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President Nazarbayev Will Visit the United States

The White House officially announced that President George W. Bush will welcome President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan to the White House on September 29, 2006.

Tony Snow, White House spokesman, announced the visit at a September 12 briefing, saying, "Kazakhstan is an important strategic partner in Central Asia. The President and President Nazarbayev will discuss a range of issues including democracy promotion, the war on terror, energy diversification, expanding prosperity, and our common commitment to working together to advance freedom and security."

Kanat Saudabayev, Kazakhstan's Ambassador to the United States, commented on the announcement: "On the eve of President Nazarbayev's visit, we declare that we are committed to further strengthening of our strategic partnership. In recent years, more people in America have come to recognize Kazakhstan as a reliable friend and partner, with whom the United States has already done a lot together in the war on terrorism, preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, ensuring energy security and promoting freedom and democracy. What our countries can do together for a prosperous and safe future. will be the main subject of the upcoming meeting between Presidents George W. Bush and Nursultan Nazarbayev at the White House. We are confident this meeting will strengthen the friendship between our nations and will see new horizons for the strategic partnership between Kazakhstan and the United States."

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."

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.

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.

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

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