asia will soon become a fully fledged element of the Partnership for Peace program."

NATO also would like to expand cooperation with Kazakhstan in science and in facing consequences of natural disasters, "where the alliance has amassed vast experience."

Simmons said these areas of cooperation show that "NATO is working for the benefit of Kazakhstan and this process is mutually beneficial." He also sought to provide assurances NATO's cooperation with Kazakhstan does not run contrary to Kazakhstan's membership in other security organizations in Eurasia, including the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Speaking to members of the Kazakh Parliament, he said NATO does not see its relations with Kazakhstan as competition with other states or organizations. He added NATO was looking to developing dialog with SCO, especially since a Kazakh has assumed the position of SCO's new secretary general earlier this year. (See [Kazakhstan](#) News Bulletin, January 25, 2007.)

In Astana, U.S. Mission Focuses on Energy, Diversification

A high level delegation from the U.S. State Department visited Astana this week to discuss ways to expand cooperation in economic, energy and investment sectors.

Daniel Sullivan, US Assistant Secretary of State for economic affairs led the delegation which met Kazakhstan's Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, as well as ministers of energy and industry and trade.

"We had a good discussion about our economic cooperation which is a priority for the State Department," Sullivan said at a briefing in Astana as the visit ended. He added the parties also discussed ways to help diversify Kazakhstan's economy.

In a meeting with Energy Minister Baktykozha Izumkhambetov, the delegation also discussed the potential for trans-Caspian oil and gas pipelines, the future of the Kazakhstan Caspian Transportation System (KCTS) (See [Kazakhstan](#) News Bulletin, January 25, 2007.) as well as for oil and gas pipelines from Kazakhstan to China.

The visit was a follow up to the meeting between Presidents Nursultan Nazarbayev and George W. Bush in Washington last September.

Kazakhstan's Parliament, Reaffirming Commitment to Nonproliferation, Ratifies Additional Protocol with IAEA

Kazakhstan's Senate (upper chamber of Parliament) approved legislation February 1 ratifying an additional protocol to Kazakhstan's safeguards agreement with the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

Since Majilis, Parliament's lower chamber, ratified it late last year, the legislation was sent to the president for signature.

"The protocol is aimed at ensuring the openness of nuclear projects in the republic, contributing to efforts to bolster the international security system, strengthens the status of our republic as a non-nuclear state, and demonstrates the stability of Kazakhstan's policy in the area of the nuclear weapons nonproliferation regime," the Majilis Committee on International Affairs, Defense and Security said in a statement at the time the legislation passed the lower house.

Kazakhstan signed the protocol, which opens the doors for more intrusive monitoring of nuclear activities from the IAEA, in Vienna on February 6, 2004.

Kazakhstan inherited the world's fourth largest nuclear arsenal after the Soviet Union collapsed. Kazakhstan then decided to terminate its nuclear program, joined the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear weapons state and has since then proven itself a strong advocate of nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation.

Ninety countries have signed the protocol which has already come into force in 62 countries.

Kazakh Men Lose to Japan Leaving It to Women to Avenge Them in Ice Hockey

After stunning their rookie ice hockey rivals with unbelievable scores, Kazakhstan's men's ice hockey team lost the final game to Japan 3-2 on February 1 in the 6th Asian Winter Games in Changchun, China.

This led to the second consecutive title for the Japanese following the feat in the previous Asian Winter Games in Aomori, Japan in 2003.

The top-ranked Kazakh men's team had to settle for silver.

Thankfully, their defeat was mitigated in the hearts of ardent fans by the victory of Kazakhstan's women team over Japan, also with a one goal difference. The women's match ended 2-1.

Elsewhere, Kazakhstan dominated the Asian Winter Games cross country tournament as the Kazakhs grabbed four out of six gold medals in the sport.

Kazakhstan completed a perfect run of form on Saturday winning the women's 4x5km relay and the men's 4x10km relay.

The Kazaks also claimed the women's 5km classical and men's 30km freestyle titles on Wednesday.

Imangali Tasmagambetov, Akim (Mayor) of Almaty, visited Changchun during the games, providing support for the team and learning the experience of hosting an Asian Winter Games. Almaty will have the honor in February 2011.

Things to Watch:

- Kazakhstan's Parliament will convene Friday February 9 for a joint session to hear Prime Minister Karim Massimov present the Government's action program for the years 2007-2009. Massimov briefed President Nazarbayev about the program on February 5 saying afterwards the program's main thrust will be to remove all hindrances to achieving the key objective of making Kazakhstan one of the world's 50 most competitive nations. At last count by the World Economic Forum, Kazakhstan was ranked 56th out of 126th countries surveyed.
- We still have a few copies available of *Kazakhstan: Reaching for the Future*, a 9-minute video documentary prepared by the Embassy of Kazakhstan to the United States. It tells the story of what Kazakhstan has become in the 15 years of its independence and of the importance of strategic partnership between Kazakhstan and the U.S. The video is available at Youtube [here](#). Those in the United States and Canada who would like to receive a copy on DVD, please contact Roman Vassilenko at numbers below.

For back issues, other news and information visit us at www.kazakhembus.com
News Bulletin of the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the USA and Canada

Contact person: Roman Vassilenko
1401 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036
Tel: 202 232 5488, ext. 104, Fax: 202 232 5845